

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

Chairman Steele called to order the meeting of the Lake Elmo Parks Commission at 7:03 p.m. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Steele, Booher, Blackford, Dunn, Larson, Wagner, Ames, and T. Bouthilet (7:05). STAFF PRESENT: Planner Matzek and Public Works Superintendent M. Bouthilet.

**Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Steele added the following items to the agenda:

- 6a – “Report on the park observations”
- 6b – “Heights Park update”
- 6c – “Update on area west of Sunfish Lake”
- 6d – “Update on Klondike Trail”
- 6e – “Looming Issues”

M/S/P, Dunn/Booher to approve the agenda as amended. Vote: 7:0.

T. Bouthilet arrived at 7:05.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Steele had the following changes to the minutes:

On page two, change “how is” to “how it.” On page three, third paragraph, he would like it to state who is responsible for each park. On page four, eighth paragraph, third sentence he would like his comment stricken.

M/S/P, Ames/Wagner to approve the minutes of June 18, 2007 as amended. Vote: 8:0.

**Draft Park Plan Timetable**

Chairman Steele said he has had this completed, but had technical difficulties in getting the information to staff for distribution.

**Future Use of Lake Elmo Arts Center**

Commissioner Booher stated that the Lake Elmo Arts Center is looking to move to a new building at some point in the future. The company HSI is currently under contract with Washington County. The existing arts facility was updated by Bob Meyer to make it code compliant for handicap accessibility. If the arts center moves to new site, HSI might be interested in moving into the existing building.

*Mark Kuppe, CEO of HSI*

Mr. Kuppe said HSI does not have specific plans for the existing Lake Elmo Arts Center site, although they do have an interest in the building. They are a community mental health service that provides a number of services.

Commissioner Larson asked if this would function as a business or would it be like a half-way house.

Mr. Kuppe said the ideas are very conceptual at this point and dependent on the art center.

Commissioner Ames requested information on the Park Commission's authority regarding this topic.

Planner Matzek said she thought the land was bought with park dollars, but would need to further research the site.

### **Architectural Horse**

*Robert Meyer, Lake Elmo Arts Center*

Robert Meyer passed out information on a proposed architectural horse to be located on the Lake Elmo Arts Center property. The conceptual horse is named Haiku which was designed by an architect. He is hopeful the horse would be up by the end of August.

Chairman Steele asked how close the statue would be to the north side of the building, if it would be anchored down by cement, and what material it would be made of.

Mr. Meyer said the horse would be approximately six to eight feet from the existing building. Cement would be used and the horse would be made of materials appropriate for the outdoors.

Commissioner Ames stated that children would try to climb on the architectural horse.

Mr. Meyer said that he has been involved with public sculptures and is aware that children do climb on outside structures. The height of the horse should preclude most attempts as the back is over five feet high. It could potentially be protected by a fence, though he would prefer not to. Grass would surround the horse.

Chairman Steele asked if there are plans for any lights.

Mr. Meyer stated it was up to the commission. Existing security cameras could be altered to cover the horse as well.

Commissioner Dunn stated she would like the city to consider exploring the option to look favorably on the installation of Haiku the horse for the Lake Elmo Regional Art Center. M/S/P Booher/Ames. Vote: 8:0.

### **Sunfish Lake Park Uses – Draft Report**

Chairman Steele said this report was viewed at the last meeting and he has since tinkered with the document.

Planner Matzek stated she has added a section to provide the City Council with all the necessary information for them to make an educated decision. This section included the idea of a Concept and Management Plan as suggested by the MN Land Trust. A Concept and Management Plan provides flexibility in the easement to allow future uses that are as yet unidentified.

Commissioner Larson asked what principles the MN Land Trust would use to approve future uses if a Concept and Management Plan were utilized.

Commissioner Wagner stated that the Park Commission has spent a lot of time discussing the future of Sunfish Lake Park. If the Council felt they did not want to follow the commission's recommendation, at least it would be documented.

Commissioner Larson said that the commissioners do not have a crystal ball. He is interested in pursuing the Concept and Management Plan.

Commissioner T. Bouthilet stated there are items in the staff report he does not agree with, such as no expansion of trails or trail improvements. Handicap accessibility is being excluded through the wording.

Commissioner Dunn said the entire area is Sunfish Lake Park. On page one under purpose it only talks about the shoreland of Sunfish Lake. There are no numbers provided for the acreage.

