

# Agenda Minnetonka Parks & Recreation Board

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

7 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center – Council Chambers

## **P**arks & Recreation

### **Board Vision**

A city with outstanding parks and recreational opportunities within a valued natural environment.

### **Board Mission**

The mission of the Minnetonka Parks & Recreation Board is to proactively advise the City Council, in ways that will:

- » **Protect & enhance** Minnetonka's natural environment
- » **Promote quality** recreation opportunities and facilities
- » **Provide a forum** for citizens interested in our parks, trails, athletic fields and open space

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
  - \_\_\_ Jack Acomb
  - \_\_\_ James Durbin
  - \_\_\_ Chair Nelson Evenrud
  - \_\_\_ Cynthia Kist
  - \_\_\_ Peggy Kvam
  - \_\_\_ Chris Gabler
  - \_\_\_ Madeline Seveland
  - \_\_\_ Chris Walick
3. **Approval of Minutes**
  - A) February 7, 2018
4. **Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the Agenda**
5. **Business Items**
  - A) **Review of the Shady Oak Beach inflatable amenity plan**
6. **Park Board Member Reports**
7. **Information Items**
8. **Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**
9. **Adjournment**

## **Minutes of the Minnetonka Park Board Meeting of February 7, 2018**

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### **1. Roll Call**

Park Board members in attendance included Jack Acomb, James Durbin, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Madeline Seveland and Christopher Walick. Staff members in attendance included Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Ann Davy, Darin Ellingson, Jesse Izquierdo, Kathy Kline, Kelly O'Dea and Sara Woeste.

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

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

Kvam moved, Kist seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of January 3, 2018 as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

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

Luke Van Santen, 2148 Sheridan Hills Road., Minnetonka requested that the park board consider hosting a cyclocross event at one of the parks this summer. There are multiple organizations in the Twin Cities that sponsor and host those on a weekly basis and it seems like that would be a great fit for Minnetonka.

### **4. Business Items**

#### **A. Mountain Biking Report and Public Meeting**

O'Dea had two announcements before mountain biking was discussed. 1). There was an addendum to the packet that was emailed to the park board earlier today. There are hard copies available if anyone is interested. 2). Wanted to discuss the report layout because it is a little bit different than what has been done in the past. Usually the entire report is gone through and then discussion items are at the end. This time we will go section by section and have some discussion after each section.

O'Dea stated that the interest in potential mountain biking trails began with the Imagine Minnetonka visioning process in 2016. A group of residents and high school students approached the park board and then staff began to work with them and Trail Source, Inc. Staff presented concept plans to the park board in June of 2017. The two sites included in that were Big Willow and Civic Center parks. After the concepts were presented, staff heard from residents, people who were supportive of trails and those who had concerns. At that time staff decided to take a step back and engage in a more thorough public engagement process. WSB and Associates were hired and contracted to assist staff with the community engagement process. WSB and Associates came to the October park board meeting and presented three different options. The park board selected

the population-based outreach option which included two focus group meetings and two public meetings. Then a community engagement process started. The first focus group meeting was on Nov. 8. It was geared towards those with concerns about potential mountain bike trails. Some of the concerns heard that evening were: parking, safety, environmental and location. The second focus group meeting was on Nov. 16. It was geared towards those advocating for mountain biking trails within Minnetonka. Some priorities expressed were: location, length of trail, broad-user appeal and design considerations. Two things learned from those focus groups were: 1). Big Willow was the big topic. Location was talked about quite a bit and Big Willow was the main topic that was talked about in both groups. 2). There were a handful of mutual interests amongst both groups. Some of those were environmental protection, minimizing user conflict, safety and ensuring adequate space. Both groups felt strongly about some of the same things. The third event was a community conversation that discussed Big Willow in general but talked about the pros and cons of three different options. 1). Building trails in Big Willow Park 2) Building trails not in Big Willow Park 3). Not building trails at all. The final meeting was another community meeting where staff presented criteria. Criteria was presented to the people who attended and staff asked for feedback. Attendees were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the proposed criteria and on the survey there was space to leave comments.

Walick expressed that it was good that the community engagement process happened and it seemed like people would have liked it earlier. Reading through the comments it seems like when emotions run high people feel like maybe they are not being heard. If something hot comes up like this in the future maybe consider that. Also, one of the things that seemed nice with the fourth one is having more data involved along with the criteria. Something more to latch onto and walk through and explain. Also, reading through some of the comments it kind of felt like people were spinning in circles. If there is something to build onto it seemed like that made a difference.

O'Dea explained that the next section talks about the core criteria that was provided at the January 8 meeting and asked for public feedback. Overwhelmingly, people agreed with the proposed criteria as a whole. Some minor adjustments and additions were made based on some of the feedback. There are a number of comments based on each. The information in blue is something that staff added after that meeting based on the feedback from the meeting on January 8.

**ADEQUATE SPACE**

A trail system should be able to sustain a minimum of 4 miles of single track trails. This could include a single park on its own or a circuit of parks in close proximity to one another. Staff believes that less than 4 miles would not be utilized.

If a circuit of parks is considered, a given park within the circuit should be able to support a minimum of 2 miles of mountain bike trails on its own.

If a circuit of multiple parks are needed, the parks should be located within 1 mile of another and provide safe, easy and navigable travel between each location.

A mountain bike trail system should be within 1 mile of a regional bike trail and provide safe, easy and navigable travel between.

A park must contain a minimum of 20 usable acres to be considered. *Usable Acreage is undeveloped acreage that could be used to build mountain bike trails. Acreage does not include wetlands, creeks, ponds, etc.*

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Trails should be built using the highest standards for development and pursuant of sustainable trail guidelines. This would limit erosion, vegetation loss and water quality problems.

Areas containing uncommon plants and high quality restoration areas (per city natural resources staff) should be avoided.

Generally, narrow trails (approximately 24") should be built to reduce the total area of intensive tread disturbance, slow down trail users and minimize vegetation and soil compaction.

Site should be designed to minimize tree impact and removal.

#### MINIMIZE USER CONFLICT

The majority of existing mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are one-way to avoid head on interactions. If built in Minnetonka, trails should also be one-way.

Mountain bike trails should be built to minimally intersect existing maintained trails and high-use informal foot paths. (High-use informal foot paths are trails that receive similar use as maintained trails and have experienced significant widening, erosion and impact as a result).

Mountain bike trails should not displace existing maintained trails and high-use informal foot paths. (High-use informal foot paths are trails that receive similar use as maintained trails and have experienced significant widening, erosion and impact as a result)

Mountain bike trails should be designated as multi-use (open to runners, bird watchers, hikers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.). Ninety-two percent of all mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities are multi-use.

Adequate parking should be available at each proposed park.

O'Dea commented that those were the criteria that was originally presented and then amended and turned it over to the park board.

Durbin said he called O'Dea earlier this week to talk about the bullet point in the Minimize User Conflict – that has to do with that the bike trails have to be designated as multi-use. He needs a little more information to be able to support

that. In concept he thinks a single track mountain bike trail should be exclusive to minimize user conflict; so as it is written it does not make sense. Durbin says he would fall into the eight percent that thinks they should be separate. A runner or walker should not have to worry about mountain bike traffic. On the converse, mountain bikers should not have to worry about people straying onto trails that are really meant for one thing and that's single track mountain biking. Durbin asked for further explanation.

Izquierdo explained that he has worked with Three Rivers Park District in the past and was influential in a lot of things they did with mountain biking. He has some concept of how the three major trails supported by Three Rivers in the Twin Cities have played out with multi-use. One of the things is that enforcement is a big issue. A lot of bikers would probably like to see trails being designated specifically for mountain bikes but you are still going to get foot traffic. So understanding the concept of how can we educate the public and figure out how these trails can be multi-use is important. The other thing that certain land managers in the Twin Cities have seen is that there is a need from the running community for varying terrain and a narrower trail to heighten their running experience. Runners have become huge advocates of mountain bike trails because it provides them a more nature-based experience when they are out in the woods. Lastly, if you engage other multi-use users, the education piece is really important. If you say a trail is closed, people are going to go use it anyways. If people are not out there enforcing the trails directly, how can you educate users? The big thing with mountain bike trails in the Twin Cities and all over the region in the last 20 years is the importance of maintaining sustainable trails. When it significantly rains, those trails need to be closed and it is important to stay off those trails. One of the biggest issues on local mountain bike trails in Minnesota with our soil composition is that when trails are closed, the mountain bikers know to stay off of them. Some of the biggest erosion and damage happens when non-mountain bikers go out on a 40 degree day when there is snow and go hiking on the trail. Multi-use is about education, it is about enforcement but it is also about making sure user groups who want that type of trail are engaged.

Durbin said from a safety perspective, his preference would be to make them for the purpose for this sport and this sport alone. Otherwise, Durbin likes the site evaluation criteria.

