

EAST BETHEL PARK COMMISSION MEETING

March 11, 2015

The East Bethel Park Commission met on March 11th, 2015 at 6:30 P.M at the East Bethel City Hall for their regular monthly meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Zimmermann Stacy Voelker Denise Lachinski
Kenneth Langmade Bonnie Harvey Sue Jefferson

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tim Hoffman

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

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

Oath of Office Ms Stacy Voelker read the Oath of Office establishing her commitment for another term on the Commission.

Election of Chair and Co-Chairperson Commission members voted to select the Chairperson and Co-Chairperson for the 2015 Parks Commission.

Ms Lachinski nominated Mr Langmade for Chairperson and Ms Voelker seconded the nomination. All members were in favor. Mr Langmade was unanimously elected as Chairperson for the Commission for 2015.

Mr Zimmerman nominated Ms Voelker for Co-Chairperson and Mr Langmade seconded the nomination. All members were in favor. Ms Voelker was unanimously elected as Co-Chairperson for the Commission for 2015.

Approve Minutes – January 14, 2015 Minutes Mr Zimmerman made a motion to approve the January 14, 2015 minutes as submitted. Ms Harvey seconded; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Park Financial Information & Capital Funds Summary Mr. Ayshford presented the current fiscal year Park Maintenance financial status for member's review (Attachment 6.1). Initial deposits have been made for the equipment replacement fund and worker's compensation insurance premium.

Mr Davis informed the members that the budget for Park Capital Funds has been reduced over the last three years from \$100,000 to \$50,000. The City Council is committed to increasing the budget, but do not have an estimated timeline for when that will happen.

Park Acquisition and Development Fund dollars are dedicated to using for Parks. The money is from development fees and can only be used for development. The Park Capital Fund is a transfer from the General Fund and susceptible to changes based on City budget

requirements. For the past several years there has been no new development in the City so no funds have been added to the Park Acquisition and Development Fund for those same years.

Mr Davis reported there has been a great deal of discussion about and planning for development but there have been no development fees paid yet. The City Council voted to transfer the Trails Capital Fund to make the final payment on the 2010 C bond. The Trails Capital Fund currently has a zero balance. There had been no use of those funds for the past five years. Mr Davis asked the Commission members to review the 2007 Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan and consider some smaller projects that can be done with the available funds. Larger projects may have to wait until additional funds are available.

Ms Lachinski asked what the process would be to bring potential grant opportunities to the City to review. Mr Davis responded that opportunities relating to parks/trails/recreation activities would best be reviewed by the Park Commission first. The Commission would then forward their recommendation for action to the City Council. Ms Lachinski stated she is considering talking with the Andover Lacrosse Association members regarding how they acquired grant funding.

2015 Park Projects

The Park Commission and City Council have approved the 2015 Park Capital Improvement Plan with the following projects:

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|--|----------|
| 1) Upgrade and add to the skateboard park equipment at Booster West Park | \$25,000 |
| 2) Upgrade the outdoor ice rink | \$35,000 |
| 3) Begin construction and irrigation of Bonde Park for soccer/lacrosse field | \$65,000 |

Funding for these projects is provided by the Park Capital Fund and the Park Acquisition & Development Fund. Commission members discussed options for what type of equipment and improvements would best fit the city's needs.

Ms Lachinski reported that young residents she has talked to about the skateboard park seem to "think it's pretty tame". Mr Ayshford stated most of the other parks he has looked at are similar to ours with a ramp on each end and a structure in the middle. There is one in Wyoming that is pretty extravagant. The structures in the park are still usable but getting old according to Mr Ayshford.

Options discussed included upgrading or replacing what is currently in the skateboard park, leaving some of the structures as is or possibly expanding the skateboard area. Ms Harvey asked if items removed from parks can be moved to the beach area for continued use. She noted that a request to this effect had been presented previously. Mr Ayshford stated he thought this might be possible.

Ms Jefferson asked how much the original park cost to build. The cost was unknown. Members discussed vandalism concerns with new park equipment and upgrades. Cameras, fences, additional lighting have been used without much success. The City has liability insurance through the League of MN Cities and they inspect yearly to ensure appropriate

coverage.

Mr Zimmerman suggested asking the residents who use the park what they would like to see done. He asked how the structures and/or equipment is usually purchased. Mr Ayshford stated he has local playground equipment sales representatives who can provide estimates within a set budget range. Mr Ayshford related that he usually provides parameters such as ages and budget for the rep to build possible options for appropriate items.

Members requested that Mr Ayshford provide a current rendering of the skateboard park at the next meeting to allow members to further discuss options within the budget.

Planned improvements for the outdoor ice rink include upgrading the boards, resurfacing the blacktop under the rink, improvements to the fence and adding new lighting. There is no warming house since the last one was destroyed in a storm. An insurance claim was filed and payment was received but was placed in the General Fund as per City policy and is not available for funding other projects.

