

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday, September 15, 2014

Members Present: Hartley, Weis, Zeno (6:34 pm), Silvernale, Steele, Frick

Members Absent: Ames, Hietpas, Nelson

Others Present: Taxpayer Relations & Communications Coordinator MacLeod, PWS Bouthilet, Park Maintainer Colemer, City Planner Johnson

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

Approval of Agenda

Moved Sanctuary Park discussion as second item on agenda.

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

Approval of August 18, 2014 Minutes

M/S/P: Hartley/Frick: Approved 6-0

New Business

a. Hans Hagen Concept Plan Review

Planner Johnson provided an overview of the proposed Hans Hagen development on Inwood Avenue. The plan included a significant amount of trails and approximately 13 acres of parkland (more than the required 10% to meet parkland requirements).

Johnson then presented the neighborhood park concept design. The recreational amenities were designed in relation to the demographics. Johnson pointed out that parking was an item that is absent from the plan. With lifestyle housing, the residential areas include islands – additional stormwater infiltration systems and additional opportunities for gathering space on a block by block level. The planning commission also proposed a park in the northwestern section of the developments. Johnson asked for the commission's feedback.

Hartley is concerned about the east-west connections and feels they need a playground in the northwest area. Weis talked about putting Stonegate on 2015 CIP to start planning. He agrees that they need something in the NW corner.

Frick clarified the demographic was 55+. She is pleased to see the amount of activities in the park, but wasn't sure it was fitting for the demographic. John Rask from Hans Hagen responded that the demographic was typical, but would expect to see an expanded demographic of those who are looking for no-maintenance. He also noted that the 55+ demographic is looking for places to bring grandchildren.

Steele stated that he feels that a park should not have a road going through it, and added that the green spaces should be combined and moved to the center of the development. Expresses that they've learned that the neighborhood parks really do need parking, and if they don't provide ample parking it could be a problem for neighbors. Also concerned about the size – points out that it's closer to 3% than the 10%

Public Comments

Curt Monteith, 331 Julep Ave .N. – Stonegate neighborhood...now that Stonegate park will be the only park south of 10th Street. He put together a park plan to propose, at the time the Boulder Ponds was being proposed. Urges to please plan and put in some nice parks. Stonegate will now be THE location. He suggest adding a parking lot off of 5th street, with a bathhouse, realigned ball field, and building berms tall enough for winter sliding. This would leave the Stonegate play structure to be the primary play structure for that

neighborhood, opening up into a larger community park. There would also be adequate trail connections heading north and south of the Stonegate development. His largest concern is that the southern development showed connections on the northwest side, but the closest point to the park would likely lead residents to cut through the property that is his yard.

Steele asked for a revised concept plan to review next month. Johnson stated that by doing so would put the development in a bind, as if it changed substantially, it would need to go back to planning and council. Steele responded that he feels the park commission needs adequate time to review new developments.

Frick stated that she feels there is a consensus that the commission would like to see more land. Johnson responded that they have to take commercial development into consideration as commercial properties aren't subject to the same land dedication guidelines.

Steele said he disagrees with the approach to design a development and allot the most undesirable plot of land as park land.

Johnson suggested that the council could approve the concept with an additional condition that there could be a central park (consensus) included in the plan before preliminary plat.

Motion made to request that a second concept plan be prepared that looks at a more centralized location of 4+ acres and have a chance to review before plan is finalized.

M/S/P: Frick/Hartley: Approved 6-0

b. Sanctuary Park Update

Intro provided via video recording by Zuleger. Weis opened the floor to public comments.

Public Comments

Jen Sletten, 5734 Lily Ave. N., Just built and moved in July. She was at the May meeting, and at that time she didn't know where exactly the park was. The only communication that she was received was for the May 19th meeting. At that time she didn't know much about the park as she wasn't living there yet. Her sense is that many people want the equipment at all costs, and feels that there are some that don't care either way. There at least 10-20 people who want to wait for the adjacent property. She pointed out that there were 50 surveys mailed out a year ago, but 15 families did not receive one; only 26 surveys were returned. Therefore only 40% responded. She isn't sure that the survey is representative of what the neighborhood really wants. The other part that she wants to mention is the pipeline. Concerned that children will play on the gas line markers. She appreciates the pause.

