

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday, October 20, 2014

Members Present: Hartley, Weis, Zeno, Silvernale, Frick, Ames, Nelson, Hietpas (6:49)

Members Absent: Steele

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Weis at 6:31 PM.

Approval of Agenda

Weis added LERT update under staff reports.

Zuleger added Carriage Station Park Land to new business.

Hartley added Pebble Park and Sanctuary Park update to staff reports.

M/S/P: Weis/Ames: Approved as amended 7-0

Approval of September 15, 2014 Minutes

M/S/P: Hartley/Zeno: Approved 6-0, Ames Abstain

New Business

a. Sunfish Lake Park Planting

Hartley spoke to Wendy Griffin from Washington Conservation District, who will provide a plant list once available.

Bouthilet stated that plants would need to be ordered for spring as continuation from the 2014 planting.

Frick expressed concern that the plantings would need to first be approved by the MPCA, as she read through her research that prior approval is needed. Zuleger stated that he is meeting with MPCA Commissioner Stein and will clarify. He asked the commission to form a subcommittee to further research this topic.

Hartley asked if they would like her to get a list of the possible trees to present at the next meeting. Bouthilet said that he would also get a mixed batch of seedlings as well.

b. Sunfish Lake Park – Conversion of Loss Parkland

Zuleger mentioned that there doesn't seem to be a sunset date from the documents that he's seen. Staff engineer Stempski has been involved with this issue in the past, and staff will meet with him to learn more details.

Weis asked for some clarification regarding where the replacement land would need to be located. Zuleger responded that he believes it would be in proximity, but is not completely sure.

Zuleger also added that there might be a stipulation that cash could be provided instead of land. Frick recalled that the DNR is saying that according to the regulations in which federal grant money was received, it was a requirement that Landfill Park be kept as open land. It is her understanding that because the MPCA took the land away they are responsible for replacing it.

Zuleger said that we will have more information to present at the next meeting.

Ames said that when the issue first came up there was a lot of enthusiasm around what this could turn into and then just kind of stopped. He asked who can make this come to a conclusion at this time. Weis asked if there was any way to guide the conversation to help the LERT trail, in terms of ROW, land, funding, etc.

Bouthilet clarified that the original agreement was that the MPCA would return the land to our ownership at some point, but that hasn't happened yet.

Zuleger said that he would be personally taking this project. His goal is to have the issue closed by spring of 2015.

c. 2015 Plan of Work

MacLeod provided a 2015 Plan of Work based off conversations from the October 6 park retreat. She asked that the commission review the plan, and ideally approve, with amendments as needed.

Hartley commented that she feels the presented task list is fairly extensive; she added that she is concerned about their ability to complete everything based on a few poor grades from last year's scorecard. Zuleger replied that the plan of work is not intended to be completed in full each year.

Hietpas added that she looks at this as a work in progress. And items that don't get finished will be rolled over until the following year.

Motion made to approve the 2015 Plan of Work as presented.

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

d. 2015 Budget

Zuleger stated that the budget was laid out preliminary in the POW. The costs projected for maintenance equipment were soft costs, and could be reduced.

Zuleger added that the LERT study would be closer to \$30,000 than \$50,000, and that getting the study done would likely push the project along. Study expenses exceeding \$30,000 would be cost shared with county.

Hartley asked if the \$30,000 was for the skidsteer. Bouthilet responded that there are other items/equipment needs that are higher priority at this time.

Motion made to approve finance report as stated in the Plan of Work with exception of the LERT feasibility study being reduced to \$30,000.

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

e. Carriage Station Park

Zuleger said that in response to a question raised about campaign signs located on city property, the city learned that there was never a deed transfer to return the Carriage Station park land back to the city. Therefore the HOA is currently in ownership of the Carriage Station park land and the City wellhouse located on the property.

Ames added that throughout the time members of the neighborhood have come to lobby for amenities in the park believing that it was city owned. Zuleger wanted to make it known and ask the commission not to make any more improvements until the ownership issue is figured out. He added that they are waiting until November so it isn't construed as political.

