

EAST BETHEL PARK COMMISSION MEETING

October 9, 2013

The East Bethel Parks Commission met on October 9, 2013 at 7:32 PM at the East Bethel City Hall for their regular monthly meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kenneth Langmade Stacy Voelker Sue Jefferson Tim Hoffman
Denise Lachinski Bonnie Harvey

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT: Nate Ayshford, Public Works Manager
Heidi Moegerle, City Council Member

Adopt **Lachinski motioned to adopt the agenda as submitted. Voelker seconded; all in favor,**
Agenda **motion carries unanimously.**

Approve – **Harvey made a motion to approve the August 14, 2013 minutes as submitted.**
August 14, **Lachinski seconded; all in favor, motion carries unanimously.**
2013 Meeting
Minutes

Parks The first page is operating budget. We are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the year, and we are at
Financial 69%. All the big items are taken care of. We should be in pretty good shape for the rest of
Information the year, unless there are a lot of snowfalls. Hoffman said looks like there was a lot of
overtime. Ayshford said that is because of the spring snowfall. Langmade asked about the
equipment. Ayshford said the parts for the mowers and blades come out of there and also
the John Deere tractor that required a lot of repairs. The line item has stayed the same for
years, but the cost of parts keeps increasing. Everything is on a replacement schedule. We
should be in good shape.

Hoffman motioned to approve the Park Financial information. Voelker seconded; all in
favor, motion carries unanimously.

Sandhill Informational item regarding update on the proposed management activities for MN
Crane Natural School Trust Land within the SCNA
Area Update

Background Information:

City staff will be meeting with local representatives and government officials about the
MN School Trust Lands within the Sandhill Crane Natural Area on the morning of
Wednesday, October 9, 2013. Staff will present updated information regarding the
proposed management activities to the Park Commission at their regularly scheduled
meeting later that day.

Anoka County has made an agreement to lease the land from the State of MN. They are
going to pay the State \$5,000 a year. They will take the school trust designation and swap
it with the land in the State forest. It will still be State land, but lose the school trust
designation. Anoka County will be doing some oak wilt management in there.

There was a meeting today, and Ayshford passed out the plan for the area. It includes
putting in some trails, observation decks, etc. Jefferson asked if it is a permanent thing.

Ayshford said yes, hopefully. Hoffman asked if the City would have to put in \$5,000 also. Ayshford said no. He also said the landfill site may be able to get money for restoration projects. It would provide money for trails, kiosks, and benches all through the property. The County will selectively harvest the oak wilt areas. They have done an inventory of the trees and have an estimate of the cords of wood they will have.

We are also going to work with Met Council to see if we can get a parking lot in their area. Hoffman asked if they would be doing the oak wilt remediation by Mud Lake area. Ayshford said yes. It will take anywhere from 9-24 months to get the school trust designation swap completed. They are looking at putting in a couple of boardwalks, trails, etc. He was pretty impressed by how well it went through with the Representatives. Lachinski said we had a purpose and a plan, and there were so many people on the City's side. Hoffman said what we are looking at about 2 years. Ayshford said yes, maybe less. The oak wilt remediation will start this winter. A lot of people hunt in there, since the State property is open to hunting.

On the north end of Ned's Lake they would like to do a walking/picnic area. A little bit more active in that area. Moegerle asked who was talking about this. Ayshford said the Parks Director for the County, the DNR and the MPCA. Hoffman said it was nice to see the change made.

They figured Anoka County would not make enough on the fire wood sales to make up the \$5,000. But they will get a lot back. Another option we talked about is using the grant money from the MPCA to bring in a contractor to help with the oak wilt control and tree removal.

The DNR talked about giving the property back to Anoka County at some point. Lachinski said would it help with more trails. Ayshford said that would go with the Regional Park designation. Moegerle said the Coon Lake Regional Park doesn't have enough people to come to the park from outside the area. Hoffman said it is a nice park, but it is hard to get to it. To get to it from Forest Lake is hard. If you don't know it is there, you wouldn't find it. Jefferson asked if they still have swimming lessons out there. When her kids were little the beach was crowded. Lachinski said no they don't. What is the difference in advertising of Coon Lake and Lake George? Ayshford said it is word of mouth and use. Hoffman said it is on a well-traveled road. Ayshford said their use to be a sign on Highway 65 directing to Lake George.

