

1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included Jack Acomb, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Marvin Puspoki, 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

Gabler moved and Kist seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of August 3, 2016 as submitted. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

None.

4. Business Items

A. Consideration of a staff recommendation to add sports lighting to the Civic Center athletic fields

Sara Woeste, Recreation Services Programming and Special Events Manager, provided the introduction and began by summarizing the neighborhood meeting conducted by the park board at the September 7, 2016 meeting. She noted that no major concerns were expressed by the neighbors however questions related to cost, parking and light spill impacting homes north of the creek were asked. Woeste then summarized lighting cost information provided at the meeting by Craig Gallop of Musco Lighting. She indicated that Gallop reported on two types of lighting were available including metal halide at a cost of \$128,000 and LED lighting at a cost of \$165,000. Woeste noted that if the metal halide option was selected by the board, staff would offset the city's funding amount of \$75,000 with a grant application of \$53,000 from the Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant (HCYSG) program. And if LED lighting was selected, the grant amount would be \$90,000. Woeste closed by noting that LED lighting provides improved spill control and more efficient energy use. Woeste indicated that, if approved, the lights be shut down by 9:45 daily to be consistent with other youth fields in the city.

Woeste requested feedback or questions from the park board members.

Gabler asked if all athletic field lights are shut down on city fields by 9:45 p.m. Dave Johnson, Recreation Services Director, responded that all youth fields are required to be shut down by 9:45 p.m., in part to be consistent with an ordinance

requiring parks be closed at 10 p.m. He noted that the only exception is Big Willow Park, where adult fields are provided and can stay lit as late as 11 p.m.

Puspoki noted that he was not in attendance at the August meeting and asked if a payback period was provided by Musco Lighting for LED lights. Woeste indicated that a payback comparison was not provided, Darin Ellingson, Public Works Streets and Parks Operations Manager, indicated that based on his experience with other applications of LED lighting, the additional cost for LED lighting verses metal halide would be covered over the time of the lights.

Kvam noted that Xcel Energy provides rebates for LED lighting due to their energy efficiency. She added that while Musco indicated that there were no local athletic field installations of LED lighting, she reviewed the Musco Lighting website and noted that they have provided LED lighting for several major projects including the White House and Mount Rushmore.

Raarup asked if the added amount needed for LED lighting would reduce the City's chances for receiving a grant. Johnson responded that based on what he has seen for project matches for past projects, he felt that the added amount for LED lighting would not be a negative factor.

Evenrud voiced support for going with LED lighting, adding that the concerns expressed by one resident residing on the north side of the Minnehaha Creek would be better addressed with LED lighting.

Raarup noted that there were no residents in attendance for this item and asked if there were any additional questions or comments from the board. Hearing none, she entertained a motion.

Gabler moved and Evenrud seconded a motion to recommend the addition of LED lighting to the Civic Center athletic fields; and to apply for a project grant through the Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant Program. Evenrud, Kist, Gabler, Kvam, Puspoki, Raarup and Seveland voted "Yes", Acomb abstained due to a full board in attendance. Motion carried.

Johnson noted that contingent upon successfully applying for and receiving a grant, staff will bring the Comprehensive Athletic Field Use Policy back to the board at a later date for consideration of changes related to the use of lights in Civic Center Park.

B. Consideration of Pickleball site concepts

Woeste provided an introduction to the item and a brief review of the options reviewed at the August park board meeting which included the following:

1. Converting the existing tennis courts at Meadow Park to permanent pickleball courts and increasing the number of courts from four to six. Estimated cost is \$148,000, however there are unknowns, both logistically and financially, related to tree loss and wetland impacts.
2. Lone Lake Park – 8 court option, includes a 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.

In addition, Woeste reviewed the research staff had completed related to the number of courts other cities provided at a single location and in general. The information provided by Apple Valley, Bloomington, Chanhassen, Edina, Maple Grove and Richfield indicated varying amounts of courts at single locations ranging from 3 to 8. The number of total courts provided per city also ranged from 5 to 14. Woeste noted that most of the cities polled have multiple locations for pickleball courts, noting that if the park board recommends a new facility at Lone Lake Park, maintaining the multi-purpose courts and/or the courts placed on the tennis courts is an option as well.

