

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday, January 5, 2015

Members Present: Hartley, Weis, Silvernale, Nelson, Zeno, Hietpas (6:40)

Members Absent: Ames, Steele, Frick

Others Present: Taxpayer Relations & Communications Coordinator MacLeod, Planning Commissioner Rolf Larson, Park Maintainer Colemer

The meeting was called to order by Chair Weis at 6:32 PM.

Approval of Agenda

M/S/P: Hartley/Zeno: Approved 5-0

Approval of December 15, 2014 Minutes

M/S/P: Hartley/Zeno: Approved 5-0

New Business

a. Open Space Definition

MacLeod spoke to city planner Johnson and relayed commission concern that development plans were being presented to them once park space was already allocated, and that they felt it seemed, at times, an afterthought. Johnson provided a written explanation for the calculation of park land in a development. It was also suggested that the commission determine more detailed specifications on parkland dedication (in terms of acreage vs. dollars) in order to obtain more park space in new developments.

Weis suggested that they look into changing policies concerning stormwater facilities as part of green space requirement. Larson responded that dedicated parkland is calculated after land allocated for stormwater is subtracted from full acreage. MacLeod read from Johnson's explanation that stormwater facilities were not subtracted from the net density.

Discussion on park land vs. open space commenced. Density as it relates to open space was also discussed. MacLeod said that she would seek more clarification from Johnson. Hartley thanked Johnson for the information that he provided to the commission.

Hartley stated that she feels the real issue is that parks seem to be considered an afterthought, and the commission is brought into the development plan discussion after they have already been decided. MacLeod encouraged the commission to further define what they'd like to see in terms of parkland to provide to developers upfront. She suggested reviewing the proposed park spaces in the existing comprehensive park plan to see if they currently apply.

Motion made that park commission request staff to investigate legalities of taking stormwater retention out of open space calculation requirements.

M/S/P: Weis/Hartley: 6-0

b. Formula for Implementing Parks in New Developments

Weis prefaced by saying that the discussion started with the Easton development, in regard to when to develop the park space in new developments.

Zeno suggested that the developer build the park up front, and once the neighborhood is fully occupied the city would buy it back.

Hartley felt that it would be a better option to base it off of a percentage of occupancy in a development. Hietpas added that before occupancy, they don't know what the demographics area, so the park development should be guided by the residents living there.

Weis feels that with Easton, they provided the maximum amount of park space and he feels it would be penalizing not to build the park right away. He wants to incentivize incoming developments to allocate the maximum park space. MacLeod responded that every incoming development meets their maximum in park space – it's just allocated at different percentages of land vs. funds. She referred to the previous item in suggesting that the commission consider defining how they would like future developments to meet the parkland dedication requirements.

Hietpas asked how other cities address developing parks in new developments. Hartley added that she would like to see how other cities allocate the parkland dedication percentages.

Zeno questioned whether the park commission had the authority to define the size of contiguous park land. Hietpas questioned whether they had the authority to define location.

Larson stated that the work of the planning commission overlapped a lot of the park commission's work. He suggested that a representative from the park commission attend the planning commission meetings when new developments are initially discussed.

Zeno said that coming up with a definition for park space design is challenging because it varies by the specific needs of each development and their demographics.

Old Business

a. Tablyn Park Improvements

The commission revisited the Tablyn Park improvement plan that was proposed in fall 2014 with the goal of deciding on and implementing some of the improvements in spring 2015.

Items to revise plan with:

- Repair stairs
- Switchback trail
- Playground feature
- Trees
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet/warming house
- Baseball field work – move benches out from the fence, grading to make outfield level
- Get rid of basketball court
- Entrance gate
- Parking lot lights
- Sliding hill light

MacLeod will work with planning intern Riley to update plan and obtain pricing for proposed improvements.

Staff Report

a. Financials and POW Update

MacLeod presented the commission with an updated scorecard for the plan of work, and an updated copy of the financial snapshot. She stated that she would continue to present updated copies at each meeting going forward.

b. February Meeting Prep

Items for next month's meeting include follow up on open space items, Tablyn and Sunfish plans, and discussion of comp plan chapter 3

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Alyssa MacLeod, Recording Secretary

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