

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Parks Commission

March 20, 2017

Members Present: Chair Weis, Commissioners Ames, Frick, Nelson, Nuenfeldt, Olinger, Steele, Zeno, Pearce

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Administrator Handt, Public Works Director Weldon, City Planner Becker

The meeting was called to order by Chair Weis at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Weis, seconded by Nelson to approve the agenda. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Weis, seconded by Nelson to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion passed.

Lions Park

Handt reported that Brady Hickcox's, Miller Architects, has submitted 3 possible layouts for Lion's Park. He is looking for feedback from the Commission regarding these layout options.

Hickcox's presented three options for the park. He state all three options show the field moved to the North to align the first base line with the 45th parallel. He said the main difference is maintaining or bulldozing the house. The plans show double the bleacher space that exists.

Zeno suggested moving the volley ball court north and east allowing a second court on the west. It is important to keep the north/south alignment.

Steele asked them to think about the longevity of the park and not just do the cheapest route and to maintain as many mature trees as possible. He also mentioned that if the house is removed, could the area be used as a picnic area rather than parking?

Weis asked if the parking areas are paved and if impervious surfacing in the park would exceed the amount and would underground tanks be needed. If they are required for the parking lots, it could be \$45,000 for a tank. Is it possible to use the house itself as a restroom and warming house and level the garage? Weis reminded them the Library is getting a new parking lot.

Nuenfeldt mentioned that Lake Elmo is a pollinator designated City and would like to see a pollinator garden installed on the park. She would be happy to lead the planning on that.

Steele asked what the minimum number of parking spaces they can have, if there is a path that will connect the parking to the park and if it is ADA compliant. He also asked if the batting cage is a critical piece and if the batting cage could be switched with the warm-up area? Suggested that bathrooms would be critical at the park.

Zeno suggested that picnic tables be installed by the playground and that parking remain near the bleachers.

Ames suggested that if the house is gone, a picnic shelter that could provide covered areas for spectators as well.

Dave Faint, 3617 Laverne Ave N, suggested that there is a 6 foot bike path on the north side of the property that connects to 39th St. He is favor of seeing the house removed. He worked on the house when it was converted to the art center. Some of the structural framing was removed and there are mold issues since water is getting into the basement.

Barry Weeks, 3647 Lake Elmo Ave, the house was purchased in 2004 to tear it down. Can the playground equipment be moved? In order to put it by the picnic pavilion that will go in? He asked if the skating rink will be going on the parking area would it allow the boards to go up. Parking surface, different boards, in beds that could be capped. There are sewer stubs for the park.

Bill Wacker, 3603 Laverne Ave N, suggested that the house has no useful purpose except for a couple hours on Mondays and has had no upkeep since it was purchased. If it is maintained, it would need to be hooked up to sewer.

Kathy Weeks, 3647 Lake Elmo Ave, would like to see the house eliminated, since bringing up to standards would be a lot of money and not fiscally responsible. Likes the idea of staging the park and doing it right. She would like to see a decision made tonight to it get the park started. She also offered to help research and design a plaque for the 45th parallel and would donate money toward it.

Weldon, lighting will need to be looked into, there may need to be new lights installed shining from north to south.

Hickcox's will be returning with design revisions and a phasing plan to the April meeting.

Free Library Question

Becker stated that she asked the resident that is proposing the Free Library in Pebble Park to show where in the park it is proposed to be installed. She will be asked to sign a form that this is a donation.

Nicole Petroff lives 3 houses away from the park and 2 other neighbors close to the park have small children. The plan is to take turns sharing books and maintenance in this proposed library. The reason was also to bring something positive to the park since it is frequently vandalized. She selected the location near the trees in hopes of it not being vandalized. She stated that if it is vandalized or destroyed, the plan would be to rebuild.

Discussion around other possible locations for the library included, near the entrance, near the light at the park. The resident felt that near the entrance would be too muddy and that near the light is a portable restroom and it has been vandalized in the past. Steele said that he thinks it is such a good idea

Ames made a motion to approve the Free Library at the proposed location and that it will be fully maintained by the resident, seconded by Frick. Approved unanimously.

Savona Park

Weldon reported the playground surfacing would change the amenities at the park, if rubber mulch is purchased, it would eliminate some of the amenities preferred by the neighborhood since it is three times the cost of wood. Wood mulch would allow the majority of the wish list. For the cost of the rubber mulch the wood mulch could be replenished two to three times for the same cost as the rubber mulch over a 15 year span. There are also health concerns within the public, nothing conclusive, but the City of Minneapolis is looking at removing rubber mulch from their parks.

