

# MINUTES

## City of Lake Elmo Parks Commission February 22, 2017

**Members Present:** Chair Weis, Commissioners Frick, Nelson, Olinger, Pearce, Steele

**Members Absent:** Commissioners Ames, Nuenfeldt, Zeno

**Staff Present:** Administrator Handt, Public Works Director Weldon, Planning Director Wensman

**The meeting was called to order by Chair Weis at 6:33 PM.**

### Approval of Agenda

Motion by Weis, seconded by Nelson to approve the agenda with the addition of a Public Comment portion and an Advisory Panel and Selecting Members. Motion passed.

### Approval of Minutes

Motion by Frick, seconded by Nelson to approve the minutes. Motion passed.

### Public Comment

Hank Gray, secretary of Stillwater Area Scholastic Cycling Advocates, a nonprofit organization that supports the Mountain biking team. Requested to use Reid Park for Mountain biking. He stated that they had used it last year, but wanted to ask for continued use of the park. He stated that 70 kids were on the Mountain biking team last year and used three parks in the area. He added that they are currently building a trail at Valley View Park in Oak Park Heights for mountain biking.

Discussion of use of trails for biking and mountain biking at and near Reid Park and the impact of Mountain biking in general at the park. Chair Weis requested that staff report back to the Commission regarding if Mountain biking is allowed at Reid Park.

### Savona Park

Weldon reported that since the November meeting when the Savona Park options were originally presented, staff and Commissioner Pearce were able to discuss park options further and gain feedback from the residents of Savona. The proposed plan for the park is under \$150,000 and the timeline is to be completed by fall of 2017.

Weldon said that the zip line option has been moved to phase 2, saving roughly \$25,000. Staff is also recommending an asphalt basketball court to keep costs within budget. The sport court tiles come in over budget, but could be an option to add the sport court after the asphalt wears or part of phase 2.

Weldon also stated that there was no site grading done by the developer. Now the City will have to incur the cost of grading during the construction of the park and installation of the equipment. Weldon added that he met with an excavation company to discuss cost of grading, seeding, and tree removal.

The plan is to keep trees on the lower area of the park, allowing drainage into the treed area and to maintain a buffer to the homes to the east side of the park. The tree removal would occur in the Northwest portion of the park. This also allows the Northwestern part of the park to be more open and usable year round.

Discussion occurred around how the survey of neighbors was done, if the proposal would meet the neighborhood's needs, how many homes will be occupied when the park is completed, noise, parking, picnic tables, and impact on homes near the park. Additional discussion about the grading concerns, asking the developer for assistance in paying for the grading, wood or metal structures for playground equipment, including or eliminating the basketball court, wood or rubber mulch for under the playground equipment.

Commissioner Steele made a motion to eliminate the basketball court from the park, the motion did not receive a second and was removed. Chair Weis made a motion to eliminate the half-court basketball court and have rubber mulch for the playground area, to not exceed \$150,000. The motion was seconded by Steele. Motion failed, with a tie vote. Pearce, Frick, and Nelson voting in opposition. Commission Pearce made a motion to include the basketball court, the larger playground, and rubber mulch, not to exceed \$160,000. Frick seconded the motion. The motion failed. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve the plan as presented by staff (Webber 3a), motion was seconded by Frick. Motion failed, with a tie vote. Steele, Olinger, and Weis voting in opposition. The commission decided to wait for a final vote on the park design until they had more information on pricing for grading and the cost of mulch, and the estimate of the cost of maintaining the park for 20 years.

### **Sally Manzara Nature Center Updated Agreement**

Handt updated the Commission on the Nature Center Agreement. She explained that since the January meeting the language in the agreement has changed from the escrow amount being increased from \$200,000 to the cost equal to the bid on the project and language about the cameras has been removed. Concerns have also arisen about the language of the mission statement and concerns about the City taking over a building it never intended to construct. Mr. Manzara plans to address some of these concerns.

Constance Kirk discussed community interest in the Nature Center. Lake Elmo Elementary, Boutwell's Landing, local daycares in Washington County, Girl Scouts all are interested in using the center and interested in partnering with programming at the center. Stillwater High school wants the Nature Center to work with the Career Development Counselor.

Darlene a preschool teacher that focuses on Environmental Education.

Ian Dorney a University of MN student. He discussed types of internships that would be available at the Nature Center. Ways for citizens to be involved would be data collection and management. Educational options through informational programming and leadership opportunities for volunteers.

Manzara explained that trail walks would be part of the education and would likely be around 10 people at a time. A large portion of the education would be inside the building, including photos and discussion for those not able to walk the trails, such as senior citizens.

