

FINAL
Lake Elmo Park Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
December 15, 2008

Chairman Steele called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Steele, Bruchu, Ames, Blackford, Booher, Adanene, Wagner, Zeno, Larson

STAFF PRESENT: Project Assistant Kriegler,

Agenda

Agenda was approved, (M/S Ames / Zeno)

Minutes

September minutes approved as amended. (M/S Blackford / Booher, Steele abstained)

Last paragraph under Sunfish Lake Park Land Trust Easement – add “Rolf agreed to craft the language”.

August minutes approved as amended. (M/S Ames / Adanene, Zeno abstained)

Fourth paragraph under Sunfish Lake Park Land Trust Easment – replace Dunn / Ames / Blackford with “The Commission.

Update on the Sunfish Lake Park Conservation Easement

Carol Kriegler reported that Sarah Strommen of the Minnesota Land Trust and the city and Land Trust attorneys have been working to finalize the Sunfish Lake Park Conservation Easement. Sarah has indicated that there have been some late developing issues related to the title work. Most of these issues are minor, though Sarah wanted to alert the commission / city to one issue that could be of some concern.

The Land Trust has determined that there is an additional 40 acre MPCA easement related to the landfill that they were previously unaware of. Initially the Land Trust was concerned about this MPCA easement being in conflict with the conservation easement and considered the possibility of excluding this parcel from the conservation easement. After further review of the terms of the MPCA easement on this northwest parcel though, they have since determined that the MPCA’s rights are quite limited (monitoring wells and a water retention berm) and that this use is probably not in conflict with the conservation easement. Therefore, they plan to include this parcel but will make some minor changes to the easement document to acknowledge the special circumstances. Part of this change would require restoration if any activity results in a conflict with the conservation values.

Carol Kriegler reminded the commission that when the city council approved the conservation easement, the motion included some latitude for the attorneys to make minor and incidental corrections and changes to the easement document as long as the changes were consistent with the intent and spirit of the easement. Kriegler suggested that it would be best to defer to the city’s attorney whether acknowledgement of the 40

acre MPCA easement would be a change significant enough to warrant bringing the easement document back for city council review and approval.

Discussion on the development of a park concept plan for Area 2 of Sunfish Lake Park

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. This city is to provide the Land Trust with a concept plan by late 2009.

The Commission was asked to discuss how they would like to proceed with the development of a concept plan. Carol Kriegler suggested that it might be helpful to review concept plans used for similar type parks / nature preserves for ideas and insights into potential planning processes, design principles, and needs assessments. She also encouraged that there be opportunities for members of the community, Sunfish Lake Park users in particular, to be involved in the process as park users often have valuable insights and a unique perspective.

The Commission expressed that they would like to proceed with developing the plan independently while allowing input through an “open house” where members of the community would be invited to review a concept plan and provide comment. Members expressed that after working for a couple of years on the conservation easement, they already have a well defined vision for Area 2. They also expressed that they felt that development of a plan was an appropriate task for the commission to take on in independent manner.

The following timeline was established for developing the concept plan.

January – March	Work on concept plan.
End of March	Preliminary concept plan developed
Early April	Conduct “open house” to gain public comment to plan
April commission meeting	Modify plan based on public comment
May commission meeting	Approve concept plan
June council meeting	Present concept plan to city council

Discussion on the Development of a Comprehensive Sign Program

The 2008 Capital Improvement Plan included \$15,000 for signage. Expenditures related to a Sunfish Lake Park trail map panel system was completed in 2008. The 2009 Capital Improvement Plan includes \$13,000 for signage. Reid Park and Pebble Park had been identified previously by the parks commission as priorities. The City’s Community Improvement Committee has identified park planting / landscape beds a potential project for the committee.

The Parks Commission was asked to provide feedback and direction related to various sign design options. Specifically the commission was asked to confirm park priorities and provide direction regarding the following:

- A. Sign panel size and shape
- B. Sign panel fabrication / material type
- C. Potential logo use: current city logo, new city logo, new park logo, no logo

Carol Kriegler made a power point presentation that included photos of entrance signs at Pebble Park, Reid Park, and Sunfish Lake Park, as well as a number of miscellaneous rules and directional signs. The commission indicated that they were generally satisfied with the signs in place. Concern was expressed for the city's parks taking on the look of Woodbury or Oakdale. Members also expressed that the existing signs were charming, representative of the rural character of Lake Elmo, and reflective of the city's past - - - though possibly in need of weed-whacking, trimming, and landscaping.

The commission passed the following motion unanimously: It is requested that staff take a photo of every entrance sign to be made available at the January meeting so that the photos can be reviewed and used to identify which signs are in need of repair, replacement, landscaping, weed-whacking or trimming. (M/S Ames / Adanene, 9-0)

Report on Park Woodland Restoration Projects

Project Assistant Kriegler reported that the Washington County Sentence to Serve program has logged nearly 800 hours removing buckthorn from Pebble Park this fall. Kathy Widen has secured grant dollars to cover chemical treatment and seedling plant costs for the restoration project. A spring community planting project is proposed for a Saturday in May. Kathy and Carol Kriegler are working on a woodland restoration interpretive panel related to the project. It was also reported that Kathy is proposing some test projects for managing buckthorn at Sunfish Lake Park. The techniques to be tested include bark treatments that would not require cutting or material removal. The hope is that the test projects will result in practical and effective buckthorn management at Sunfish Lake Park.

Update on City Trail System / Trail Segment Inventory

At the June Park commission meeting staff presented a system for inventorying trail segments identified in the city's *Comprehensive Trail Guide Plan*. This inventory is intended to serve as a resource for prioritizing and planning future trail improvements. The inventory includes classifications related to trail type, associated level of connectivity, level of use and degree of public safety enhancement.

Carol Kriegler reported that 4 Excel spreadsheets have been created for the city trail system inventory. The 4 spreadsheets include the following 4 trail types: Existing off-road, Proposed off-road, Existing on-road, Proposed on-road. Information included in the inventory includes: Location; identifying number (from the map); Trail type; Ownership / R.O.W. issues; Short-term purpose; Short-term user group; Short-term use

level; Condition, safety features, needed improvements; Estimated Costs; Issues, and Potential Funding. The spreadsheets will be available for review at the January meeting.

Steele expressed an interest in having the inventory include a numerical rank of all trail segments. Kriegler responded that much of the inventory is subjective, quite complex and not necessarily quantifiable. She expressed that while it might not be possible to have an overall ranking system, the public safety portion of the inventory could possibly include a numerical rating system.

Kriegler questioned whether commissioners knew whether the *Comprehensive Trail Guide Plan* had been submitted to neighboring cities, Washington County, MnDot for their review and comment. Members expressed that they did not think so, and asked staff to follow up with this.

Heights Park Neighborhood meeting follow-up and improvement plan.

The Park Commission conducted a Heights Park neighborhood meeting back in May. The 2009 CIP includes \$25,000 for improvements to this park.

The commission was asked to develop a timeline and process for planning improvements to the park. The commission responded by setting the goal of developing a park concept plan for the park at its January – March meetings. It was requested that staff make the neighborhood meeting comments minutes (May meeting) available for the January meeting as well as an aerial photo of the park.

Update on Picnic Shelter Projects

Design Forum was authorized to proceed with the design development phase for the picnic shelter projects at the November 18 council meeting. This will allow the city to obtain competitive proposals for the shelters.

Carol Krieger expressed that Design Forum is currently preparing the documents and have been instructed to provide for several material options so that there will be some flexibility in project costs.

Information Items:

Adjourned 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kriegler
Project Assistant