

## MINUTES

### City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday, May 19, 2014

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

**Members Absent:** Ames, Hietpas

**Others Present:** Planning Commissioner Larson, Taxpayer Relations & Communications Coordinator MacLeod, PWS Bouthilet, Park Maintainer Colemer, Councilmember Reeves

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

#### Approval of Agenda

**M/S/P: Hartley/Zeno: Approved 7-0**

#### Approval of April 21, 2014 Minutes

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

#### Presentations

##### **a. Friends of Stillwater Area Dog Park**

Friends of Stillwater Area Dog Park were unable to make it to the meeting to present. Weis provided an overview on the proposed dog park and welcomed those in attendance for the dog park.

Steele skeptical about this initiative. Said that there are 60 dog parks in the twin cities, and wonders why this is emerging as a high priority for the commission, as it wasn't an item that was initially included on the plan of work developed in fall 2013.

Hartley suggested doing research this year and revisiting the dog park the following year.

Frick stated that this would be a good item for the Sunfish subcommittee to discuss.

Reeves: Suggest sequence the meeting so that the commission can hear from the subcommittee.

Frick stated that she uses Sunfish quite a lot and by talking people in the main parking lot she has found that only about 25% of the people are from Lake Elmo. The remaining 75% are from surrounding communities. She believes that by adding amenities and promoting use that would bring more people, which would ultimately increase the level of safety in the park.

#### *Public Comments:*

*Nadine Obermuller, 8696 42<sup>nd</sup> St. N. Stated that the Friends of Stillwater Area Dog Park failed at getting parks in several different sites in Oak Park Heights and Bayport. She listed the concerns that were addressed by the council members. She and her husband believe that a dog park of this type does not belong in a residential area. She does not think that a dog park is a bad idea: She suggested that it be placed in another location and suggested the water tower/public works building. She further stated that if a dog park were to be added in the proposed location, she would no longer feel safe using the west pedestrian access into Sunfish Lake Park.*

*Austin Anderson, 11686 56<sup>th</sup> St. N. Stated his belief that there is a public need for people to have their dogs off leash. If the space is not provided, dogs will end up in the parks without leashes. He wasn't sure about the proposed location, but would like to ask the issue not be taken off of the agenda.*

*Rolf Larson, 11720 Little Bluestem Ct. N. Larson stated that the response from the online survey (80% in favor of a dog park) shows that a dog park is a desired issue. He clarified that the proposed area isn't really part of Sunfish Lake Park, but rather area adjacent to the park, and needs to eventually be used for something. Said that there are issues that will need to be worked out – parking being one of them. One of the main problems with Sunfish Lake Park is that very few people use it, and with lack of use comes safety issues. Has lived in Lake Elmo for 11 years, said that people in Lake Elmo have gone elsewhere to utilize certain amenities and services (including dog parks). He feels that in order to be a good neighbor, it's time for Lake Elmo to offer services that residents typically go elsewhere for.*

Commission took no action at this time.

## **New Business**

### **a. Sanctuary Park (Weis)**

Weis shared the history of the request for a park in Sanctuary. The commission had initially addressed the commission in spring 2013 to request that a park be developed in their neighborhood. The commission was waiting on plans for the adjacent Getschel property before moving forward.

Frick visited the area and shared concern about the gas line on the property. Bouthilet thought it was a 60' clear zone – thinks that there is enough room in that upper area.

#### *Public Comments:*

*Teresa Silvernale, 11751 58<sup>th</sup> St. N.: Have come to the meeting a year ago to begin this process. She agrees that it made sense to wait for the Getschel development. But now, not knowing when the other property would be developed, she asks that the council to provide a timeline and take action on this item.*

*Austin Anderson, 11686 56<sup>th</sup> St. N. Reiterated that if they were waiting on a developer, that doesn't provide a timeline to create a park. He expressed that they are excited for the park.*

*Jennifer Sletten, 5734 Lily Ave. N. Sletten's property backs up to the park. Her concern is lighting in the park, and suggests that the equipment avoid tube slides to avert 'troublemakers.'*

*Jennifer Mowdy, 11753 56<sup>th</sup> St. Stated that several years ago, when the development was half full there were about 45 children, and since, the families that have moved in have children. There is a need for a park in the neighborhood.*

*Jennifer Cotton, 11797 56<sup>th</sup> St. N. asked about getting a designer to do the work. Stated that there are 16 children under age 6 in a row, and that they would like the park for a gathering space. Echoes the comments that the park needs to cater to all ages.*

Weis made motion to have a rough draft of the area plan to present at the June meeting. Steele suggested having easement issue clarified for June meeting, and asked for a comprehensive plan that they could share with neighborhood in July and make choice in fall.

June = easement and brainstorm and decision on design choices.

### **b. Trail Along 50<sup>th</sup> Street (Weis)**

The commission is responding to an email received from a resident asking if the park commission could create a trail on 50<sup>th</sup> Street, as there is road construction currently. Her concern is that she sees many people using the road for recreation on which there is no shoulder.

Silvernale noted that the path could connect to the proposed Sanctuary park would go.

Zeno stated that 50<sup>th</sup> street could be an important route to get to the High School. It also connects to Lake Elmo Ave., which has a wide shoulder. Larson pointed out that there are currently no east-west trails in Lake Elmo so that it does become an artery.