Michael Hoheisel, 5802 Lily Ave. N., Pointed out where his home is. He and Zuleger spent two Fridays prior talking in depth about the issue and Zuleger sent back via email four options for putting on pause. Hoheisel went that Friday to each and every HOA board member to get input on the decision. It was not sent to the rest of the neighborhood and people have been pointing fingers and saying the HOA has been putting the park on pause, which isn't accurate. The HOA board thanks all involved, and isn't here to derail project. They want to make good on a promise to get a park for the Sanctuary residents. Hoheisel stated that he doesn't know which action the commission will take but the HOA board feels that if they could have a drop dead certain date, if the Goetschel property isn't platted, to put the park where it is currently located. If the process will extend several years the HOA is adamant that they do not support the pause.

Jonathan Moon, 5712 Lily Ave. N. –He is here to encourage delay of implementation until they have a broader picture. He has several concerns about the current site. It is an awkward piece of land that makes sense with the Goetschel property, but not much sense on its own. He feels that it is very isolated, and is concerned about security/proper use. Also mentions there is no parking. Feels the southern part would be more efficient closer to access by the road. He addresses process. He feels that everyone made a good effort, but feels that critical details were missing including how the park will be lit, etc.

Tara Cadenhead, 12190 Marquess Ln. N. Has comments on community planning. Her house backs up to the bike path in Carriage Station. One of the reasons they moved to the place is because of the green space and safe place for her children. For the past several years she and her husband have been concerned about the seclusion – destination for illegal activities. Last summer would see trends – HS Jr high kids going back a certain time of day. She has been very involved in the safety issue of the secluded spaces. She loves the idea of the new park, but the destination piece which is set back/ the seclusion is scary to her, and she also supports a pause.

Gregg Sainsbury, 11923 58th St. N. Has two kids ages 10 & 7. Has no stake in this. If there are two or three/four lots that will be directly affected by a park, and that they aren't very happy with it, he thinks they should be listened to. He supports the pause for time for more planning. He feels it makes more sense to wait.

Jed Bastyr, 11619 58th St. N. Has three young kids. When they bought their lot 3 years ago one incentive was a park coming in. He feels uncomfortable waiting for the platting activity for the neighborhood especially given the market. He thinks we would be missing an opportunity to get it going forward. He understands the concern but thinks there are work around with greenscaping.

Amy Christiensen-Bruce, 11671 56th St. N., She expressed that it was hard for her to come here tonight with a three day notice. She would have appreciated more than a three-day notice knowing this park would be derailed. The general location for a park is not a surprise to her; it was mentioned when she purchased the home. She feels that the park should go where it was planned. Stated that HOA meetings aren't well attended.

Jessica Erickson, 5760 Lily Ave., She is a lot owner. Was unaware of the park going in, but learned of it from Jen Sletten. She is concerned about the location of the park. As a city park, she is concerned about the parking. She feels that the people coming to the park would be parking in front of her home. She is unsure how active the park will be. She is moving here for a quiet home site, and is worried how the park would affect it. Prefers waiting for the Landucci development to see if there is a way to get designated parking. She feels that a park behind homes feels more like a private park than a city park. She feels that the burden to police the park will fall on the shoulders of the residents bordering the park. She thought the paths were for walking and biking – she wasn't sure it would be an access to a city park. She feels like she should have been directly contacted and informed better, and feels that there should be more transparency. She has been on a HOA before and appreciates the work of her neighbors but feels there are too many details that haven't been addressed.

David Silvernale, 11751 58th St. N., They came forward to launch the project at the urging of a councilwoman stating that they have money to spend on a park. His family took on the project as a pay-it-forward to get something for the neighborhood. He said all of the concerns have been discussed prior, and addressed. He commented on the Goetschel property. He talked about the concept plan and shared that it was the same plan presented last year. He feels they can't rely on that hoping that the park will be placed exactly where it is. He apologized for missing people on the communication list. He pointed out that the HOA meetings are very lowly attended. He fears that pausing the park will mean not getting one. He urged the residents to choose between a park or no park.

Pamela Chickett, 5711 Linden Ave. N., Was on the first elected board in Sanctuary. As a member of the board and when they purchased their property in 2006-07, the park was noted in this space. The park was supposed to be in by 2011, which was agreed upon between city and developer. She does not have any children but knows the importance for having a play area for children. She says that it's not meant to be a huge park with parking, lighting etc., but more of a neighborhood park – a place for neighbors to meet and play together. To put a pause on it, she would be extremely disappointed. The HOA members have not been informed on what has been going on. She has asked for years for better communication from the board, but now as a result for the HOA's lack of communication neighbors are being pitted against one another. Feels that they need to go back as association and board to figure out how they will communicate so everyone is represented. People should have known when they purchased their properties what was going on there. Feels that a lot of the problems by the pump house is from kids with cars going back there.