Izquierdo mentioned that trail construction plays a big piece with line of sight. When mountain bike trails are built, you want to build a faster section compared to a slower section where a mountain biker will be able to see another user in front of them and react in the amount of time where there wouldn't be a collision. A lot of this is subjective because research has not been done. If we were to move forward, further research could be made towards other land manager's experience with multi-use. To assess concerns or other things that land managers in the area have potentially encountered.

Durbin agrees that a lot can happen in the design phase, this is just conceptual. He wanted to put that out for the park board and community right now. It is something really important that should be addressed if we go down this path.

Kvam was concerned about dogs under that same section and it does not mention them. Kvam says that currently dogs are allowed off-leash in the unmaintained trail areas and thinks they are a real hazard to bicycles. Kvam asked if the trails are multi-use, if criteria could be added saying all dogs must be on-leash.

O'Dea responded that can be looked into. It came up when Purgatory Park was looked at and the number of dogs leashed or unleashed was a safety concern. Since it presents a safety concern, it would have to be looked into. What could be done to minimize the conflict, the interaction and promote safety?

Walick asked what the prospect of informing users regarding safety concerns looks like. Does it involve signage on the trails? The casual user may not pay attention to websites or newsletters and may just show up to use the trail. What does that education piece look like at the moment?

Izquierdo says it starts with a solid advocacy group. In the Twin Cities, there is a group called MORC that is well known for their advocacies. People that are advocates of mountain biking and also engage different users of the park. As tangible things it would look like a kiosk at each point of entry. A kiosk that would be able to provide information to the different users about what they are about to enter and a trail map. The other thing needed would be a gate. A lot of times mountain bike trails have a gate that volunteers managing the trail would be responsible to close. When the trail is closed because of muddy conditions, a placement of a small sign at the kiosk saying trails are closed could be made. Those simple tangible things can really do a number to educate users.

Woeste commented that the criteria was put into place to see if our parks are feasible for mountain bike trails. The details regarding multi-use and signage will come down the road and park board members will be involved in those decisions. Things such as safety concerns will be addressed in the future if we move that direction.

Seveland said that the criteria were all-encompassing and that they made it easier to look at the parks in a way that addressed both the concerns and the needs from the different groups. Seveland thinks staff did a good job putting it together and appreciated the fact that public input was incorporated after it was put together.

Acomb mentioned that the final criteria under Adequate Space, that 20 useable acres was kind of the cut-off point and was curious if there was reasoning behind why 20 acres was the number that was chosen.

O'Dea said that one of the handouts from the fourth meeting was information about existing mountain biking trails and information about our parks. When looking at the amount of acres available per mile of mountain bike trail, the minimum in the Twin Cities was about 10 miles per one mile of trail. Since two miles in each park was needed, we thought the 20 miles per park was adequate.

O'Dea said the matrix is in the next section. The criteria was filtered by Minnetonka parks that have 20 undeveloped acres through that criteria. There is the list of parks, Lone Lake is at the top and that meets the most criteria. Crane Lake is at the bottom and that meets the least amount of criteria.

O'Dea gave a brief summary of seven parks that he thinks are worthwhile to go over.

**Big Willow** – While this is a large park, many of the acres are developed. There are a number of acres that are undevelopable, which leaves 29 usable acres. If the ratio of 10:1 is used, it does not provide four miles to hold a standalone trail system at Big Willow. Parking is a concern at Big Willow. There is a lot of parking options but there are also a number of softball games and events so those parking lots do get maxed out at certain times of the day and year. Although, some people may ride to the parks, we need to be considerate of the people driving to the parks too. Big Willow is heavily utilized by patrons and there are a number of high-use informal trails; some of them span up to six feet wide in sections throughout the park. Staff believes it would be difficult to create a safe trail concept that would not displace or minimally intersect some of those trails. Safety is also a concern at Big Willow. The useable land being discussed is both north and south of the railroad track. The connection point is under the bridge, which floods at certain times of the year. That presents a safety concern as we do not want people crossing the tracks, which is encroaching on the railroad property and would be a safety concern to themselves too. The southern half of the park contains some high quality natural areas and potential trails would put pressure on the restored woodlands in those areas. A petition was received regarding Big Willow Park and that is attached to the packet.

**Hilloway Park** – Is a medium sized park that is tucked into a secluded neighborhood. The park has some high-use informal trails that have been created throughout the park. Some of them are up to six feet wide, and staff feels it would be difficult to create a safe trail that would not displace or intersect those trails. There is no designated parking, which means if people were to drive there it would push cars into the neighborhood. The park contains 23 useable acres so it would not support four miles of trail on its own.

Civic Center Park – Is a community park that has good connectivity to the regional trail system. It has good parking and the opportunity to connect with other circuit locations. However, the park has 15 useable acres and indicates that the size of the park is small. It would be difficult to put two miles into that park and make it a sustainable trail. Staff also believes it would be difficult to create a trail concept because it would displace some of those high-use informal trails that are in there. It is so dense in there that it would be difficult to get through those without displacing or intersecting those trails. Lastly, it goes back to the size and having a minimum of 20 acres, which this park does not have.

494 Corridor – Is the west side of 494 between 394 and McGinty Rd W. It would be difficult to build a sustainable trail there because of the narrow footprint due to the topography. There are a few areas on the west side of the maintained path where the slope gain would cause erosion issues and the passage through low-land areas could be problematic as well. The trail would also detour back onto the main paved paths. As you are going up or down you are looking to be on a mountain biking trail, yet you would be diverted back on that paved path quite a few times. There is also insufficient parking at this location.

Victoria-Evergreen –Is in a quiet residential neighborhood. The park has good topography and it has a number of maintained trails throughout the park. Similar to some of the other parks, it would be difficult to create a safe trail concept that would not displace or intersect those trails. It has minimal parking, which would push cars into the neighborhoods. The park has 21 usable acres, which going back to the ratio would not support four mountain bike trail miles. It is in close proximity to the regional trail but it is over a mile from any other park.

Purgatory – Is a community park that has 37 usable acres, which could not support four miles of trail on its own and it is not in close proximity to any other viable park. It also does not have adequate parking. There is a parking lot on the north side of the park, which would require bikers or walkers to walk over a half mile to get to the area that could potentially be a trail. There are some environmental concerns, many of the areas that would be desirable for the bikers contain the high-quality woodland areas. It is heavily used by dog owners, both on-leash and off-leash which presents a safety concern.

Lone Lake – Is a community park that has a connection to the Minnesota River Bluffs Regional Trail. It has 52 usable acres which is the largest in Minnetonka and it does have ample parking. It is foreseeable that Lone Lake could support four plus miles of trails on its own. The park has a network of maintained trails but the usable land to be considered is located away from those maintained trails. Staff identified some low-informal trails that would require further research for possible displacement or intersection. Some restoration projects have taken place throughout the years and should be evaluated when aligning a potential trail.



Some history about Lone Lake is that the park was evaluated as a potential mountain bike trail location in 2000. At that point, the park board supported the recommendation to deny proposed trails based on the cost and the natural resources management and its costs. Since then Lone Lake went through the park renewal process in 2007 and 2008. A number of amenities were updated, including the basketball court, the dock structure, the picnic shelter, trail and athletic fields as well as many more. At that point mountain biking was not brought up. In 2009, Lone Lake was evaluated for a potential location to establish a dog park. The park board voted to exclude Lone Lake for consideration of a dog park location at that time. Lone Lake is a busy park and there are many of amenities there. There are proposed pickleball courts that could be constructed there in 2018, which could cause the number of patrons to increase and the demand on the parking to increase. It seems like it is a park that has been the focal park when looking at adding certain amenities to the park system.

O'Dea mentioned the staff recommendation which is to further study Lone Lake Park as the site for potential mountain bike trails. Staff does not recommend any other park or open space be considered for mountain bike trails at this time. If the park board recommends moving ahead with studying Lone Lake Park, the likely next steps would be to: establish a communication plan evaluating the environmental concerns, creating trail concepts, conducting community and neighborhood meetings for public input and then presenting a study and concepts back to the park board.

Evenrud recommended opening public comment and then having park board discussion after.

James Saewert, 13325 Minnetonka Drive, Minnetonka, introduced his daughter Alice. Alice is with him because she has been a part of this group to bring mountain bike trails here and she has become in a lot of ways our mascot. She is a good reminder for all of us why we are here and why we are doing this. It is for this generation. It is the reason why we put so much time into this and this is really important to all of us here and I am really glad to see there is a lot more kids here than there has been. Thank you O'Dea and staff for working so hard on this. This has been probably a difficult process with a lot of angry voices. As advocates, they tried to respect the process and support it in every way they could. It sounded like there was a petition and we are saddened that Big Willow is off the table but Saewert challenged everybody that signed the petition to get out and take care of that park like they were. Last fall they put in over 130 hours of service to cut down buckthorn and make that park better for everybody. They posted an invite to people on Nextdoor. Many people that are not in favor of this are on that site and not a single one of them showed up to help out. Unfortunately, now that our attention is being turned away from Big Willow we are going to start putting that effort towards Lone Lake. Saewert challenged everyone that signed that petition to help Janet and her team to take care of that park and make a difference for everybody. Everyone understands objective criteria and he thinks that is a very

fair way to go around. Behind him there are more voices and everybody wearing a teal shirt feels like this process has been a little unfair from a very small group of people that were very angry about a shared park. He respects the decision and stands behind it and will help make Lone Lake Park a fantastic mountain biking park. Saewert hopes it is the crown jewel of all the Minnetonka Parks after they start cleaning things up there.

