

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday, April 21, 2014

Members Present: Weis, Hartley, Nelson, Steele, Silvernale, Ames, Frick, Hietpas

Members Absent: Zeno

Others Present: Administrator Zuleger, Planning Commissioner Larson, Taxpayer Relations & Communications Coordinator MacLeod, PWS Bouthilet, Park Maintainer Colemer

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

Approval of Agenda

Amended to include Item IV-C, sanctuary park discussion

M/S/P: Hartley/Frick: Approved 7-0

Approval of March 17, 2014 Minutes

Amended that motion of Item V-F was approved 4-0, not 7-0, as misstated.

M/S/P: Ames/Hartley: Approved 7-0

New Business

a. 5K Runs in Sunfish (MacLeod)

MacLeod said that the main office has received several calls (in 2013 & 2014) inquiring about the use of Lake Elmo parks to host 5K runs. Currently there is no procedure or application process in place and staff typically refers interested parties to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve. MacLeod asked if formalizing the process and encouraging the use of city parks for these purposes would be of interest to the commission.

The commission shared support for the idea, and discussed the possibility of planning multi-park runs and events.

Ames stated that it would be great to have a set of guidelines outlining maximum amount of attendees, application fees, and liability details; suggested looking at other communities for examples. The commission was in agreement that a policy would be beneficial, did not want to limit the policy to 5k events, and thought it would be best to avoid commercial events.

Motion made to direct staff to draft a policy to present at the May 2014 meeting.

M/S/P: Weis/Ames: Approved 7-0.

b. Priority Park Action Item Discussion (Weis)

Weis stated his desire to revisit priority items discussed at the work session from December 2013. He requested that the commission choose an item to discuss at each meeting throughout the remainder of 2014. Pebble, Reid, and Tablyn were agreed on as the parks that were the highest priority parks.

Monthly action items were set as follows:

May – Park Amenities

June – Park Safety and Visibility. (The commission requested photos of the area presented at the meeting, and the Sheriff included in the discussion).

July – Parking (Definitely a problem at Tablyn and Pebble)

August – Landscaping + Reid Park (park chosen to add restroom in 2014)

September – Pathways and Trails

October – workshop (Zuleger recommend that they have a workshop in October, where they will have a better idea of what kind of land will be available in Reid Park).

Staff will create a booklet including the park survey, park audit and the plan of work, for commissioners to refer to during these planning meetings.

c. Sanctuary Park - David Silvernale

Resident David Silvernale addressed the commission, requesting a follow up to a discussion from summer 2013 regarding getting a park built in the Sanctuary neighborhood. D. Silvernale recalled that the last time they spoke they had been fairly close to reaching a decision to get a trail put in. Since then he deduced that the park had not been high on the priority list based on commission minutes.

Zuleger responded that the commission had decided to plan the park in conjunction with the development of Getschel property. He shared that the development wasn't going as quickly as planned, which has delayed the planning of the park.

Ames remembered from the visit and discussion that because the land in the corner in the Getschel property would be more conducive to a park they talked about building a trail in preparation to connect to a park in that space.

Hietpas asked if it was possible to at least put in a play structure at the top of the hill in Sanctuary, regardless what is added on the Getschel side. Zuleger stated that he thinks they owe this neighborhood something.

Bouthilet reminded the commission that the park had been surveyed and there are a lot of encroachments; they know where the trail would go if they were to put one in. Hartley asked for a refresher on what was decided about the trail; remembers that neighborhood members were going to help clear. Bouthilet responded that they didn't want them out there fighting over the boundary lines.

Steele suggests that residents from the Sanctuary neighborhood attend the May meeting to provide feedback.

Frick suggested that it was advisable for commissioners not familiar with the land to get out and look at it.

Ames appreciates the urgency but personally think that it is premature to decide on equipment without considering the rest of the area. Hietpas expressed frustration that they don't seem to install anything. Steele requested that Bouthilet produce a trail plan for next month's meeting. D. Silvernale added that he thinks that a trail system would encourage more use, and that is more important than the actual structure.

Motion was made to table discussion to May meeting when they have more information on adjacent property development and all commissioners have had a chance to walk the property. Hietpas added that she would like a decision to be made at the next meeting, for the upper part of the property.

M/S/P: Ames/Frick: Approved 7-0

Old Business

a. Review of Revised Oak-Land Park JPA (Zuleger)

Zuleger stated that the Oak-Land JPA has caused a bit of discomfort to some council members. Zuleger pointed out that the park location would be ideal for three reasons: there is currently no area for a park in the commercially-zoned area, the new collector road will have a path that can serve as a means of transportation to the park destination, and the updates on Manning will serve a park in that area well. The land is 3.7 acres roughly, on the corner of Manning and 10th. The area has a nice space for picnicking and flatter area for equipment. There is also a small parking lot area.

Zuleger shared that they presented the plan to the councilmembers and they weren't impressed; they discussed that it wasn't the best area in terms of land use. They also felt that the school park is already serving the function as a recreational facility. The Council shared concern that the city should not be in the business of funding tennis courts. Much of the discussion revolved around park maintenance. Zuleger explained that the JPA was pretty self-explanatory – that the City would be responsible for maintaining whatever they put in. The school would take care of grounds maintenance.

Another issue discussed was school security. Access will be restricted during school hours, and the park will be alcohol and tobacco free to satisfy prohibitive uses by the school. It has been expressed by police that putting in a park would decrease the “monkey business” currently happening in the area.