Voelker asked if the trails would be connected around the lake. Ayshford said no, probably not, since they are not connected due to private property. Moegerle said Anoka County's trails are associated with the Highway Department. Anoka County will help us get trails only if it is near a highway. They want to take advantage of the heavy equipment at the site. So to have the trails at a natural area, they don't want to bring in the equipment.

Moegerle said knowing how Anoka County is, you have to have a road to get a trail. With regard to our trails through natural areas, how will we get them? Once we put together our master plan, we will be able to say we either can get money because it is along the road or won't get money since it isn't along the road. Moegerle said if we want to get money from Met Council for trails we need to plan out 7 years. We need to hear about your interests in trails. Should all the trails be by roads or go through natural areas.

Lachinski said people who wanted to know about trails for horses approached her. Hoffman said it was at Cedar Creek. Moegerle said Cedar Creek was going to start working on the MOU Second Edition this fall. There was supposed to be a permitting process, but there was subtext that was disagreeable to everyone. If we want to have those trails, this is the time to speak to us. Should horses only be limited to City trails? Lachinski said she has seen people riding horses along 221st in the ditches. Moegerle said if Anoka County puts in a trail on 221st would it be on the north or the south side. Ayshford said they put in the crosswalk and they are ADA crosswalks. Moegerle said they all want to do it all at one time. Lachinski asked if we have people looking at the grants. Ayshford said the Legacy grants the County applies for them. Moegerle said the Met Council has been taking \$100,000 a year from the residents of East Bethel. East Bethel can't get money from Met Council Legacy funds, unless we are part of the Anoka County Master Parks plan. The Legacy list is 7 years out. Right now the Regional trails are not on the Anoka County Master Plan. Hoffman said the last trail he saw was on Bunker to Lexington, to Linwood.

Moegerle said are they unilaterally going to plan for it without coming to us. Moegerle said she understood there would be meetings and discussions. She will check with the County on it. Ayshford said we have a pretty good relationship with Anoka County. Lachinski said people forget we are part of Anoka County. Hoffman said we don't have a County park. We don't get our share of the pot. Moegerle asked if we have exhausted their good will. Is this a sign that there will be continuing good communications? Ayshford said we have to keep in contact with them. Lachinski said we have to be the squeaky wheel. Ayshford said there are other grants out there, but most of them are matching grants. Moegerle said part of it is priorities. She has the snowmobile maps. You can connect all the way to the trail over on 35. But there is a bottleneck at Coon Lake. We could get that connected up. Snowmobilers stop every 30 minutes for a beer or a break.

Capital Improvement Planning Amendments

Amend Capital Improvement plan to reflect reductions in the Park Capital transfer from the General Fund

Background Information:

The Parks Commission prepares a Capital Improvement Plan annually which updates projected projects, evaluates priorities and establishes funding for these works for the coming year and for each of the subsequent years for a five year period. The attached plan was recommended by the Park Commission and approved by the City Council in July, but due to the need for budget reductions, the General Fund Transfer of \$100,000 has been reduced to \$75,000. Additional changes to the Parks CIP could take place up until the final budget is adopted.

The Park Commission will need to begin reevaluating and prioritizing the planned projects for 2014 to reflect this budget reduction. The items planned for 2014 include a regulation baseball field for Booster West, additional skateboard equipment for Booster West, and an addition to the trail plan at John Anderson Park. Changes to the 2014 CIP will have an effect to future planned projects as well.

We had planned for a skateboard park in 2014 for Booster West. Lachinski said to apply for the Tony Hawk grant we need to work with a group. It has to be a need not a want.