Reeves talked about the connection issues with Wildflower and Gonyea coming in.

Weis brought up the LERT and gave an update. Johnson is currently working with county to get included in master plan. Weis reported that they received an email from Jennifer Pelletier from the county and she said that they were starting to see an increase in the number of trail applications coming in and that competition is becoming heightened.

Steele suggested that this item is tabled in order to acquire more information. Weis asked for more details on the right of way and land acquisition, for next month.

Motion made to request staff to do research on right of ways.

**M/S/P: Weis/Hartley: Approved 7-0**

**c. 39<sup>th</sup> Street Trail (Weis)**

Reeves provided recap about discussion that came forth at the April 15th council meeting. The plan is to add a trail on both sides of 39th. Weis said that he had listened to the meeting and was not pleased with councilmember Smith's comments to use park dedication funds, during the council's discussion of trail assessments.

Weis reiterated that the park commission has a well thought out process for the park plans and expenditure of funds. Reeves responded that that gets reiterated to the council frequently.

Weis questioned how the improvements on 39<sup>th</sup> Street became a park commission issue. Bouthilet stated that what triggered this is that 39<sup>th</sup> is currently being redone, and every time a road is redone, it is looked at to analyze possible trail connections.

The commission discussed whether or not the proposed path would be a sidewalk or a trail and who was responsible for paying for it. Bouthilet said that it isn't unheard of for an off-road trail to be added in conjunction with street improvements and paid for through park funds - - not common, but not unheard of.

Weis reiterates that he is not necessarily against the trail, but against the way it was brought up. Bouthilet stated that in Council member smith's defense, she is a strong supporter of parks.

Zeno stated that the commission should be asking the question why they wouldn't put a trail in. He stated that he does not see a reason not to put one in, as the street is close to downtown and there may be an opportunity for many trail connections.

Steele said he'd be more comfortable looking at this in a longer term plan. Reeves added that bigger picture would be the south side of the collector road will go through several developments down to 30<sup>th</sup> and Reid Park.

Weis asked when improvements would occur. Bouthilet responded that the project is in feasibility stage at this time, and a date is unknown.

Nelson asked if the council can take the park dedication funds without the permission/knowledge of the park commission. Reeves responded that he believes they can, but the question is rather, would they want to. Nelson expressed concern that it shouldn't be a matter of wording/terminology (sidewalk vs. trail) in order to utilize park funds.

Reeves confirmed that the council has high regard for the work of the park commission.

Weis closed by requesting more information on the project time and cost.

**M/S/P: Weis/Zeno: Approved 7-0.**

**d. Pebble Park Amenities (Weis)**

Bouthilet presented an idea for equipment to add to Pebble Park. The proposal included a zip cruise to go near the existing swing set, and another feature to go near the existing playground equipment. Also discussed was adding volleyball courts, a play structure, a hexagonal picnic shelter, and reshaping the parking lot.

Total cost for the zip cruise with rubber borders and safety surface would be \$26,000 (\$12,630 for the feature itself). Pour in place option would be \$53,000. The proposed additional play structure would be about \$39,000.

Weis stated that if the proposed items were to be added, he could easily see it becoming a destination park.

Bouthilet reported that Colemer has painted parts of the existing play set to start as a test. The addition of grills was discussed. Bouthilet said that people don't really use grills for correct use and would advise against them.

Steele stated that it would be helpful to see an overall map of the park with the proposed elements mapped out. Weis suggested getting a concept plan for each of the three priority parks and break the proposed improvements into a three phase process, including prices. The decision was made to start with, and focus on, Pebble Park.

**Old Business**

**a. Oak-Land Park JPA Update**

Weis stated that the council passed it 4-1. The school has agreed to make land available to make a trail between Cimarron and the park. The park commission would have to pave it but the school district would make the land available.

**b. 5K Runs in Lake Elmo (MacLeod)**

MacLeod presented a shortened version of the special event permit, which would be used for smaller-scale events with less than 100 attendees. She also presented a modified park usage policy that included verbiage about reserving entire parks (previously limited to ball fields or picnic shelters). The changes to the policy and the event form would provide process and structure to the City's current lack of procedure for utilizing public land for small events.

MacLeod shared that the Lake Elmo Lions Club had recently expressed interest in collaborating with the park commission to organize a walk/run event in the City. Bouthilet suggested hosting a Volksmarch.

Commissioners expressed concerns about the use of parks for for-profit events. Request to have staff provide more information and possible amendments to the not-for-profit vs. for-profit.

**M/S/P: Weis/Hartley: Approved 7-0**

**c. MPCA Planting Update (Hietpas)**

MacLeod shared on behalf of Hietpas, that the tree order has been officially approved. Bouthilet added that the tree list was received and they would be staking the land.

**d. Sunfish Gate (Bouthilet)**

The gate arm will be installed within the next few days. The plan is to use randomly spaced boulders to keep people from cutting through, until they are able to get trees in place.

The front of Sunfish is prepped and graded. Needs to be seeded and get the sign in.

## **Staff Report**

MacLeod shared that the planning department has a new intern, named Casey. She will be working on updating the trail plan.

MacLeod also noted that OnLocation TV (channel 14) will be filming a segment in Sunfish Lake Park. Topic will discuss events and activities in Lake Elmo throughout the summer.

## **Meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alyssa MacLeod, Recording Secretary