

**1. Roll Call**

Park Board members in attendance included Jack Acomb, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Elise Raarup and Madeline Seveland. Staff members in attendance included Jo Colleran, Ann Davy, Darin Ellingson, Dave Johnson, Kelly O’Dea, Mike Pavelka and Sara Woeste.

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

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Evenrud moved and Gabler seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of April 6, 2016 as submitted. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.

**3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda**

None

**4. Business Items**

**A. Neighborhood Meeting – Civic Center Athletic Field Lighting**

Sara Woeste, Recreation Services Programming and Special Events Manager, provided the introduction. Woeste noted that the 2012 Athletic Field Needs Study (AFNS) indicates that the most significant needs related to athletic fields in the city are for field sports such as soccer, lacrosse, football and rugby. Woeste further noted that the AFNS recommends the lighting of existing fields such as the Civic Center to address the shortages in place.

Woeste indicated that the Civic Center fields are designated primarily for youth use. Woeste added that the use of lights in the summer time would be minimal, with the greatest need being in the months of May, September and October. To be consistent with other lighted fields in the city, the lights at the Civic Center would not be permitted for use past 9:45 p.m.

Woeste closed by stating that the lighting of the fields is contingent upon park board and city council approval; as well as successfully receiving a Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant for the project. Woeste noted that the application process will be this fall and that city funding is included in the 2017 Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

Woeste introduced Craig Gallop of Musco Lighting. Gallop indicated that he has been a resident of Minnetonka for about 25 years and has been involved in the lighting of several athletic fields in the city. Gallop noted that the Civic Center

provides the ideal lighting situation due to the proximity of the nearest homes by his estimates being over 500 feet away.

Gallop provided a brief history of athletic field lighting to illustrate how far lighting has come. Gallop mentioned that the latest trend is moving from standard metal halide lighting to LED lighting. While currently more expensive, Gallop indicated that he feels the cost for LED lighting will begin to come down over the next few years. Gallop reviewed light spill designs in place, warranty information, and indicated that the lights would be controlled through technology so that they can only be programmed for use by city staff.

Chair Raarup opened the floor to resident comments.

Vincent Troy, 14852 Timberhill Road asked what the expected cost of the project was. Gallop responded that LED lighting would cost \$165,000 compared to \$128,000 for metal halide. Woeste added that the CIP includes \$75,000 in city costs and \$75,000 through a Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant. Troy asked what the cost for maintenance would be. Gallop indicated that maintenance was included in the cost.

Earl Jensen, 14855 Timberhill Road, asked if the mailing had gone to residents on the north side of the creek. Woeste indicated it had. Jensen provided a history of past opposition residents from north of the creek; namely their concerns several years back regarding a community building being placed on that site. Jensen then asked if there would be adequate parking for the increased play. Woeste responded that there would not be an increase in the number of people on site at any given time, only that the hours of play could be extended in the months of May, September and October.

Jane Sweet, 3124 Minnehaha Creek, indicated that when the fields were constructed, neighbors were told there would not be lights. Sweet added that from her property, she can see increased lighting from city buildings and parking areas. Thus, she believes that the field lighting will be visible from her home. Darin Ellingson, Public Works Streets & Parks Operations Manager, reported that the city's engineering department is working on a campus-wide plan to program lights more efficiently and economically. Ellingson felt that this would reduce the impact nearby residents might be currently seeing.

Vincent Troy, 14852 Timberhill Road asked if there would be increased costs for labor on the fields. Ellingson indicated there would not be additional costs.

Hearing no further requests from resident comments, Raarup closed the public comments portion of the meeting and asked for park board member questions and comments.

Acomb asked for an explanation on the differences between LED and metal halide lighting. Gallop responded by saying that LED lighting has tighter spill control, requires less electrical use and has an immediate on/off ability unlike metal halide that takes time to cool and regenerate.