Pete Svebakken, 9611 Oak Ridge Trail, Minnetonka, is a frequent user of Big Willow Park as well as Lone Lake Park and thinks this process ended up good. To identify common interests: we both care about parks, we both care about recreation and we care about nature and preserving the environment. Svebakken liked the way it was done because ultimately that is what we want as citizens and thinks it is a good decision to use Lone Lake. The multi-use concept will work. If you have ridden around Lake Calhoun in the summer you know you can make it work. It is a matter of education and as long as people respect that it is a mountain bike trail and that mountain bikers have right of way, it can work. There is a lot of environmental resources and wildlife at Lone Lake, which can be appreciated. Svebakken also would be happy to volunteer.

Maureen Hackett, 4919 Arlington Drive, Minnetonka, says that over the last several years she has started to heavily use Lone Lake Park. She is a very experienced bicyclist. Hackett said that Lone Lake Park has incredible amounts of habitat and they have been cleaning up the buckthorn so it is not a mess. There are parts that might be but there have been concerted efforts at cleaning it up with volunteers who also use the parks for other reasons than biking. Hackett is opposed to opening up the parks which already have multiple uses and changing the experience. She wants to have a place like Lone Lake that you can walk to and be in nature. Hackett uses Lone Lake and the other parks that are not being used for mountain bike trails. She has seen the erosion from the bicyclists on the trails and off the trails in Lone Lake and it will damage and change the experience and people need to know that. She does not want it to be like Lake Calhoun, she wants our parks a little calmer. There are bicycling trails all over the city. If she was younger, she would probably say it would be great if we had bicycle trails in the parks. However, now that she has used the parks a lot more the way they were designed she sees how it would change the experience quite a bit. So she is in total opposition of this.

Luke Van Santen, 2148 Sheridan Hills Road, Minnetonka, has lived here for 15 years. Van Santen thanked everyone for the opportunity to share his thoughts. He is strongly in favor of the creation of mountain bike trails in many parts of Minnetonka. As part of the support, he has actively engaged in activities supporting trails from the time he became aware of it in late 2016. He has attended meetings, weathered online storms while trying to educate others about all the benefits of mountain biking and how many people's fears have been misplaced and removing invasive species from Big Willow Park. As much as he would like to continue this level of engagement tonight to help provide further

understanding of what mountain bike trails are and how trails and trail users fit into both environmentally conscious and a healthy striving city. Van Santen is choosing to limit his participation to identifying and asking for assistance in resolving inconsistencies in potential emissions in the developed core criteria in the narratives provided by staff as part of the board package and in scope of locations that were reviewed.

First with regard to the core criteria there were three main sections put forward: environmental protection, adequate space and avoiding user conflict. In regards to environmental protection, all four specific criteria there are straight forward and match how other locations have been built and maintained and how he is confident how trails would be built and maintained in Minnetonka. Consistent with this, all reviewed locations with the exception of Lake Rose and Crane Lake that are shown in the matrix on page 20 of the board packet, successfully meet all environmental criteria. Moving onto the adequate space section though where there seems to be several inconsistencies in the summary matrix. First the leading bullet – four miles of trail, specifically mentions a trail system, yet none of the locations other than Lone Lake are marked as meeting this criteria despite being potentially being involved in a system. From prior documentation, the combined total of proposed trails at Big Willow and Civic Center Parks totaled 4.2 miles. There were 2.4 miles at Big Willow and 1.8 miles at Civic Center. It seems at least these two should be indicated as meeting the criteria. In addition, a system that includes the 494 site could contain two – four additional miles since the straight line distance of the 494 segment is one mile, not including the portion south of the pedestrian bridge over Stone Road. While inclusion of the 494 segment seems to meet the system requirement of four miles it is not indicated. Same arguments for Victoria-Evergreen and Hilloway parks. They cannot sustain four miles in a single location but as part of a system they certainly could contribute to that length. The second bullet of the adequate space section – two miles per location seems to have been strongly agreed with, 73% of survey takers agreed as shown on page 273. However, if you are an opponent of mountain bike trails, wouldn't this be exactly what you say to try and limit the places where you can build mountain bike trails? With that being the case, it seems like this criteria should be invalidated. There was a question touched on earlier, how was it developed, was it the rule of thumb that one mile of trail needs 10 acres of usable space. It seems like that was the case and there is a little more to that maybe. In fact, using the specific criteria two miles as a minimum is demonstrably wrong. Specifically I refer to the Theodore Wirth system, a very popular and successful trail system where two of the five segments are less than one mile in length and the remaining three segments of that system are less than two miles in length. The first two are .8 miles each then we have 1.9, 1.9 and 1.4. If the two mile per location criteria had been used at Theodore Wirth, there would be a single track there. Van Santen referenced those distances from the website *mtbproject.com*. Van Santen touched on the one mile from each other criteria specifically with respect to Mooney Park. It is not one mile from anywhere by road or even by bike path through Oak Lea Drive or Minnehaha Court. However, it is one mile from Jidana and Civic Center

parks in winter, which is a criteria that has been completely overlooked. The fourth bullet of the adequate space section – they need to be within a mile of a regional bike trail, additional clarification would be helpful from staff or from the board. Does that mean a regional trail like the LRT trail or the River Bottoms Trail or does it mean from an identified segment of the overall biking network that exists within Minnetonka? If it is the former, the matrix is correct. If it is the later, it seems like Meadow and Purgatory should be indicated as being within one mile of a trail since both of them have identified bike trails running through the middle of them. The fifth bullet – 20 usable acres was mentioned a minute ago and because that is entirely based on the preferred two mile segment length per park it seems to be entirely redundant and should be removed in my opinion. Of those five specific criteria there seemed to be many that need to be answered before this criteria can actually be accepted by the board. In regards to the third section – user conflict, it seems there are user conflict and inconsistencies there as well. All of the reviewed locations meet the first bullet one-way trails and the fourth bullet multi-use trails. There is a little benefit seen there to discuss them other than to observe that staff does recognize that the large of majority of existing single-track is one-way and is multi-use and to also note the resounding lack of reported incidences of user conflict from existing metro single track. However, the second bullet of the minimize user conflict criteria set minimally intersect maintained or high traffic foot paths seems to be incorrect, at least for Big Willow. The originally prepared proposal from Trail Source, Inc., seems to clearly show the intersections with either the main trail or the high use footpath as defined by staff are minimized. They are not illuminated but they are minimized so with criteria being worded that way it seems like Big Willow does in fact meet that criteria. Trail Source and many others have very clearly stated that when the trail design is conducted, trails can be rerouted or shaped so that intersections that do exist have a resulting lower trail speed thereby reducing or minimizing the severity of intersection. Alternatives presented to city staff by myself via email on January 19 identifies ways to further reduce intersections namely by limiting mountain bike trails at Big Willow to the central portion, north of the creek and south of the railroad. Third bullet for minimize user conflict set – do not displace maintained or high use footpaths seems also to be correct for Big Willow and possibly Civic Center. Civic Center is marked as TBD so it is hard to say for sure but it does not seem that there are high use footpaths at Civic Center. Original proposal shows the proposed trails paralleling the maintained trails and configured in such a way that most crossings of high use footpaths could be removed and the trail built parallel to them. Van Santen repeated the definition that was put forward for high use informal footpaths, “they are trails that receives similar use as maintained trails and have experienced significant widening, erosion and impact as a result.” This seems to exclude deer trails through the woods because they do not see significant use at least to the level of maintained trails; which that information has also been provided to staff via screen shots from the website Strava. Their heat map shows the maintained trails that have larger use than any of the other smaller trails. The fifth bullet of the minimize user conflict section seems to be incorrect for the 494 corridor, there is space perhaps not deemed sufficient but space nonetheless at

the 494 corridor where McGinty Road runs north and turns to the west. There is parking space at Big Willow, the north lot, the south lot, the lots near the ballfields, the lots at Public Works and there is ease of access from the LRT trail. Jidana as itself may be too small but it is immediately adjacent to Civic Center and is also near the Park and Ride lot along Minnetonka Boulevard. It also seems questionable or at least unclear for Lone Lake being graded as meeting this criteria since despite the fact it has large lots. It is a busy park and there will be six to eight new pickleball courts added later this year. Van Santen wanted to touch on a perspective kind of thing with respect to parking. Yes, there might be several days in the summer when staff has to field complaints from people who feel their parking is being infringed upon by users of the parks. There will also be many days in the fall and in the winter where nobody's parking is going to be impinged on and it seems not entirely fair or maybe disingenuous to focus only on those cases where there will be a problem that results in conflict being directed at staff. It also seems that there are omissions in the criteria dealing with year round use, shouldn't we be considering winter use.

