

**Lake Elmo Park Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
January 23, 2008**

Chairman Steele called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ames, Blackford, Booher, Larson, Steele, and Wagner. STAFF PRESENT: Planner Matzek and Project Assistant Kriegler.

Election of Officers

David Steele was nominated and elected Chair. Todd Bruchu was nominated and elected Vice Chair. Judith Blackford and John Ames were nominated for Secretary; Blackford was elected Secretary.

Agenda

Chairman Steele added 4a – “2008 Priorities”

M/S/P, Ames/Blackford, move to approve the agenda as amended. Vote: 6:0

Minutes

Planner Matzek handed out Commissioner Dunn’s email with requested changes to the minutes which were read aloud.

M/S/P, Ames/Booher, move to approve minutes as amended. Vote: 6:0.

Review of Commissions’ Terms of Appointment

Chairman Steele said it is important to review the term standings each year for the commission. He requested an updated term list be brought back in February.

2008 Priorities

Chairman Steele requested a 2008 work plan be created at the February meeting in anticipation of a joint meeting with the City Council. He requested the following items be added to the work plan: Trail Plan Implementation, Comprehensive Park Signage Plan, Sunfish Lake Park into MN Land Trust; Approval of Park Plan; Augment City Website, and Launch Park Planning Process (starting with Heights Park).

Commissioner Larson suggested adding a buckthorn removal program.

Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields

Steve Hobbs, Director of Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields

Mr. Hobbs said the property is 1,400 acres in size and been in operation since 2000. He said the management is seeking contributions to assist in a capital campaign for two improvement phases – a concession stand/interpretive area and lights for the fields.

Colleen Danford, Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields

Ms. Danford provided a handout and said this follow up visit from the September meeting is to again request \$8 per child annually for the next five years. She said there are a total of 700 children in the 55042 zip code registered in 2006.

Tom Winer, VAA

Mr. Winer said that he has no affiliation with the facility, but his work with the VAA has identified that the Lucy Winton Bell athletic facilities serve a municipal function as city parks become less available. He said the facility became 100 percent user fee funded last year and that all municipalities benefit from the facility.

Commissioner Booher identified that the number of school age children is based on the entire city and not in the 834 school district. He asked why Woodbury was not being asked for funding as a portion of their city is located in the 834 district.

Mr. Winer said they have not been approached yet.

Chairman Steele questioned why they were requesting \$8 per school age child in the city when not all of them are in the 834 district.

M/S/P, Bruchu/Booher, Lucy Winton Bell athletic fields add to the quality of our community. Without use of these fields we would not have the programs available to our youth. Therefore we recommend Lake Elmo financially support the donation requested by Belwin. Vote: 4:3. (Voted against: Blackford, Steele, Ames)

- Commissioner Blackford said it is a wonderful facility, but it is bad timing and the commission should think hard about utilizing general funds.
- Commissioner Ames said he is supportive of the facility, but that type of facility has been discussed for a city park for which there is not currently money allocated in the CIP.
- Chairman Steele said he is also supportive of the facility, but at this time it would not be responsible to spend money outside the city and is uneasy at the requested \$8 per student across the entire city instead of only within district 834.

Commissioner Bruchu said that as a resident and parent, he believes this should have a higher priority than some of the things he sees going on in the city.

Commissioner Larson said he supports the concept and the facility, but he is also nervous about the dollar amount.

Park Entrance Signage Update

This item was tabled until the February meeting.

Update on Trail Implementation

Planner Matzek identified on maps the four proposed trail segments the commission identified as the priority trails for 2008. She asked for clarification on the start and end location of the trails segments. She pointed out the trail types and potential challenges.

Sunfish Lake Park Report

Planner Matzek said that Chairman Steele had presented the report to the City Council on January 8th and had received many positive comments as well as some feedback on the report.

Chairman Steele asked staff to return with a timeline for proceeding with a Minnesota Land Trust easement for Sunfish Lake Park.

Update on Park Planning Process

This item was tabled until the February meeting.

Reservation Process for City Fields

Chairman Steele said he had brought this item up in response to a request the spring of 2007 requesting the use of city park ball fields. The item was tabled until the February meeting.

City Website for Parks

Chairman Steele said he would like to redesign the parks content on the city website. He said this item will be discussed in the future.

Informational Items

Planner Matzek provided an update on the informational items.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelli Matzek
City Planner