Raarup asked whether all of the courts listed on the cities' surveyed are dedicated courts for pickleball. Woeste responded that both dedicated and multi-purpose courts are included in the survey. Raarup asked if it was correct that both pickleball and tennis players do not prefer multi-use courts. Ellingson responded that he did not feel that was the case, he noted that the pickleball courts at Meadow are slightly smaller than regulation, however they are still playable and he has not heard otherwise. Kvam added that the need for a lock box for nets and equipment is the main issue of concern expressed.

Kist asked if staff has a timeline for reconstructing the sub-surface on the Meadow Park courts due to wear and tear. Ellingson responded that the project is not yet scheduled in the CIP, however repainting of the surface is scheduled for 2017. Kist pointed out that resurfacing the Meadow Park courts will need to be done in multiple years and she felt that the Meadow Park option is a more difficult option than either of the Lone Lake Park options.

Kvam asked for a summary of why Meadow Park was initially selected as the location for the existing pickleball courts. Johnson responded saying that Meadow was selected because staff had recommended to the board that a neighborhood park not be designated as the primary pickleball site due to the

lack of infrastructure i.e., parking and restrooms to support heavy use. He went on to say that the only community parks that had tennis were Meadow and Lone Lake. Meadow was selected because there are only two tennis courts, and Lone Lake is considered a primary tennis location due to the availability of 4 courts.

Kvam asked staff if pickleball courts can be converted to other uses should the sport decline in popularity in the future. Ellingson responded that yes, the courts could be converted to a variety of other uses including tennis, basketball or shuffleboard.

Evenrud noted that he was concerned about how the courts could be used if demand declines and appreciated Ellingson's response. He added that he sees the popularity of the sport and the needs for permanent courts in Minnetonka and supports constructing 8 courts at Meadow Park,

Raarup supported Evenrud's comments and asked if the budget can support the construction of eight courts. Ellingson indicated that there is \$310,000 in the CIP budget for 2018, and noted that the cost for the 8 court option is \$336,853. He suggested that either cuts could be made to the plan or the eight court plan could be reduced to six with two courts added at a later time.

Kvam noted that she supported building eight courts now and delaying the addition of the \$30,000 sun shelter to allow for the project to meet the budgeted amount.

Seveland agreed with Kvam, adding that she would be concerned with building six courts then never getting to the point of adding the additional two.

Raarup opened the floor to public comments noting that only one person was in attendance.

David Allan, 16528 Hidden Valley Road, Minnetonka, voiced support for building eight courts at Lone Lake, noting that eight courts would allow for flexibility and availability for players of all ability levels.

Hearing no further comments, Raarup closed the floor to public comments.

Kvam asked if staff had researched courts constructed with the sports court surface. Ellingson indicated he had not. Johnson added that the sport court surface could be explored once a location is recommended and final plans are developed.

Gabler asked about the possibility of a public/private partnership in an effort to save dollars. Johnson responded that these types of partnerships have proven to be successful when the amenity being constructed has a single use or

designated association it is being constructed for such as an ice arena. Johnson explained that public amenities such as pickleball courts are more difficult to form partnerships around.

Hearing no further comments, Gabler moved and Evenrud seconded a motion to recommend to the city council the construction of eight dedicated pickleball courts at Lone Lake Park, eliminating the addition of a sun shelter if the budget does not allow for it. Evenrud, Kist, Gabler, Kvam, Puspoki, Raarup and Seveland voted “Yes”, Acomb abstained due to a full board in attendance. Motion carried.

C. Receive a request for the addition of mountain biking trails

Johnson informed the board that staff had recently been contacted by Ben Marks, a Minnetonka resident with a request for the city to consider the addition of mountain biking trails in the city to help meet the growing demand for such trails. Johnson explained to the board that he has worked with Marks to prepare for addressing the park board with his initial request and introduced Marks to the Board.

