

1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included Jack Acomb, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Madeline Seveland, Marvin Puspoki, and Elise Raarup. Staff members in attendance included Jo Colleran, Darin Ellingson, Dave Johnson, Mike Pavelka and Perry Vetter.

Chair Raarup called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Gabler moved and Kist seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of January 6, 2016. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

Alan Lanners, President of Bennett Family Park (BFP), provided some historical information related to the partnership between the city of Minnetonka and BFP. More specifically, Lanners reviewed funding provided by the city from 1996 – 2000 that totaled \$217,200, along with several other in kind donations. Lanners noted that the BFP Board, including himself, are all volunteers who help to oversee the park's \$180,000 annual operating budget to support the provision of youth baseball and softball programs. Lanners requested that the city consider assisting BFP with some park capital costs similar to what was provided back in 1996 – 2000.

Raarup asked if the BFP operations budget of \$180,000 was fully supported by program participation fees. Lanners indicated that it is budgeted to be, however reserves have been used over the past few years to cover basic operations.

Lanners indicated that the city was supportive this past fall in BFP receiving a \$10,000 Hennepin County Youth Sports equipment grant to assist with the replacement of outfield fencing that is needed.

Perry Vetter, Assistant City Manager, informed Lanners that he will be the appropriate contact moving forward with his request.

Park Board Member Gabler noted that he serves on the BFP board and will recuse himself from any future discussion regarding funding assistance for BFP.

Derek Diesen, 131525 Larken Drive, addressed the park board and distributed related documents associated with concerns he had in relation to the collection of park dedication fees connected to project developments that include the provision of park or trail amenities on private property. He also wanted to make the park board aware that staff and council had not been responsive to members and had not responded to his past concerns. Raarup noted that the board can't take action on

items not published on the agenda and thanked Diesen for his information. She noted that all documents would be turned over to the appropriate staff for review.

4. Business Items

A. Consideration of plans for potential pickleball enhancements at Meadow Park

Darin Ellingson, Streets and Parks Operations Manager, presented information related to the item, noting that at the August 5, 2015 park board meeting, a request was made by Minnetonka resident David Allen, Minnetonka Pickleball Coordinator, to consider removing tennis from the existing court at Meadow Park and make it a dedicated space for pickleball. As a result of the discussion, the park board directed staff to explore the feasibility and develop cost estimates to expand the existing two tennis courts to dedicated pickleball courts.

Ellingson reported that staff selected WSB & Associates to prepare a concept plan for the court expansion and the associated costs. He noted that the recommended space for a single pickleball court is 34'x64', with a minimum of 30'x60'. In addition, the existing court surface would accommodate the recommended 34' width, but would have to be extended approximately 9 feet to meet the 60' minimum length to provide playing space for six courts. He added that different options were considered regarding which direction to extend the courts. Due to wetlands on the north and west sides, Ellingson indicated that expansion is only available on the east and south sides and that it is best to keep the courts oriented in a north-south position to minimize sun glare in the eyes of the players, leaving expansion to the south as the only viable option. Also noted, the expansion to the south will require realignment of the existing trail, and relocation of four medium size trees and slightly reduce the size of the open skating rink.

Ellingson explained that the project would also require the court to be reconstructed. He reported that given the age of the existing surface, the possible effects of subgrade irregularities after removing the old net posts, and differential settling where the expansion would meet the existing court, it is best to reconstruct the court to provide a long lasting surface. The perimeter fence will need to be taken down to facilitate construction regardless of the method chosen to expand the court surface. Ellingson also reviewed plans for a six foot high fence with a top safety rail that would be installed between the courts to minimize interruption of play from other courts.

Ellingson reported that the estimated cost for the concept as presented including contingency and design fees is \$148,112. Due to the scope of the project and associated cost, these improvements would not be able to be completed as part of the park department's annual operating budget, and would need to be funded through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The park board will be reviewing the 2017 – 2021 CIP at the March 2, 2016 meeting.

Ellingson asked for feedback from park board members.

Kist asked why expanding to the south would require such a significant loss of space for the general ice skating rink area. Ellingson explained that moving the trail would require a gradual slope from the courts that are positioned at a higher grade.

Raarup asked for an assessment of problems related to the relocation of pickleball courts on the existing hockey rink surface. Ellingson explained that the primary reason for problems incurred is related to the poor soils the hockey rinks are constructed on. He noted that the two eastern courts have ruts due to the poor soil conditions, and added that the net posts have heaved for the same reasons.

Hearing no further park board member questions, Raarup opened the floor to comments from pickleball enthusiasts present at the meeting.

David Allan, 16528 Hidden Valley Road, indicated that the 60' court length is primarily a safety issue, noting that a 64' court allows for the required 44' playing area and a 10' base area. He explained that a 60' court would allow for only an 8' base area which could be a safety concern and might not meet national standards for hosting tournaments if desired. Allan noted that the 8' base area would be an improvement over the existing 5.5' area currently provided on the four courts located on the Meadow Park tennis courts.

Joe Durkin, 14207 Spring Lake Road, echoed Allan's assessment and reiterated that the current 5.5 base area is a safety concern and 10' would be ideal and meet national standards for tournament play.

Allan noted that he was not sure, but thought an 8' base would be allowed for tournament play. He also added that he has seen a deterioration of the court surface over the past year and felt that major maintenance was needed to the courts and would be delivered with the presented plan.