Van Santen wanted to touch on some of the items mentioned in the staff's narratives. Statements made seem to not fully consider alternatives or easily available solutions and that results in the disqualification of the trail segment being discussed. One case of this is in regard to the 494 corridor trail where it is stated, "There are a few areas where slope gain could cause erosion issues and passage to low-land and could be problematic." This statement is almost certainly true any soil disturbance could cause erosion issues or low-land impact. Erosion issues and soft low-land issues are frequently successfully addressed in other trail systems through armoring, placement of rocks or other more durable materials to strengthen and or bridge the affected area. Placement of rocks for armoring then has the potential side-bin of it of becoming a feature that provides additional challenge to trail users. He wanted to mention this earlier to with respect to how the actual business of trails is looking out for environmental issues by coming up with solutions like this. Another staff narrative piece that I would like to touch on is also from the 494 corridor. There are areas where bikers would be detoured onto the maintained paved path before re-entering a mountain bike trail. While it would be ideal for such routing to not occur, it would minimize user conflict. Such re-routing is successfully done at other trail systems, perhaps most notably at Cuyuna where the dragline trails slows and then runs on the paved walking path for several hundred yards. The third case that I want to touch on in the staff narrative is in regards to Big Willow where it is stated, "Bikers would have to use the maintained trail that parallels the Minnehaha Creek and crosses under the train tracks. This trail is frequently flooded which leads to potentially unsafe passage between the north and south sections of the park and could potentially encourage mountain bikers and walkers to cross the train tracks, trespassing on the BNSF property." This is true but only if the northern portion of the Big Willow Park is being considered for trail placement as originally shown by Trail Source, Inc. The northern portion of the park was not included for trails, the part north of the railroad tracks. There seems to be some confusion in some places about that.

He wanted to point out that if it is of such concern that bikers may trespass on BNSF Railway property due to flooding is it also of sufficient concern that walkers and dog walkers and strollers may trespass on BSNF Railway property. Especially given the seemingly high footpaths that exist in at least four locations crossing the railway now. If it's the case maybe that should not be a criteria against mountain bike trails. Van Santen has more he would like to talk about regarding the scope of where locations were looked at but has provided that information to staff already.

Evenrud thanked him for all his information.

Matt Urbanowicz, 4924 Winterset Drive, Minnetonka, resident for 18 years. Off-road cycling is a young and very rapidly growing sport. When he first started riding in the early 90's overwhelmingly his observation was that municipalities, park districts simply did not address whether or not off-road cycling was permissible. If you saw a trail, you used it. As the sport has grown, obviously rogue cyclists put more pressure on those unofficial trails and to some extent the knee jerk reaction of some park boards was to put a ban up. Now it was addressed and unfortunately it was addressed through prohibition. Now that my fellow cyclists and I are older, we are becoming more organized. To the woman who commented two speakers ago who observed trail damage and erosion, what you are observing is damage done by rogue cyclist. People who ought to know better and people who clearly do not represent MORC. The others dressed in teal here tonight have demonstrated even before being granted permission to ride in the trail systems in the parks, a willingness to put in hundreds of hours of trail maintenance. Urbanowicz encourages the board, staff and all the constituents here to take a look at what has happened on a small scale in Lakeville. Just this past July they opened a part of West Lake Marion Park to off-road cycling and that was through a public-private partnership between the Lakeville Cyclist Association and the Lakeville Park Board. It is early but it has been very successful. Urbanowicz encouraged people to reach out to other park board and city government officials to get some data with regards to the success of that project. With off-road cycling being a young and growing sport; as a resident and as a constituent it would make him sad to see the city of Minnetonka get left behind as far as embracing the sport that is developing into clubs and teams within our school systems.

Mary McKee, 3842 Baker Road, Minnetonka, has lived here for about 30 years and she wanted to go back to what our mission is. When she reads the mission and what it is to protect the environment for those citizens of Minnetonka and she thinks it is for the common good. There is a small group of people who are very well organized and are very elite but McKee thinks their sport is detriment to our natural resources. When talking about multi-use and discussing opening and closing a certain trail, she does not know if we want to go for that. She wants to encourage people to revisit what the mission statement is and to think of the common good.

Jeff Greenwood, 6032 Pinewood Lane, Minnetonka, wanted to talk about the impact on the people. He hears a lot of people talk about the impact on the land but 25 years ago he was in this building and was talking to the park board about trails in Lone Lake and at that time there were four or five people in that room asking for trails and there were four or five people there asking for trails not to be built. Looking around the room today, there is a lot more than eight people in the room. So mountain biking has changed and it has had a great impact on the people. It has brought so many people together. Greenwood has lived in this area for 40 years and has been biking in Minnetonka parks for about 35 years. He was in Lone Lake biking before they put the signs up. After that, he was in Purgatory Park until they put the signs up. Greenwood thinks that if there is an issue and people have a park, you put up a sign. That is what happened in Lebanon Hills. Then after time, Lebanon Hills identified that their resource was valuable and that they explored looking into trails. Greenwood helped there to design trails with the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) and worked with them to create those trails, those first few miles. It did not start out as a great, beautifully designed trail that it is today with a repair center and water fountain. It was just a small little parking lot, nothing huge and it was not a long 20 mile trail. It was a two to three mile section that people would come out, enjoy and overtime it continued to evolve. Greenwood would like to see Minnetonka start to explore this recreation of mountain biking that so much of the United States has really embraced. So many cities around the United States have really embraced it and we should bring that positive impact not only to the citizens of Minnetonka but also the surrounding area. There could be a really great resource here not only for Minnetonka but for the metro area.

Norm Gaskins, 4177 Hull Road, Minnetonka, has been a member of the Hopkins-Minnetonka Park and Recreation system since he was five and is now 47. He can remember days when he would drive to Schwinn at the time, where Tonka Cycle is at now. He has seen a lot of commerce change from that point. Jen and himself just bought a mountain bike there. Gaskins picked up the sport at 40, it is an up and coming sport. Minnetonka is great, he was born and raised here and continues to live here. He feels there is a very diverse group from an age perspective and that there are fantastic parks. Gaskins loves the fact that he can be one tier from downtown Minneapolis and have so much wildlife. There are a lot of walking parks here; there are not any mountain biking parks. Gaskins thinks he understands the folks that may be opposed to it and maybe feeling like mountain bikers are going to claim the parks but he thinks he has one choice. He can go ten miles down the road to Theodore Wirth or he can go all the way up to Elm Creek or down to Lebanon Hills to ride his mountain bike. Gaskins put a great investment his family's bikes. They are having to pack up and take their commerce and take everything outside the city along with their friends. A person earlier brought up the fact that times have changed and he thinks we need to stay with the time. Gaskins is a hockey official, NCAA, High School, youth and is always at Pagel and at Minnetonka. We have always kept up from an athletic

perspective. Hockey is big in this town, in this state and I see mountain biking kind of doing something similar. There is all kinds of mountain bike teams starting. He gets it from his kids that we do not have any place for them to go mountain biking unless they go up to Lebanon Hills to get some good mileage in or maybe Theodore Wirth. Now that Gaskins mountain bikes, he sees on certain nights these parks are packed with kids because they do not have anything on the western side. People could go to Lake Rebecca but that is still out there. Geographically, we are sitting perfect for this. To wrap up, from a commerce perspective, whether at Willow Creek or part of the chain he thinks all of these businesses can benefit from this new respectful sport. It is both for the children and for some of these affluent adults who will lead us. They will spend their money in town and that helps. Gaskins has a friend that has a house in Forest Lake, he pays an extraordinary amount in taxes because they are trying to develop. We have all this development and can continue to grow it but we have to stay vital and he thinks that can help us stay vital. Gaskins is not looking to take over these parks either. He has two dogs, he wants to walk with them off a leash, and have all that stuff too. Gaskins definitely does not want his children or anybody else's children not safe. We want to do this right so he appreciates the time that staff is taking on this and wants to bring that up because he read the minutes and it seemed like it was people that were not residents from Minnetonka coming up to speak. Gaskins is from Minnetonka and wanted to share his input.