Marks informed the Board that he is a 20-year resident of the city who has an active interest in mountain biking recreationally. Marks noted that he had submitted a letter explaining his desire for the city to consider adding mountain biking trails to the Minnetonka park system in the Board’s meeting packet and asked if the Board had any initial questions or specific items for him to address before he introduced other supporters in attendance. Kvam noted that she was a road cyclist and prefers longer trails and routes. She asked if the Minnetonka park system provided the room necessary to build trails long enough to benefit mountain biking. Marks responded that his hope is that a series of shorter trails, hopefully in the range of five miles, could be connected by the city’s existing trail system. Then look at the possibility of expanding that even further in the future if possible. Marks added that the average speed of mountain bikers is 7 MPH, meaning that a five mile trail would provide significant benefit.

Marks indicated that Johnson had provided details related to the discussions the park board and council had related to a request made for mountain biking trails approximately 20 years ago. He noted that this request was denied and felt that the reasons for denial, specifically the cost and method for constructing trails, has evolved to the point where most of these earlier concerns no longer exist.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Marks introduced others in the room who support the addition of mountain biking trails. Those introduced included:

Jason Stukel, Minnetonka High School mountain biking coach

Logan Cummings, Minnetonka student and mountain biking athlete
Eleanor Dolan, Minnetonka student and mountain biking athlete
Tim Vossberg, Chanhassen High School mountain biking coach
Ben Johnson, Hopkins High School mountain biking coach

Stukel addressed the Board and noted that as a coach, it is difficult to take his athletes to locations outside of the city to practice. He added that the city's off road system does not provide the skill set that mountain bikers need to train appropriately. Stukel indicated that he supports Mark's vision of a series of trails in multiple parks that would be connected by the city's trail system. Puspoki asked how many teams are participating in the sport of High School Mountain Biking in the metro. Stukel responded that the number was approximately 750 riders statewide. Responding to a question from Puspoki, Stukel informed the board that the Minnetonka School District does not provide funding for the sport. He indicated that each student is responsible for their own gear and also pay a required activity fee. Puspoki asked if the sport was considered a club sport and Stukel responded that it varied, with Minnetonka not being a letter sport but working towards achieving that goal.

Ben Johnson indicated that mountain biking was a letter sport in Hopkins with 32 students on the team.

Vossberg indicated that teams travel as far as Wisconsin to compete, noting that there were no metro area races held last year due to a lack of trails and sites that can accommodate parking and other related needs. Puspoki asked if the proposal coming from interested mountain bikers would accommodate the need for larger events. Stukel responded that it would not be an event site but would be a valuable practice and recreational site.

Seveland asked those in attendance what they were looking for in respect to mountain biking trails. Marks indicated that the desire is for fun trails constructed with a width of 12 to 18 inches in width that utilize the landscape and existing trees and vegetation. He indicated that these trails are typically one-way and multi-purpose meaning walkers and others are permitted to be on them.

Evenrud asked if trails would include features such as ramps. Marks indicated they would not.

Cummings informed the Board that he is a junior at Minnetonka High School and has been involved in the sport since he was a freshman. He noted that he and his friends used Purgatory Park for mountain biking prior to signs be posted prohibiting the activity. He noted that he had previously tried other sports, only to connect with Mountain biking. Cummings reported that ages for the sport range from students in grades 6 thru 12, with several of the team members using the

sport of mountain biking to train for other sports. He closed by saying that the technical ability of the sport can't be learned on the city's general trail system.

Dolan indicated that she was a student at Minnetonka Middle School West and has been involved in the sport of mountain biking for the past five years. She stated that the sport helps reduce stress and allows her to be active instead. Raarup asked Dolan what a typical practice/event schedule was for her during the season. Dolan indicated that it was 2 practices and one event per week.

Gabler cited concern for mountain biking being contained to a single location and asked for confirmation that those in attendance were requesting smaller trails off of the existing trail system maintain year around. Marks confirmed that was the request, noting that the problems at Purgatory Park are an example of how a single location can be too heavily used by a variety of activities.

Kvam asked staff to research the possibilities of working with the city of Hopkins in partnership and/or researching the possibility of utilizing land along the trail that parallels 494 from Minnetonka Boulevard to 394.

Acomb asked for confirmation that the trails being requested would be available for multi-use. Marks indicated that they would.

Raarup asked what other metro area communities are doing to meet the growing demand for mountain biking. Vossberg reported on efforts with the city of Stillwater and Oak Park Heights. Raarup asked how his school (Chanhassen) is addressing the shortage. Vossberg said that he is working with Three Rivers and also the city of Chaska on the possibility of adding trails to an existing 60 acre park. Vossberg also reported that the city of Lakeville recently authorized \$85,000 to build trails.