Staff will proceed with HOA to get a quit claim done.

Hietpas mentioned the trees that were growing over each other along Highway 5. It is believed to be in the prescriptive right of way.

Motion made to prune and remove per Hietpas suggestion in the Carriage Station ROW.

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

Old Business

a. Sunfish Forestry Plan

MacLeod stated that the item would be going to City Council at tomorrow's meeting - Steven Kunde's initial proposal will be presented for approval at the cost of \$6,300.

Frick asked for clarification regarding email conversations and open meeting law issues.

b. Pebble Park Volleyball Court (MacLeod)

MacLeod provided an update that the volleyball courts went back to council but were not approved based on location. Council would like to see it more centrally located, suggested Reid Park

Zeno feels that they already addressed council concerns and stated that a volleyball court wouldn't currently fit in Reid Park. Bouthilet responded that they could fit it but would need to pave a driveway and parking space to the court. Zeno also referenced Lions and reiterated that a second court couldn't be added because of the drainfield, however it could possibly be dismantled once sewer was in.

Hietpas said that she is confused because she thought the purpose of the park planning exercise was to create destination parks and increase utilization in all parks instead of keeping everything centrally located. Zeno questioned why they couldn't put a volleyball court both in Lions and also in Pebble.

Reeves spoke to the council's decision and reasoning. Reeves suggested that for future perhaps switch the perspective from "The idea of the park commission" to "How can we develop programming for mid-range aged children." The challenge is bringing in other folks and educating the council on the value of this type of program. He agreed that splitting the courts (one in Pebble, one in Lions), could remove the location issue.

Bouthilet added that he felt the cost presented was very high, and the number could be tuned up.

Ames shared two reactions. First, He feels that it is unusual that the council would reject something that the commission would recommend several times. Second, he feels the Council argues over locations, but other locations are not currently available.

Hietpas shared that before adding amenities in the Village area she would like to see an overall plan to ensure the area looks inviting. Zuleger suggested that a group of commissioners meet with members of council to elaborate on details.

Hartley suggested that Councilmembers Nelson and Pearson attend the next commission meeting.

Ames suggested that they take the winter to let the issue settle and create a stronger argument for the both/and scenario. Zeno offered to put together some statistics.

Staff Report

a. Volksmarch (MacLeod)

MacLeod provided a recap on the Volksmarch event which took place on Saturday, October 11. More than 200 people were in attendance, and they were raised over \$1,000 to donate to FamilyMeans.

Frick commended the public works staff for their work on the trails.

b. November Meeting Prep (Weis)

Weis suggested starting a discussion on the comprehensive plan at the next commission meeting. Zuleger added that he felt the council was eager to see the task force plan for Sunfish Lake Park.

Reeves suggested that someone from the park commission do a formal presentation to the council. Weis stated that he would do it.

Weis suggested having a holiday party during December's meeting while continuing discussion about the comprehensive plan

C. LERT Update

Zuleger said that they met with Wayne Sandberg and administrative staff at Washington County, and they will have some money to spend on the master plan, and are ready to move it forward. The next step would be to pick a consultant to work on the master trail plan.

Zuleger added that once we have the consultant's ideas we will present to Washington County.

Weis asked about time frame for the whole thing. Zuleger responded that the master plan would be about a 3 to 6 month project.

Hietpas stated that one of the concerns about the proposed (regional trail) Highway 5 plan with the MPOSC is that it doesn't necessarily qualify as a regional trail because it doesn't connect park to park. She thought that connecting to the Gateway might be something to consider – especially when considering options for funding. Weis responded that Hartley has looked into funding/grant programs. Zuleger thought that if they could get into Washington County's plan, County funding might be available as well.

D. Sanctuary and Pebble Update

MacLeod displayed photos of the newly installed Sanctuary play structure, and the climbing equipment in Pebble Park. Weis asked about the shelter in Pebble. MacLeod replied that a shelter plan still needs to be decided on. She added that the Zipkrooz in Pebble Park should be completed next week.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Alyssa MacLeod, Recording Secretary