

EAST BETHEL PARK COMMISSION MEETING

February 12, 2014

The East Bethel Parks Commission met on February 12, 2014 at 7:05 P.M at the East Bethel City Hall for their regular monthly meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Zimmermann Stacy Voelker Kenneth Langmade Sue Jefferson

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Denise Lachinski Tim Hoffman Bonnie Harvey

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

Oath of Office I, Sue Jefferson, do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States of America and the State of Minnesota, and faithfully discharge the duties as a member of the City of East Bethel Park Commission in the County of Anoka and the State of Minnesota, to the best of my ability. So help me God.

Election of Chairperson and Co-Chairperson Ayshford said Lachinski made him promise that we wouldn't nominate her for anything. Moegerle said there isn't any harm in him continuing for one meeting.

Zimmermann nominated Langmade as Chair. Voelker seconded the nomination; all in favor, motion carries unanimously.

Langmade nominated Stacey Voelker as Co-Chair. Jefferson seconded the nomination; all in favor, motion carries unanimously.

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

Approve – January 15, 2014 Meeting Minutes **Zimmermann made a motion to approve the January 15, 2014 minutes as presented. Voelker seconded; all in favor, motion carries unanimously.**

Parks Financial Information & Parks Capital Funds Summary Not much to report at this point. The one item that jumps out is overtime and that is due to snowplowing. Nothing has come out of the budget and the same thing with the capital budget.

Discussion of
Snowmobile
Trails with
Snowmobile
Clubs

Over the past few Park Commission meetings, the commission has been discussing and developing a trail map for the City of East Bethel. The map includes all existing City owned and maintained trails and state snowmobile trails. The purpose of the discussion is to formulate a master plan for trail development and improve recreation activities within the city.

One item they have been discussing are the snowmobile trails in the area and helping to make East Bethel a destination for snowmobilers from the Twin Cities to use as a trailhead to ride on the trails that expand outward from this area. Representatives from the local snowmobiling groups have been invited to attend the Park Commission meeting to have an open discussion on what improvements could be made and how the City can help. Another thing we also discussed was ATV trails.

Two representatives are here tonight to represent some of the clubs: Kiwi Snowmobile Club – Mike Parker and Sno Ghosts – Zachary Scott.

Ayshford said we have got your snowmobile trails on the map here, Viking Boulevard and Hwy 65 trail. The map also shows the other trails within the City including walking and biking trails. We have some trails that are not part of the road system and are part of the parks.

What do you see for need of improvements in East Bethel when it comes to snowmobiling opportunities?

Scott said snowmobiling is paid from grant-in-aid by the State. Clubs can't get more aid because they are cutting back. Our club would be willing to pitch in and get access to some areas. As long as the access is easy. The Sno Ghosts are based out of St. Francis and they groom all the trails from East Bethel to Isanti on Hwy 65 and it runs west from Hwy 65.

Moegerle said on the other map she doesn't see the trail west of Hwy 65 on Viking. Scott said we don't go west on Viking, but we do go west near the Green Barn.

Zimmermann said near Viking and Round Lake Boulevard near Super America. Scott said our trail goes north there and west from there on County Road 9. Zimmermann said would there be any benefit to making other connectors. Scott said we would have to look for access and also look at the road ditch to see if it would work. He could bring it to the club. They had their meeting last night and asked them to find out who would be willing to do the work. Our grant has been cut by 10% this year. Zimmermann said you had mentioned other areas you would be interested in helping out on. Scott said when we add a trail it is to connect something or get to a destination. What are you looking for trail access in the City? We can put trails wherever. What is a destination? Bar, restaurant, gas station. It has to be a connection or it has to go to a certain place.

Langmade said he noticed there is a lot of traffic around Coopers Corner. There is nothing that goes east from there. Scott said no, you have to go north to Isanti or go down to County Road 22. If you have some areas you have interest in, pick them out and then at a future meeting we review it and we could investigate putting in the trail in that area. We could look at the road ditches and viability. If we are going to put more trail in, or land that City owns and go through land. That is what the trail needs in the city areas. We have expanded our trail with a spur that goes down to the river and the City of Anoka and Ramsey, we have a couple of spurs that go into the river and have access to the City of Anoka. The City has opened up a parking area by the downtown area for Anoka. By Green Barn, we had a couple of miles of trail that went through the woods and they are selling their land and now we can't use it. We now have a little bit of country area by Crown. That is the only land that is non-road trails.

Moegerle asked if the City gave a resolution or could the City council or the park commission help. Scott doesn't see them expanding the grant in aid monies.

Parker said 100% rely on the grant in aid for our trails. The DNR will look at the plan and see what it will do. They won't spend money on dead end trails.

Moegerle asked if they have a special point of contact with the DNR. Both of the representatives said yes. Parker said you have to go to them and it is like petitioning for more trails. Moegerle asked if the DNR liaison would come to the next meeting if it would be helpful. Parker said it can't hurt, the only thing they can say is no. They can say they aren't interested at this time. There is your shot. Ayshford said we hopefully have plans of commercial destination on Hwy 65 at County Road 22. Scott sees County Road 22 as a good destination point.