Moegerle said it has been debated about the value of the softball parks. The potential moneymakers are things going on in the parks. There is a big event here in the summer that brings in 2,000 people. Lachinski said that is the Father's Day softball tourney. Moegerle said what is the value of the parks for the community? Do people come here because they have a big lot? Do people like the parks and trails? Do people like the activities at the park? It is not really black and white. If we can hear from you saying this is an East Bethel community value. She would like to hear you guys talk about the value of that. So she can say what the Commission says.

Hoffman said on that weekend, it brings in 2,000 people. About 75% buy concession from the softball association. The others go to a restaurant close to the field, like Hunters or Hidden Haven. They are here for two days. We schedule them so they are stuck here. The baseball association has another big tournament in the spring. Lachinski said there are baseball playoffs in July as well. There is also Booster Day. Hoffman said if there were places to stay, they would stay up here. He said a lot of the people comment about how nice our parks look. We got lots of compliments on how nice our City is due to our parks. Lachinski said we have a baseball team that can't play here, the East Bethel Bandits. They would bring their games up here. Hoffman said nice ball fields are hard to come by. Our fields are a rarity in the north end of the cities. To have parks like we have is unusual.

Ayshford said it is hard to put a monetary value on parks. Hoffman said one of the Council member's comments was that they don't see kids on the playground. That isn't a fair statement. Moegerle said the Council needs to hear that. Sometimes the silence is deafening. She said she is going to go to bat for this. This commission needs to start looking at its relevance. You are sitting ducks if there is no money for parks. The question is then do you morph into something else. Like you are the energy behind a Citywide garage sale. To remain relevant we need to hear voices on what is important. We need to figure out how to do it all without having our taxes being sky high.

Hoffman said there are some small trail segments that could be done, with current staff doing it. Moegerle asked how much it costs to do a bituminous trail per foot. Ayshford said he didn't have the numbers with him but the trail at John Anderson was right around \$30,000. Hoffman said we talked about doing a natural surface trail on that neighborhood off of Durant. We need to get some of the trail segments in at places, to get the momentum.

Langmade said we have that beautiful pavilion at Fish Lake. People said if we had playground equipment up there, they could come and use the pavilion and the kids would have a place to play. Moegerle said she recently talked to Jeremiah that lives up there and is a City employee. She said it would have to be a style that is over the fence, or a small gate through the fence. She thinks you have a good point. That pavilion was how expensive? That is the one with the fireplace and the stone. Lachinski said it is geared towards the cross-country skiers. Ayshford said inside the pavilion is empty except for a few picnic tables. Moegerle asked if the satellite out there is year round. Ayshford said that is year round. The property in the area is owned by Cedar Creek. Lachinski said that turnaround area, would that be ours? Couldn't we put the playground equipment in the middle of the cul-de-sac? Ayshford said probably not. Moegerle said Mary Spivey said when they get kids from the schools they bring the kids to that area. They would bring more kids to that area, but they can't get three busses of kids there. Maybe this is a conversation that comes up with the MOU discussion. Maybe we can get them to deed it

to us, to put in some equipment there. Mary Spivey had mentioned doing a meeting hall and interpretative center to Ayshford. Moegerle said it is underutilized because it is small. Hoffman said it was built for smaller groups. Hoffman said the ATV groups would like a trail. They like to run along the snowmobile routes. Lachinski asked if we had any recognized groups in our City that would help us convey to the City the support of the Parks. Hoffman said we should talk to the youth organizations, soccer, baseball, etc. Hoffman said we have talked about changing Bonde to soccer fields. Bonde would be beautiful for soccer. Ayshford said soccer and lacrosse. Lachinski said we are 10 years behind on lacrosse. That is the number one growing sport for kids.

Ayshford said so looking at this capitol fund, do we want to keep what we have on here and scale back or do we want to push anything back. Hoffman said we are good in 2014, but it will get sticky in 2015. Is \$100,000 realistic for irrigation in Bonde? Ayshford said yes. Hoffman said we might have to scale that back and possibly move part of it back to 2016. Ayshford said the big one is the 2014. We will re-look 2015/16 in the spring.