Considerable discussion took place with respect to how the fencing between the courts would be provided, as well as placement of the access gates to the courts. No final decisions were decided

Charles Houghton, 14701 Wellington Road, asked if any complaints had been voiced from neighbors regarding noise from pickleball play. Staff indicated that to their knowledge none had been received. Houghton suggested that the courts be color coded similar to those provided in Chanhassen.

Ivy Chang, 15524 Highwood Drive, questioned why WSB was the only construction estimate received and no other firms. Ellingson explained that WSB served as a consultant for the project and is not, and will not, bid on the project if it goes to construction.

Mimi Scribner, 5364 Miracle Lane, asked if lighting was an option for the new courts when they are constructed. Ellingson indicated that lighting was not included in the plan and would need to be discussed further.

Gabler asked about the level of lighting the courts would need and indicated that including lighting with the improvements being discussed would be the appropriate time to do so. Vetter commented that the addition of any lighting should be reviewed with the neighborhood prior to any recommendations being developed.

Jo Colleran, Natural Resources Division Manager, indicated to the park board that the project might very well need to go to the Planning Commission due to the city's wetland setback process. Colleran noted that any expansion of the court would likely require that a wetland delineation be conducted.

Allan commented that the courts, if done correctly, could last another 50 years before major work would need to be done on them.

Hearing no further comments, Johnson indicated that staff would review the cost of lighting the courts, determine if further expansion was possible to extend the courts from 60' to 64' in playing area, and review options for fencing between courts and access gates and report back to the board at the March meeting.

B. Natural Resources Division's Annual Report and Education and Outreach Plan

Colleran provided the overview of the Natural Resource Division's 2015 Annual Report and 2016 Education and Outreach Plan.

In reviewing the 2015 Annual Report, Colleran made special note of the following 2015 accomplishments:

Water Resource Protection

- Natural resources and engineering staff collaborated to complete the city's 2015 Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit and identified and tracked the information required to complete the 2014 annual report.
- Wetland related technical assistance was provided on approximately 200 occasions to land owners and developers.

Development Review

- Staff reviewed 49 development and engineering projects
- Eight acres of conservation easements were acquired bringing the total number of acres in the city to 194
- Staff reviewed 312 building and grading permits

Forestry Activities

- For the 20th year in a row, the City received a Tree City USA designation
- Staff finalized the details relating to herbicide damage caused by Imprelis that damaged 160 trees and required 97 to be removed.

- Staff continued to develop and refine plans for addressing the Emerald Ash Borer through injections, removal of at risk trees and the planting of new trees.
- Staff implemented a new tree injection program to residents to protect ash and elm trees
- Approximately 260 trees were watered weekly by seasonal staff

Habitat Restoration Activities

- Staff is managing over 310 acres of city land, including all five community parks
- Habitat restoration was conducted in 18 parks
- Staff reported that garlic mustard is “under control” in our highest value restoration areas but requires a full complement of resources to maintain the work done.

Education Activities

- Staff held the 6th annual Native Plant and Eco Fun Fest event.
- Staff conducted the Eco Series of Walks and Talks
- Staff submitted 19 electronic billboard messages
- Staff hosted the NEMO west metro winter road management workshop
- Staff implemented the Park Board’s Pet Waste Reduction Campaign

Colleran continued with a review of planned 2016 Minnetonka Memo articles, a review of topics for the 2016 Eco Series of Walks and Talks, and the schedule for 2016 billboard messaging. Colleran noted that she and her staff are always looking for new and improved ideas and are open for suggestions.

Colleran reviewed plans for the new Ripple Effect schedule to be placed on the city employee Intranet. She explained that the intent of the program was to educate city staff so that everyone is receiving the same information.

Colleran asked for feedback from the park board.

Evenrud reported that he found the Minnetonka Memo information on organic/compostable collections very educational and plans to collect his free bin and bags; as well as to contact his collection service. He also noted that he plans to purchase a tree in the upcoming tree sale. Colleran commented that Ellingson was responsible for obtaining the County grant that provides the organics incentives to residents.

Seveland asked if staff plans to or has conducted a pollinator workshop. Colleran indicated that staff worked with Eden Prairie to provide a workshop in 2015 and will be doing another in 2016.

C. Review of 2015 Athletic Field Use and Consideration of 2016 fee structure

Mike Pavelka, Facilities Division Manager, noted that the city of Minnetonka provides athletic fields for a variety of community and city sponsored programs. Field fees were originally established in 2010 by the park board to streamline field reservations, process fees, and generate funds for operational maintenance and future capital projects (67% of revenue assigned to general operations and 33% to a capital fund for future upgrades to fields). Pavelka reported that the park board previously reviewed fees for 2012, 2013 and again for 2014. He added that the last fee change made by the park board was to 2014 category C fees (less than 50% resident participation OR non-resident).

In 2015, Pavelka reported that reserved field hours totaled 4,573 compared to 4,639 in 2014. Revenues totaled \$29,504 compared to \$27,648 in 2014. Sales tax accounted for \$760 of total revenue leaving net revenue at \$28,744. The amount allocated to the capital fund for future field upgrades is \$9,485.

Pavelka closed by noting that staff was not recommending any changes to athletic field use fees in 2016. He noted that previous changes made by the park board have resulted in more efficient use of the fields overall.

5. Park Board Member Reports

None

6. Information Items

Johnson provided an update on the Kids Fest event that was held on January 24th and attended by an estimated 2,500 people. He thanked Acomb for the volunteer assistance he provided for the event.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

The upcoming 6-month schedule included in the meeting packet was reviewed. No changes to meeting dates or times were made.

8. Adjournment

Raarup adjournment the meeting at 9:10 p.m.