

FINAL
Lake Elmo Park Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
February 18, 2009

Chairman Ames called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Dunn, Larson, Ames, Blackford, Booher, Adanene, Zeno

STAFF PRESENT: Project Assistant Kriegler,

Agenda

Agenda was approved (M/S, Dunn/ Larson)

Minutes

January 21, 2009 minutes approved as amended. (M/S Booher / Dunn)

First sentence in first paragraph in Update on City Trail System / Trail Inventory - - - - sentence should read - - The city's *Trail Guide Plan* provides some guidance for inventorying and prioritizing trail segments.

Photo review of existing park entrance signs and discussion on possible sign replacement / repair, and landscaping. Add to end of third paragraph - - The sign at Sunfish is in particular need for trimming of the spruce trees. Add the word "sign" to the second to last sentence in same paragraph to read as - - The Commission expressed the interest in starting a sign program with the placement of signs in locations currently lacking a sign and possibly replacing the Sunfish Lake Park sign. Add - - request that the old / outdated sign currently hanging on the backstop at Stonegate Park be removed by the public works staff.

Report on potential park and trail grant opportunities

Carol Kriegler provided an overview of grant opportunities that should be available due to the Legacy Amendment passed last fall, as well as other grant opportunities.

Kriegler explained that the states sales tax going from 6.5% to 6.875% beginning in July with the funds generated by the increase dedicated as follows:

- 33% To restore, protect and enhance wetlands, prairies, forest and habitat for game, fish & wildlife. \$80 million in 2010, \$91 million in 2011.
- 14.25% To newly created Parks and Trails Fund to be spent to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance. \$35 million in 2010, \$39 million in 2011.
- 52.75% to Clean Water Fund and Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

The LOHC is considering very large scale “shovel ready” projects now. Projects in the \$100,000 - \$400,000 range are to be considered through the “Conservation Partners Grant” – possibly in August.

DNR Grants

Local Trail Connections Grant Program – due Feb. 27

Emphasis of this program is to promote access between people and desirable destinations, not to develop significant new recreation facilities. Its primary purpose is to complete trail connections between where people live (eg. Residential areas within cities, and communities) and significant public recreation facilities (eg. Parks and other trails). Priority will be given to residential connections to state and regional facilities and linking existing trail segments. Eligible activities: Land acquisition and trail development. 50-50 match, \$100,000 limit.

Regional Trail Grant Program – due Feb. 27

Primary purpose of this program is to promote development of regionally significant trails. 50-50 match, \$250,000 limit.

Kriegler acknowledged that while application is not possible for this year, plans should be made to apply for these types of grants in future years.

In addition to pursuing grant opportunities, the commission also expressed the value in conducting trail improvements with other infrastructure improvements whenever possible. The Demontreville Trail road reconstruction project was also discussed. Kriegler responded that the city engineer is well aware of the city's interest in constructing a trail along this stretch of roadway. He has indicated that the county has expressed that there simply isn't adequate right-of-way for a trail. On initial review, the city engineer concurs with this preliminary assessment, but that he will not make a final determination until further in the design development process. The commission expressed that the need / importance of a trail in this area be underscored. There is particular concern about the potential increase in the volume of traffic on this stretch of roadway.

Minnesota Cross-Country Ski Trails Assistance Program

2009 Capital Improvement Projects – due Feb. 27

Kriegler explained that this might be an opportunity to gain 100% reimbursement for an information kiosk at Sunfish Lake Park. There is some question though, as to whether the city currently has GIA (Grant in Aid) status and is eligible to apply for the grant. Kriegler explained that the DNR's GIA program provides reimbursement for trail maintenance and grooming expenses, and CIP improvements. Indications are that Sunfish Lake Park was a GIA trail for a number of years, although they haven't been an active participant in recent years. Kriegler requested that the commission consider application for the CIP grant for construction of an information kiosk although there is question about the city's eligibility.