Sno Ghosts have 70 miles of grant in aid trail routes and another 40 miles of non-grant in aid trail routes. Going up County Road 9 is not a grant in aid trail. Since we can't go through St. Francis. People can run up to the gas station and then they can get back on trail. It is a route. We have a few sections called routes, we brush and sign them. It connects areas. Ayshford asked if you have an agreement with the County. Scott said we have approval to work in any ditch in the County. The only problem with putting in a route is we can put them in, but we don't groom them. You can look for spots for trails and determine anytime of the year if they are good spots for routes. There might be dicey spots, but any road can be that way. Zimmermann said there is nothing from East Bethel going west, until you get up north of Coopers Corners. He knows it takes Oak Grove too, and it opens up access to Anoka.

Scott said they could scout out some areas. If we could get a mile through land, it makes it that much more desirable. There is so much ditch riding around here.

Ayshford asked do you see this as a destination to go north. Parker said you look at our trails, you see a lot of sleds that come out of Wyoming and Forest Lake and come this area. One of our big trails comes down and goes to Coon Lake. That is one of our heaviest parts of our trail. It is off the road and through the woods. Linwood is planning that as an ATV trail as well. 205th is designated as an ATV trail. It is 4 ½ miles long. The difficulty we have is getting out of the road ditches. People want a nice smooth ride. We have a trail around Linwood Lake and around Island Lake. If you can give them a place to ride that is a nice ride. If you make a nice ride and get it off the roads and into the backcountry that is

what they want to ride. Ayshford said around Linwood and Martin is county parks. We have a small spur that cuts across a tree farm. It is a beautiful ride through that area. Carlos Avery the DNR is fond of us there. But 205th is a Linwood City Street and they have provided for the rights for the trail on the road. As close as we are here to the cities, it is perfect. Instead of having to run up to or Duluth, if we could find some way to get off the roads and go in the Country. Jefferson asked where is the land where you want us to get us access. Scott said that getting the farmers to let us run through in the wintertime. We get complaints all the time and go off the road and they yell and scream. We need to find the land and work with the farmers. That is the big part. To get the people to agree with you. He is also the president of the Drift Skippers in Isle. Moegerle said she hears complaints from landowners about tearing up the land. Scott said once you have 8 – 10 inches the land is protected. Once the snow starts melting you need to close off the trails.

Moegerle asked about 221st? You have to look at the bank on the ditch and the climb. We want to keep them as far away from the road as possible. We need to look at the condition of the ditches. Moegerle said we have Wild Rice and Durant that go north and south. Langmade said what about 229th to Fish Lake. How much City property do we own by the Fish Lake? Ayshford said that is all owned by the U of M.

Parker said for this place to be a destination give them a nice scenic ride, you would draw people to come in here. It would be people coming up here for a one-hour drive.

Scott said another idea would be a spot for them to drop off their sleds and park. If you plowed out where the ball fields are, and they can drop their sleds and go. A lot of this is to get together with the landowners. A letter from the Council to the DNR couldn't hurt. If you said we want both of these clubs to add a total of 20 miles of trails. Parker said if the economy gets better our grant in aid money should increase. The one run is over \$200 in fuel. Moegerle said what is the next process? How do we work with the DNR? Process is so important with this. Zimmermann said there is benefit to the City. What can the City do with the grant in aid money? Does this come from the City or the club? Scott said he could call the DNR and see if they are interested. He can then come back in a month and let us know what they hear. He would send out a feeler.

Scott said we didn't come down to solicit to put trails in the City. We were asked to come here and discuss trails in your City and ways to improve snowmobiling and increase visitors. Would we be willing to expand this if we could? We have four groomers that do those trails. Putting more trails in is our time, and we are not paid to do this. If you want to put more trails in here, we can do that. We can bring it to the club. It is a large responsibility. We groom at 6 miles per hour. We are spending some time. Moegerle said where are the fun routes and destination routes. That is her question. If she heard some of that back, it would help. Parker said we do trails; we don't like to put sleds up on creeks and back up on roads. We don't like marshy areas. Scott said it is going to be a joint effort. If there were some areas, we would need to look at it. You guys will have to put in some legwork. This is what has been proposed to us, and see what we come up with. You can say we found some landowners that will allow us to cross over the land. Sometimes when a City calls the landowner it comes across a lot better. We are trying to bring more business into our City. Scott said we would sure do a trail but it will take a lot of work. Moegerle said tomorrow night there will be a meeting about a new development on County Road 22 and how can we work best with you to make that area attractive to you. Scott said it needs to be a nice wide ditch. Parker said when they did the area on County Road 22

and Hwy 65 it made it harder to put in a trail.

Moegerle said should we invite them back to the next meeting. Both gentlemen said they could come back to the next meeting. Scott said if they got the go ahead from the DNR they would start working on it next fall. But they won't get the funding until the next fall (2015).