Jon Richie, 4980 Kingsberry Lane, Minnetonka, has been a resident of Minnetonka since it was a village. Richie has a dog and go to all the parks that seem to come up on this list: Lone Lake, Big Willow, Victoria-Evergreen, Jidana and Civic Center. He thinks he knows people on both sides of this issue. He volunteers at schools, nursing homes and libraries with my dog because he is a registered therapy dog. When Richie got wind of this he started coming to some of the meetings because he has seen different activities come and go. Minnetonka went through a huge tennis court building boom in the early to mid-70's. A lot of those courts now are underutilized. It looks like they will be building pickleball courts now. That is great, get people outside. As he came to these meetings he listened to both sides and wanted to get to know some of the folks that were promoting the mountain biking. Richie did some invasive species removal with them. He found it to be a really nice group of people who are very dedicated. He has never seen a group that has been willing to put in the sweat equity, organization and put together a comprehensive cogent plan to try and get mountain bike trails built in Minnetonka. Richie has to say that he is for it and thinks they have done a great job. Richie thinks there is a lot of this park that is underutilized. He has been volunteering with Minnetonka parks since Perry Vetter was ahead of parks and still volunteers through Todd Kasowski. He has always been concerned about people not picking up after their dogs. Especially going out to the island in Jidana stocking a lot of bags and picking up a lot of pet waste that does not belong to him. Richie sees mountain biking as a very minimal impact sport unlike the tennis courts that require grading, 14 high foot fences, paving, striping, maintenance, the same with warming houses and hockey rinks. If the day



comes where these trails are built and are not utilized, they will gradually and naturally go back to nature.

Mark Broin, owner of properties on Timber Hill Road, Minnetonka, said as an interdiction some time ago he sold those properties which represented a substantial amount of open and developable land on the south side of Minnehaha Creek. Broin did that for growing a profit for potentially developing that property so that he would be assured that the property could be restored to its natural state and remain preserved for the enjoyment of the public and the benefit of the creek's environmental integrity for generations to come. After hours and days of researching, reading and looking for common threads amongst the available information, it simply appeared to him that the proposed intensity and the specialized single track trails of this project that has been proposed are simply demographically inconsistent with the intent, the character and the layout of the Minnetonka parks system. At least as he has experienced with it. Broin spent quite a bit of time on the Minnehaha Creek committee that looked at how the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District would be developed and utilized many years ago. He has had quite a bit of experience with trying to get an understanding of a point in time from which all of this started out but he can, however, visualize some additional expansion of biking and walking trails to reasonably accommodate the maximum number of potential park users. He has pursued how to do this responsibly as his fundamental concern. Broin is trying not to complicate the issue with all the pro and con details that have been thrown back and forth. He is trying to sit back as a business consultant now in his older age to take a simple look at things like the land profile and address what should be natural reactions about what makes common sense here. He did a lot of research and has presented numbers on that. What the numbers show is that mountain biking is part of the relatively stable but per capita declining bike experience. Some people are surprised as mountain biking growth has been promoted. Looking at industry statistics do not support a lot of those claims, they represent a minority of biking activity. This should cause any government body considering biking amenities and the local planning processes to pay close attention to the fact that roughly 96 percent or more of public biking activity does not include an interest in mountain biking. No matter how you look at the information proponents are eluding to regarding mountain biking in Minnesota and its demographic centers and other areas of concern; he does not see anything overwhelming or other driving factors to cause anyone to look at mountain biking as a priority in any way above other more far reaching public parkland planning priorities. Major public investment there from his opinion should have a much higher and wider range in priorities in looking at the best use of disappearing and valuable suburban natural resources such as the preserved parkland located in higher population density areas like Minnetonka. In this case, he would stand with whatever might be in the best interest of the 96 percent of the biking community that does not show intense interest and only one small aspect of the bicycling experience. There is more at stake than a small minority's deep commitment to the biking options which they represent only three percent. This structure of the marketing perspective seemed

to have given their intense loyalty and focus particularly rare sensitive and disappearing parkland environments must be viewed from the perspective that not all special interests are able to be accommodated in a balanced, respectful and workable set of circumstances. Minnetonka parklands, which have now have been managed for decades with a focus on highly important and long-view priorities, which properly outweigh the many other options the lands may be used for. As he mentioned, he spent a great deal of his time in the early beginnings of this focus personally. If expanding walking and biking trail footprints in the parks is desirable in a manner consistent with respect for the land in which they arrive and also consistent with maximum access and usability for the larger hiking and general bicycling public at large it seems to him this more inclusive objective should be obvious goal to pursue. Even if this more wide ranging and inclusive consideration is not pursued and if in particular no biking paths were added it seems to him the vast majority of current and future park users will hardly be inconvenienced or disappointed. Broin says this with all due respect to the members of the mountain biking community, he really appreciates the intensity, the focus and the amount of effort they have put into this because he thinks it shows that they are seriously interested in properly servicing the people they represent and he really appreciates that.

George Skinner, 15330 Lynn Terrace, Minnetonka, had a question and comment regarding one of the criteria – not displacing informal trail paths. Skinner suggests a no-net growth and trails policy, by that he means, if mountain bike trails are built they should be located on the informal paths where possible with needed improvements. Informal trails that are not suitable should be closed and rehabilitated. The parks are being badly trampled and these bare-ground trails encourage aggressive pioneer plants. Some are non-native invasive and others are on the state's noxious weeds list. The parks are in danger of being loved to death. They simply cannot be all things to all people. For example, groomed cross country skiing trails are not offered, which Skinner would love to see and we should not feel bad about that. We just cannot be all these things to everybody. Future Minnetonka residents are entitled to high-quality natural parks for the quiet enjoyment of nature. The existing improved city trails and bike ordinances are well thought out and can be maintained for the foreseeable future at reasonable costs and demands on park staff. When Skinner talks about quiet enjoyment at Lone Lake particularly, he views it as a jewel in our park system. For him it is the number one bird watching location in the park system. Skinner sees many very shy and hard to see species whether they are bald eagles or ospreys. That wooded hillside to the southwest of Lone Lake is the only place that he can reliably see scarlet tanagers during breeding season for example. If there is a concluded network of trails going through the back areas of the parks, it is going to push the wildlife away and out and they will be gone and will not be there to enjoy. That would be a very sad circumstance.

Ben Johnson, 4736 Gaywood Drive, Minnetonka, is pro bike trails but is here for a lot of reasons. Johnson is passionate about it because today's there is a

mental health and a physical health epidemic with kids in the United States maybe even more than many other places these days. There is a lot of screen time, first-person shooter games and all sorts of crazy things that are creating massive amounts of chaos. Not all over the place, not all the time but some really scary stuff goes on and the thing that is scary to him about that is that he has an eighth grader and a tenth grader. Johnson's entire street is starting to turnover and the people moving are in their 70's or 80's and new younger families are moving in. There are five families that have kids under first grade and Kindergarten. There are a few older than that but there is three kids at one house, two kids at another and a new born baby at another. These kids need activities to do and mountain biking may not be the activity that they choose but it is important that we give opportunities for people to do things in parks. During the process of coming to these meetings Johnson heard over again the not in my back yard deal all the time. Big Willow, not in my backyard - that is where I walk and now Lone Lake, not in my backyard - that is where I go to do this and do that. Johnson thinks the mountain biking crowd is saying please can we ride somewhere? Can we give our kids the opportunity to ride somewhere with their friends? Can we ride with them? Can we do those types of things? Can we be outside and enjoy our parks? The only time that he spends in parks these days is when he is going to an organized soccer game or soccer practice or an organized activity that is out there. Bryant Lake is a gorgeous place to watch birds and do things and it is right down the street from Lone Lake Park. Johnson is a bike commuter in the summer so from April till November he rides from Gaywood Drive close to the Carlson towers and his wife prays for him every time he leaves. The reason why is that he is riding on the roads until he gets to the bike trail that I get to ride on there. He has a good friend who no longer has a wife because she was run down and killed riding her bike on the road. That is one reason why a lot of different people need a place to do activities. Johnson's a jerk when he does not have activity, he is not as kind of a dad, he is not as good of a person when he does not have an opportunity to do active things. He is selfish about that but he is selfish about his family. We need places to do things outside. He has ridden bikes for years, specifically at Lone Lake. There is a whole bunch of space that is not used around the outer rings of Lone Lake that would be great for riding bikes. It is sort of all along the cemetery on the east side. It is along the top of the ridge where all the townhouses are. On the backside area, there are a lot of places that people could ride bikes and not have to worry about too much other traffic. There is a lot of great linkage to get on different places around there that is relatively safe. One thing that Minnetonka or whomever has done well is there are some nice bike shoulders to ride there. Johnson hopes we get something done somewhere, sometime because he thinks it is important.

