

## **1. Roll Call**

City Council members in attendance included Mayor Brad Wiersum, Patty Acomb, Deb Calvert, Mike Happe and Rebecca Schack. Park Board members in attendance included Board Chair Nelson Evenrud, James Durbin, Chris Gabler, Cynthia Kist, Peggy Kvam, Madeline Seveland and Chris Walick. Staff members in attendance included Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Darin Ellingson, Carol Hejl, Kathy Kline, Kelly O'Dea, Sara Woeste and Perry Vetter.

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

## **2. Business Items**

### **A. Report from the Chair**

Chair Evenrud reported that the park board has met a total of seven times in 2018. In addition, the board conducted a tour of parks and facilities in May. The following is a summary of significant park board accomplishments to date in 2018:

- ✓ Adopted a Strategic Plan in January that includes a mission, vision, four primary goals, and related objectives.
- ✓ Reviewed, discussed and recommended park and trail projects for the 2019 – 2023 Capital Improvement Program.
- ✓ Reviewed the 2018 Shady Oak Beach operations report.
- ✓ Mountain bike trail project:
  - Reviewed the Mountain Bike Study and held two public meetings to gather citizen input.
  - Held a public hearing and recommended the construction of mountain bike trails in Lone Lake Park to the city council.
- ✓ Reviewed the 2017 Farmers Market operations report and staff's recommendations for 2018.
- ✓ Received reports and presentations regarding the Burwell House and Cullen Nature Preserve.
- ✓ Reviewed the Natural Resources Division's 2018 Education and Outreach Plan.
- ✓ Approved 2018 slip fees for Gray's Bay Marina.

Mayor Wiersum mentioned that the park board should be a lot of fun and not controversial, however, that is not always the case. He wanted the park board members to be proud of the work they did because it was important and challenging work. He thanked them on behalf of the city council and the city for their hard and challenging work. Their work probably went beyond what they signed up for and he wanted to recognize it.

**B. Cullen Nature Preserve**

Vetter gave background on the Cullen Nature Preserve. Vetter explained that the city's had a long extended tradition of acquiring properties for open space; even for park and trail use. It goes back to the 70's and 80's when the city was very active in acquiring parcels around the creek corridor. Minnetonka's parks were formed throughout the system by acquiring land from willing sellers; whether it was through a development process or as people were ready to sell their property. As the city developed from large acre lots to more half-acre lots there started to be that more systematic planning effort around parks and open space. It really culminated in the late 90's when a task force was formed to review what open space criteria are and what should the city be looking for. A number of parcels were identified, criteria was set, inventories were done and it really helped formulate the backbone along with the park's open space and trails system plan for the 2001 bond referendum.

Leading up to that, the city was acquiring parcels mainly through operating funds or capital funds but nothing on a large scale system. With the successful passing of the 2001 bond referendum, 15 million dollars was made available. About half was used for park renewal and about half used for open space acquisition. At that time, City Manager Geralyn Barone led the open space acquisition parcel of it. A number of those viewshed acquisitions were done under Barone's tenure in that. One of them is the Ann Cullen Smith parcel.

Cullen Smith lived on the parcel from the 30's until 2014. When Vetter and her first started talking, they were negotiating with her children who at the time were in their 70's. This is a legacy thing for Cullen Smith and she viewed it that way. Looking at the aerial photos of that parcel, there is the development to the north of her. The parcel had gone in several years earlier and there was a roadway stub that came down to the top of her parcel and it did not cul-de-sac. It upset Cullen Smith that it was a through street and she had a conversation with her family about what the legacy is and what they wanted to do. When you look at the dollar value for 30 acres, the family could have made a lot more money, but that was not what was important to the family.

After the successful passing of the referendum, meetings were held with Cullen Smith. There was a small earnest down payment made to the family and it was conditional on Ann's passing. She wanted to live on the parcel and she lived until 106 years old. Cullen Smith would attend meetings because she wanted to know things. Staff used to deliver VHS tapes of council meetings to her home because at the time they would not run cable back to her home; so she was not able to get the local channels. Ann was very connected to the community and this was very important to her. If you google her, the parcel here comes into the results but she was also very active helping a community down in Arizona to try and preserve land for bird viewing. That was very important to her and she loved bird observation, study and creating habitat. It was very reflective in the conservation easement on her property. The city purchased it upon her passing for 2.6 million dollars, which included the \$100,000 earnest payment to her. Upon the conservation easement put over the entire property; that is held by the Minnesota Land Trust. The city is the owner and there is a conservation easement on top of that. The deal is that no matter what happened in perpetuity, that land would always be protected. There was always a backstop so in 10 years from now the city could not say that we are in hard times, let's sell that property for development. That is not an option and that is the way Cullen Smith wanted it.

There are a number of restrictions on the property about what we can and cannot do and how it would be approached in the future. That would all need to be gone through as well. Now the question is what do we do with it now that we own it? In 2016, the property was a stop on the park tour. Shortly after, the home was deconstructed and Ann's son Bill was very involved in that. A step was taken back, normally we would raise the home, try to recycle some things and in essence just get rid of the home. However, you do not want an unoccupied building back in there. So we used a company that deconstructed the home, everything down to the millwork that was involved. About 90 percent of that home was recycled or reused and diverted from the landfill. That was very important to the family as well.

