

FINAL
Lake Elmo Park Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
August 17, 2009

Chairman Ames called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ames, Blackford, Zeno, Adanene, Dobbs, Steele, Dunn

STAFF PRESENT: Project Assistant Kriegler

Agenda

Agenda was approved. (M/S, Blackford/Dobbs, 7-0)

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Minutes

May 18, 2009 minutes approved (M/S Blackford / Dobbs, 6-0, Dunn and Steele abstaining)

Review of Ravine Restoration Project within DeMontreville Wildlife park to repair an eroding ravine and to prevent sediment from washing into Lake DeMontreville.

Valley Branch Watershed District outlined proposed activities within the park ravine to prevent sediment from washing into Lake Demontreville. It was explained that there erosion issues that occur largely due to the intermittent stream at the site. A grading permit has been received and reviewed. The Assistant City Engineer has reviewed the proposed grading and found the project and resulting grades to be acceptable. The following comments were made in response to the presentation.

The commission was very interested in the project and generally expressed support for the project. They asked a number of questions related to the construction / technical aspect of the project. Overall, their biggest concern was that there might be a potential conflict should there be any trail improvements in the area.

Requested that measures be taken to ensure that the road construction project and ravine restoration project will be done in a coordinated fashion to maximize efficiency and minimize problems. The commission also expressed that they do not see any immediate urgency for the project.

Requested that the infrastructure associated with the project not create any sort of nuisance or attractive nuisance. Concerns were expressed about safety (i.e. significant standing water, strong current during heavy rain, etc.).

Requested a clear understanding as to which agency is responsible for maintaining the ravine / infrastructure and that maintenance be carried out in a sufficient manner.

Support for the project passed on a 5-1 vote. The motion was as follows:

The Park Commission endorses moving forward with the ravine restoration project contingent on prior review and consideration of potential implications on the anticipated Demontreville Trail reconstruction project and any potential trail improvements.

(Motion passed 5-1, with Blackford in dissent. M/S,Steele/Dobbs)

Blackford explained the reasoning behind her dissent as wanting to take a more cautionary approach. She expressed that she doesn't see the urgency for correcting a the problem and is concerned that the disruption related to the project might create a bigger problem than it solves.

Demontreville Trail – Discussion on Trail Options as part of the Washington County Reconstruction and Turnback Project

City Engineer Jack Griffin presented a summary of options, costs and impacts associated with adding a trail along Demontreville Trail. The presentation was intended to solicit discussion and input to provide direction to staff for working with the County on their reconstruction project.

The Parks Commission made the following comments:

The commission was very interested and supportive of trail improvements / shoulder widening improvements of some kind in an effort to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety along this stretch of roadway. Several members reported personal experiences and use of the roadway in its current condition, and expressed great concern related to the current safety risk. They recognized the timeliness of addressing this issue with the impending reconstruction project.

The commission also recognized the substantial costs associated with each of the possible improvements, but commented that is not possible to place a financial value on potential loss of life or serious injury.

In considering the prioritization of the identified 4 segments, (50th St. N. to Highlands Trail N., Highlands Trail N. to) the Commission prioritized them from highest to lowest as the segments exist from 50th St. N. to Highway 36. This was in large part due to the presence of the DNR boat launch and Demontreville Wildlife Area and the associated potential vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic associated with each of these destinations.

While the commission expressed their strong desire for an increase in public safety along this stretch of roadway, they also commented on the potential recreational value in an off-road trail constructed to meet “bicycle trail” specifications. The commented on the aesthetic value of the area in general, Demontreville Lake, and Demontreville Wildlife Area. They also commented in the potential role these segments might offer in linking to the Gateway Trail and beyond.

Recognizing that potential vey high cost and challenges associated with meeting “bicycle trail” specifications in this area, the commission acknowledged that shoulder widening might well be the only feasible option. They expressed that they are most concerned with improving public safety along the stretch and are very much in support of any public safety improvement, regardless of whether it would result in an official bicycle trail designation or opportunity to promote public use.

Support for improvements of some kind passed on a 6-0 vote. The motion was as follows:

The Parks Commission has significant concern about the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists who use Demontreville Trail. As Washington County prepares to turn over responsibility for the road to the City of Lake Elmo and as it develops plans to improve

the road prior to doing so, the Parks Commission strongly urges the county and the city to include improvements in the road that will enhance the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists while not compromising the safety and usefulness of the road to motorists. The Parks Commission stands ready to participate fully in any planning process concerning this road in order to explore the feasibility of integrating design elements into the improvement plan as a way of addressing the Commission's concerns.

Carol Kriegler provided a brief report on the City of Oakdale's efforts to gain federal grants for the development of trails in the Oakdale and surrounding area, including a trail down 10th Street to the Park Reserve.

Due to the late hour, the meeting was adjourned with the understanding that a special meeting would be held on Monday, August 24 to address to items: Review of picnic shelter quotations and Sunfish Lake Park West, the area of the Washington County landfill that will be turned back to the city after the remediation project is complete.

Meeting was adjourned: 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kriegler,
Project Assistant