Brittani Prosser, 11784 58th St. N. She is supportive of putting the park up and adding tree shields. She has a 2 year old and 6 month old. She is concerned that if the park is postponed they will not get one. The children in the neighborhood are in the prime age, and they can't afford to postpone it. She feels that this is a tight knit community and doesn't feel it should matter if the playground is behind someone's house. She doesn't feel that people are going to drive from other neighborhoods to use the park, as it is more of a neighborhood park.

Ben Backburg 5693 Linden Ave. N., Lives directly in front of the pump house. Gets home late at night but has never seen or heard any problems back there, despite it being secluded. He has 3 young girls ages 6, 3, and 3 months. They love parks. One of the main draws why they moved to Lake Elmo is the parks. He feels that the city does a great job of developing them and doesn't have that much of a say on process, but we live in a democratic society – they elect representatives to make decisions. This process has been going on for a long time. This land has been dedicated for 10 years. As an attorney he feels that if you have designated land you better do something with it. He feels that this neighborhood is deserving of a park. He has looked into the history, and public information. He confirms that no one attends HOA meetings and no one really cares. He believes it is the city's function to make decisions so neighborhoods aren't battling. The decision was made at May of this year, plans were presented. Another meeting was held. He feels everyone knew it was happening, and that proper procedure was taken by going to council. Afterward someone complained, and it went back to the HOA and halted even though they had already approved. He feels that the majority of the citizens would approve the park to go in. He feels it would only take a matter of days to email everyone and get the opinions of everyone. ON a side note, the HOA involves 3 people, 2 of whom have direct interest. As an attorney correct process would be to remove those parties.

Weis thanked everyone for coming. He stated from here on out to be upset with the park commission as they will make the decision tonight, and doesn't feel it's worth fighting with neighbors. He asked for round table response from commissioners.

Silvernale feels that the process was done correctly. He said that they have reviewed the lower part, and it's a big question mark. He doesn't feel that they should rely on that piece regarding the decision.

Steele reminded the residents that as a park commission they have to look at the plan holistically as well as just what's best for the neighborhood. He specifically addressed the homes bordering the park and the result was that there were no problems. He made a few points that there are concerns about the visibility issues. His own sense is that parking is a big issue. He has said publically that any time they put in a park that they look at the use of the park. He said that they had talked about looking at both parts of the park as a whole but they responded to enthusiasm from the residents. He is in favor of the pause. Even if they voted in favor of the park, it wouldn't be in until late October. He feels like they could acquire more formal input from residents over the winter.

Frick – wasn't around when the park commission discussion started. She went to the designated area when she heard about the neighborhood's desire for the park. She also would like to understand better what the real consensus of the neighborhood. She feels the commission acted because they felt that they were dragging their feet.

Hartley – She says that they need to understand that the location of the park was not established by the park commission. It was decided by the developer with the city years ago. If they purchased a lot in the development they should have been alerted that there would be a park at that location. She added that the gas line easement puts a lot of constraint on location. There will be no parking as it is a neighborhood park (by definition a neighborhood park classification means it is intended to be walked to). Neighborhood parks in general are not lit, therefore no planned lighting. She does not feel it is a good idea to wait for the Geotschel property and feels they did the very best job they could do under the constraints of topography and pipeline. In the interest of the community, she feels that the park should move forward.

Zeno – too has thought the location had a lot of difficulties which have all been discussed. They felt there was some urgency behind getting one in and felt the urgency was the consensus, but now is not sure. They want to do something for the community and is prepared to do it. He doesn't want to put something in if it causes more problems than good feelings. Until that is understood, he's not sure he would be in favor to put it in. He felt pressured due to urgency.

Weis – Never really wanted to put a park in that location, but felt pressured due to the urgency. He also does not want to wait for the Goetschel property. Doesn't think it's fair not to put something in yet. He likes the idea of an overall vote with all members representing. It would be majority rules in that case. He understands that if there is no motion, the park will go in as planned...if there is a motion, it will need to go back to council. Weis added that hard surfaces were not included on the first planned, because it would leave the option to move the structure if needed. He commended the residents for their input and stated that the park commission makes a lot of decisions based on resident opinion. He feels the good in this circumstance outweighs the bad.

Steele made a motion to delay installation of park equipment until next spring and use the time for more consultation with neighborhood with definite action next spring. Seconded by Zeno.

Discussion

Frick stated that she was looking for a further understanding of what the entire neighborhood thinks.

Silvernale feels that this is just delaying the issue.

