

DRAFT

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday April 15th, 2013

Members Present: Chairperson Weis, Ames, Steele, Zeno, Hartley, Blackford, DeLapp
Members Absent: Hietpas
Others Present: City Planner Nick Johnson, SPW Bouthilet

A. Call to Order/Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Weiss called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM

Without Objection Agenda Additions: 1. Wendy Sullivan Resignation (Hartley)
2. Park Land Dedication (DeLapp)

B. Minutes: February 20th, 2013 Approved as presented.

March 18th, 2013 Approved as amended. 7-0 (Blackford- Sunfish Lake history distributed)

C. Visitors/ Presentations

1. Trail Grant Opportunities-Nick Johnson

Nick Johnson- Presentation will include:

- Trail Planning Overview & Background
- Funding Opportunities
- Staff Recommendations

Johnson- Background and expertise has been primarily in land use planning, but I expect to be available as a resource during planning and developing the City trail system. Johnson reviewed two sections of the Comprehensive Plan with trail implications. First was the 2030 Park Plan, which identified the “green belt” and adjacent County trail plans. Second was the 2030 City trail guide which focuses more on developing trail connections. The existing Comprehensive Plan states:

“It is suggested two parallel processes be developed to establish priorities for implementing the trail system. The first should be a general overall priority for trails...[and second] a process should be set to help develop the simpler sections of trail.”

Johnson presented trail opportunities as follows:

- 1. Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**
- 2. DNR Local Trail Connections Program**
- 3. DNR Federal Recreational Trail Program**
- 4. DNR Outdoor Recreation Grants**
- 5. Other Possible Opportunities**
 - a. MnDOT (i.e. CIMS or other corridor improvements)
 - b. MDH (Statewide Health Improvement Program)
 - c. Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program

1. Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

- Program Purpose: Safe Routes Minnesota provides funding to community and school groups to make improvements to the routes your children use to walk and bike to school.
- Eligibility: K-8 schools
- Funding is broken into two categories: 1) education and enforcement, and 2) planning and installation of infrastructure.
- Minnesota has \$3 million available for infrastructure grants and \$800,000 available for non-infrastructure and planning grants for 2013-14. All SRTS grants use federal funds, and no local match is required.

Johnson-the next grant opportunity for a SRTS grant is 2014. *Steele*-What is the range of the grant funding? *Johnson*-there is a minimum, but I'm not sure of the number. The highest I've seen is \$150,000 *Weis*-does funding from one grant limit the eligibility from another grant? *Johnson*-Some grants do have restrictions on funding from other sources, specific funding restrictions be determined in an application process.

2. DNR Local Trail Connections Program

- Program Purpose: To provide grants to local units of government to promote relatively short trail connections between where people live and desirable locations, not to develop significant new trails.
- Funding priorities: Priority for trail project funding will be given to projects that provide significant connectivity.
- Eligibility: Eligible applicants include counties, cities, and townships.
- Level of assistance: Grants are reimbursement based up to 75 percent of the total eligible project costs.
- Anticipated funding for FY 2014 is \$805,000.

Johnson-I believe the Local Trail Connections Program would be the most suited grant funding source for the City. *Ames*-What is the definition of "relatively short"? *Johnson*- I will have to inquire about specific details. It will be important to identify our own project and do comparisons of similar projects awarded. Fitting our project to the appropriate grant is important. *DeLapp*- How much trail does \$850,000 construct? *Weis*- Approximately 3 miles.

3. DNR Federal Recreational Trail Program

- Program Purpose: To encourage the maintenance and development of motorized, non-motorized, and diversified trails by providing funding assistance.
- Eligibility: Motorized and non-motorized trail projects; maintenance/restoration of existing recreational trails; development/ rehabilitation of recreational trail linkages....
- Level of assistance: Grants are reimbursement up to 75% of total eligible project cost.

DeLapp- How much money is available in this program? *Hartley*- An average of \$335,000/year over the last 3 years.

4. DNR Outdoor Recreation Grants

- Program Purpose: To increase and enhance outdoor recreation facilities in local and community parks throughout the state.
- Eligibility: Cities, counties, townships and recognized tribal governments.
- How it works/funding: Provides matching grants to local units of government for up to 50% of the cost of acquisition, development and/or redevelopment of local parks and recreation areas.

5. Additional Opportunities

- a. MnDOT (i.e. CIMS or other corridor improvements)
- b. MDH (Statewide Health Improvement Program)
- c. Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program

Johnson- The City is currently working on a CIMS grant for the Lake Elmo Elementary School crossing.

DeLapp- MnDOT needs to be informed the corridor improvements are restricting biking access on TH5.

Steele- It appears grant funds are limited in comparisons to total project costs. *Ames-* Even with limited funding, grant could be the impetus to push a project forward. *Weis-* What options do we have for a grant writer? *Johnson-* Grant writing would have to be a collaborative effort with the planning and engineering staff. A professional grant writer could expedite the process.

Staff recommendation:

1. **Prioritize.** Identify most important trail projects according greatest needs and impacts.
2. **Research.** Conduct additional research about funding opportunities to identify the high-priority projects that match well with funding opportunities.
3. **Strategize.** Determine the budget of the project, finalize project design, assign responsibilities for the application process, and formulate a strategy to secure the funding for City's match.

A consensus of the Commission was to request an opportunity to review or comment on any road construction projects as they relate to trails. A sub-committee to identify and establish new trail priorities.

M/S/P Ames/DeLapp to establish a trail subcommittee of Weis, Hartley, Zeno.

D. Park Survey Subcommittee

The subcommittee consensus was the survey did not meet the expectations in design and content. They decided to "step away" from the contract, develop survey questions internally and then contract the actual survey/analysis. The goal is to provide the full Commission the survey questions at the May meeting.

E. Sunfish Lake Park

1. Landfill Restoration

Bouthilet- A landscape plan will be provided at no cost by Abrahamson Nursery with the purchase of materials. The Commission has develop general criteria for a plan. The consensus of the Commission was to have staff distribute flyers around the adjoin neighborhood for input on a landscape plan.

2. Land Trust Determination

Staff reported the Land Trust ruled agreement stipulated, no new uses, which in effect bans bikes. Changing the name of Sunfish Lake Park to Sunfish Lake Preserve could better capture the spirit of intended uses.

M/S/P Hartley/DeLapp to re-name of Sunfish Lake Park to Sunfish Lake Nature Preserve 7-0

Audience: Greg McGrath expressed his appreciation of the Commissioners service, the survey considerations, and noted some dead trees for the 2012 MnDOT Landscape Partnership Project.

F. Revised Park Use Policy

A revised park use policy was presented to the Commissioners. Discussion about generated a desire to have the reservation system posted publicly for residents viewing and planning. Staff will attempt to incorporate a reservation posting calendar.

M/S/P Hartley/DeLapp To accept the revised Park Use Policy as amended. 7-0 (insure to ensure)

G. Commissioners/Staff Reports

1. Commissioner Hartley acknowledged the resignation of Wendy Sullivan and noted and the open seat on the Commission. The Commission has asked for a current status of their memberships.

2. Commissioner DeLapp noted the high density of the development south of 10th Street has a higher impervious impact. Green space and trails could alleviate some that impact. He does not believe the park land dedication requirements are equitable.

Chairperson Weis adjourned the meeting at 9:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted

Michael Bouthilet, Recording Secretary