

EAST BETHEL PARK COMMISSION MEETING

November 12, 2014

The East Bethel Parks Commission met on November 12, 2014 at 7:04 P.M at the East Bethel City Hall for their regular monthly meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Zimmermann Tim Hoffman Denise Lachinski
Kenneth Langmade Bonnie Harvey

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sue Jefferson Stacy Voelker

ALSO PRESENT: Nate Ayshford, Public Works Director
Tim Harrington, City Council
Sue Irons, Recording Secretary

Adopt Agenda Mr Hoffman motioned to adopt the agenda. Ms Lachinski seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Approve – August 13, 2014 Mr Zimmerman made a motion to approve the August 13, 2014 minutes as submitted. Ms Lachinski seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Parks Financial Information & Parks Capital Funds Summary Mr Ayshford presented the current financial status for member’s review (Attachment 4.1). Budget appears on target. It was noted that the equipment rental was slightly over budget due to rental of porta potties for all parks and for Booster Day (budgeted as per last year but price was increased by rental company) as well as occasional rental of pumps for ponds. These expenses will be reduced as the season has ended and only two porta potties are maintained year round. The current winter storm will be reflected in increased expenses for plowing, overtime, etc.

Mr Hoffman motioned to forward the Parks Financial Report to the City Council as presented. Ms Lachinski seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

5.0 Baseball Field Request Theresa Martin has requested the Park Commission discuss options for athletic fields designated for baseball use. Possibilities include converting an existing softball field into a baseball field with a mound and possible grass infield and/or constructing a new baseball field in Booster West Park where the existing soccer fields are located.

Theresa Martin was present at the meeting to provide comments and discuss possible options. She introduced herself as a resident of East Bethel for 15 years with four sons involved in baseball. They have participated in SBAA for many years and have noted a frequent issue of a lack of fields for teams to play on. There is only one “senior” mound, located in Soderville. She noted that at a coaches meeting she attended East Bethel was praised for the quality and maintenance of its ball fields. Ms Martin researched access to fields including Ham Lake, St Francis and Blaine. She also contacted neighbors and asked them if they would volunteer time, services, goods, etc and met with a very positive response.

Ms Martin and the members discussed requirements and options for additional fields in East Bethel. The current fields at Booster West are in demand all season. There are three other fields that are not currently being used and would need some work to be usable.

It was noted that the current Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) already contains plans for an additional ball field in 2017. The project was initially slated for 2014 but had to be pushed back due to loss of funding. Funding for Parks comes from income generated by development in East Bethel but there has been no development since 2008.

The plan is to convert two soccer fields to a baseball field. Regulation field requires 90 ft mound as opposed to 75 ft for younger athletes. There are only parking lot lights in the area slated for the new field.

Batting cages were also discussed to be included with the ball fields but some cages must be manned by someone while they are in use. Although batting cages can be profitable, it can be difficult to keep volunteers in place. Indoor batting cages would cost more to establish but there are outdoor cages as well. There are batting cages available at the East Bethel Ice Arena but they have not been in use.

Blaine is building a new large ball field/sports complex off of Lexington. There are different organizations involved in baseball activities around the area but they don't all have the same goals and some are in conflict.

Ms Martin thanked the members for the discussion and suggestions for possible future options and funding issues. She stated she will continue researching ways to help move forward and find volunteers and donations. If SBAA doesn't want to work with East Bethel, she plans to reach out to other people and businesses for help.

Insecticide Use and Pollinators

Christine Dahlman had asked to present information on this topic at this meeting, however, she contacted Mr Ayshford and requested rescheduling her presentation for the January meeting due to a death in her family. It was noted that we currently do not use any of the pesticides of concern. Mosquito treatments are used by the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District and Mr Ayshford noted that a pesticide for treatment of Emerald Ash Borer may be required in the future.

Mr Hoffman motioned to postpone Ms Dahlman's presentation until January per her request. Ms Harvey seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Cedar Creek Memorandum of Understanding

In March of 2004, the City of East Bethel and CCESR entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that established the Cedar Creek Park, use of the trail system around Fish Lake, and the vacation of the East Bethel Blvd easement within the CCESR. Portions of the MOU are set to expire in 2014 and staff from the U of MN and the City of East Bethel have begun discussions on the need to update the document. Both parties would like input from the East Bethel Parks Commission on any changes that may be necessary so that an amended document can be drafted for approval by the East Bethel City Council and University of MN.