Mr Langmade reported several residents have requested a new warming house as well as to fix the entry way to the ice as it can be muddy and the mud gets tracked onto the ice. No upgrades were done last year. Mr Ayshford stated that the planned resurfacing of the blacktop could be extended to improve the entryway onto the rink.

Mr Zimmerman asked about an area for open skating as opposed to hockey. There have been no requests for an open skate area and no organized activities are allowed on the current rink so it can be used by all skaters during open hours.

Members discussed possible options for a warming house. A construction trailer was suggested but they tend to be uninsulated and not warm enough for the purpose. It was agreed that a more permanent structure would be the best option. Mr Zimmerman suggested two doors would also be helpful for participants to come in a "front" door to put their skates on and exit out another door onto the rink. This could prevent congestion at a single door entering and exiting the rink. There are currently no benches at the outdoor rink.

A permanent structure would not be available within the current budget for this project. Mr Ayshford will research costs for building a permanent structure to budget for future years.

Plans for Bonde Park include adding irrigation and building a soccer field. This will require moving large amounts of dirt and clarification of property lines. The parking lot is currently gravel and very large. The street is a non-parking zone. It was noted that North Metro Soccer has new facilities for their use in Andover and Oak Grove but they may use EB City fields as well once they are completed.

2016-2020 Park Capital Improvement Planning

The Park Commission prepares a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) 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. This plan is presented to City Council for their approval and use for preparing the coming year's budget. Attached is the 2015-2019 Park CIP (Attachment 8.1). Members discussed the projects listed for 2016 to determine if they need to stay in their current funding year or be rearranged to reflect any changes in park priorities. Other projects could be added and existing ones could be deleted if needed for restructuring the schedule. With reductions to

the General Fund transfer to the Park Capital Fund, the commission and staff must adapt the Park Capital Improvement Plan to reflect those reductions.

Mr Davis related that a project was approved in 2010 to build a trail from Booster Park East and connecting to the Pavilion at Cedar Creek. The project was put on hold and ultimately cancelled in March 2011 due to cost. The major source of funds for the project were from MSA street funds which are currently needed to improve roads in the sewer district.

Mr Davis shared a possible project in the Sand Hill Crane Area. He stated there is a grant application in process for \$1,000,000 for improvements in the Sand Hill Crane Area. These improvements would be totally paid for by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) without requiring the city to match any funds. Mr Davis suggested a possible trail to connect Booster Park East with the Sand Hill Crane Area. There are only a few gaps that would need to be worked on.

Another possible project would be off of Durant Street. The residents of the Oak Brook Acres neighborhood off of 209th Street previously approached the Park Commission and requested some type of development on the 10 acres owned by the city in their area. Commission members remembered the residents as motivated to pursue a park and/or walking trail in their neighborhood. .

Mr Ayshford stated that the project would actually require two culverts in order to cross a very wide ditch. A trail had been mowed down from both sides of the ditch but the bottom was very wet. Mr Ayshford felt it would still be possible to consider this project as culverts are not very expensive. It would still require a discussion with Anoka County staff regarding the ditch crossing. Members remembered touring the area last year.

Ms Lachinski asked if the John Anderson Park trail was completed. Mr Ayshford responded that it was not approved by the City Council.

When asked about the population density in the area, Mr Davis responded that it is very low and the Commission would need to consider the benefits versus the less positive potential outcomes. A trail would connect a small nearby neighborhood on 235th Ave. with 10-12 homes and eventually could connect to Jackson allowing a person to continue walking all the way to Bonde Park. There is very little residential area along this path and a trail would open up the back side of John Anderson Park even more. There has been a fair amount of vandalism and “unwanted” activities in this area.

Mr Langmade commented on the increased interest in trails for walking and biking among residents and Ms Lachinski noted seeing joggers running along the side of the road. She stated they would appreciate a safe circuit to run if it was available. Mr Davis related that it is City Policy that any new road construction must have a 6 foot paved shoulder on one side for biking and walking safely.

Members agreed to delay the fencing for the baseball field at Anderson Lake Park as there is little use of the field and fencing is not expected to increase use. This would allow the funds budgeted for that project to be assigned to another project.

Ms Lachinski asked about the reason for separating the various projects for Norseland Park. Mr Ayshford explained that the park is very large. A previous proposal was for a trail from

Norseland that would have traversed a parcel of land owned by Anoka County.

The ballfield there has no dugout and is for younger players. The project would add a backstop and baseline fencing. SBAA had suggested an outfield fence to define the play area. An open fence was noted to be easier for maintenance of the field. The park has a small off-street parking area and a very nice playground with equipment that was installed two years ago.

Another project proposed for next year is playground equipment for Rod and Norma Smith Park. Ms Lachinski asked about vandalism in that area. Mr Ayshford reported that vandalism was a problem two years ago but was not as bad this past year. The playground equipment that is currently there is very old and needs to be replaced. The park is small and has a very small parking area but it is surrounded by wetlands on three sides. Ms Harvey thought there had been complaints about parking during activities at the park but Mr Davis reported no concerns have been raised in recent years. Ms Jefferson suggested the possibility of putting off this project one more year and using the funds for a warming house.