Kvam asked if there were any athletic field LED applications in the immediate are. Gallop indicated there were not. Gabler asked if this lighting would require a 4-post system. Gallop indicated it would. Gabler asked about the sports that would benefit from the addition of lighting. Woeste indicated that primarily soccer, lacrosse and football would benefit.

Evenrud commented that when the fields were constructed back in 2005, there was a likelihood that lighting was not a priority at that time. Evenrud feels that with increased play, it is now more of a need than it was back in 2005. Evenrud then asked if field management practices would need to change due to increased play on the fields. Ellingson responded that the fields handle the current level of use well and that his department would need to monitor the turf for any new concerns due to increased play.

Hearing no further questions, Woeste thanked those in attendance for their comments and noted that the item will come back to the park board on September 7, 2016 for final consideration.

## **B. Consideration of Pickleball site recommendations**

Woeste provided an introduction to the item and informed the board that in response to a related article in the Minnetonka Memo, a total of 16 residents responded. Those responses were best summarized by those wishing to convert the Meadow Park tennis courts to pickleball (2), those opposed to converting the tennis courts at Meadow Park (11), those wanting courts in general (3) and one person suggesting adding sport courts to the Meadow Park hockey rink.

Woeste reported that the Memo article mentioned three potential options to addressing pickleball in the park system that includes:

1. Converting tennis courts at Meadow
2. Adding new courts at Lone Lake
3. Working with a local school district to partner with on courts

Woeste noted that talks with both the Minnetonka and Hopkins School Districts have not provided possible options due to a variety of factors that include current demand for tennis, lack of available space to construct new courts, lack of a pickleball curriculum in both District's, and parking and traffic concerns during school hours.

Ellingson provided a review of three concepts currently being studied by staff. The concepts include the following:

1. Converting the existing tennis courts at Meadow Park to permanent pickleball and expanding the number of courts from four to six. Estimated cost is \$148,000, however there are unknowns as far as tree loss and wetland impacts.
2. Lone Lake Park – 8 court option, includes sun shelter for players waiting at a total cost of \$336,853 (construction and contingency costs). This option would also require the Hillside picnic shelter to be relocated at an additional cost of \$45,000.
3. Lone Lake Park – 6 court option, includes sun shelter for players waiting at a total cost of \$265,342 (construction and contingency costs). This option would also require the Hillside picnic shelter to be relocated at an additional cost of \$45,000.

Ellingson indicated that variations of the two Lone Lake options could allow for six courts to initially be constructed and 2 courts added at a later time if so desired. Ellingson also noted that there are six trees that would need to be removed in order to get the courts in place as shown in both Lone Lake Park concepts. These trees range in size from 17” to 23” and are comprised of two ash, two basswood and a silver maple.

Woeste closed the staff presentation by noting that the current Capital Improvements Program includes \$310,000 in 2018 for the addition of pickleball courts to the city’s park system.

Raarup asked for park board member questions to staff. Hearing none, she opened the floor for public comments.

David Allan, 16528 Hidden Valley Rd, Minnetonka, asked a clarifying question related to the 8 court option at Lone Lake Park. Allan wondered if there was enough room to stack the courts north/south without getting too close to the forest tree line. Ellingson indicated that this option was reviewed and determined that there would be significant impact to trees, as well increased grading and retaining wall costs. Allan voiced support for the 8-court option at Lone Lake Park and indicated that if constructed Minnetonka would have a state of the art pickleball facility.

Frank Stucki, no address provided, indicated that he lives near Meadow Park and prefers to keep pickleball at that location as well as to complete the project as economically as possible. Stucki asked if expansion could occur into the open green space east of the existing tennis courts. Woeste indicated that the area mentioned is required to support the summer playground program for youth.

Joe Durkin, 14207 Spring Lake Road, asked a clarifying question wanting to confirm that the courts, if constructed at Meadow Park, would be less than the \$310,000 currently scheduled in the CIP. Ellingson indicated that this would be the case as far as staff is currently aware, however there may be issues related to the wetlands if the courts are expanded. Jo Colleran, Natural Resources Division Manager, mentioned that any expansion would require significant exploration. Durkin then asked Allan if he supported the Lone Lake site over Meadow and Allan indicated that he did.

