

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Parks Commission

August 19, 2019

Members Present: Commissioners- Mayek, Olinger, Schumacher, and Weeks

Absent: Ames, Nightingale, and Zeno

Staff Present: City Planner- Prchal, Public Works Director- Powers

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

Announcements

No announcements

Approval of Agenda

Olinger motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mayek

Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

a) July 15, 2019

Weeks motioned to approve the July minutes. Seconded by Mayek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Susan Dunn, 11018 Upper 33rd Street North. She started by saying that the National Night Out was really nice and organized very well at Lion's Park. But she would like future consideration for more shelter at Lion's Park because there is not a lot of shelter from the sun. Then she expressed her passion for Sunfish Lake Park and how the beauty and history needs to be preserved. She stated the proposed bike trails is against the plans in the 2030 Comp Plan. There was a survey done in 2013 that found the use of Sunfish Lake Park changing and she said that should not be happening. She said this change started in 2013 and has slowly been evolving to today, where no biking signs have been removed from the park and new trails for bikes have been added. The survey listed future priorities that included ski trails, hiking trails, picnic benches, restrooms, and a dog park. No bike trails were included. Then in January of 2019 the Parks Commission were presented with two proposed bike trails with no discussion until May. Mrs. Dunn is asking the Commission to review their past decisions and reconsider not allowing these bike trails in Sunfish Lake Park because they are going against the 2030 Comp Plan.

Ann Bucheck, 2301 Legion Avenue North. She read parts of the 2030 Comp Plan to the Commission relating to Sunfish Lake Park. Reading that the Comp Plan states that bikes are prohibited from Sunfish Lake Park. Then she noticed in May 2019 the no biking signs had been taken down. She is asking that the Commission to have the signs put back up

in the park. She is unsure of who took the signs down and why, but she would like them put back up by the proper authority.

Buck Thorn Removal Grant for Sunfish Lake Park

Powers explained the background on this proposed grant. In May, George Johnson was working with Stantec to write a grant, but they withdrew their offer because the City could not guarantee them the service. Now, Mr. Johnson is looking at submitting a proposal for another grant.

George Johnson, 3070 Lake Elmo Avenue. He is very passionate about removing buckthorn and that is why he wrote the grant himself. He said that State gave him a high approval chance for this grant, because there are not many similar ones written. He stated they can get up to \$450,000 for the buckthorn removal through this grant because they are a first time applicant. But he kept his request at \$150,000 and said that there is not really any work that the City would have to do for this project. He said once they get the grant the bidder will do the removal, moving, and controlled burns of the buckthorn. They will bid it out to whoever wants to do this. This is going to be a three year process with many stages. His first request is that the Commission asks for an additional \$10,000 in their budget for next year and another \$10,000 the following year. He explained how it will work, they will get \$140,000 from the State and the City will commit \$10,000, and the Friends of Sunfish Lake Park with commit volunteer hours equal to 250 hours which equals another \$5,000. He also invited the Commission to participate in buckthorn day which will be on October 26, 2019. They spend the day cutting down buckthorn.

Schumacher asked Mr. Johnson if he has a comprehensive plan in terms of the controlled burns. Mr. Johnson said yes he does he has done a lot of research on how to burn the seeds to prevent the buckthorn from coming back. Schumacher was also concerned with the removal of large deadfall trees. Mr. Johnson said that instead of leaving them to decompose they want to cut them down, so that they can perform controlled burns without wood in the area.

Weeks asked if something were to happen that prevented Mr. Johnson from carrying out this project, is there someone else that would carry out this grant and get this project done. Mr. Johnson said that the friends of Sunfish Lake support this project and they have a large group that is capable of carrying out this project. Weeks asked if Becky Tenpas would be in charge of the grant funds if a contractor were to come into to perform the work. Mr. Johnson said no, the grant goes to the City and they would pay the contractor. Becky would be in charge of the paperwork, scheduling, and recruitment of volunteers. Weeks also asked what Mr. Johnson believes the chances for success are for this program. Asking about long term, in a decade will all the buckthorn be back. Mr. Johnson said you do not totally rid an area of buckthorn, but the idea is to get it back to a natural forest by mitigating the buckthorn and then perform basic upkeep in the future. Schumacher compared buckthorn to a lawn, no matter how much fertilizer you use, there will always be a few dandelions.