Mr Ayshford stated he will update the CIP based on the discussion and present for review at next meeting.

Cedar Creek Ecosystem and Science Reserve Memorandum of Understanding Members reviewed the updated Memorandum of Understanding(MOU) between East Bethel and Cedar Creek Ecosystem and Scientific Reserve (CCESR)

At the January 14th Park Commission meeting, the commission voted on recommended changes to the MOU (Attachment 9.1) between the City of East Bethel and CCESR. City Staff met with representatives from the CCESR and presented those recommended changes and developed the attached updated MOU for review and approval by the commission. (Attachment 9.2)

The recommended changes included

- Eliminate Item 10 & 11 from the Recreational Trails MOU
- Change Item 3. Horseback Riding Trails to read as follows:

“By separate agreement, CCNHA and the City have agreed that horseback riding on a non-guided basis will be permitted within the eighty (80) foot right-of-way along part of the easterly boundary of the Natural History Area.”

- Update and combine two MOUs into one document.

The changes were accepted for the Recreational Trails MOU. Unfortunately it was noted that part of the 80 foot right-of-way is very wet and may not be passable at all times. There was no need to combine the two previous MOUs into one document as the Road and Park MOU sections related to horseback riding had expired.

The new director of the CCESR is Forest Isbell. At the meeting with CCESR representatives they asked for assistance in marketing the Cedar Creek area through the website and newsletter. An article in the newsletter will provide information on how to arrange for tours and activities in the Reserve and Park Commission members were offered a tour of the Reserve as well.

Ms Jefferson made a motion to recommend approval of the updated MOU to the City

Council. Ms Lachinski seconded the motion; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**Council
Report &
Other
Business**

Staff and the Parks Commission will continue discussions on the future direction of the City's Parks and projects with the City Council liaison Tim Harrington. The purpose of this discussion will be to formulate goals and objectives for the park development program and to update the commission on issues currently before the City Council.

Mr Harrington reported that the process for refinancing the 20A bond has been started. It is hoped that this will provide a large savings for the City. On March 19th there is an "Empty Bowl" fundraiser for the food shelf at St. Pat's Church from 5-7:30 pm. On the same evening there is a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for the EB Scholarship at the Senior Center from 5:30-8 pm.

Mr Harrington noted that improvements to the inside of the Ice Arena are required and asked that this be added to the Park Commission agenda. The Zamboni, bathrooms and painting need attention.

Mr Davis stated that he would like to have the Park Commission become more involved in the Ice Arena activities, plans and operations. The goal is to improve offerings during the off season to help cover costs and help the facility operate more efficiently.

The Andover Lacrosse Association is renting the Ice Arena for 40 hours between March and April. There are several off-ice activities planned in the near future including a gun show, craft show, the East Bethel Beauty Pageant and a Lion's Club garage sale. Mr Davis encouraged Commission members to provide contact information for the City Hall if they might be considering an activity or event that would be appropriate for the arena.

The cost for renting the arena during the off season is negotiable. There are no tables or chairs available but they can be brought in. The concession area is managed by contract with the current lease ending July 30th. Proposals are being accepted for the next contract with a decision expected in April.

Ms Voelker asked about insurance requirements for activities and Mr Davis stated that coverage is required but there are different options for how the requirement can be met. Ms Voelker stated it made sense to get more different groups using the arena and more people aware of the opportunity to access it. This can help with word-of-mouth marketing.

Mr Davis stated a possible drawback for use of the arena is that the building does not have air conditioning. The doors of the facility can be opened to allow it to remain fairly comfortable. He also noted that the location is not as desirable being so far north of the suburban areas. Other possible activities mentioned by Commission members included archery, Girl Scout and Boy Scout events.

Ms Lachinski noted the request for two seasonal employees. Applicants must be 18 years old and have a valid driver's license. The job is posted on the City website and the League of MN Cities website. Starting pay is \$10 per hour.

Mr Ayshford reported on a letter received from the Department of Natural Resources stating that they are using Cooper's Lake for Walleye rearing. They plan to use it again

next year.

East Bethel received the Tree City USA status with an official announcement anticipated in the near future. There will be an Arbor Day celebration with the Scouts on Recycling Day, April 28th. There will be a tree planting in Booster Park on that date as well.

Mr Ayshford also reported that Anoka County notified the City of Ham Lake recently that they found the Emerald Ash Borer within their city limits. It was noted as far north as the East Bethel southern boundary. There has not been an official announcement yet.

Mr Zimmerman shared that Troy Lachinski is working to train community members in CPR and AED training and suggested training for Park Commission members. Ms Lachinski will contact Mr Lachinski to request this training.

Adjournment Ms Harvey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Mr Zimmerman seconded the motion; all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Susan Lori Irons
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

- 6.1) Park Financial Reports
- 8.1) 2015-2019 Park CIP
- 9.1) 2004 MOU Recreational Trails
- 9.2) Revised MOU Recreational Trails (2015)