

## MINUTES

(As Amended)

### City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday August 20, 2012

**Members Present:** Chairperson Hartley, Ames, Steele, Zeno, Sullivan, DeLapp, Blackford, Weis

**Members Absent:** Hieptas

**Others Present:** Administrator Zuleger, DPW Bouthilet

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pam Hartley at 7:03 PM.

- A. **M/S/P: DeLapp, Blackford: To approve the agenda as presented.**
- B. **Eagle Scout Presentation:** Chairman Hartley noted that Collin Fisher was not available to give an update on his Eagle Scout project at Demontreville Park. She will ask him if he could speak to the Commission in September.
- C. **Approval of Minutes:** Administrator Zuleger noted that Carole Kriegler was on bereavement leave and therefore no July minutes were available for the meeting. The Commission agreed by consensus to remove the approval of the July minutes from the agenda.
- D.
  1. **Lake Elmo Park Use / Availability:** At the request of Commissioner DeLapp, the Park Commission entered into a discussion on conducting a “statistically significant” park usage survey. Several methods were discussed including Survey Monkey, using University of St. Thomas, and the University of Minnesota or Bill Morris’s group. Commissioner Ames noted that there was be a balance between survey cost and statistical validity and that perhaps a representative sample might be best. Commissioner Blackford noted that it might be appropriate to survey all Lake Elmo households. Chairman Hartley suggested that we construct a survey instrument that looked at parks comprehensively including plantings, equipment, field use, etc. Commissioner Steele suggested a survey be designed in accordance with the Park Commission’s five year planning cycle and that it have enough rigor to be useful in the interim. Commissioner DeLapp would like the survey to include issues such a lighting, safety, and street / parking use. The Commission appointed a park survey task force consisting of Steve DeLapp, Shane Weiss, David Steele and Dean Zuleger to work out the methodology of a survey.
  2. **Reid Park Survey** – The Commission reviewed a small sample of surveys regarding Reid Park that were received as part of the recent city newsletter – The Source. Items such as safety, visibility, and more family friendly equipment were discussed. Administrator Zuleger noted that the Washington County Sheriff’s Department had been giving attention to three parks (Reid, Tablyn and Pebble) at the

request of the City. Commissioner Ames noted that while the sample was small and not statistically significant, the information was useful. Zuleger noted that it was the intention

to use new communication vehicles like Facebook and the website to poll residents on their thoughts about individual parks. Commissioner Zeno noted that there is a nice trail in Reid Park and perhaps we could address some of the safety issues so more residents could take advantage of this amenity.

**3. St. Croix Soccer Club** – The Commission entertained a request from the St. Croix Soccer Club on use of the Lake Elmo Park System for practice. Commissioner Ames explained the nature of the Club noting the program was competitive and acts as a feeder program for the high school. Mike Bouthilet noted that Pebble, Tablyn, Demontreville and Reid Park are the parks that can be reserved and that soccer goals can be moved to sites where they are needed. Commissioner Blackford noted that increasing the use at Pebble Park could help with some of the chronic issues the park had experienced and asked if the staff could provide a history of use in the parks that can be reserved. Staff was asked to provide park reservation logs. Commissioner Zeno / Ames asked if research could be done on what other park system's policy is on use. Commissioner Zeno suggested that perhaps we would charge for use. Commissioner Ames noted that school district charge for field use, but that may discourage appropriate use by residents. Chairman Hartley noted that the Club will address the Commission at its September meeting.

#### **E. Maintenance Issues**

**1. Park Maintainer** - Zuleger reported that he has included the addition of a FTE Park Maintainer in the 2013 Operating Budget as a response to general concerns about park maintenance. The Commission concurred with the decision as it would help promote the use of parks and make sure that park upkeep was not an afterthought.

**M/S/P DeLapp, Steele: To endorse the addition of a full time Park Maintainer to improve the maintenance and operation of the Lake Elmo Park System**

**2. General Maintenance Issues** – Mike Bouthilet reported that it was his desire to add additional curb and gutter to the Demontreville parking lot to improve drainage and to move water to a designed adjacent rain garden. The additional cost would be \$11,000. Many use this park as an access to the wild life area. Commissioner Ames clarified the cost of use an asphalt curb versus concrete noting that he felt concrete was the better option. Bouthilet noted that the cost of this project per linear foot was coming in cheaper because it was part of a large street improvement project. Commissioner Steel asked if the project would allow for bike access and be handicapped accessible. Bouthilet noted that it would be.

**M/S/P Steele, Ames: To expend an additional \$11,000 of parkland dedication funds to complete curb and gutter for the Demontreville Park parking lot.**

**3. 2013 Capital Improvement Project Discussion** – DPW Bouthilet led a discussion of C.I.P. projects for 2013. The Parks Commission has \$935,000 in its parkland dedication account. Items discussed included a more formal parking lot at Stonegate Park, a shelter at Demontreville Park (which was put off in lieu of a shelter at Carriage Station), improvements to the land dedicated for a park in the Sanctuary, and Sunfish Lake Park prairie work.

Commissioner Ames questioned how long \$2,000 per year prairie work expenditure would continue. Chairman Hartley assigned Mike Bouthilet the task of talking with Minnesota Native Scapes for an update on this ongoing cost.

The Commission spent significant time talking about future amenities at the land dedicated for a park in the Sanctuary. Commissioner Ames suggested that Park Commissioners visit the site before the next meeting as many were unfamiliar with the location. Commissioner Steele noted that it would be his opinion that we take 2013 and focus expenditures on maintenance issues until we receive the results of the park survey. There was general consensus of the Commission that this was a good approach and Mike Bouthilet was asked to put together a priority list of maintenance items.

Commissioners Ames, Weis and Zeno noted that it was time to refocus efforts on the City's trail system as it has been neglected for some time. Commissioner Weiss noted that "connectivity" is a problem. Commissioner Steele noted (and Administrator Zuleger concurred) that there are many grants available and that perhaps some park funding could be used for trail planning as part of our match for some of these grants. The Commission appointed a task force of Steve DeLapp, Mike Zeno and Pam Hartley to reinvigorate work on the Lake Elmo Trail System. Zuleger noted that the Planning Commission had just approved a green belt complete with a multi-use trail to buffer Stonegate from future development.

- F. **MPCA Remediation Grant for Sunfish Lake Park West** – This item was tabled at the recommendation of staff as they were acquiring more information.
  - G. **Commission Member's Reports, Comments, & Concerns** – There were no reports. Administrator Zuleger noted that Lake Elmo Days were coming up the weekend after Labor Day. Chairman Hartley / Commissioner Blackford expressed their appreciation for Carole Kriegler's service to the Commission.
  - H. **Next Meeting Date** – Monday September 17<sup>th</sup>, the Commission will meet at the Sanctuary at 6:30 PM for a park visit prior to their regularly scheduled meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM
- Respectfully submitted,

Dean A. Zuleger  
Recording Secretary