

# MINUTES

## City of Lake Elmo Park Commission December 19, 2016

**Members Present:** Chair Weis, Commissioners Nelson, Frick, Hartley, Ames, Zeno, Steele, Neuenfeldt

**Members Absent:** Commissioners Silvernale

**Staff Present:** Administrator Handt, Public Works Director Rob Weldon, Colemer of Public Works, City Planner Becker

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Weis at 6:30 PM.**

### Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ames, seconded by Steele to approve the agenda as amended to include recognition of Commissioner Hartley's service to the Parks Commission. Motion passed.

### Approval of Minutes

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Weis to approve the November 21, 2016 minutes as amended. Motion passed 5-0-3. Zeno, Steele, and Neuenfeldt abstained.

### Recognition of Mike Bouthilet's Service for Parks

Handt presented Resolution 2016-001:PR: Recognizing Mike Bouthilet's Service to Lake Elmo Parks. Handt clarified the resolution would be mailed to him.

**Motion by Hartley, seconded by Zeno to adopt Resolution 2016-001:PR. Motion passed 8-0.**

### Recognition of Commissioner Hartley's Service to Parks Commission

Weis thanked Hartley for her years of service to the Parks Commission.

### Neighborways Presentation

University of Wisconsin River Falls, WI American City Politics students Katelyn Bares and Dennis Dadashev gave a presentation on neighborways. They stated that the class was assigned to research the feasibility of neighborways in Lake Elmo. They presented an overview of neighborways, which is a growing trend in the upper-Midwest to promote the use of public trails on privately-owned land. Land owners who allow neighborways and take outlined steps will not be culpable for risks associated with public use of their land.

Commissioner Steele had felt that Lake Elmo residents would not be perceptive to neighborways, as its residents generally value their privacy. There was general concern by the commission that it would be a tough sell to get Lake Elmo residents to participate in such a program. The commission asked if there were any case studies showing how other neighborways cities impelled residents to participate. Steele asked if there was a way that residents could receive tax relief if the value of their homes did go up as a result of neighborways.

### **Sally Manzara Nature Center**

Mr. Tony Manzara presented, as requested by the Parks Commission at its September 19, 2016 meeting, more details on his plans for the Sally Manzara Nature Center. Manzara also addressed specific Staff concern, as outlined in the Parks Commission Staff report regarding the Nature Center.

Ames expressed concern that the roof shown above the picnic tables would be still be able to be climbed. Steele had asked if there was a way that the building could be used for more activities other than nature. Manzara clarified that it was outlined in the draft agreement between the Nature Center and City that the City and its residents could use the Nature Center when no other activities were booked, and even a small contribution to the Nature Center for the use of the building could constitute a nature activity. Steele asked if the bathrooms could be unisex rather than designated as men's or women's. He also asked if the building could have more of a rural aesthetic. Ames asked if the bathroom would be open when the center was not open, and Manzara clarified that it would not. Steele asked if there could be more of a welcoming area for gathering and wants to see the center as not just functional, but something beyond that.

The Commission then refocused their attention to the draft agreement.

Weis had asked if there would be a performance bond and expressed concern that the \$20,000 escrow required according to the agreement was not enough. If something were to happen and the Nature Center could not be finished, the Parks Commission and City would have to decide either to tear it down or finish it themselves, and \$20,000 may not be enough to complete the project. He felt making the decision to tear down a half-completed building would be a tough one. Weis proposed amending the escrow amount to cover the cost of construction and then providing monthly reductions as construction progressed.

The commission recommended this change to the agreement.

Steele was concerned about the language stating that permission was granted, with no caveats, to install surveillance equipment on the property. Zeno felt that this could take away from the wilderness of the area.

The commission recommend to strike this sentence of the agreement.

Staff was directed to update the language in the two sections as discussed and bring a revised agreement back to the January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Draft 2017 Parks Commission Strategic Plan of Work**

Becker presented a Draft 2017 Parks Commission Strategic Plan of Work. The Parks Commission was to add, edit or delete items on this plan of work. The Plan would then be discussed with Council during the yearly Parks Commission and Council joint meeting in April. The commission then made recommended changes to the Plan of Work including removing neighborways, adding improvements to Tablyn, park improvements to Hammes Park, 50<sup>th</sup> Street Trail, gravel parking at Ridge Park, table the placement of barriers to Ridge Park, creation of a five year maintenance plan based on necessity, addressing the wood chip issue and park sizing amongst other items. Motion by Steele, seconded by Zeno to recommend approval of the 2017 work plan. Motion passed.

### **Public Input**

Judith Blackford, Lake Elmo resident and former Parks Commissioner, suggested commemorating Mike Bouthilet's years of service by having a plaque placed on one of the benches he's made.

### **January Meeting Agenda**

Savona Park  
Lions Park  
Nature Center

### **Staff Reports and Commission Update**

The Council has not yet approved the Capital Improvement Plan but will do so at its meeting on December 20, 2016

**Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Emily Becker**