Olinger asked if there are other companies like Stantec that specialize in this. Mr. Johnson said they have found four other companies that would be a good fit.

Prchal asked when the grant is due. Mr. Johnson said the timeline for the grant is hopefully approval at this meeting, then approval at City Council, and then the proposal is due on September 26th to the DNR.

Weeks motioned to recommend to the City Council to submit the Grant Application for the Sunfish Lake Park Buckthorn Removal Project. Seconded by Mayek.

Schumacher pointed out that the plan is for 35 acres, but he asked what about the bigger plan. Mr. Johnson believes they could get the whole park done for the total of \$450,000.

Weeks asked Olinger if she sees any issues with this project since her husband and brother volunteered a lot of time in the past to buckthorn removal at Sunfish Lake Park. She does not see any issues and is favor of this grant proposal.

Motioned passed unanimously.

Wildflower-Village Preserve Park Name

Prchal presented on some proposed names for the Commission to look at. He highlighted the policies for selecting a name and then gave some examples of what the City would like to see. In the packet there are some proposed names provided with some names that have historical contributions to the City. These names came from the public who were interested in submitting names. Weeks brought up the name Moscrip who was the original Dairy Farmer in Lake Elmo and he believes that he is an important person to include. Prchal is hoping the Commission can decide on one name, if not picking three and bringing them to council would be good as well. Prchal categorized the names in his report and there were a lot of “animal” names.

Olinger said that if they end up going with a person, she would like a plaque included with some background.

The Commission discussed about if they want to get it down to three or one name. They decided they would go around and each say their top names to narrow the choices.

Olinger- Wild Preserve, Dragonfly, Settlers, and Flower Slope; Mayek-Firefly; Weeks-Firefly, Dragonfly, Prairie Pond, and any historical names; Schumacher- Dragonfly and Rosalie Wahl.

The Commission decided to send three proposed names to the City Council ranked as 1st-3rd choices: Firefly Park, Moscrip Park, and Rosalie Wahl Park.

Weeks motioned to recommend a list of three park names to the City Council, the park names to be recommended are: Firefly Park, Moscrip Park, and Rosalie Wahl Park. Seconded by Olinger.

Motion passed unanimously.

September 16, 2019 Meeting Agenda

No Items at this time.

Communications

Prchal said that Savona needs to be named next. Then the City will look into park signs to get a better deal for ordering more than one.

Prchal said the soccer net that they put at Easton Village was supposed to be at Reid Park, so they moved in to Reid Park. They have another one ready to go to Easton Village, they just need to assemble it and then they will put it out there.

Powers said the Pebble Park lighting improvements are scheduled for the middle of September.

Weeks said he has had a resident asking about security cameras at Pebble Park. He asked Powers if that is possible and how expensive that would be. Power said they are looking into cheap trail cameras. Powers also said the mower they are using for Sunfish Trail broke down, so if some of the trails are not mowed that is why. They are going to take a lawn mower out to do their best to get some of the trails cut.

Olinger said more people are contacting her about the pickle ball courts. Someone would like a divider between the courts so they are not crossing into the other court. Another resident wanted to know if there was a possibility of pick ball courts at Pebble Park.

Powers said it could be done by putting in a new net at a different height and painting new lines, and if that wanted to be pursued it could be done. Weeks said he has been asked the same thing by residents for Inwood Park, which will be discussed next year.

Weeks complimented Prchal on his packets recently because they have been very thorough and comprehensive. He also complimented Powers and Public Works on the success for National Night Out.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Alex Saxe, Deputy Clerk**