Requested Action:

Review and update Memorandum of Understanding between East Bethel and Cedar Creek Ecosystem and Scientific Reserve (CCESR)

Items of interest:

3. Horseback Riding Trails. For a period of ten (10) years from the effective date of this MOU, and thereafter with the consent of CCNHA, horseback riding by persons holding permits issued by the City will be permitted on trails in the Natural History Area designated for that purpose by CCNHA. CCNHA will make these trails available on a guided basis only at least once a month from April thru October. By separate agreement, CCNHA and City have agreed that horseback riding on a non-guided basis will also be permitted within the eighty (80) foot right-of-way along part of the easterly boundary of the Natural History Area. CCNHA shall have the right to set reasonable limits as to the number of riders on trails at any one time. The City agrees that no parking facilities will be constructed that will facilitate the trailering of horses to the Natural History Area.

Complaints have been received from the U of M about users not cleaning up after their dogs and horses, sneaking in to the area on the NE side of Fish Lake where no outside animals are allowed. The initial part of this section expired this year but there is a separate agreement regarding use of the right of way along old East Bethel Blvd for horseback riding. East Bethel Blvd was traded for the Park area that the city owns now.

Members agreed that residents using the area for horseback riding probably did not have permits as required and may not even be aware that they needed them. There is no information on the city website about horseback riding or the permit requirement. Some members felt the website was supposed to be updated but that update was minimal. Any riding on trails in the Natural History Area were to be guided only but most members felt that contacting the CCNHA to arrange for a tour was extremely difficult if not impossible. Mr Ayshford reported that there are signs in the area where horses and dogs are not allowed but people have pulled them out and used the areas regardless.

The consensus was that the Horseback Riding agreement should remain but the expired part of this section might not be possible to renew/continue. As a minimum, would like to keep the "separate agreement" in place but no copy was included in the package for this meeting.

Ms Harvey made a motion to table this item until research can be done into the original discussions/negotiations leading up to the MOU as well as checking with residents interested in having places to ride horses for their input. Mr Zimmerman seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Ms Lachinski agreed to contact residents regarding horseback riding and Ms Irons will pursue research on the decisions/negotiations leading up to the signing of this MOU. Mr Ayshford will provide a copy of the "separate agreement" for review.

11. Provision of Additional Parking for Cedar Creek Access. CCNHA will work with Isanti County and Athens Township to provide an area to be designated as parking for the purpose of providing access to canoeing and kayaking down Cedar Creek. City and Athens Township have agreed to fund the construction of the parking area and City understands that Athens Township will pay one-half of the costs. The land shall, regardless of such use, at all times be property of the University and a part of the Natural History Area.

Members suggested that at the time of the MOU there was a meeting planned with Athens Township to discuss this item but it does not appear that the meeting occurred nor has any action been taken to provide parking as described. Members felt this item did not seem to benefit East Bethel in any way and suggested that it be deleted.

Mr Hoffman made a motion to delete item 11 from the MOU. Mr Zimmerman seconded the motion; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

**Anoka
Conservation
District Comp
Plan 2015-
2019**

The City of East Bethel has been asked to review and provide comments on the Anoka Conservation District's Comprehensive Plan for 2015-2019. (Attachment 8.1 draft 2015-2019 ACD Comp Plan)

Mr Hoffman commented that he felt there was a great deal of information but did not see any detailed future plans and strategies. Projects are funded mainly through state and federal grants. The organization provides education for landowners and local government in natural resource management and conducts monitoring and analysis. Ms Lachinski questioned how projects are prioritized and how they might be able to assist the City of East Bethel. Mr Ayshford reported that the two bodies of water that are impaired in East Bethel are Coon Lake and Crooked Brook.

**Council
Report &
Other
Reports**

Mr Harrington reported the elections resulted in Brian Mundle and himself as new council members and Mr Steve Voss as the new mayor. There will be a town hall meeting on November 20, 2014 from 6-9 PM.

My Ayshford reported that the Anoka County Master Trails Plan was changed. The new plan has the trail going through Carlos Avery around Linwood Lake. The only drawback is that it will no longer tie into Wild Rice Drive.

Adjourn Mr Langmade motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Mr Hoffman seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Susan Lori Irons
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

4.1) Parks Financial Reports

7.1) 2004 MOU

8.1) Draft 2015-2019 ACD Comp Plan