There is some concern that this park will be used. Zuleger stated that they have talked with West Lakeland Township, who has agreed to be a partner to place some infrastructure. They do not think that there will be as much use from Cimarron as originally thought, given that the park located there is heavily used. Steele asked if the park was not serving Cimarron, who would it primarily serving. Ames views this more as a neighborhood park; he sees it as a drive-to park because of a 6-court tennis area, and the 3.7 acres of park received in exchange for the fees, would be considered a bonus. Zuleger agrees: the cost to build the courts alone would be around \$170k. Funds are provided by park dedication fees. No property or school taxes will be affected.

Steele asked if there was evidence that the demand for tennis is there. Zuleger added that the tennis courts area currently frequently used. Steele sees a lot of advantages but is concerned that it's located on two busy roads. He also questioned the priority of this park, given the numerous requests received to build a park in Sanctuary. Zuleger responded that it is the commission's decision, but reiterated that it's the ideal (and possibly only) location to add a park in that quadrant of the City.

Silvernale asked about the trail connections. Zuleger responded that there will be a 10' multi-use ped trail that will line up with the Holiday intersection on 5th street. Manning will have a 10' multi-use path that will run all the way up Manning; and 10th will have a bike path. He also noted that the park would be within walkable distance from the Ryland and Pratt developments. Ames pointed out that there is also a trail connection from the Holiday station that goes east.

Ames shared with the commission issues addressed by councilmembers at a recent meeting involving Weis, Ames, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Nelson: Do we need a park in that quadrant of the city and who would benefit from it? (discussed by commission) Trail access? (Zuleger responded to Nelson's questions) Is there its own parking lot? (yes)

Nelson asked if there would be a certain amount of money that would need to be spent in the park. Zuleger said there might be some improvements that they would want to add in terms of landscaping – these would be needs of any park. The school would make available any equipment that they might need to accomplish that.

Steele asked what the commission can do to move it forward. Zuleger would like the commission to make a motion to support one of the following options: support the JPA and tennis courts, No JPA but still support the tennis courts, or nothing.

Ames moves to support JPA with tennis courts, as discussed and further that the final JPA agreement be reviewed by legal staff. Zuleger responded that the last version was reviewed by attorneys of both parties.

Steele asked about adding language that they see it as a partnership with West Lakeland? Amendment made to motion to include the exploration of a partnership with West Lakeland.

M/S/P: Ames/Hietpas: Approved 7-0

Weis informed that the council will be looking at this item at a special meeting on Wednesday, April 23, 2014.

b. MCPA Tree Planting Update (Hietpas)

Hietpas met with Urban Companies, a state contracted landscaping company, and placed an order of \$20k of trees and shrubs to be installed at the end of May. The planting will take place along boulevard and fence.

Weis expressed his gratitude to Hietpas for sticking with the project. Hietpas stated that it would be an awesome area to develop a dog park, as it is wide open and fenced in. Zuleger asked if they would like to bring the dog park group back. Hietpas noted that there aren't many other areas where they could put in a dog park, at least without a lot of expense.

Steele said that he is apprehensive about investing too much money into the dog park because he remembers that a dog park didn't rank very high on the park survey. Hietpas responded that they would basically be using the land as it is. Zuleger added that there may be grant funds available, and Bouthilet added that the proposal from the dog park group was fairly extensive.

Frick asked about the need to amend the off-leash ordinance. Zuleger responded that they could amend to say that they can be off leash in designated dog park area. He added that there is a litany of rules that are standard, and they will likely have to zone of a separate area for smaller dogs.

Frick was concerned about the steep area by the storm pond. Commission responded that it was gated off, not accessible to public. Ames asked about parking and if they could use the fire parking lot. Zuleger said the parking lot could be used, as long as a pathway was kept open; Bouthilet added that he envisioned going through the existing gate and create parking closer to (angled parking along north road).

Weis made a motion to invite Friends of Stillwater Dog Park group to evaluate the landfill area. Frick responded that she doesn't think use should be restricted to dog park area. Hietpas added that it is a large space and could be sectioned off as a multi-use facility.

Larson stated that he was in favor of a dog park and suggested that they encourage people to use the space because right now people do not realize that it is a public space. Frick stated that based on an MCPA study regarding soil testing. Hietpas responded that the soil was tested and it is safe.

Ames suggested encouraging input from neighbors in the area; communicate with neighbors to address any concerns that they might have.

M/S/P: Weis/Hietpas: Approved 7-0

c. Park Sign Update (MacLeod)

MacLeod presented comparative bids for new signs. Companies included Fast Signs, Impression Signs & Graphics, and Landmark Architectural Signs. Bids were presented for options with sandblasted Extira (wood composite material) throughout and an option for vinyl lettering applied to Extira panels.

Motion was made to approve Landmark Architectural Signs to supply sandblasted signs and panels, with city to provide posts at a total estimated cost of \$32,916.

M/S/P: Weis/Hietpas: Approved 7-0

d. Pebble Park Equipment (Bouthilet)

Bouthilet said they were still in the process of finding something unique. Bouthilet shared some videos with the commission that demonstrated unique playground amenities. Colemer has been looking into options for refinishing old playground equipment.

The commission discussed options for park edging – something practical, safe and aesthetically pleasing (concrete vs. plastic).

Hartley emphasized the need for equipment that would appeal to older children. Zuleger confirmed that the commission seemed to be in favor of climbing equipment and zip line.

Weis asked Bouthilet will bring pricing options at the next meeting. Bouthilet said that he would need to factor in pricing for surfacing and borders before deciding on equipment. He will bring options to the next meeting with concrete pricing for both park equipment and finishing.

Bouthilet asked about clarification on trees needing maintenance at Pebble Park. He requested that someone would come out there with and point it out.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Alyssa MacLeod, Recording Secretary