Skip Houghton, 14701 Wellington Road, noted that other communities have constructed new courts or converted existing tennis courts and wondered if staff has talked to any of these communities. Woeste replied that staff has toured some locations and talked to other cities about their approach to adding pickleball. Woeste noted that the recent courts added in Edina were done as a result of a private gift to the city.

Hearing no further comments, Raarup closed the public comment portion of the meeting and asked for park board comments.

Kvam asked staff if it could be determined what has caused the Meadow Park tennis courts to deteriorate and asked if it could be the sub-soil conditions. Ellingson indicated that it was likely soils, however no soil samples have been completed. Kvam asked if Ellingson thought that Lone Lake soil conditions would be better. Ellingson said he thought they would be. Evenrud asked if staff was confident that the Lone Lake Park soils would be suitable, Ellingson responded that it looked promising.

Kvam asked Allan what was required to host sanctioned tournaments. Allan responded that courts in groupings of four are preferred, eight courts being optimal. Kvam then noted that the Lone Lake proposal included a \$30,000 sun shelter for players relaxing or waiting to play on a court. Kvam noticed that the Meadow Park plans did not have the sun shelter included and pointed out that this was part of the cost difference between the different plans. Ellingson concurred, noting that this feature was something staff noticed on a tour of the Apple Valley facility.

Evenrud liked that the restrooms at Lone Lake would be in close proximity, noting that previous plans reviewed in Lone Lake did not have that availability.

Kist asked why neighbors have expressed concern regarding permanent pickleball courts at Meadow Park. Woeste responded that concerns were primarily based on the loss of tennis in the park and not issues related to the sport of pickleball. She noted that most neighbors have expressed support for continued shared use of the court.

Raarup asked if eliminating a hockey rink at Meadow Park would be an option. Dave Johnson, Recreation Services Director, indicated that both rinks receive heavy use in the winter and noted that Meadow Park is typically the highest attended rink in Minnetonka. Ellingson added that soil conditions would not be good for converting rinks to permanent courts. Raarup asked what the time table would be for researching wetland restrictions. Ellingson could not provide a date, noting that it will require extensive work.

Kvam asked if the picnic shelter at Lone Lake would be moved or a new one built. Ellingson indicated that moving it might be an option but felt construction of a new one would be more beneficial.

Raarup asked how many courts other cities are building when they construct new courts. Woeste indicated that she will research that date and report back.

Hearing no further comments or questions from the board, Woeste summarized the process moving forward. Woeste indicated that staff will report back at the September 7 meeting with information on the number of courts other cities are constructing. She noted that staff will be requesting direction at that meeting on how to proceed.

## **5. Park Board Member Reports**

Kvam reported that Hennepin County Commissioner Jan Callison has appointed Kvam to represent District 6 on the Hennepin County Bicycle Advisory Committee. Kvam also reminded the board of the upcoming Tour de Tonka event.

Gabler shared a book recently published by a long time Bennet Family Park supporter related to woodpecker sightings at the park. Gabler also brought to staff's attention some trail sections that could use brush trimming to improve sight lines.

Evenrud reported on a successful Minnetonka Summer Festival despite challenging weather conditions.

## **6. Information Items**

Ann Davy, Recreation Services Programming Division Manager, reported that Shady Oak Beach has experienced a successful summer to date. She informed the board that daily pass sales are 2,600 higher than the same period in 2015, as well as equipment rentals (+131) and facility visits (+1,500).

Johnson reported that the city council recently approved the purchase of the property used for Pioneer Park from Faith Presbyterian Church. He indicated that

the City and Church have partnered in the operation of the park since 2001 and the 15 year agreement ends December 31, 2016.

**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 adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.