

**FINAL  
Lake Elmo Park Commission  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
April 19, 2010**

Chairman Ames called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Steele, Ames, Zeno, Blackford, Larson, Dobbs

STAFF PRESENT: Project Assistant Kriegler

**Agenda**

Agenda was approved as amended (add item 6. Natural Resource Management Plan Update) (M/S, Dobbs / Larson, 6-0)

**Minutes**

March 15, 2010 minutes approved as amended (M/S,Steel / Blackford, 4-0 with Ames abstaining) Correct: *Blackford* called the meeting to order, strike *Ames* from attendance; Deferred appointment of officers; spelling correction on "Commissioners", correct unanimous votes to correct vote.

**Review of Park Commission term expirations and appointment of officers**

**Appointment of Officers**

Confusion was acknowledged regarding the expiration of Blackford's term. Kriegler reported that City Clerk Sharon Lumby would be determining the date of Blackford's appointment and would determine term expiration. The commission expressed the desire to review term expirations on an annual basis.

The following officer appointments were made:

Chair - John Ames (M/S Larson/Steele, 5-0)

Vice Chair – Rolf Larson, Secretary – Mike Zeno (M/S Steele/Dobbs 5-0)

**Review and discussion on Sunfish Lake Park Area Two Improvement Project Design Development**

Carol Kriegler reported that the next step in the improvement project process is for the City to further refine the plans and specifications related to the prairie restoration project and submit them to the Minnesota Land Trust for their review and approval. She also reported that, Dr. Kathy Widin, and Rusty Schmidt, an ecologist and landscape architect with the Washington County Conservation District are assisting with the design development phase of the project, particularly with respect to recommending seed mixes, plant species types and placement of the soft footpath in the prairie area. Rusty is suggesting the use of 3 types of seed mixes for different areas: Tall Grass Prairie, Low Mow Mix and Brillion. While the tall grass prairie mix will cover the vast majority of the area, the low-mow mix will be utilized in the area designated for the ***Interpretive Center / Picnic / Short Turf – Open Play Area***. A Brillion seed mix is anticipated to be used along the footpaths. Kriegler also reported that the seeding plan will be done in a manner that anticipates and provides for the potential placement of other year-round amenities, such as a non-competitive pleasure skating rink and related facilities, consistent with the natural character and theme of the park - - as was requested by the City Council at their 2-16-10 meeting.

A very long discussion followed in response to the report of the council's stated desire for the project to accommodate a significant area of shorter turf for non-competitive casual play and potential placement of other year-round amenities such as a non-competitive pleasure skating rink and related facilities. Commission members expressed very strongly that they feel that the entire area should be dedicated to tall-grass prairie restoration. The over-riding sentiment expressed was that the city has 17 other parks available to meet more traditional recreational needs such as ice skating and informal play. A second point expressed was concern over the rolling terrain in the area and the associated challenges that those conditions pose for building and maintaining an ice rink. Blackford expressed that the historical use of the area for cross-country skiing should dictate that future use of the area should center on skiing, not skating. Larson added that he thought the MPCA area, referred to as Sunfish Lake Park West, would likely provide a more suitable location for recreational activities such as skating. Blackford noted that at the 2-16-10 council meeting, City Administrator Messelt suggested consideration of Sunfish Lake Park West as a potential site for an ice skating rink.

The following Motion on the matter was made and approved unanimously:

*The Parks Commission recommends that the City of Lake Elmo not install an ice rink of any kind in Sunfish lake Park Area Two because it is unsuitable to that purpose and that the City should explore other locations for such a facility. (M/S Dobbs/Steele)*

Kriegler also reported that efforts would continue for other anticipated improvements:

- Planting of seedlings to create an inviting and visible entry
- Cluster plantings along various points for the purpose of plant interpretation
- Rain garden
- Boulder placement
- Information kiosk
- Entrance sign

In response to gaining community assistance for a future planting event, the suggestion was made to utilize area garden clubs, Tri-Lakes Association, and area scout troops.

#### **Update on City Trail Plan and Inventory planning**

Kriegler reported on progress by staff in developing a trail inventory which is designed to assist in the prioritization of the development of base trails and trail segments, identification of ROW issues in need of resolution, and the identification of land acquisition needs. Specifically, staff is working on an inventory related to city acquisition of private trails and in drafting a recommended policy for the acquisition of private trails. To date, staff has compiled a list of issues to be considered, and an inventory of private trails within the city.

In response, the Commission requested that the policy reflect that all future trail development provide for public use and that all trails be designed with a public purpose and destination goal.

Adjourned 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Kriegler,  
Project Assistant