Discussion revolved around the number of cameras. Steele asked why is there concern from the Friends about asking for permission to place a camera. Manzara answered that he has been to the Parks Commission five times and he cannot imagine having to go through that length of review for each one day event. Steele proposed that a Protocol would be established by the Parks Commission and administered by staff.

Motion by Steele to recommend approval of the Nature Center document with the insertion of the MN Land Trust language and the new language from the Friends and a modification to include language regarding any cameras placed in the park for programming purposes by the Friends would be consistent with the Camera Protocol Procedure developed/established by the Parks Commission and seconded by Pearce. Motion passed.

### **Royal Golf Preliminary Plat**

Wensman reported that Royal Golf has made Preliminary Plat application. He mentioned the previous recommendation was for a trail connecting 20<sup>th</sup> St to 10<sup>th</sup> St and that a park would be desired and that one maintained by the HOA would be sufficient.

The developers are proposing no public park, but are proposing a private green space park within the development maintained by the HOA. They are also proposing trails through the entire development, the trail does become a sidewalk in front of homes and along the streets.

Wensman stated that the City is going to hire an assessor to determine the value of the land to determine the park land dedication. The amount that will be deducted will be the cost of the improvements for trails provided.

Wensman posed the questions: Are the trail out lots sufficient? Is the Commission still ok with a HOA park? Are the proposed trails a sufficient connection from 20<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>? What is best connectivity from trails, are sidewalks sufficient? What size sidewalk would be better, a 6 ft. or 8 ft. sidewalk?

Commissioner Steele expressed his concern with the developer proposing sidewalks since it is illegal to bike on them. He posed the question of instead of trails and sidewalks, what about widening the road and allowing for a bike lane. Weis stated that 8 ft. wide sidewalks in front yards is not a good idea and would prefer to see a bike line on the road for that distance. Commissioners also want to see a trail connection out to Lake Elmo Avenue. Wensman stated that the developer will

need to address the concerns. Commissioner Ames submitted an email to state he would like to provide access out to Manning and Oak-Land Junior High. Wensman stated that we can only ask the developer to address the trails within the property that they own and we can make additional connections as other properties develop. He stated that the county plan will be difficult to implement, but this is an attempt to accomplish the goal within a development that is looking to develop.

Developer talked about the steep slopes and wetlands that prevent the trails from being constructed further along 20<sup>th</sup>. The trail does provide the desired connection from 20<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> that was previously requested. The plan provides a trail that works with the topography. He stated that 1/3 of the units in the development are age targeted, providing single level living, starting around \$500,000. The remaining properties would be families. Additionally the developer mentioned that the existing ballfields on site would remain available for use until they start developing that portion of the site. Once those will be removed the owner has made a commitment to make a donation to the City to construct new ballfields to replace the ones that will become houses. The developer also mentioned that there are picnic tables, playground equipment, garbage cans, and shelters available and has offered them to the City if they are interested.

### **Park Development Policy Plan**

Staff presented the Park Policy Plan draft. Staff would like the Commission to provide feedback on the document and understands this will take several meetings to finalize.

Discussion about having more time for the Commission to review the document regarding the math surrounding the funds to establish the parks and some of the more specific details. The Commission suggested that a Guide Book naming may be better than a Policy. Concerns about developers being able to use the Plan against the City.

Wensman stated this document is to establish a Policy not an Ordinance, it would provide consistency without requiring it, the funds would still need to be available in order to establish a park, additionally the Policy may dictate a location that does not make sense, so there would be reasons to stray from the established policy.

No action needed on this item.

### **Advisory Panel**

Handt stated that the City will be approving an agreement with SHC for the 2040 Comprehensive Plan update. Part of that is the use of an Advisory Panel.

The Advisory Panel would be 5-9 individuals made up of Planning, Parks, EDA, and Environmental, and Public Safety Committees and a few at-large residents and are looking for students to participate in this. They would start in April and finish in early November.

Staff is looking for a representative from the Parks Commission for the Panel. The representative would that would also serve as liaison to go between the

Advisory Panel and the Parks Commission to provide updates and attend a few community events such as Nature Day at Sunfish Lake Park. Commissioner Frick volunteered.

**March Meeting**

Lions Park  
Savona Park  
Protocol Procedures for Cameras at Sunfish Lake Park  
Park Development Guidelines

**Staff Reports and Commission Update**

1. Handt shared that there was a short report in the packet on a citizen request to put a Free Library at Pebble Park. Staff is going to establish donation forms similar to other and ask that the City not be required to do any maintenance or replacement.
2. Handt shared that she had meetings with the County regarding their plan for Parks. That they will be completing their trail plan in Cottage Grove then will be wanting to meet with the Parks Commission in May to discuss the County Trail Master Plan. The County has hired a new staff member that will be attending the meeting.
3. Weldon did not have any updates.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Tanya Nuss**