Moegerle said another road she might be interested in seeing about is Sims Road. Scott said Sims road is pretty tight and the ditch isn't good there.

There are a lot of people want to get off the road and off the ditches. They stay a lot nicer when they are not very close to the road, due to the salt and sand. Once you get out of the ditch, it gets safer for the families.

Scott said the County has been pretty accepting and more willing to work with us. We have a land spur just south of County Road 9 and County Road 22. The first of February we had the Mayor's ride. Six mayors were involved. Our club has bonfire and treats. We had a bunch of people come up. Maybe it is something the Mayor of East Bethel would come to. Langmade said he wishes that Hoffman had been here tonight.

Anoka County Master Trail Plan

The Anoka County Parks Department is in the early process of updating its Master Trail Plan. The stakeholders have been asked to review and provide comment on the initial design and will be provided more information as it becomes available.

The East Anoka County Regional Trail would run along Lexington Ave in the SE corner of the city. It would reenter East Bethel in the NE corner and run along Fish Lake in the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Scientific Preserve.

Once Anoka County develops the Master Plan, funding from the State Legacy Funds would become available to help construct the trails. The funds are applied for and distributed through the Anoka County Parks Department.

They didn't have any details for us, but they will continue to update us. Moegerle said could you go over that process. She thought it was going to be collaborative. Ayshford said they are going to provide us more information. The connection that was added is a spur connecting up Fish Lake. This is a piece we had talked about before as a connection point in the City. At some point if we could get another connection in this area and loop it.

We did look at per footage costs for putting in paved off road trails. It would be \$20 per foot for a paved off road trail, and doesn't include right of way. They did get as high as \$40 per foot in areas that had sewer and water utilities to deal with. He thinks ¼ mile of trail along a road would be \$35,000 with a contractor doing all the work. Previous trails we looked at having the public works staff do some of the work. Jefferson said if you are up at Fish Lake, you are not too far from 35. You are close to the trail in Wyoming. Ayshford said yes, that is correct. Once we get more information we will bring information to the Park Commission. They want to redo the chunk on Lexington. Moegerle said they are still seven years behind. It will be seven years until they start something new. Ayshford said because of their capital planning. Jefferson wanted to know if they would be doing 4 lanes on Lexington. Ayshford said they would be doing

four lanes all the way to Crosstown at some point according to their capital plan. Jefferson wanted to know if they would put snowmobile trails along Lexington.

Tree City
USA

To qualify as a Tree City USA community, a town or city must meet four standards established by the Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters. These standards were established to ensure that every qualifying community would have a viable tree management plan and program.

1. A Tree Board or Department
2. A Tree Care Ordinance
3. A Community Forestry Program With an Annual Budget of at Least \$2 Per Capita
4. An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation

The hard part of this is number 3 and we will have no problem in reaching that with what we already have in place. What we do in a year, we are probably closer to \$4 per capita. We probably want to decide if we are going to forward, we can't apply until the end of this year. To do so we need to have an Arbor Day celebration. We need to designate a date and then we can have the Cub Scout pack come out and plant the tree. Most cities do it with their spring clean up day.

Langmade motioned Celebrate Arbor Day along with spring clean up day, April 26. Seconded by Voelker; all in favor, motion carries unanimously.

Council
Report &
Other
Reports

Moegerle said the most important for the take away is the development along County Road 22. Viking Preserve is going to be in front of us for a special meeting. The Army Corp wasn't happy with the development. They had fifty homes and now it will be reduced. The Army Corp is taking a much more stringent approach. They want Viking Preserve to do a 180-day process. Now we will be discussing the process tomorrow night. Jefferson said why did they say they have to cut it in half. Moegerle said because of the run off. Basically they want to get away from water running off your land and for it to be filtered on your own land. She is sure we will hear more about that tomorrow night.

She wants to compliment the Commission about talking about East Bethel as a destination. She said what you heard from the gentleman is we can be a destination. It is a good way to start looking at things.

Jefferson asked if you have any more information on the water and how the people in Minneapolis. Moegerle said she didn't have any information. She talked to some people. They are still looking at this. When we had the legislators here, they are following it closely. Minneapolis hasn't done anything on it. The Mayor of Spring Lake Park is very concerned about this. Anoka County is on it. It is winter doldrums and she is sure this spring it will pick up again. The ball is in Minneapolis's court. We are at a stand off at this point.

Lachinski said they are working on a Booster Day fundraiser. They will do a beach party theme with activities for families and kids. Moegerle said is a new event. Ayshford said yes. They are looking at March 22nd. They would have volleyball nets from Ham Lake Lanes, and food and beverages. Langmade said they asked if they had climbing walls. Ayshford said the National Guard has a portable climbing wall.

Adjourn **Voelker motioned to adjourn the February 12, 2014 meeting at 8:15 p.m. Jefferson seconded; all in favor, motion carries unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Jill Anderson
Recording Secretary