We do have the first housing development that has come in since 2008. In the past did the Park Commission take a look at it to determine if it would be park dedication fees or land? Ayshford showed the Commission the plans for the development. There are 62 lots planned. It will be hooked up to the sewer and water. Hoffman asked if it was on the south side of County Road 22. Ayshford said no, the north side. The development will have walking trails through the development. We are still talking about how we will have them maintained. Voelker asked what the schedule is. Ayshford said they want to get moving on it as soon as possible. That is good news to have something moving forward. That combined with future development on the corner, will be good for the City. Lachinski said it is a step in the right direction. Voelker asked if they are single-family homes. Ayshford said yes. Voelker asked what the lot sizes are. Ayshford said they are city lots. We are trying to avoid a small neighborhood park at this time. They have plans on here for a future expansion. Norseland Park is pretty close to this. Hoffman asked if we could connect Norseland with a trail. He would rather see us utilize that park than put in a neighborhood park. We had talked about putting a trail on the backside of Norseland Park. Hoffman said it is close enough where people would ride their bikes or walk to the park. That would be a nice area to put in a trail.

Ayshford said we would have to look at getting those projects done next year. Hoffman asked how close your estimate is for the baseball field. Ayshford said it all depends on the field. The cost would be fencing and main field. The cost could be expensive. Hoffman said we could get it usable and then upgrade. Lachinski said if we get fencing, we could get advertising. Even the scoreboards we can raise funds for it.

Lachinski said we reprioritize this in April. Ayshford said yes.

Other Reports

Moegerle said at the July Local Government Officials meeting, that is where St. Paul and Minneapolis talked about tapping into the Mt Simon Aquifer. White Bear Lake is only the beginning. We are at least replacing the water into the aquifer with the water reclamation plant and rapid infiltration basins. Minneapolis and St. Paul are not putting their water into the aquifers. Since the water supply isn't be replenished. They are looking at putting in these wells just south of the Anoka County line. Right now the resolutions have passed the Minneapolis Council and possibly the St. Paul Council. Lachinski asked if the DNR is

also involved with this. Moegerle said not that she was aware of. Moegerle said the personal wells aren't in Mt Simon.

She also attended the League of MN Cities policy committee. That committee works on legislation. She asked Tom Hackbarth about how powerful the League of MN Cities is. He told her they are very powerful. She has the whole list of what will be coming up, which is troublesome actually. She took the time to meet with the executive director of Metro Cities. She said they are the watchdogs of Met Council. She asked for guidance on what to do with Met Council. She recommended ways to work with Met Council. Moegerle said at the last Council meeting we discussed it, and the Council members will meet with them, but they need to be professional with them, not talk like we are on Two and a Half Men. Metro Cities has not found a way to work with one city, without compromising the other cities. It helps if we are members with Metro Cities and membership is \$4,300. It would be better to have them on our side, rather than impartial. Lachinski asked if they were working or had worked with the City of Ramsey. Because they really turned themselves around. Moegerle said she didn't ask.

Those are the two biggest issues. The big take away from speaking with Pat was Met Council will work with you, but you have to ask them. We got a copy of a news article today of what people are going to be coming in and saying tomorrow. She sent a copy of the articles to the Met Council. Lachinski asked if anyone from Met Council will be here tomorrow or our Representative will be here. Moegerle said no, they probably won't be. We got into this mess by the 2010 Met Council. The current Met Council representatives are all new, as new as our Council. None of the staff there is the same, except one person. We can be mad at Met Council, but it is really their predecessors that caused the problems. The current staff is as baffled by this as we are. Lachinski said to get some background from the City of East Bethel, she thinks there should be someone here to hear what is going on, and bring it back to their staff. You can sit down there and rely on word of mouth. Moegerle said she is expecting TV cameras. Lachinski said there is a town hall meeting coming up in November.

Adjourn Hoffman motioned to adjourn the October 9, 2013 meeting at 8:15 p.m. Harvey seconded; all in favor, motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jill Anderson
Recording Secretary