

## MINUTES

### City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday, February 2, 2015

**Members Present:** Hartley, Weis, Silvernale, Nelson, Frick, Steele

**Members Absent:** Ames, Hietpas, Zeno

**Others Present:** Taxpayer Relations & Communications Coordinator MacLeod, Planning Commissioner Rolf Larson, City Administrator Dean Zuleger, Park Maintainer Colemer, Mayor Mike Pearson

The meeting was called to order by Chair Weis at 6:33 PM.

#### Approval of Agenda

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

#### Approval of January 5, 2015 Minutes

Change the year on the date to 2015

**M/S/P: Hartley/Weis: Approved as amended 6-0**

#### Presentations

##### **a. Sunfish Forestry Management Plan Update**

Kunde provided an update to the commission. He is working with Art Weestrom (rep from the DNR for private forest management). They have a pretty good idea of their recommendations and will next be working on mapping those areas out – looking at doing some low level photography to map out the sites.

Identified challenges include:

- Windstorm damage, scattered throughout (more prevalent in the NE corner), in the parking lot area toward the west.
- Addressing the maturing aspen stands (as they age, there will be more trees falling). Combined with buckthorn, the Aspen will slowly die out and the buckthorn will take over.
- Several pockets of oak wilt.
- Dramatic elevation changes (difficult for logging equipment to get through). Need to work hard to find access sites to different points of the park (will meet with Mike to go over possible access sites).
- Fire hazard area
- Hazard trees on the trails (need to be marked, trimmed and knocked off; used as part of the harvest process)

Next steps will be meeting with Mike B. to identify access points. Short term they will get the flight done and hope to do some firewood harvesting yet this year. In the meantime they will look into the possibility of funding and into the grant process.

Weis thinks hazard trees are priority. Hartley asked when they could start removing hazard trees. Kunde responded that before they could go out for bids, they would first need to have the plan approved by the land trust.

Steele asked for a timeline from the point when the land trust will look at it to when the work starts. Kunde hopes to have a good idea when the photography can be done and when the logging can be done within the next couple weeks, followed by mapping the trails for firewood is and identify who will come in to manage it. Kunde aims to have the plan approved by the land trust by the end of March. After the plan is approved they

would line up contractors, and start with addressing the buckthorn. Most of the forestry work would take place next winter.

Hartley asked about closing the trails that have hazardous trees. Kunde said it would be possible just to mark trees that are leaning over the trail and drop them to the side.

Frick stated that she would like to get moving on the downfall on the trail as soon as possible. Kunde is concerned about doing heavy tree marking because with limited liability insurance through the city. He could work with Art. Colemer said that he and Bouthilet could identify which trees they would be capable of removing. Weis asked if given time, would it be better to have it hired done. Yes.

Weis asked how they would handle the cost to remove trees; if they would need to approve a 'not to exceed amount.' Zuleger responded that they wouldn't have an estimate of cost until they had them marked. (Jamie and Mike will identify which ones they can handle in house – cost estimate will be on the ones that they cannot manage).

Motion made to request a comprehensive audit of dangerous trees by the March park commission meeting.

#### **M/S/P: Steele/Hartley: 6-0**

Pearson asked if they would want to include Reid in the plan with Sunfish. Kunde recommend focusing on Sunfish first and if it goes smoothly, approach Reid. Hartley suggested that Colemer go take a look at the situation in Reid. Kunde suggested long term that they have a member of city staff go to a hazardous tree training class.

#### **b. Acquisition & Relocation of the Fiddler's Barn**

Larson located a barn in Southern Chisago County that dates back to the 1860's. It was built by an original homesteader, and with the name the "fiddlers barn." Larson provided some history with the barn. The farm used to be used in the area for barn dances. The owners are willing to give it to the city for free. The City would just have to move or dismantle it. He presented photos of the structure. It is approximately 20'x25' in size.

Frick asked if Larson has looked into how practical it is to tear it down, move, and rebuild. Larson responded that it needs to be looked into.

Weis suggested that with a barn this age there might be a possibility of historical society funding. Frick asked why the folks in Chisago County wouldn't take it. Larson responded that no one was interested.

Larson suggested that it could be used for a warming house in winter and for public meeting space.

Weis thinks it is a cool idea if it could be moved.

Steele suggested talking to the MN Historical Society just to find out what the historic value is; would like to see a statement identifying the value.

Hartley feels that the building does not look structurally sound. Also feels that they would not be able to use this with modern facilities.

Motion made to ask Larson to look into the historical value, and technical feasibility of moving and rough estimate to move it.

