

**Lake Elmo Park Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
April 16, 2007**

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Adanene, Ames, Booher, Bouthilet (7:04), Blackford, Bruchu (7:04), Dunn (7:20), Larson, Steele, and Wagner (7:05). STAFF PRESENT: Senior Planner Ben Gozola. CONSULTANTS PRESENT: Rich Gray and Berry Farrington from TKDA.

Approval of Agenda.

Chairman Steele requested to add item 7 as “Old business” to include ball field times and Heights Park Planning. Commissioner Ames requested to also add discussion of trail maintenance in Sunfish Lake Park.

Approval of Minutes

February 21, 2007

The commission requested the following changes:

- a. The name of the Parks Commission should be consistent throughout the minutes;
- b. On page 1, the word “vice” should be removed from the title for Chairman Steele;
- c. The word “perspective” should be changed to “prospective” throughout the minutes;
- d. On page 5, the fourth paragraph should be edited to read “Chairman Steele asked whether number 3...”

M/S/P, Ames/Bouthilet to approve the minutes as amended. Vote: 8 – 0 – 1.

March 14, 2007

The commission requested the following changes:

- a. On page one, spell out Environmental Impact Statement prior to the abbreviation EIS;
- b. On page 4, clarify that the “larger players” referred to by Commissioner Blackford included Washington County Parks.

M/S/P Ames/Bouthilet to approve the minutes as amended. Vote: 9 – 0 – 0.

Draft Parks Plan Presentation

Rich Gray and Berry Farrington from TKDA presented a summary of the Draft Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan. Grey summarized the park system principals which guided the plan, the different park types found throughout the City, and the analysis used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. Farrington discussed short and long term plans for neighborhood parks, community parks, special use parks, and a community sports complex. Farrington concluded by discussing proposed greenway connections between parks and policies and strategies proposed by the plan.

Commissioner Dunn arrived at 7:20 p.m.

Commissioner Dunn indicated the plan currently does not reflect the totality of Lake Jane Hills Park and would like the boundary and size of the park to be verified. The commission directed staff to examine the issue and to find out who owns the land in this general area.

Commissioner Ames provided guidance to Grey on how to present the information in the future for clarity, and questioned the level of services for fields called fourth in the plan. With regards to Sunfish Lake Park, Commissioner Ames was concerned that limit on uses should be specific to future uses and not already existing uses.

Commissioner Bruchu commented on the level of services for fields and spoke in favor of the recommendations in the current draft plan. Commissioner Larson indicated that parking should not be forgotten as an important component to active use parks.

Chairman Steele questioned why neighborhood park search area “D” was not removed. Planner Gozola indicated that search area “D” is consistent with the findings of the analysis done for the entire City, so staff would not recommend its removal. Commissioner Dunn asked if the area south of Sunfish Lake Park could be removed from the neighborhood park search area in favor of a guided open space. Commissioners Ames and Bouthilet agreed that the search area should not be removed as a needed park is not mutually exclusive of a future open space corridor. Commissioner Dunn made a motion to remove neighborhood park search area “D;” there was no second so the motion failed.

Commissioner Blackford provided language from the Nature Conservancy of Minnesota and DNR statement for inclusion in the plan.

The commission voted on recommending the following changes:

1. On pages 3 through 7, substitute “city wide” for “community wide” under service area. Motion by Wagner to accept the change; second by Dunn; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.
2. On pages 3 through 13, change “Preserve” to “Reserve” when referring to Lake Elmo Park Reserve and any other time it is mentioned. Motion by Ames to accept the change; second by Dunn; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.
3. Integration of the quote regarding forest quality in Sunfish Lake Park from the Nature Conservancy of Minnesota. Motion by Dunn to accept the change; second by Blackford; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.
4. On page 2-2, the reference to mountain biking in Demontreville Wildlife Park should reflect the status quo for such activity according to current city policies. Motion by Wagner to accept the change; second by Bouthilet; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.

Commissioner Blackford distributed a handout outlining various changes she would recommend. The commission voted on the following changes:

5. On page 1-1, insert under “purpose” the following language: “Park and recreation planning needs to be integrated with City Planning. Park planning will enhance the quality of life in our Community, will help to protect the City’s natural environment, and will serve to meet the recreation needs of Lake Elmo citizens. Parks do have a significant value as a community resource, and they are an essential element of the community. The recreational facilities in the City of Lake Elmo add to the unique rural character of the community, and help to foster civic pride.” Motion by Dunn to accept the change; second by Blackford; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.
6. Under Park principles, add “our City’s” in subsection “a.” Also use the word “citizens” in subsection “e.” Motion by Dunn to accept the change; second by Blackford; motion approved 7 – 1 – 1 (Wagner opposed and Bouthilet abstained).
7. Under passive uses for Reid Park, add the language “Flora/fauna identification” and “Quiet solitude.” Motion by Dunn to accept the change; second by Blackford; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.
8. On page 3-7, change the reference of “community” to “City” under the heading “service area.” Motion by Blackford to accept the change; second by Dunn; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.
9. On page 5-1 under park planning, reinsert the standards and policies from the current park plan which read:
 - Standards: The Parks Commission shall make recommendations to the City Council on plans and policies governing the location, design, maintenance, and public use of parks.
 - Policies: 1) In order to seek opinions and diverse recreational interest, the City Council shall appoint residents with various backgrounds to the Lake Elmo Parks Commission; and 2) Park planning will include public participation and a forum will be provided for open discussion of issues to insure early and continuing public participation in park planning. Motion by Dunn to accept the change; second by Bouthilet; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.
10. On page 5-2, add the language “To ensure a quality recreational experience for park users, the City may have a Parks and Recreation Department to manage its facilities.” Motion by Bouthilet to accept the change; as there was no second, the motion failed.
11. Add park principle “g” to page 1-1 reading “Dedicated parkland shall not be used for non-recreational or non-conserving purposes.” Motion by Ames to accept the change; second by Dunn; motion approved 9 – 0 – 0.

Commissioner Dunn requested that TKDA provide a summary of meetings be added to the end of the document to show the process the document went through to get to this point.

M/S/P, Wagner/Ames to accept the plan with all noted changes. Vote: 8 – 0 – 1 (Booher abstained).

Draft 2007 Work Plan

Gozola explained that City Code calls for the Park Commission and City Council to have a joint meeting in April, and that one is scheduled for next week. Gozola reviewed the general ideas suggested by staff, and invited the Park Commission to provide others for consideration. The Park Commission requested that staff also add the following.

- Implementation of the trail plan;
- Use and improvements to existing parks;
- Improve the website to make information easier to find and to add additional parks information.

MnDOT Landscaping Partnership Program Informational Item

Gozola explained that Planner Matzek provided this information simply as an informational item to ensure the Park Commission was aware of the pending project.

City Council Updates

Gozola provided a brief summary of the latest actions of the City Council.

Old Business

- a. Trail maintenance in Sunfish Lake Park
- b. Ball field times
- c. Heights Park Planning

Chairman Steele indicated the items could wait until the next meeting.

Adjournment

M/S/P, Wagner/Dunn to adjourn. Vote: 9 – 0 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Gozola
Senior Planner