Discussion about the right approach to the parks that already have rubber mulch. The conclusion was there are 3 parks within the City that currently have the rubber mulch and that the mulch should remain until it is determined to be carcinogenic.

Frick made a motion to use wood mulch for all playground areas within the City for current and future projects and not rubber mulch, seconded by Steele. The motion was amended to include "until such times as more information is available" by Ames. Wood mulch passed unanimously.

Competitive bids, tree preservation, creating a natural planting area, and park size were all discussed.

Ames made a motion to approve option Webber 3a for Phase 1 Savona Park, not to exceed \$150,000, seconded by Steele. Motion passed unanimously.

Park Development Policy Plan

Becker presented that with recommendation from the Commission the language was changed to Guidelines. Becker highlighted some of the changes made and explained that having a park search area of ½ mile would be fairly easy to get 100 certificates of occupancy. The Village Preserve Park was mentioned and within ½ a mile of the park, there are about 600 lots.

Staff is looking for feedback from the Commission. They can either approve as presented or staff can amend them and bring them back to the next meeting.

Ames asked if item 3C recreation amenities included County Parks and boat launches. Becker suggested that including what is included within the definition.

Frick is concerned about running out of money by providing neighborhood parks and City parks. Frick is concerned the level of requests is increasing.

Steele also has concerns about costs and tracking requests and acreage of proposed developments. He asked where the \$500 per house came from, Becker responded it was based on previous Commission discussion and the 100 Certificates of Occupancy for the first phase of developments and the first phase of park installations.

Steele mentioned his concern with the Guidelines, that they could be used against them. Handt said she talked to the City Attorney and the statement "Neighborhood Park planning is entirely within the discretion of the City and nothing in these

guidelines is intended to abrogate that discretion” was added to relive the City of this responsibility.

Ames mentioned that at some point there will be no more new developments and the money to maintain the parks will come out of the City budget. He also said he is not interested in seconded guessing the City attorney.

Camera Protocol Procedure

Becker presented that at the last meeting the Commission voted to approve the lease agreement for the Nature Center. Staff has drafted a Camera Protocol Procedure for review since the approval of the Nature Center called for one.

Weis feels there should be a maximum number of cameras allowed at park. Then staff has a baseline for a limit, providing staff clear guidance and not putting staff in the middle.

Discussion about if there is a maximum number of days a camera can be located in the park. There should be an end date on the application and staff should be reviewing that the cameras are removed. If there is a violation of camera removal, the City will be remove the cameras at the Nature Centers expense.

Ames does not want any cameras since it is a City Park. Feels that Sunfish Lake Park is a natural retreat away from cameras and it should be preserved.

Frick suggested that that the reason the Nature Center is requesting the use of cameras is to record ecological data. Some discussion about other individuals in the future using the Camera Protocol for use in other parks that may not have the same intent.

Steele would like a report on the camera usage.

Nuenfeldt asked if we could research other cities and their policies related to cameras.

Zeno requested that the cameras would not point at trail and that they would be used for monitoring animal behavior and census. Had concern about sound records and if the cameras would capture a portion of a trail that there should be flags or markers indicating people would be on camera.

Handt suggested adding a complaint procedure. Maybe limit the number of nature activities at any one time in order to capture the concerns of the Commission members.

Ed Nielsen Birthday Resolution

Handt state that Ed Nielsen was instrumental in obtaining the land for Sunfish Lake Park and previously served on the Parks Commission. The resolution would be sent to Nielson to honor him for his contribution.

Discussion about Sunfish Lake Park and the nature center regarding talking about historic people and properties in the area.

Nuenfeldt made a motion to approve the Resolution for Ed Nielsen’s 80th birthday, Steele added and for all of his contributions to the City and seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

April Meeting

Camera Protocol Procedure

Lions Park

Policy Development Plan

Spring Family Day in Sunfish Lake Park

Little Libraries

Staff Reports and Commission Update

1. Spring Family Day in Sunfish Lake Park in May last year it was larger and there was a financial contribution. The date for this year is May 20th. Handt mentioned that the funds would come out of the Parks Operating budget as it did last year, if the Commission decides to contribute. The one item to consider is that May 20th is also the City Cleanup Day.
2. Handt none.
3. Becker the monthly calendar would be assessing the 50th Street trails and costs. Handt asked that they wait for Council direction on that discussion.
4. Weldon shared they hope to complete the surfacing of Easton Park. They need to verify that the drain tile is installed and working and then they can add the surfacing.
5. Weldon, working with an Eagle Scout to build a new railing for the steps at Tablyn Park.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tanya Nuss