Ben Marks, 4362 Avondale St., Minnetonka, has been a resident for 21 years. Marks says that the mountain bike advocates could be upset that they have been denied Big Willow. They can be angry that a small group of vocal neighbors, many of whom have lived in Minnetonka less than two years, who clearly did not

represent the consensus of the 50,000 residents of this community have had an undue influence on who's allowed to use our community parks. But dwelling on that today is wasted energy; as they say, that ship has sailed. City staff is determined that Lone Lake Park is the best location to develop mountain bike trails and there is plenty of good reasons on why this site was selected. The terrain is well suited for sustainable built trails. It is a large, relatively underutilized park with 52 usable acres that has the capacity for 5.2 miles of trails based on the city's criteria. It has ample parking and is in close proximity to the LRT River Bluff Trail. Marks thanked O'Dea and all the city staff for the time and effort they have put into this project thus far. It's been a long journey for all of us. Marks encouraged city staff, the park board and ultimately the city council to have the political will to make these trails at Lone Lake Park a reality and do so through an expedient process because doing nothing is not a feasible solution. There are miles of informal trails as the report refers to them in every Minnetonka park. These trails were not built to be sustainable for bikers or frankly walkers and create frequent user-conflicts. If designated mountain bike trails are not developed, you are willfully ignoring this problem in the potential risk associated. For those of us that attended the Mayor's State of the City address this morning, we heard it. Mayor Weirsum specifically sighted the proposed mountain bike trails as an example of an amenity that is important to our young families. Marks is confident our city leaders want to see a plan before the city council in a timely fashion. Change is hard and we know who will show up for this next round of neighborhood meetings. Those who live in close proximity to Lone Lake Park that do not want change. It has already been heard it tonight, there are citizens here that are going to argue that they have been using that park for years and they do not want to share it with mountain bikers. Others are going to argue that sustainably built trails will cause environmental damage while ignoring the fact that informal trails used by both bikers and walkers is causing much more damage. Lone Lake Park is a community park, it is not a neighborhood park. It is for the benefit of the entire community. Neighbors have a voice regarding access points to the trail to the extent that it affects their property but they should not have a say on whether or not the trails are built at Lone Lake Park. The city has completed an extensive analysis to determine that this is the best location. For residents that live near a community park they have to realize that over time how that park is used will change as resident's recreational interests evolve but their influence should be no greater than any other Minnetonka resident and anything other than that is simply not fair. Marks thanked the many advocates that are here this evening. Thank you for your countless hours that you have taken out of your busy lives to tend these meetings. This is a win, we are one step closer to having this important recreational amenity for our city and that is something our neighbors in Eden Prairie and Wayzata cannot say. Also, thank you for the many hours you have volunteered to help our parks restoration efforts. He encouraged them all to keep up this important work. The partnership that the biking community has developed with the Natural Resources department is unprecedented and can be transformative in the city's restoration efforts. Despite uninformed stereotypes that mountain bikers are a bunch of kamikazes, the

reality is, that we choose to ride our bikes in the woods because we have a great appreciation for nature. Marks truly believes that if you give the young families and youth of our community a reason to care about our parks you would develop a whole generation of citizens that will care for our parks.

Diana Houston, 12201 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka, is at a facility that was built a little bit over a year ago. A majority of our residents have lived here in Minnetonka for decades and enjoy the community and enjoy the new facility. A couple of things Mr. Marks touched on about the challenges that we faced with proceeding and going forward looking at Lone Lake or the other sites. There was a letter in the packet from December 13, 2017 that Heather Holm wrote. Houston does not know her at all. Holm is a Minnetonka resident, biologist, landscape restoration professional, former high school coach, her husband Brent and she are avid cyclists and fully support the growing sport of mountain biking as a high school sport. Houston wanted to point out that she was suggesting another location within Minnetonka. Maybe there is a creative solution to look outside some of the current park systems. Holm mentioned in her letter, the county home school's great potential for a partnership between the county and the city of Minnetonka and also the Three Rivers Park District. Holm continues on why she feels that could be a really good location for mountain biking. Is there something "outside of the box" as an alternative site to look at for mountain biking because we know how challenging it is looking at the existing systems that already have a lot of programming there? The north end of Big Willow Park, north of the rail line where BMX biking has taken place and they are crossing over to get over to the south side. Houston understands that MORC is not part of that type of riding; however that is not to say that does not occur there and what is to stop that particular riding. Also, the crossing over of the tracks if you introduce much more activity on the south end. There was a comment from January 8 under the engagement results - additional comments, the author is unclear but it is a comment that is repeatedly heard at the public meetings. Someone said that Theodore Wirth is for mountain bikers only, Minnetonka parks are not big enough for what mountain bikers want, single-use. This ties back into looking at some of the current parks that there are proposals for. Maybe taking a look outside of our current park system might be worthwhile taking a look at. Houston's not saying anyone is advocating for this; however it is something that has been said numerous times at meetings. She thanked all the work done by the staff. It is a tremendous amount of work. A lot of emotions from the very beginning with this. Certainly the comprehensive packet that was put together for tonight's meeting gives us so much to go off of and we can take a look and reflect on and it can help us all come to terms with how you are going to proceed. Thanks for your time and your work.

Jim Fallon 4149 Baker Road, Minnetonka, has lived here for 40 years and he is listening to both sides of this argument. He has been an avid cyclist since 1965. That trail that goes through your town, he is one of the people who pushed for it. He pushed for the Greenway. When people say there are not any other things to

do in this town, he would take exception to that. He has been working with skating trails, bicycle trails for many years. I'm glad you made the decision of Lone Lake. It has been there over a hundred years, it has not been developed, and not much has been done to it and that is why it is so nice. Fallon's emphasis speaking here is that he thinks the mountain bikers deserve to have a place and since they have teams or clubs in high schools now maybe the school districts should get together. There are many of them on the west side and they have land and they have money. Three Rivers could help put it together also. There is Meadowbrook Golf Course that is under water in Minneapolis and they own that. There are all types of resources but this city does not have a whole lot of land to develop and he thinks what they actually need is a pretty good course. People do not want to go to Duluth or Cuyuna and they do not even want to go to Theodore Wirth so he thinks this discussion kind of divides the city instead of unites it. If the other people want to talk about the children and exercise, that is what I do for a living, we can exercise them in all kinds of ways. There is the Williston Fitness Center and all kinds of other places and you have a great community for exercise. Fallon congratulates staff on that and would like to see the discussion go a little more positive instead of what we can or cannot do, or this generation wants it and this one does not. Fallon would like to see if the group will start talking about more regional things instead of just the city. Maybe it could be in some of the parks or maybe you could start sharing them, the city already shares the golf course with Eden Prairie. Fallon was a state planning examiner for 22 years so he's pretty aware of all these different arguments and nobody really wins unless you can get a positive output for everybody.

Evenrud thanked everyone. He said that he heard a lot of people saying thank you and a lot of people sharing great perspectives. The goal we all have is to get more people involved in the parks; it's just a question of how we do it. Evenrud wanted to thank MORC bicycle advocates and those advocating for the parks not to change. They both have been here a long the way and have taught us a whole lot. Also, those that took part in the focus groups that was tremendously helpful.. Evenrud feels city staff has done a great job taking in all the information and making sure park board members have every bit of public comment as it comes in by the day. The board, as volunteers appreciates that. Evenrud thanked everyone again for all their input. It is obviously very important to a lot of people and everyone involved loves parks. That is why everyone is here.

Steve Philbrook, 4222 Oak Drive Lane, Minnetonka, has lived here about 12 years. He has lived in the west metro, he has rode Lake Rebecca, a great park to ride. He has rode Theodore Wirth and traveled to Elk River. He travels to those parks. While he has been in those parks, he has not chased away the wildlife. Philbrook has seen eight-point buck 10 feet away from him while coming down a trail because he is not out there going, "hey, I'm on a mountain bike, I'm making noise" that does not happen. People are riding and enjoying nature. Philbrook has seen turkeys, coyotes, eagles in trees that he has ridden under, red tail hawks and he has seen nature all over while riding. Philbrook knows when he

goes on these trails that if it is muddy, he does not ride on them. He is not out there to wreck the environment, he is out there to have fun and he trails to the trails. Philbrook has traveled to Eau Claire and rode the trail system over there, beautiful trail system. What does he do, well he has to get gas and get a bite to eat while he is there. If he is in Elk River, he is probably going to get something to drink or eat while there. He is putting money into their economies and their businesses. People will come here if we have trails that are good enough, just not myself will be riding them. If Philbrook is going to other places and riding there, he guarantees other people will come here and spend money here. They will be respectful of the trails. They will see wildlife like he has at other places and not chased it away. They will be very conscience of the people that are on the trails out there. They aren't going to be out there messing with other people, they are not going to be trying to impact the environment. Mountain bikers are just there to have fun. Philbrook has a son that is eight years old, and he is now starting to learn how to bike the trails with him and he loves it. He would love to be able to just go down the street, ride to Lone Lake Park and take him for a ride. Instead of getting the rack on the back of the vehicle, loading up the bikes and driving for a half hour or an hour before they can even go bicycles.

Everud closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

O'Dea said that he heard two things. One criteria talked about was how far from a regional bike trail. By that, we meant a regional bike trail system. The second, was a question about the county boy school. Barone will fill us in on that property. Barone says that Hennepin County, who owns that property, is planning to construct their medical examiner's office at that location. That is going to take up a substantial amount of the property, especially on the east side of that property on the southeast corner.