The commission requested that staff pursue possible participation in the GIA program. Pursuit of the CIP grant was desirable provided that the kiosk would be owned by and controlled by the city and that the agreement would not include any attachment or entitlement from any outside source.

Metro Greenways Restoration Grants – due March 31

Restoration activities that establish or support native plant or animal communities.
50-50 match – (\$90,000 being requested from legislature)

Metro Greenways Conservation Assistance Grants – due April 24
75-25 match.

Motion: Support of application to the Minnesota DNR GIA capital improvement grant for the construction of an information kiosk at Sunfish Lake Park providing that the City of Lake Elmo would be owned by and controlled by the city and that the agreement would not include any attachment or entitlement from any outside source.

. (M/S, Larson / Adanene, 7-0)

Review of Park Commission Application Form

The Park Commission reviewed member recruitment strategies and the current application form at the January meeting. Upon review of the current application, the commission expressed that revisions were needed to provide a better opportunity to express their interest level in parks and trails and their motivation for serving. Rolf Larson agreed to work on revising the application. The commission expressed their approval of the revised application and appreciation for Rolf's efforts. It was also requested that the commission be provided with a membership roster including term expirations.

Motion: Approval of revised Parks Commission application. (M/S, Blackford / Booher, 7-0)

Consideration of Proposed 2009 Work Plan

At the January meeting, the Parks Commission reviewed progress and accomplishments on the 2008 work plan, and developed a work plan for 2009. The commission was asked to review and approve the 2009 work plan.

In regards to Natural Resource management – the following re-wording was requested. Development of Pebble Park and Sunfish Lake Parks natural resource management plans.

Picnic shelter construction was confirmed as meaning those planned for Demontreville and Heights Park locations.

In addition, it was expressed that park visits be prioritized by scheduled projects. It was noted that a visit to Sunfish Lake Park is particularly important.

Motion: Approval of 2009 work plan. (M/S Booher / Zinne, 7-0)

Review of park entrance sign design

The Park Commission has addressed the issue of park signage at several meetings. At the January meeting, the Park Commission expressed the interest in starting a sign program with the placement of signs in locations current lacking a sign and possibly replacing the Sunfish Lake Park sign. The commission expressed an interest in a sign design that resembles the DNR / NPS style signs that are currently in place.

Kriegler presented sign designs based on the commissions request for a DNR / NPS style sign. The commission expressed a liking for the designs and selected a continuation of the dark brown / yellow color scheme. It was noted that these colors are considered very identifiable with natural resources and parks. It was suggested that sign sizes be determined at the time of a future park visit, so there is the opportunity to evaluate consider the setting of the sign.

Discussion on Sunfish Lake Park Area 2 concept plan

The recently approved Sunfish Lake Park Conservation Easement to the Minnesota Land Trust states that Area 2 of the park, a 20 acre portion, may have limited development for education, outdoor recreation and nature observation purposes, in accordance with a city approved park concept plan. The city is to provide the Land Trust with a concept plan by late 2009.

The commission requested that “footprints” of Area 2 be made available for the next meeting. They also discussed the need to visit the site as a part of the planning process.

In addition, it was requested that copies of the narrative describing the desired use of Area 2 as drafted by David Steele (dated 8-08) and supported by the commission - - be available for review at the next meeting.

Discussion on Heights Park concept plan development

The Parks Commission conducted a Heights Park Neighborhood meeting in May of 2008. The meeting was attended by 12 neighbors and 4 commission members. The 2009 CIP includes \$25,000 for improvements in the park.

The commission expressed the interest in meeting on site as a part of the planning process. Considerable discussion took place as to whether to invite any neighborhood residents, a couple of neighborhood representatives, or all interested neighbors to also participate in the site visit. Commission members ultimately decided that it would be best to inform / invite all interested neighbors to attend the site visit.

Information Items:

The meeting was adjourned 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kriegler
Project Assistant