

## MINUTES

### City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Members Present:** Chairperson Weis, Hartley, Zeno, Blackford, DeLapp, Hietpas, Silvernale

**Members Absent:** Ames

**Others Present:** Administrator Zuleger, DPW Bouthilet, City Planner Nick Johnson, Tim Freeman

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Shane Weis at 7 PM.

#### **A. Approval of Agenda**

**M/S/P DeLapp, Hartley: To approve the agenda with the addition of Item #H “City Forester Program”**

#### **B. Hammes West Concept Plan Review**

City Planner Nick Johnson presented an overview of a 170+ single family development located on the west side of the Hammes gravel pit off of Keats Avenue. Johnson explained that the planning staff had reviewed the concept plan for both neighborhood park function and trail connections/ Johnson explained the Planning Commissions desire for a 100’ foot buffer between existing neighborhoods (Stonegate) and the newer high density developments.

The Park Commission offered comments on the concept plan that centered on neighborhood access, trail design, and park amenities. Commissioner Zeno noted that he would like to see better access and parking for a park that was going to serve as many homes. Weis (and others) liked the trail design and the effort to connect the neighborhood to other neighborhoods and parks. DPW Bouthilet noted that there would have to be some work done on the trail connections because there already are some overgrown trails on the southern boundary of Stonegate – some synergy needs to be provided. The Commission spent some time working on the location of the park with a considerable discussion focusing on trying to incorporate the dedicated park land with City-owned land adjacent to the southeast corner of Goose Lake. Johnson and Bouthilet noted that the City-owned land may have a flood plain / drainage use and that they would look into it.

Commissioner Hietpas noted she would like to see a larger park / open space provided suggesting that a tot lot would not be sufficient to serve the neighborhood. There was general concurrence of the Commission on this point. A long exchange took place between the developer representative Tim Freeman, and Commissioner DeLapp on a variety of planning and park policy issues. Administrator Zuleger intervened to clarify the Commission’s comments and concerns about the proposed development.

**The Commission noted the following guidance to the developer:**

- 1. Hammes must work out a plan to eliminate any duplication of trails and find a way to co-join trails with Stonegate when possible;**
- 2. Hammes must provide some access/parking considerations to any neighborhood Park;**
- 3. Centrally locate the park at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cul-de-sac by reducing the pentagon-shaped lot to the west; and link the park to the City owned land on Goose Lake;**
- 4. Changes needed to be presented to the Park Commission before the development moves forward.**

**D. Park Survey Results**

Zuleger presented the preliminary results of the City of Lake Elmo Park Survey and noted that a full data set would be presented in August, where all 430+ submittals would be analyzed. Zuleger said that so far the data respondents are heavy in the 50+ category. Commissioner Steele, joined by Commissioner Hietpas, expressed some dissatisfaction that the wording of the questions in the survey were changed. Zuleger responded that the Council thought that leaving the questions open ended would provide respondents with more freedom to respond. After discussion the Park Commission instructed the City Administrator to share disappointment with the City Council that they (the Park Commission) was not consulted prior to the lake question changes.

**E. City Forestry Program**

For time purposes, Zuleger asked if City Forester position could be moved up in the agenda due to time constraints. The Commission by acclamation agreed to move the item up. Commissioners Hietpas and Hartley shared their concerns about not having a formal forestry program in 2013. Zuleger explained that it was the will of the Council to reduce the program due to liability issues and to not compete with for profit tree services. Zuleger noted that per the City's property and casualty policy City employees cannot cross the ROW into private property and offer service / advice and that was a factor in the reduction of the program. Prior to the elimination of the program, Cathy Widen provided the staff with a plan of action that Mike Bouthilet had been executing against. The Park Commission after a lengthy discussion on street maintenance, disease control and protecting the City's asset took the following action:

**M/S/P Hartley, Zeno: To recommend to the City Council that a City Forestry program be re-implemented at 2011 levels to protect the City's natural resources.**

Zuleger noted that he would include the request in the 2014 budget to be shared with the City Council in late August.

#### **F. Sanctuary Park Discussion**

The Park Commission met with Mr. Silverdale to discuss the possible park amenities. A map was provided and a roundtable environment ensued. Key notes of the discussion included:

- Sanctuary taxpayers expressed a desire to have amenities similar to Carriage Station Park.
- The challenges of topography, the oil pipeline complication, access, and the isolating environment.
- It was noted that some of the more active amenities might be more appropriate for adjacent future park dedicated land.
- A modified disc golf course could be established.
- A request was made from Sanctuary Reps. to connect the two trail stubs currently in place.

The consensus of the Commission (without vote) was to continue analyzing the potential of the current land, factoring in the likelihood of additional park land. Mr. Silverdale requested he be allowed to scope and identify a route to connect the two trail stubs. Bouthilet added before anyone started planning or developing the connecting trails, a survey establishing the park boundaries along neighboring homes should be completed to avoid any potential conflicts. It appears that some private yards are already encroaching on park land. An administrative decision to survey and mark the park boundaries should be pursued.

#### **G. Trail Sub Committee-Postponed**

#### **H. Tapestry Access-Postponed**

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 PM

**Dean A. Zuleger for Mike Bouthilet**  
**Recording Secretary**