

## MINUTES

### City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday September 17, 2012

**Members Present:** Chairperson Hartley, Ames, Steele, Sullivan, DeLapp, Weis, Hieptas  
**Members Absent:** Zeno (Excused), Blackford (Excused)  
**Others Present:** Administrator Zuleger, DPW Bouthilet

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pam Hartley at 7:07 PM.

**A. M/S/P: Ames, Hartley: To amend the agenda to include a discussion on Sunfish Lake maintenance issues and a report from Commission Weis on trail planning.**

**B. Eagle Scout Presentations:**

1. **Colin Fisher, Demontreville Park** – Eagle Scout Candidate Fisher presented his project to install benches on the baseball field at Demontreville Park. The project would consist of the installation of (2) 15' foot player benches. The Mahtomedi baseball League would partner on the project contributing up to \$500 contingent in guaranteed use of 3-4 times per week. Commissioner Ames noted that he was not comfortable funding a project with a use contingency. Commissioner Sullivan and Steel noted that a contingent approval would set a bad precedent. The Commission concurred noting that the project needs to be evaluated on the public benefit. DPW Bouthilet noted that he would prefer 21' benches with backs that would accommodate more players. He noted that for safety purposes he would also like to see 30' of chained link fence in front of each bench. Fisher noted that he could not complete this work per Eagle Scout requirements. Bouthilet noted that the Public Works staff would aid with the fence and the field prep. After a lengthy discussion, it was determined that the project had merit, however, should be funded by the City of Lake Elmo Park Commission C.I.P. to avoid a contingent relationship. Fisher and Bouthilet agreed that the project would be completed in October.

**M/S/P Steele, Ames: To support the Eagle Scout project of the installation of 21' benches with backs and field restoration at Demontreville Park for a cost to be determined by bid (\$1,015.85). The City of Lake Elmo would aid the Eagle Scout in the installation of a 30' fence for a cost to be determined by bid (\$1,196).**

2. **Billy Wortman, Landscape Project** – Eagle Scout Candidate Billy Wortman presented his project to install (5) trees in Lions Park and (5) trees in Tana Ridge Park. In addition, Wortman wishes to engage in an ash tree identification program and Emerald Ash Borer education in the Source newsletter. Bouthilet noted that the Lion Clubs would be paying for the tree purchase and placement in Lions Park. Wortman will solicit funds for the Tana Ridge Park Tree planting. Commissioner Hieptas asked about watering. DPW Bouthilet will work on a water strategy with Wortman. Chairperson Hartley offered her services to Wortman on his EAB education work. Ames noted that the Scoutmaster may have modifications to this project and Wortman should let Bouthilet know what those might be.

**M/S/P Ames, Steele: To support the Eagle Scout project for tree planting additions in Lions Park and Tana Ridge Park, and an ash tree / emerald ash borer education program pending the guidance of the Scoutmaster and under the direction of Mike Bouthilet.**

Sara Hieptas asked that the St. Croix Soccer Club presentation be moved to the October meeting.

**C. Approval of Minutes:**

**M/S/P: Ames, Weis: To approve the 8-20-2012 minutes as amended.**

**D. Lake Elmo Park Use / Availability:** Zuleger noted that the survey subcommittee did not meet but that he had contacted the NPRA and that they directed him to two types of surveys that they liked – one comprehensive using a scientific, university-prepared method and one using a popular survey tool known as Survey Monkey. Commissioner Sullivan noted that Survey Monkey relies heavily on input from folks that want to participate. Commissioner Steele noted that it would be nice to know who cares about our parks. Chairperson Hartley liked the Survey Monkey approach for a quick response to help us in planning. Ames noted that he thought it was only fair to solicit everyone in the City to see what they think. DeLapp noted that in the Missoula MT study, a City recognized for their parks, 70% of those surveyed did not use the parks. Zuleger noted that since the Commission was going to use the survey to make capital improvement suggestions that the Commission may wish to stake a more detailed approach. It was agreed that subgroup meet to determine what questions need to be asked and what methodology would be used. Zuleger was instructed to set up a meeting of the subgroup before the next Commission meeting. The survey will be timed as to not interfere with any other survey the City may engage in or to impact / limit the park survey.

