

EAST BETHEL PARK COMMISSION MEETING  
February 10, 2016

The commission met at 6:30 pm at the East Bethel City Hall for the regular monthly meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kenneth Langmade, Chair      Bill Zimmermann      Bonnie Harvey  
Sue Jefferson                                      Denise Lachinski

ABSENT: Stacy Voelker      Tim Hoffman

ALSO PRESENT: Nate Ayshford, Public Works Manager  
Tom Ronning, City Council Liaison

2.0 Adopt      **Mr. Zimmermann moved and Ms. Lachinski seconded to approve the agenda**  
Agenda      **as presented.**

3.0 Oath of      Ms. Harvey, Mr. Langmade, and Mr. Zimmermann each took the Oath of Office.  
Office

4.0              **Ms. Lachinski moved and Ms. Harvey seconded to elect Ken Langmade as**  
Elections of      **Chair. Motion carried.**  
Chair and

Co-chair      **Ms. Jefferson moved and Ms. Lachinski seconded to elect Bill Zimmermann**  
**as Co-chair. Motion carried.**

5.0 Approve      **Mr. Zimmermann moved and Ms. Lachinski seconded to approve the**  
1/13/16      **minutes as amended Under Parks, Trails, Open Space Comp Plan to read,**  
Minutes      **“... starting trail, as this could be a multi-purpose trail segment starting at**  
**Booster Park then going north east to Fish Lake.” Motion carried.**

6.0 Park      Mr. Ayshford reported a Park Acquisition and Development Fund balance of  
Financial      \$30,131.73 and a Park Capital Fund of \$125,001.03. Expenses as of 1/31/16 were  
Information      \$36,534.57. Last year’s budget finished at 95%. Mr. Ayshford clarified that there  
are eight full-time employees, four are expensed to parks and four expensed to  
roads.

7.0 Dog      City staff received an inquiry about developing a dog park in East Bethel or  
Park      northern Anoka County. A dog park is a public area where dogs are allowed to  
Request      run off-leash and provides a place where dogs and owners can socialize without  
interfering with other conventional park users. In Anoka County there are  
currently five dog parks, all located in the southern portion of the county where  
open space is harder to find and home density is higher. The closest dog park to  
East Bethel is located in Bunker Hills Park off of Hanson Blvd.

Anoka County has partnered with the Cities of Coon Rapids and Andover on the  
construction of a dog park at Bunker Hills Regional Park. Located off 133rd  
Avenue near the existing compost site, the 6.5 acre dog park has a separated small  
dog area, an open play area and a short trail for those that want to walk with their  
dog.

Dog parks typically require a minimum of 1 acre and are surrounded by fencing. Dog owners are required to clean up after their pets and maintenance can be provided by a public agency or sometimes a local kennel group. Costs vary for development but typically are \$100,000 to \$400,000. Anoka County, the City of Coon Rapids, and the City of Andover were able to build the Bunker Hills Dog Park with donated land and in-kind labor with a budget of \$45,000.

Randy Plaisance, 715 192<sup>nd</sup> Ave. NE, East Bethel was the requestor for the dog park. Mr. Plaisance currently uses the Bunker Park dog park and would like to see a dog park in East Bethel. He believes that adding a dog park to the city is a good place to start to increase buildable neighborhoods and a way to provide opportunities for social engagement for those utilizing the dog park.

Mr. Plaisance thought that the approximate \$35,000 cost could be shared with Anoka County; he will have to go before the Anoka County board to request a shared project. If it is a shared project, the park must be located on county property. There is enough county property located at Coon Lake Beach to support a dog park, however, the property is located in Columbus. It was suggested partnering with Columbus also. The Sandhill Crane area is also county property, however, Mr. Ayshford doubted the County would consider putting in a dog park at that location. Mr. Plaisance did not have a breakdown of the approximate \$35,000 cost splits, however, he believes it would be an equal share cost split. He thought maintenance would be handled by the County since it will be on county property, but again, he will have to check. The main costs involved are fencing, maintenance, signage and liability postings. Mr. Plaisance believes residents should be involved with the dog park. He suggested contacting surrounding vets, sporting groups, 4-H groups, etc. to help out with the park.

