

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Park Commission Monday, December 16, 2013

Members Present: Chairperson Weis, Hartley, Silvernale, Ames, Frick, Nelson, Zeno, Steele

Members Absent: Hietpas

Others Present: Administrator Zuleger, SPW Bouthilet, Council Member Reeves, Taxpayer Relations & Communications Coordinator MacLeod, Planning Commissioner Rolf Larson

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Weis at 6:35 PM.

Approval of Agenda

M/S/P: Hartley/Ames: Approved 7-0

Approval of November 18, 2013 Minutes

Steele questioned minutes regarding forming a subcommittee. Zuleger responded that the commission planned on doing a workshop in January dedicated to prioritization of tasks as a group.

Regarding Sunfish Lake ski grooming, Zeno clarified that the group made a recommendation to groom at a minimum of every two weeks; he didn't make the recommendation himself.

Regarding Frick added that she said flatter trails would attract entry level skiers.

Old Business

a. MPCA Tree Planting Contract (Hietpas)

Zuleger spoke in Hietpas's absence. Zuleger pointed out that the scope of services is optional, and the associated costs per service are listed on the contract. He added that Hietpas has suggested that the commission sign the agreement and get it back to the district. The cost/design is estimated to be \$6,102.

Ames asked for clarification that no City funding would be used on this project and also asked to confirm that they are approving planning but not materials or installation.

Steele asked for an estimate of cost for plants. Zuleger responded that the figures were discussed at a previous meeting and are well within the budget. Zuleger believes the amount from the MPCA is approximately \$23,000.

Zuleger clarifies that the CWF grant funds include WCD design and MCC installation/oversight – the remaining funds provided by the MPCA would go toward plant material.

M/S/P: Hartley/Zeno: Approve technical service agreement between Washington Conservation District and City of Lake Elmo. Approved 7-0

b. Trail Feasibility Study Update (Weis)

Weis shared that the process with Washington County is more intensive than expected, and that they should receive an update from Jack and Nick on Thursday, after a meeting with Washington County.

Zuleger clarified that because this trail must be on the County master plan in order to qualify for Legacy Funds. Therefore before presenting the plan to the Met Council, it must first be presented to Washington County.

Weis noted that the trail subcommittee would be meeting with Griffin after the meeting with Washington County on Thursday to look at options, and that an update would be provided in January.

New Business

a. Sunfish Lake Park Task Force (Steele)

Steele said that the Council had asked for a master plan for developing Sunfish Lake Park over several years. At their last meeting, the task force set a goal is to provide a report/recommendation to City Council by June. Steele shared an outline identifying major sections on report suggested by task force. Steele asked commissioners to add additional bullet points as they see fit. Steele explained that they would address improvements by area (wooded, treeless, and big hole). He added that they planned on incorporating ideas expressed in survey.

Frick and Ames thanked Steele for his work on the outline/summary.

Weis asked if each section would have a proposed timeline for implementation. Steele responded that it would be as detailed as possible to form a very concrete plan.

Ames noted that parking should be addressed. Steele confirmed.

M/S/P: Hartley/Ames: approve 2013 Park System fall audit. 7-0

b. Lake Elmo Representation on the MPOSC (Hietpas)

Zuleger reported that at the last Met Council meeting, former Mayor Johnston is now chair of the Parks and Open Space Commission, and Hietpas was appointed as rep for section/region F. They are the group that does Legacy funds for parks and trails in the metro area. This will be helpful in the trail planning.

Staff Report and Updates

a. Park Public Relations (MacLeod)

MacLeod provided update that individual web pages have been created for each park, and that she is developing an interactive map to add to the site. She added that there will be an article on parks included in the winter issue of "The Source," and that the "park of the week" marketing in "fresh" will begin in January.

Audit Priority Work Session

Due to getting through agenda efficiently, Zuleger suggested amending the agenda to include an audit priority work session. Weis added that the agenda should also be amended to include a date change for the January meeting.

Agenda amended to include additional work from the audit and moving January meeting due to MLK holiday. Meeting was moved to Thursday, January 30.

M/S/P: Ames/Steele: Agenda approved as amended. Approved 7-0

Zuleger asked the commission how they would like to tackle the audit and prioritize. Weis asked to clarify objective. Zuleger responded that the objective is to determine how to spend the \$220 allocated to park improvements. Steele expressed concern that it would be hard to prioritize without knowing cost of improvements. Zuleger reminded the commission that they have excess funds available (up to \$900k) if needed and an additional \$150k-\$200k would likely be added this year from new development.

The commission agreed to go through the audit and prioritize line by line, recognizing two parks most in need of improvements to focus on.

Zuleger informed the commission that Gonyea and Mattamy development would likely bring some improvements to Reid Park, next spring. Frick asked how many acres will be added to Reid. Zuleger said it would likely be 8-10 acres.

Steele asked why they were only looking at six parks. Zuleger responded that they are the only ones that were audited. Steele confirmed the parks that weren't audited: Stonegate, Kleis, Parkview (Park Ridge), Fields II, Tana. There is also an understanding that there will be a joint park at OakLand Jr. High. Steele confirms that they should be free to add in additional parks that they think might need some work.

Inviting Entrance:

Priority was ranked: 1. Pebble, 2. Reid, 3. Tablyn. Steele suggested doing signage system-wide; determined a high priority by commissioners. Zuleger said they would take a look at Carol Kriegler's work with signs.