The Commission, based on their review of park logs, entered in a discussion of appropriate use and scheduling of parks. Much of the discussion centered on the common practice of athletic associations (ie lake Elmo Baseball) reserving large blocks of time and then not utilizing the time. Weis noted that perhaps a fee could be developed for blocking multiple time slots. Ames noted that any use policy should be crafted to encourage the use of Lake Elmo Parks. Zuleger shared a copy of the Vernon Hills, IL Park District because it talked specifically about soccer use and differentiated between lighted and unlighted fields. Chairman Hartley noted that she would like to create some discipline in our system and supported creating a list of rules. She also noted that she would like to see field availability times posted on the website. Bouthilet stated that he would like to see a policy developed that mandated a release of blocked time if not needed. Steele expressed his desire not to allow the booking of large blocks of time. Ames asked Mike Bouthilet about our policy about use of lighted fields / rinks. Currently Lake Elmo does not have a policy. As an aside, Zuleger noted that Fury Motors owner Jim Leonard has purchased a Zamboni machine and will let the City of Lake Elmo use it this winter. The Commission requested that Zuleger / Bouthilet draft a park usage policy for the next Commission meeting.

## **E. 2013 Plan of Work / Maintenance Projects**

**1. Priority Maintenance Projects –** Mike Bouthilet noted that he had three projects for the Commission to consider in 2013: Lions Park Drainage, backstop replacements for Pebble, Tablyn and VFW parks, and tot lot equipment at Reid Park. Steele and Ames noted that Lions work may be premature without the Park Commission knowing what the future status of Old Village land use might be. Zuleger noted that DeLapp is on the Old Village Planning Workgroup. Planning maps and concepts maps of the Old Village were handed out. The Commission agreed that DeLapp would provide monthly updates at each Commission meeting. Bouthilet estimated the Lions drainage work could cost between \$15,000- \$40,000 and suggested that work take place at the lower or minimal end. The Commission discussed painting the faded equipment at Pebble Park – Bouthilet will look into it. Prairie maintenance at Sunfish Lake Park was discussed with an emphasis on trail work and grooming for x-country skiing. Bouthilet is still waiting to hear back from the consultant on additional prairie work. Hartley and Steele noted that our park signage could be improved, but Steele noted that he wanted to strike a happy balance because he felt the conversation had gone on too long. Zuleger and Bouthilet will work on a signing approach that strikes a happy medium between way-finding and maintenance. There was a brief discussion on installing a fitness / par course and Reid Park. The Commission determined that the addition of equipment should be something included in the upcoming survey. The tot equipment at Reid Park was pushed back to 2014.

**M/S/P: Steele, Weis: To commit to \$15,000 for drainage work at Lions Park in 2013 and \$15,000 of backstop replace and repair for the next three years.**

**M/S/P: Ames, DeLapp: To expend \$5,000 to conduct a park survey in 2013.**

2. **Trail System Planning:** This item was placed on the October 15<sup>th</sup> agenda to give the matter full attention. Hartley thanked Commissioner Weis for his work.
3. **Forestry Project & Plan of Work:** Bouthilet has begun his fall tree trimming working through the list generated by Kathy Widin. He would like to contract out some that we cannot handle. Hieptas brought up the tree trimming on 50<sup>th</sup> Street, she would like both sides trimmed. A discussion was held on the need for a contract forester. Zuleger noted that the City's insurance did not cover Widin's work on private land.

**M/S.P: Hieptas, DeLapp: For the City to continue to fund a City Forester at the 2012 level.**

Hartley noted that Kriegler was working on controlling our invasive species in our parks by using sentence to serve prisoners. Zuleger will look into this with Washington County. DeLapp mentioned that he felt that it was beneficial to leave some of the dead trees for habitat preservation. Hieptas concurred. Steele noted that maybe we could leave some of our park areas un-mowed for habitat and to reduce costs. Bouthilet raised concerns over weed maintenance.

**F. Unfinished Business:**

1. **MPCA Grant for Sunfish Lake Park:** Zuleger noted that Ryan Stempski is working on a file update and will provide him with background on how to proceed. It was suggested that Judith Blackford may have more information on this matter.

**Chairman Hartley declared the meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Zuleger, Recording Secretary