Gabler commented that it is striking how far the conversation has come from a year ago when a group of high school students made a presentation, a very professional presentation downstairs in another room, to now, where we are up here and there is a lot of people here. It is amazing how it has grown and he thinks it took us all by surprise that the passions were inflamed, sometimes good, sometimes not so good To city staff, you did a great job getting stuff together. Gabler knows there are questions about whether or not staff got the information out. He does not know what else staff could have done, you got the information out. As consumers, it is our responsibility to go looking for that information and not be spoon-fed all the time. He thinks staff did a great job and to Ben Marks, he has gotten to know Marks and the group that he has. At the beginning the kids were so professional and impressive; it is too bad they are not here. Everrud pointed out one student in the audience and said thank you to the VANTAGE program. Gabler said that the VANTAGE program was very impressive but now that the conversation has started the issue is not going to go away. He is a proponent of finding some way in the city of Minnetonka to put mountain biking tracks because he knows he would still be doing it if he could. Gabler thinks

where we have come to now is the point where staff took a huge look at this and has looked at a number of different sites. It seems like we are starting to zero in on some potential sites, which is good. The face of the demographics in Minnetonka is going to change. Gabler's neighborhood has turned over. When he moved in they were the youngest family and now they are one of the oldest and it only took 18 years. So things are changing in Minnetonka. Gabler has looked at some of the other mountain biking facilities across the metro area and has talked to people that use them. They are responsible, they utilize their trails properly, of course there is always going to be knuckleheads and there are those that are kind of out looking for trouble. What he likes is the debate it has had. Gabler thinks at times, conflict is good especially if it is managed properly because the only thing better than one idea is two good ideas that get mashed together. He thinks we are starting to see that. O'Dea and staff to you congratulations, he thinks they have done a great job so far. Staff gives us information so we can make a recommendation to the council so I think it has been a job well done.

Kvam asked for a clarification on the Lone Lake Park usable area for mountain bike trails. She wondered if that includes the section of city land between Rowland Road and Crosstown where there is a trail going that connects to Bryant Lake. She thinks it is about 20 acres of city land in that piece.

Ellingson responded by saying no, that was not looked at. Staff only looked at the Lone Lake Park property. Kvam asked if that 20 acres was available for mountain bike trails or could it be included if we decide to go further with a study of Lone Lake Park? Ellingson said that it is possible but not all of that areas is owned by the city but it is something that could be looked at because there is trail going through there.

Izquierdo responded to Kvam by saying he remembers her bringing that up. When he looked at Google Maps and from looking at some topography one of the reasons that they did not further look at that is because at a quick glance it looked pretty low-land. It also did not look like it had much variation that would be conducive to mountain bike trails. It is definitely something we can take a look at.

Kvam said that she was thinking if you are up on Rowland Road it is downhill slope down to where that trail is so obviously there is a slope there. So theoretically you could put something on there. Izquierdo said it is definitely something that can be looked at if we move forward with looking at Lone Lake.

Seveland said she has been on the park board for about six years and this is a topic that has made her stare at her ceiling a lot at night. Here is where she is, she works in natural resources and has spent most of her life trying to get people to change their behavior to protect natural resources, specifically water. What she has learned from that is that people value natural resources in different ways. Seveland knows as a younger generation, there has been actually a



significant loss in people that are signing up for conservation programs, such as hunting licenses, fishing licenses, groups like Trout Unlimited and it maybe that people are identifying or protecting natural resources or valuing them more from a recreational aspect. So she thinks there is good reason to look at putting mountain bike trails in Minnetonka particularly for a younger generation that might be able to connect with nature and if you get them to connect with nature you can get them to value nature. She has done the literature reviews, she has looked at them and what they told her about environmental impacts is that hiking trails and mountain biking trails are pretty much equal, but apparently horses are bad. Hiking trails and mountain biking trails impact it about the same so we are not necessarily talking about a difference on impact environmentally. There are going to be some differences, but we are talking about an increase in users if you want to look at it that way. Seveland agrees with the staff's recommendation to not look at Big Willow for a number of concerns that were brought up in the summary, she agrees with those concerns and agrees you should look at Lone Lake. Seveland thinks we should find a place for them somewhere.

Acomb explains that he is the student representative through the park board and when we are talking about youth involvement, he thinks his perspective is particularly pertinent. As he looks around the room, it is pretty clear to everybody that his demographic is not horribly well represented and he thinks that is an important voice that we all ought to think about as we move forward with this sort of project. When he talks to kids that are part of his community and part of his school, the response to potential expansion of trails, mountain biking, biking or otherwise is always positive. He thinks people want more opportunities to be out in nature and if we can provide that, people will come and use them. Acomb has not heard one student or kid at Hopkins High School that would be against mountain biking trails and they are not the people that are showing up to these meetings because as we all know kid's in politics and governments is notoriously hard to pin down but he thinks the user-base is there even if they are the silent part of the demographics as a city and as a community. Acomb agrees with staff's recommendation that Lone Lake is the next step. The concerns raised regarding Big Willow are grounded and fair but he thinks no matter how this process runs, we owe it to our younger generation who often are not able to represent themselves to provide resources for them that they will enjoy using. Like Seveland says, they will learn to respect those resources and respect our city the way that all of you in this room do.

Gabler moved, Durbin seconded a motion to move forward with staff's recommendation and expediting the process the best they can. All voted "yes."  
Motion carried.

Seveland asked as we move forward with Lone Lake and a community process or neighborhood process if there were lessons learned that we can take from the experience at Big Willow and use at Lone Lake so maybe we do not have some of the same polarized outcomes. Seveland would like to see something a little

more proposal based or bringing people more information so they are not getting that information second-hand and then it blows up on Nextdoor and Facebook and all these other places. It is sort of clearly defined here of what we are proposing and then people can react to it opposed to kind of going off.

O'Dea responded by saying that those really are the order that we have them in so that is what we are looking at.

**B. Presentation of the 2017 Shady Oak Beach Operation Report**

Davy presented the annual operations report for Shady Oak Beach. It was a pretty typical year length of season wise. The beach opened in early June as we usually do. In 2016, we made the decision to stay open a week longer just because the weather was favorable for that. Again, we did that in 2017, there were a couple of days that week that we ended up having to close early just for some cooler temperatures and some lower attendance but for the most part we had a full season ending at the end of August. Our revenues were down this year, daily passes were down and overall attendance was down but we still had a great year. There were positives. Our rentals and equipment continues to grow in popularity. We have been working with a woman named Kayla, who has a company named KB Sculpt and she has been doing a lot of stand-up paddleboard classes for us and sunset beach yoga. This year we had 45 classes held out there in the evenings and weekends and we are going to continue to work with her this year. We had some additional expenses, there was a net operating cost in \$10,000 this year but we had some expenses that were planned for. We lost a freezer real early on and freezers are not cheap. We put a new deck in at the beach this year and it really stood out. From the beach front up to the gate entrance, we had new stairs put in, a new deck, a foot wash installed and it made it look so much better so it was a huge improvement there. We also made some late season purchases in our overall recreation budget. There was some extra money to spend and so we have new signage coming in 2018 throughout the beach area. Also, since we have had so many new rental equipment purchases in the past couple of years, our storage space is limited so we added a new shed for next year to dedicate just to rental equipment and we are going to be selling it out of there. There are some good improvements for the next season. The overall attendance was down and that is kind of reflected on revenues being down as well. Overall, great season and we are looking forward to next year.

Walick asked if we have a guess why the attendance was down and why the concession revenue was down a little bit.

Davy responded and said that concession revenue is tied to the overall attendance being down. It is always weather related, we are always looking for new ways to attract people, which next year we are looking at inflatables which is coming next month to the board. Davy could not really say other than weather and different activities going on for families but we are excited for 2018.

Evenrud said that she mentioned inflatables and asked if she had any information on that. Davy responded that information will be provided next month to the park board.

Woeste gave an update on the monument entrance sign that has previously been discussed. We put it on hold based on our planning department possibly changing the sign ordinance. We met with our planning department this week and it did not affect our sign ordinance so we are back to square one. What we have decided as staff is that we are not going to push for a dynamic sign because it is not going to fit within the ordinance. We could put a really tiny dynamic sign with maybe a couple letters, two lines, it would not get any point across so we are back in conversation with the Spectrum Sign company to put some concepts together for more of a Welcome to Shady Oak Beach sign because as you know as you drive up there are some directional signs but there is nothing that welcomes you once you get to the entrance. We still want that monument sign, it is just not going to be a dynamic sign so we are coming to terms with that. We will have another update once we have some more concepts but that is where we are at with that.

Durbin said he is kind of sad about not having a dynamic sign and pushing that forward but if it is the will of the city, it is the will of the city. Woeste responded saying it is hard to get variances for your own signs. It is not something we want to do as a city in general so we tried to make it work and it is not going to work.

Evenrud said he appreciates the thought that is going into the sign though because it would be there for a long time.

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

None

## **6. Information Items**

Woeste talked about the brochure. She heads that now and it used to be Lorry. We are in final edits of our summer brochure which is our biggest brochure, Woeste believes it is 80 pages. It will be sent to the printer soon and it will be to homes in early March. As you have seen with our last two brochures, it kind of has a different look so we are working closely with our communications department now and our new branding, a new look and a different designer so we are excited to get this hard copy into people's hands. As a parent she knows people are looking for summer stuff now. It should be in mailboxes the first week of March. Our first day of registration is March 13. That is our biggest day of the year, our busiest for registrations as you can imagine at 8 a.m. it is busy at all of our locations. We watch the numbers online and the classes fill up quick. It is exciting and it is stressful and it is fun to see things fill up. O'Dea commented that it shows the demand for our programs.