Vossberg indicated that the cost to build trails is approximately \$20,000 per mile. He indicated that MORC (Minnesota off Road Cycling) is responsible for maintaining most of the mountain biking trails in Minnesota.

Seveland indicated that she was concerned about erosion that would occur with the construction of trails in the natural areas. She asked how steep trails would protect against erosion. Vossberg responded that trails are not constructed vertically for that reason, and are instead constructed to circle hills.

Dave Johnson reported that staff has recently received requests for the consideration of adding a BMX biking course in the city as well. He asked for an explanation of the differences in the sport. Ben Johnson responded that BMX biking is typically of interest to younger riders ages 6 to 15 and conducted on wider oval tracks.

Jo Colleran, Natural Resources Division Manager, added that she believes much of the damage in Purgatory Park is a result of BMX features such as ramps and jumps being constructed. She thanked those in attendance for starting this dialog, explaining that a positive solution is beneficial to everyone involved.

Marks mentioned the VANTAGE program, an accelerated program offered by Minnetonka School District for students interested the business world. He suggested that further research related to mountain biking might be provided by these students. Dave Johnson indicated that he has worked with similar groups in the past and would be willing to work with the VANTAGE students if they express an interest.

Marks closed by thanking the Board for their time and attention.

Hearing no further comments, Kvam moved and Gabler seconded a motion to direct staff to conduct further research into the possibility of adding mountain biking trials in the Minnetonka park system, including possible partnerships to design, construct and maintain trails, and report back to the park board prior to discussions on projects to be included in the 2018-2022 Capital Improvements Program. Evenrud, Kist, Gabler, Kvam, Puspoki, Raarup and Seveland voted "Yes", Acomb abstained due to a full board in attendance. Motion carried.

D. Consideration of a partnership to restore habitat on Minnetonka School District and City of Minnetonka property

Colleran introduced Matt Compka from Barr Engineering who provided a presentation explaining the history of property owned by the Minnetonka School District at Scenic Heights Elementary School and used for the schools environmental curriculum. Compka explained that the Riley-Purgatory Creek Watershed District has grant funding available through the DNR's Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program and that they anticipate applying for a grant of approximately \$315,000 to assist in expenses to provide restoration to the area that is 1.25 acres in size. Compka further explained that the school districts property also abuts city park land at Purgatory Park that would also benefit from the restoration dollars if the grant is successful. He explained that his reason for being in front of the board this evening was to gain the park board's authorization to apply for the grant on behalf of both the School District and City of Minnetonka.

Kist asked if the project would require any additional city funding and/or staff time to administer. Compka responded that no city funding would be required, however staff administrative assistance required by no actual labor.

Raarup asked how the School District benefits from the proposal. Compka responded that a curriculum will be developed to involve and educate students throughout the process. Evenrud asked if additional curriculum options would be

developed. Compka indicated that increased opportunities would become available in the areas of water quality and native species knowledge.

Puspoki indicated that his children have benefitted from the students access to this property in the past and he would welcome the added curriculum.

Kist asked what the timetable for the project would be. Compka responded that, if the grant is successful, work would start this winter after a qualified contractor is selected.

Kvam asked Colleran if there were any potential negatives to the city's involvement in this grant application. Colleran indicated that there were no concerns, adding that the city will need to continue restoration efforts whether the grant is approved or not.

Hearing no further comments, Evenrud moved and Kist seconded a motion to approve the restoration partnership and authorize the park board chair and Recreation Services Director to sign off on the letter of intent. Evenrud, Kist, Gabler, Kvam, Puspoki, Raarup and Seveland voted "Yes", Acomb abstained due to a full board in attendance. Motion carried.

5. Park Board Member Reports

Kvam reported on the successful Hopkins Royal Triathlon that was held at Shady Oak Beach and the surrounding area on Saturday, September 3, 2016.

6. Information Items

No additional items were discussed in addition to the information included in the meeting packet.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

No additional items were discussed in addition to the calendar included in the meeting packet.

8. Adjournment

Raarup adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.