Way-finding signs.

Steele suggested that entrance signs and way-finding signs go together. Ames suggested that way-finding signs are more important in some parks than others (where you can see everything from the entrance of the park). Nelson suggested auctioning old signs.

Reeves suggested focusing on big bucket items rather than on details in order to remain timely.

Park Lighting.

Commission agreed that lighting is a high priority Ames suggested that they differentiate what type of lights they need and where they are needed.

Steele moved to put Pebble as first priority, Reid and Tablyn second priority.

M/S/P: Hartley/Ames: approve lighting priorities. 7-0

Park Safety.

Nelson asked what electrical costs would be in parks that don't already have it. Zuleger said it would be \$1,500 at best.

Sunfish, Pebble, Tablyn, Reid were ranked in order of illegal activities.

Zuleger said that webcams are relatively inexpensive, also suggested call boxes as an option for parks with power. Weis asked if police reports were primarily crimes being inflicted on people or illegal activity. Zuleger responded that it depends on park. Primarily loitering at Reid, drug activity at Pebble.

Steele moved to prioritize installing cameras or call boxes in Sunfish, Pebble, Tablyn and Reid. Commission agreed.

Steele suggested that disabled accessibility be considered low priority, as they are in good shape. Bouthilet replied that standards are changing and it will need to be assessed at least.

Parking.

Hartley stated that increasing parking at Tablyn is priority. Steele added Carriage Station was in need in parking as well; currently streets are too narrow. Steele suggested digging road out a few feet and adding parking spaces along the side of the road and asked if it is feasible? Bouthilet responded that there is limited room for parallel parking.

Weis asked about the Park off Inwood had parking; mentioned that it is not discussed much but is heavily used.

Pebble, Tablyn determined priority for parking.

Pathways/Trails

Zuleger mentioned connection issues will be addressed at Reid and Tablyn (sidewalks at Reid/30th, and trail connection at Tablyn)

Internal pathways well marked and maintained? Hartley mentioned that the stairs in Tablyn are in need of work; trails need to be marked at Pebble. Ames thinks the staircase in Tablyn needs to be looked at in terms of safety; Pebble improvements determined on the rest of the park plan), therefore leaving Tablyn at 1. Steele agrees steps at Tablyn priority; clearing brush in sliding hill.

Commission discussed reconfiguring ball diamond at Tablyn – backstop close to retaining wall; bumpy field. Zuleger mentioned that Stonegate will be expanded by new development that was just approved (boulder ponds).

Pebble and Tablyn determined priority for pathways and trails.

Maintenance

Steele asked for Bouthilet's recommendations regarding what needs to be replaced; to bring to next meeting.

Pebble, Reid Tablyn determined priority at this time.

Amenities

Steele asked if this section was referring to capital improvements. Zuleger clarified that they already touched on capital improvement with parking. Steele suggested Pebble and Tablyn as priorities in amenities.

Weis asked if the LERT goes through, if the county would be interested in developing a new parking lot that serves as an entrance serving both Tablyn and the Reserve. Zuleger anticipated they will know by spring if they are included in the master plan. Ames suggested creating a contingency plan around parking in spring.

Weis suggested that what is left are 'big dream' items – restrooms, ball field, etc. Weis asked each commissioner to suggest top item for improvement.

Hartley: Volleyball courts and move basketball court at Pebble. Lighting in parking and courts – also adding bathrooms.

Zuleger reminded the commission that from the retreat the commission decided to add one bathroom each year.

Steele: Pebble ranks top; but not sure on highest priority for bathroom.

Weis: As part of LERT master plan, funding may be available for a restroom at Tablyn

Ames: Transform first 100 yards of Pebble as you enter - from street to swing set.

Silvernale: Restroom combined with a picnic shelter (not park specific).

Zeno: Supports work in Pebble Park

Frick: Pebble top priority based on what was seen in audit. In Tablyn hopes that funding can be picked up through trail; hopes improvements in Reid may be funded in part by new development.

Hartley: Can't see into the entrance at Reid; at least wants to take down some weeds to open up visibility

Frick: Thought some cameras and a lit parking lot could help at Reid.

Ames: Adds brush removal to the list

Hartley: Discusses issues with buckthorn off of Ideal.

Nelson: Preserve character of the ball fields in VFW and Lions, but would like to see them upgraded.

Hartley mentioned flooding in Lions/VFW. Zuleger responded that they are in the process of Washington county study and there are three issues that are naturally taking care of themselves. Options are being looked at including retention ponds/drainage considerations.

Weis asked about time frame on the city center park project. Reeves responded that the village work group is looking at village green, plans are still being solidified. Zuleger added that plans are dependent on airport zoning.

Nelson mentioned the perspective of guests coming from out of town and how they view the downtown parks. Zeno suggested that because they are unsure what is going to happen in that area, maybe best to do temporary cosmetic touches but not invest a lot. Zuleger agreed that would be prudent; looking at 3 years to finalize plans due to airport zoning and railroad crossing.

Ames mentioned utilizing new development to support trail plan. Zuleger responded that trails were being implemented with new development.

Weis summed up big bucket priorities: Pebble, Reid, VFW (smaller bucket). Unsure on improvements in Tablyn based on timing of LERT.

Commission reviewed Boulder ponds trail structure plan/map.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Alyssa MacLeod, Recording Secretary