#### **M/S/P: Steele/Frick: 5-1 in favor**

Hartley is concerned that they have a lot to invest into existing parks, and feels that this looks like a money pit. She thinks that they could put in a new structure that appears rustic.

Frick feels that there is a lot to consider with this and asks whoever researches it to provide a vision as well.

Zuleger is concerned that it would be too difficult to reconstruct.

## **New Business**

### **a. Spring Event at Sunfish Lake Park**

MacLeod mentioned that resident Judith Blackford had sent an email stating that she would like to help organize a spring nature event in Sunfish Lake Park. The idea followed a similar event that was put together last summer at last minute. MacLeod asked if the commission would support the event and if anyone would be interested in helping with the planning and facilitation of the event.

Frick stated that she would be interested in helping and thought they would need to plan some other activities for children.

Motion made to recommend staff to research further for a Sunfish family day and commend Judith for her volunteerism.

**M/S/P: Weis/Steele: 6-0**

### **b. Sunfish Lake Park Plan Review**

Steele said that he had only received feedback from Hartley. He reiterated the request for commissioners to send feedback to him by Feb. 16. And would have final recommendations to MacLeod by Feb. 18, and they could review at March's meeting.

Frick asked about Area 3, and what decision was made. Zuleger responded that the aim was to get the fines removed. There would be no additional land or funds granted to the city. Frick asked about looking into Superfund resources. She felt they could possibly acquire funds to acquire land or develop the park of area 3 that is useable park land.

Steele commented that he feels the subcommittee isn't sure of area 3. He felt because of the uncertainty that they would leave it for future commission and councils to work with. Hartley expressed being in favor of moving forward with a dog park because it as a park that is not where else in Lake Elmo.

Weis suggested tabling this item until next meeting, when everyone's had a chance to provide input.

### **c. Comp Plan Review – Chapter 3**

At the commission's request MacLeod spoke to representatives from other cities (Hastings, Cottage Grove, Plymouth, and Forest Lake) to learn their process for parkland dedication and new park development. Findings indicate that most approach it on a case-by-case basis. MacLeod advised the commission to review Chapter 3 in their park plan to determine if they still found it relevant. The plan will be revised in 2018.

Frick's main concern is servicing residents in the higher density development. She feels that the park commission should look at acquiring land if needed to service those individuals. Zuleger responded that they bring development plans to the park commission for them to weigh in on park space at that time. He added that we currently do not have the staff to maintain additional park space.

A discussion about maintenance ensued. Steele suggested identifying park areas that could be left as natural areas and where they could cut down on maintenance. Zuleger responded that they functionally do that already.

Hartley suggested providing direction on keeping parks centrally located and to include trails.

Weis concluded that if the commission would like more green space they would have to ask for full dedication in land.

Zuleger read the parkland dedication guidelines as outlined in the city code.

Steele asked what the combination of land versus funds has been given for dedication in recent developments.

The commission discussed their process for plan review. Steele requested that they see the changes that were made after first review. Talked about having a representative from park attend planning commission meetings when plans were reviewed.

Staff will look into some options for a formal process for park commission review between concept and preliminary phase.

### **Old Business**

#### **a. Park Space Development & Definition**

addressed in previous agenda item.

#### **b. Tablyn Park – Updated Plan**

An updated park plan with associated costs was provided to the commission. Total cost was approximately \$130,000.

Steele's main concern is that there is not enough parking. He suggested having the trail move down the south west by the stream and extending lights to the north along the entire sliding area. Also suggested clearing out the entire hill.

Weis asked the commission for their top choices of improvements to implement. Revision suggestions include expanding the parking lot, and adding additional lights. The commission decided against putting in a shelter.

Motion made to request staff to revise plan with suggestions, review at March 16 meeting with pricing.

MSP: Steele/Hartley: 6-0

#### **c. Bee Ordinance Update**

MacLeod presented an updated resolution with less restrictive and more formal language, along with a proposed action plan.

Motion made to approve bee resolution with amendments as noted and present to council.

MSP: Weis/Steele: 6-0

### **Staff Report**

#### **a. Financials and POW Update**

No discussion on POW; financials hadn't changed from previous month.

#### **b. LERT Feasibility Study Update**

Zuleger spoke with Peter Mott from Washington County and learned that last fall they identified Lake Elmo Regional Park plan as a priority.

County Staff will sit down with ad hoc trail committee within the next 2-4 weeks. Goal is to have Master Plan completed by June 2015. The next step will include going through a series of Met Council subcommittee meetings.

#### **c. Priority Item for March**

Zulelger suggested master planning for Reid, with incoming land.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alyssa MacLeod, Recording Secretary

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