Zeno suggest that the neighborhood may decide they don't want anything.

Frick asked if they could get feedback from the residents before the next park commission meeting.

Steele withdrew original motion and made motion to delay installation of playground to use winter as rigorous consultation and planning to decide in spring if it is a no-go.

M/S/P: Steele/Frick: Approved 4-2.

RECESS

Reconvened at 9:16 pm.

Weis made motion to table Items 6. e and f.

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

Old Business

b. Tablyn Park Concept (MacLeod)

At the August meeting it was discussed to consider removing the ball fields in Tablyn Park. Bouthilet stated that Lake Elmo Baseball expressed that they use Tablyn field as a primary practice field and urged the commission not to remove the field. He said that a compromise would be to add a field at Pebble, and move the soccer field to Tablyn.

Hartley responded that it made sense because Pebble Park has a large parking lot. She also recalled that there would need to be some grading work done to make the soccer field at Pebble a proper field.

Steele feels it is a brilliant solution. He feels that a soccer field in Tablyn won't interfere with the sledding hill.

Steele commented that north to south orientation of the ice rink would interfere with the sliding hill. He suggests moving it to an east-west orientation. Bouthilet responded east-west orientation is sometimes a

challenge with sun. Bouthilet said that it is not likely to get an ice rink in this year, because water will have to be brought in.

Weis stated that the goal for tonight was to determine what was feasible to get done yet this year. Bouthilet responded that physically there isn't much that can be done yet this year, but there a lot of details and planning to sort out throughout the winter.

Weis asked if realistically there was something that they could sub out to have done yet this year. Bouthilet responded that it would be possible to grub out the sliding hill.

Steele reevaluating the lower parking area, and feels that it doesn't make sense; he suggests instead to remove the swingset and increase the current parking lot. He added that he supports the idea of a gate. Wies asked if they could get a gate in this year with the grubbing. Bouthilet suggested a guardrail near the top of the sledding hill.

Motion made to approve to grub out proposed trail area for amount not to exceed \$5,000 at Tablyn Park.

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

c. Ballfield Backstop Pricing (Bouthilet)

Bouthilet received hard costs for backstops for VFW, Pebble, Tablyn and Reid. He presented full costs, and possible deductions due to doing some work in-house and contributions from Lake Elmo Baseball.

Motion made to repair VFW backstop, Reid Fabric and Demontreville fabric according to estimate, not to exceed \$17,000.

(Tablyn and Pebble will be addressed with master planning)

M/S/P: Steele/Hartley: Approved 6-0

d. Sunfish Lake Forestry Plan

Brought in Steve Kunde, a forester. He gave suggestion to hire loggers, pick section of park near northeast corner. Talked about taking out storm damage, aspen, popple, remove, mulch, at cost. Would be at the overall health of the forest, with understanding that there is initial impact.

Another community got sued for violating land trust agreement for doing similar work. Bouthilet has been reading the forestry plan. He thinks that if they move forward they need the land trust to approve any plan before moving forward.

Frick asked if there was language in the land trust that said make improvements. Bouthilet clarified that it was with their permission.

Weis asked where they were in terms of comparing the forestry plan to the previous plan (Widen's plan). Hartley confirmed that the plans were different.

Frick feels that they need to move faster because if they wait, the trees will not be useful to the forester. She feels that the state of the trees is affecting the park's appearance. She feels that they need a plan of some level of value to get the land trust on board in order to move forward.

The forester has stated that he wants word from the Mayor and confirmation from the land trust before willing to move forward.

Motion to advise staff to communicate with land trust to figure out criteria for forestry.

M/S/P: Weis/Frick: Approved 6-0

e. Land Trust Agreement Restrictions

tabled

f. LERT & Comprehensive Trail Plan - Weis

tabled

g. Pebble Park Volleyball

MacLeod summarized that volleyball was coming back to commission per request from council for more information. She presented the commission with equipment and labor estimates, which was roughly \$30,000, \$10,000 more than the initial estimate/not-to-exceed amount.

Move to increase not to exceed amount to \$30,000 and bring back to council.

M/S/P: Steele/Frick: Approved 6-0

Staff Report

a. Volksmarch (MacLeod)

MacLeod shared updated Volksmarch event details with the commissioners. She encouraged commissioners to attend or volunteer.

b. Retreat Prep (Weis)

MacLeod provided time and date details for the retreat. Weis mentioned that the main items to be discussed would be CIP and Sunfish. Weis told commissioners to send agenda topics to him.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Alyssa MacLeod, Recording Secretary