O'Dea gave an update on pickleball courts. We sent out bids in August of last year and they came back in at \$423,000 with the budget being at \$310,000 so we decided to reject those bids at that point and rebid. The bid went out and we will have bid opening on February 13, 2018. In March we will have an update on where those bids came in and hopefully we can get the pickleball courts built here in 2018. If the bids come in high O'Dea thinks we will have to make a decision on either looking to see if additional funds are available and/or revising the scope of the project.

O'Dea had the 2017 Park Board Annual Report which was attached. He advised park board members to look that over. It has to be turned into the administration department next week so if anyone sees any changes or errors let him know. That document has to get turned in mid-February every year.

O'Dea commented on the Ridgedale area park visioning process. It really talks about the Ridgedale area and the number of projects and developments that are going on up there. They are looking at the complexities with all those projects and staff thought it would be helpful to establish a small working group comprised of city council, planning commission and park board members to really help assist staff in establishing the process and the potential design attributes of a park amenities in this area. They do have some drawings. Again this is a development project so it is different than someone coming to the park board saying we want a park. This is a large development, they are working with the mall and things like that. As you can see the last sentence here, "the city council did review and approve this process at their meeting this past Monday night." So the recommended action is looking to see if you are supportive of having one or two representatives on this committee in working with staff to evaluate the guiding park plans in the area. We do not need volunteers tonight, just looking to see if you are supportive of having one or two volunteers, which you have the timeline on the first page. O'Dea asked them to contact him within the next week if they are supportive of that.

Evenrud commented that they look pretty supportive. O'Dea said to contact him if they are interested.

## **7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

Next month we pushed the Shady Oak Beach inflatables amenity plan back to next month so we are bringing that to you. Also, there will be a technology training at 6 p.m. The iPads are in and we will send the packets electronically so you will be able to view them. We would like to do a working dinner at 6 p.m. There is an outside firm that comes in to help train staff and boards and commissions so we will have them come in at 6 p.m. to provide training. The park board tour is set for the second Wednesday in May. This weekend on Saturday, is our Winters Farmers Market, the second of two that will be at the Community Center from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. and then Kid's Fest on Sunday from noon – 3:30 p.m. That is a major special event, we will

see a lot of people. The dogsled rides are on. The ice on the pond is 17 inches deep so everybody is safe and we are good to go. Evenrud asked if any familiar faces will be running the dogsled portion. Woeste said yes.

Kist commented that Assistant City Manager, Perry Vetter mentioned that the city was looking to hire a landscape architect that might help out with the park board projects. Kist asked what the development was there. Woeste said that we have gone through the hiring process and we made an offer so we are in the process of doing background and finalizing that offer. You should know more about that soon if all goes through.

## **8. Adjournment**

Kist motioned to adjourn, seconded by Gabler. Evenrud adjourned the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 4C  
Meeting of March 6, 2018**

<b>Subject:</b>	Review of the Shady Oak Beach inflatable amenity plan
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	To provide quality athletic and recreational facilities and programs
<b>Park Board related objective:</b>	Offer a full range of programs for people of all ages and ability levels
<b>Brief Description:</b>	Staff will provide information on a proposed plan to add inflatable amenities at Shady Oak Beach.

### **Background**

Shady Oak Beach is jointly operated by the cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka. The facility is open from June-August each summer and average yearly attendance is 35,000. There are a variety of amenities at the beach including a designated swimming area, high dive, two floating docks, concession stand, a playground and kayak/paddleboard rentals. While these amenities are attractive to beach users, there have not been any changes to the water features in many years and there has been a significant decline in pre-teen to teen attendance over the last few years. The 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Program includes \$25,000 designated for the purchase of water play inflatable amenities in 2018. The integration of inflatables will enhance the experience and continue to provide a variety of fun experiences for beach users of all ages.

### **Summary**

Staff has been working with an inflatable company called Witbit that has recommended a layout suitable for the beach. Their recommendation includes a total of nine pieces that together create an obstacle course type set-up (see attached layout). Several of the pieces will be usable in the Williston Fitness Center's pool during the winter months as well.

The inflatable course will be open three days per week during set times yet to be determined by staff. It will be available for use by anyone who has purchased a season pass or daily pass to the beach. Additionally, groups and birthday parties will be able to pay a fee for private use of the course outside of the set inflatable schedule.

Witbit staff have suggested the following operational procedures and safety practices to implement:

- Lifejackets are mandatory.
- Course has a designated start and finish.
- All users must sign a waiver and wear an issued wristband.
- No swimming allowed in designated inflatable area (identified by ropes/buoys).
- Course is monitored by 3-4 lifeguards (one at the beginning, one in the middle on a kayak, one at end to signal the start of the next patron, one additional on a kayak during high use).
- Inflatables are secured by weighted buckets attached to buoys for easy set-up and take-down.

While not in use, the equipment will be housed in a storage shed that has been purchased for rental equipment. Beach staff will follow a maintenance checklist to inspect the inflatable pieces after each day of use in order to maintain proper working condition.

**Recommended Park Board Action:** Provide staff with feedback on the proposed plan for adding inflatable amenities at Shady Oak Beach. Recommend any changes to the items to be purchased, operational procedures and/or safety practices to be implemented.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 7  
Meeting of March 7, 2018**

<b>Subject:</b>	Information Items
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	N/A
<b>Park Board related objective:</b>	N/A
<b>Brief Description:</b>	The following are informational items and developments that have occurred since the last park board meeting.

**Purgatory Red Barn Project**

Beginning in the spring of 2018, the home on the Penaz property will be removed due to maintenance issues. The structural contents of the home will be evaluated for recycling and reuse if possible. Staff is also looking into moving the home to an alternate location if feasible. Public Works, Engineering and Community Development will be involved in the coordination. This work should not impact the red barn.

We have created this website in the event residents are curious about the home deconstruction and the barn in general.

<https://eminnetonka.com/current-projects/other-projects/1906-purgatory-park-red-barn-project>

**Kids' Fest Recap**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Kids' Fest was held on Sunday, February 11 at the Minnetonka Community Center from noon - 3:30 p.m. It was a successful event with over 2,000 people in attendance enjoying a variety of activities such as dog-sled rides, a magic show, horse-drawn carriage rides, an ice sculpture demonstration and much more. Over \$400 was raised for the recreation scholarship fund from concession sales and 123 pounds of food was donated by attendees for the ICA food shelf.

**Mountain Biking Update**

Following an extensive public input process, the City of Minnetonka is developing a concept plan for adding mountain bike trails to Lone Lake Park. The park board directed city staff to develop the Lone Lake concept plan based on criteria developed by city staff with input from residents, and Lone Lake was the only city park that met the criteria.

Between February and May, staff will further their study and create the formal concept plan – detailing trail location and length – for adding trails to Lone Lake Park. Residents will have an opportunity to review the concept plan and provide feedback at an open house at city hall on Thursday, May 17. Advertising for the open house will include the following: May Minnetonka Memo, mountain biking project page email blast, and postcards mailed to residents within 800 ft. of Lone Lake Park (739).



The park board will review the concept plan at its June 6 meeting. If the park board votes to move forward with the concept, it will advance to the city council for final approval. If the council approves, a timeline and next steps will be established.

**Pickleball Courts**

Pickleball courts were designed and bids were received Aug. 3, 2017. Based on concept plans to build eight courts that were prepared in 2016, the estimated cost for construction was \$310,000. The lowest bid received was \$423,050.94, which well exceeded the budgeted amount. Bidding projects in the summer sometimes yields higher bids as contractors have their workloads established for the remainder of the year. The bids were rejected and the project was rebid again in January 2018.

The bid opening was on February 13, 2018. The low bid was \$372,431 - \$62,431 over budget. Staff is in the process of determining if funding is available for eight courts or if the scope of the project will be changed to allow for six courts.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 8  
Meeting of March 7, 2018**

<b>Upcoming 6-Month Meeting Schedule</b>				
<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Agenda Business Items</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Wed</b>	4/4/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Natural Resources Division's 2018 Education and Outreach Plan</li> <li>Review of the 2019-2023 Capital Improvement Program</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	5/9/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Park Board Tour</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	6/6/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mountain biking study and concept plan</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	7/4/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	No meeting - holiday
<b>Wed</b>	8/1/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	9/5/18	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minnetonka Historical Society presentation regarding Burwell House</li> </ul>	

**Other meetings and activities to note:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Tues</b>	3/13/18	Summer Registration Day	
<b>Sat</b>	3/31/18	Spring Eggstravaganza	Community Center 10-11:30 a.m.

**Items to be scheduled:**