Ms. Lachinski noted that a survey was done about four years ago and that there was zero interest at that time. Mr. Zimmermann understands that residents have large yards for their dogs, however, he likes the social aspect of the dog park and agrees that it may bring more people to East Bethel. He is in support of the dog park as long as there is an interest by residents. Discussed avenues for finding out if there is an interest by residents. Suggestions were to provide information at the Town Hall meeting and Booster Days, play videos showing dog parks in use on Channel 10 and on the City website.

Mr. Plaisance suggested a dog park organization be formed if this idea moves forward; he is willing to spearhead the project, be a contact person, and be the liaison between the Parks Commission and the other parties involved.

Ms. Lachinski voiced concerns regarding vandalism to the fence and benches (if installed).

Mr. Langmade said a dog park is a good idea to look into.

Ms. Jefferson asked that Mr. Plaisance check further into finances and if funding could be available from other organizations and groups, and to check with surrounding communities, i.e. St. Francis and Isanti, to see if they are considering

putting in dog parks. Mr. Zimmermann's concerns are financing and maintenance, but thinks a dog park is a great idea.

Mr. Plaisance will address the questions and concerns raised tonight and will bring more information to another meeting.

8.0 Tree Ordinance

As part of the requirements for applying for the annual Tree City USA award, the DNR and Arbor Day Council would like East Bethel to update a couple key components to its tree preservation ordinance as noted below.

Standard 2) A Tree Care Ordinance

A basic public tree care ordinance forms the foundation of a city's tree care program. It provides an opportunity to set good policy and back it with the force of law when necessary. A key section of a qualifying ordinance is one that establishes the tree board or forestry department—or both—and gives one of them the responsibility for public tree care. It should also assign the task of crafting and implementing a plan of work or for documenting annual tree care activities.

Ideally, the ordinance will also provide clear guidance for planting, maintaining and removing trees from streets, parks and other public spaces as well as activities that are required or prohibited. Beyond that, the ordinance should be flexible enough to fit the needs and circumstances of the particular community.

Mr. Ayshford presented a Draft Tree Ordinance for review and approval. Ms. Lachinski asked that an amendment be added regarding the replacement of removed trees. Mr. Ayshford stated the Tree Preservation Ordinance, which is different from the Tree Ordinance, covers planting trees. Ms. Jefferson asked if this ordinance is adopted, will residents be liable for diseased trees. Mr. Ayshford left the wording vague in the draft ordinance regarding diseased and hazardous trees, and shade tree pests in order to allow flexibility when considering different circumstances. **Ms. Jefferson moved and Ms. Harvey seconded to recommend the City Council adopt the Draft Tree Ordinance. Motion carried.**

9.0 Council Report & Other Business

Mr. Ronning reported that the City Council has had more discussion on the Superstreet.

Council had a potential dangerous dog hearing that ended up being dismissed.

One firefighter will be leaving the department and three probationary firefighters will be promoted to regular status.

Work session item was a request from Ham Lake to re-evaluate the operating and non-operating budget items for both the Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization and the Sunrise River Watershed Management Organization.

Dates set by City Council: April 19 Town Hall meeting, April 23 Recycling and Arbor Day, sometime in April a dumpster will be delivered for the Coon Lake beach clean-up.

The Park Commission had \$144,000 removed from the trails budget and placed in the general fund to help reduce property tax increases. The three miles around Fish Lake makes up the majority of hiking trails in East Bethel. The Park budget has been chipped away, is there any talk of getting money back into the budget? The 2016 budget is done. Staff, the commissions, and City Council will start working on the 2017 budget next month. CIP's will be done by May, then in June/July work will be done on budgets, with a final budget sent to Anoka County in September and the final budget approved in December.

Commissioners would like to do a park visit in June.

The Verizon tower is being built and is expected to be operational April 1<sup>st</sup>.

10.0            **Ms. Harvey moved and Mr. Zimmermann seconded to adjourn at 7:52 pm.**  
Adjourn        **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Gessner, Recording Secretary  
Submitted 2/11/16