

1. Roll Call

City Council members in attendance included Mayor Terry Schneider, Patty Acomb, Dick Allendorf, Tim Bergstedt, Tony Wagner and Brad Wiersum. Park Board members in attendance included Board Chair Elise Raarup, Jack Acomb, Geralyn Barone, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Marvin Puspoki and Madeline Seveland. Staff members in attendance included Jo Colleran, Ann Davy, Darin Ellingson, Corrine Heine, Dave Johnson, Kathy Kline, Kelly O'Dea, Susan Svec and Perry Vetter.

Park Board Chair Raarup called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Business Items

A. Report from the Chair

Chair Raarup provided a summary of 2016 park board activity to date including:

- ✓ Adopted a Strategic Plan in January that includes a mission, vision, four primary goals and related objectives.
- ✓ Approved park and trail projects for the 2017 – 2021 Capital Improvements Program.
- ✓ Conducted a neighborhood meeting in January to review a resident request for a park in the Robinwood neighborhood. The Board approved a concept plan for the park at their March meeting after reviewing the feasibility study and related data. Council approved the park plan for construction in 2018 as part of the CIP adoption.
- ✓ Received natural resource information pertaining to education and outreach efforts, toured the experimental goat grazing project and approved the Scenic Heights Elementary School Forest and Purgatory Park Restoration Partnership.
- ✓ Held a community meeting on the sport of pickleball and included related information in the Minnetonka Memo to obtain resident input. In August, developed a recommendation to add new courts at Lone Lake Park in 2018.
- ✓ Held the 3rd annual Volunteer Recognition event to show appreciation for volunteers who donated their time and efforts to the areas of parks, recreation and natural resources management in 2016.
- ✓ Reviewed budgets and operating policies related to Shady Oak Beach and the use of community athletic fields

- ✓ Conducted a neighborhood meeting related to the proposed lighting of the Civic Center Park athletic field. Recommended to the city council that staff submit a grant request to the Hennepin County Youth Sports Program.
- ✓ Received a request from residents interested in mountain biking and the addition of new trails in the city's park system. Directed staff to work with the group to develop conceptual plans.

Raarup asked for any council questions.

Allendorf asked what the current status was in regards to mountain biking requests made through Minnetonka Matters. Colleran noted that staff met with a group of five interested mountain bikers and walked Big Willow and Civic Center Parks to discuss possibilities for shorter mountain biking segments throughout the park system as opposed to one park being dominated by the activity. Colleran indicated that the group will be making a formal presentation to the park board at the December 7 meeting. Johnson added that he has been working with a resident and members of the Minnetonka High School VANTAGE program who are developing a proposal as part of their curriculum. Raarup added that the sport of mountain biking is of interest and available to students in grades 7 – 12, as well as residents of all ages who enjoy the sport.

B. Guidelines for public requests

Raarup noted that over the past year, the park board has experienced an increased number of requests for new park related amenities being brought forward by interested residents. Examples include requests for new “pocket” parks by residents in the Meadow Ridge and Robinwood neighborhoods, requests for permanent pickleball courts from interested pickleball players and resident requests for the addition of mountain biking trails in the city's park system. Raarup explained that for all of these cases, the initial request was made directly to the park board without a formal or informal introduction being made to the council.

Raarup indicated that the park board anticipates that the recent trend of resident requests for new or enhanced recreational amenities will continue, and could even be enhanced due to the Imagine Minnetonka initiative. She suggested that to better prepare for these requests, a process be considered that would address the following goals:

1. Improve council awareness of requests being made
2. Increase community awareness of requests being made
3. Enhance direction from the council to the park board and city staff on an as needed basis

Bergstedt voiced support for a process that would provide upward communication to the city council so that they were aware of project requests and any timetables involved. He added that he did not feel that the project request had to start at the park board level.

Barone added that staff's major concern was related to the possibility of council members receiving calls supporting or opposing a project that they were not aware of.

Wiersum concurred with Bergstedt and Barone, noting that the park board continuing to receive the request is preferred. He asked what is currently required in order for a resident or group to make their initial request. Wiersum suggested that criteria be set by the board, including funding requirements, if any, of the asking party. Wiersum cited the process used for requesting the addition of a street light in the city where 100% of residents need to be supportive of the request. Wiersum also suggested that specialized requests be considered at a higher level if the funding support accompanies the request.

Acomb requested that an online park board update be developed so that the council can review the activities of the board and be kept current.

Mayor Schneider noted that he felt the park board was doing a great job of vetting requests that come to the city. He agreed with Wiersum that criteria be put in place such as project cost and available funding/donations; as well as operations and maintenance costs. Responding to Wiersum's suggestion for a required support level from a neighborhood, he suggested maybe starting at 50% support.

Johnson noted that the park board currently has a document in place titled "Guidelines for Funding Special Projects", that includes criteria needed to bring a project forward. He indicated that the requests being made by the council this evening could be drafted into the existing document.

Seveland suggested that material be developed that assists those coming forward in organizing their grassroots effort.

Barone suggested the addition of an online project page for all park board projects so that residents can access the most recent information. Wiersum voiced support for this approach.

Allendorf noted that attempts to notify residents by mail often create concerns due to people indicating they were not noticed. He realizes the mail notifications are needed, but added that they can be challenging. He supported the efforts of any on-line project updates.

Gabler suggested that the project request application to the park board also be accessible online. Gabler supported Wiersum's suggestion of specialized groups bringing funding to the table.

Raarup thanked those in attendance for their input and indicated that the park board will take the information provided and develop a process for improving communications moving forward.

C. Review of 2016 Park Board Strategic Plan

Raarup noted that the park board's 2016 Strategic Plan was included as an attachment in the meeting packet. She added that the park board will begin the process of developing their 2017 plan in December and asked for any city council input.

Wiersum noted that the Park Board's Strategic Plan is well prepared and succinct. He added that his only request for 2017 was, under the goal "To Renew and Maintain Parks & Trails", objective number 5 should separately deal with recreational verse trails designed for connectivity.

4. Adjournment

Mayor Schneider thanked the park board for their work and dedication over the past year.

Raarup adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.