Commissioner Blackford said she sees the mention of flora and fauna as protecting the rest of the park.

Chairman Steele asked the commission to review Area One (wooded area) first.

Commissioner Ames said the only trail expansion allowed would be the connection to Tapestry as currently worded. He asked if future adjacent neighborhoods would be allowed to connect to the park by trails.

Chairman Steele suggested the following text be added "The trail system should be limited to what exists except as necessary to provide limited access to adjacent future neighborhoods."

Commissioner T. Bouthilet said he would rather see wording identifying the trails to be constructed to preserve the future ecosystem. He said trails should be regularly groomed and left natural or covered in biodegradable material or maintained with material as deemed appropriate to provide for the accesses. He suggested adding the words "or materials deemed appropriate to preserve the natural usages of the park."

Chairman Steele suggested the following text "Trails should be regularly groomed and left natural or covered in biodegradable material or covered with other materials consistent with the natural environment of the park."

M/S/P, Wagner/Booher to make the following two changes. Vote: 8:0.

“The trail system should be limited to what exists except as necessary to provide limited access to adjacent future neighborhoods.”

“Trails should be regularly groomed and left natural or covered in biodegradable material or covered with other materials consistent with the natural environment of the park.”

Chairman Steele directed the commission to review page seven of the report. He would like to add the words “consideration of” to the text.

Commissioner Larson suggested this area would be appropriate for a self-guided nature trail and would like to see trails added.

Chairman Steele asked the word “trails” be added to the list on page six.

M/S/P, Ames/Dunn to accept page seven. Vote: 8:0.

M/S/P, Park Commission recommends page eight unanimously with the addition of the text “of members present.”

Chairman Steele asked commissioners to look at last half of page 8 regarding Area One. He asked that under “Facilities and Construction” number one, to use the same language that was used under Principles on previous pages. For number two, expand to use the access trail system language suggested earlier.

Commissioner Wagner said number four at the bottom of page eight should include the following text “and any expansions to include new and existing adjacent neighborhoods.”

Commissioner Ames said future councils may want to allow bikes and it should not be shut out completely at this time.

Commissioner Blackford said she got on the Park Commission the first time to start the ordinance banning bikes from Sunfish Lake Park.

Public Works Superintendent M. Bouthilet said existing trails are dead-ends. A future trail on the perimeter of the park may be wanted to create a north/south connection.

Four commissioners were for leaving the word “bikes” in the report; four were for taking it out. An official vote was not taken.

Commissioner Blackford said there is a thick file on mountain biking in the park at city hall. She urged commissioners to view the file. She said the Park Commission at that time discussed mountain bikes for three years and there is an ordinance in place.

Public Works Superintendent M. Bouthilet said there is a clear distinction between mountain biking and using bikes. Sometime far in the future, a bike trail may be wanted.

Chairman Steele said the report identifies that the trail system should be maintained according to current standards. If “bikes” is taken out, there is still an ordinance not allowing bikes in the park. He asked all commissioners to take a look at page eight and nine in the report for the August meeting.

**Report on the park observations**

Commissioner Dunn said Lions Park could use additional chips to fill in around the playground equipment and the water fountain did not work. The merry-go-round still has the pipes coming up from the ground.

Public Works Superintendent M. Bouthilet said the woodchips were planned to be delivered the following day. He was not aware the water was not working and was glad to be made aware.

Commissioner Larson said he talked with an adjacent neighbor to Pebble Park. The neighbor had good, inexpensive ideas to prevent kids from using it as a race track.

Commissioner Booher said Ridge Park does not have a restroom and would like a picnic table or bench by the playground equipment.

**Heights Park update**

Planner Matzek stated that it is difficult to accomplish this item due to reduced staff. A full time Senior Planner is planned to be hired this fall.

**Update on area west of Sunfish Lake**

Planner Matzek stated that a portion of the area adjacent to Jamaca Avenue is held under a MPCA easement. She will look into how a park boundary is changed.

**Update on Klondike Trail**

Planner Matzek had no update.

**Looming Issues**

Chairman Steele said the commission will be reviewing the Park CIP and would like to do a city wide audit of park signage.

Commissioner Ames suggested reviewing trail implementation priorities at a future meeting.

Planner Matzek stated that in a volunteer recognition event will take place in September.

**Adjournment**

M/S/P, Booher/Wagner to adjourn. Vote: 8:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelli Matzek  
Planner