Now it brings us to present date and what to do with that site. We have always had that conversation about what Cullen Smith's wishes were but because of the invasive species on the parcel we did not want to jump too far, too quickly. Cullen Smith was an advocate for bird watching, so how do we restore habitat. First, would be removing invasive species. Find out what is actually still in the soil as far as wild flowers and natural habitat. Without doing restoration for a number of years we did not want to put a walking trail somewhere and find out we created it through a habitat that is ready to grow. Natural Resources staff has been working on the parcel for a couple of years now. A dedicated group of volunteers that presented an update on the parcel last fall at the park board meeting has been working on restoring this site.

Right now we are in that mode of trying to protect what we have on this site and not take on too much. As far as a planning process, maybe just learning from another project that recently came before the park board. With that project, there was a very dedicated group of volunteers that wanted to see something happen. So, how do we manage those expectations and what can staff commit to and a city as far as the work load and the process for going forward. What does that look like so the community can be engaged and have a somewhat engaged process going forward.

The invasive species management will continue with staff and volunteers. Those next steps will be looked at and as far as discussion points they had to open them up. Where do we prioritize - staff included a list in the packet about continuing to work on the site, identifying those areas, mapping the areas and then maybe start looking at a public process for this. The city has owned it for 2.5 – 3 years, what do we make out of this and how do we go forward with a public process that respects Cullen Smith's wishes, complies with the conservation easement and meets city's needs once staff can identify that. Maybe it can be on the park board tour for next year so the progress can be seen because it has changed quite a bit. The parcel is roughly 30 acres, between Oakland Road and 494, just a little above Meadow Park on the west side.

Evenrud said it was exciting to tour the parcel a few years ago and now to hear all the work and thought going into it is great. Evenrud thinks of it as a place to bring his kids in the future.

Vetter explained that the parcel is not all upland and it is 30 acres total. There is a definite upland area, a lot of wetlands and there is a little island in the southwest area so it has some really unique characteristics.

Durbin asked what would be permitted there and if it would affect future planning.

Vetter commented that there is a number of restrictions in the conservation easement. Activities such as bike riding are not allowed so we actually had to clarify. Vetter worked with Cullen Smith a little bit because she was very concerned that as she got older, she would not be able to navigate that site. Cullen Smith was very concerned the way she viewed the conservation easement when it was originally drafted to now. Cullen Smith explained her concern because she wants people in wheelchairs to be able to go out there but in the easement there are things like no bike riding. There were even comments like, can you push a stroller because they are considered a wheeled vehicle. If the city ever wanted to do an interpretive building, it has to be within the footprint of her home. There are a lot of restrictions in that since whatever we do, it would have to compliment the Minnesota Land Trust. When the easement was written, Vetter reached out to the Minnesota Land Trust and said that he was not even sure the American's with Disabilities Act would allow us to go over this easement. Whatever we end up doing, the Minnesota Land Trust will have to be at the table to be a part of those discussions to agree or disagree that it meets the intent of the easement.

Kvam thought maybe this could be used as a place for kids to learn. She asked where a bus could drop off kids.

Vetter said that initially they asked if it would make sense to develop something further into that site and kind of impact the acreage or if it is better to off-set that acreage more by the road so you could have people pull-in and pull-off. Then vehicles would not necessarily have to come way into the site. With having a land trust there to interpret that request to say, if the city were to request a small pull-off parking lot right by the road; would that be okay if the end-goal is bird habitat, natural resources and education. If management is to say that the true intent of her wishes is to be more on the roadside, would they allow that. Another question is, is the intent to bring in 70 kids on that site? Or, is it more for smaller groups? What are we really going to try and offer there? What does that mean for operations? Would the site be staffed or self-guided? There are a lot of unknowns to be determined regarding this location.

Evenrud said that some people feel like we are losing something if bike trails go in at Lone Lake. However, the city could also gain an amenity like this around the same time. It may not be exactly what they are looking for with birds and bumble bees though. Evenrud asked what the dog aspect on this property looks like.

Vetter responded by saying as we head into a planning process, part of the discussion is going to be how this parcel is classified. Cullen Smith's intents were that this is more of a preserve nature center and not a park. Which may allow different restrictions on this site because bird habitat and bird viewing is not compatible with our current dog regulation regarding voice command in our park ordinance. Would it get classified differently to allow that more as a preserve nature classification rather than just as a park? Cullen Smith's intent was pretty clear that this was not going to have swing sets. This is open space that was acquired so not necessarily a park. The responsibility is on the city to say what that vision is and how it will be managed.

Vetter says that part of this has to be education as well because this is 30 acres of open space and not parkland that Ann Cullen Smith sold to the city. There are a lot of restrictions on the parcel so how do we best manage it. A planning process for a 30 acre parcel could lead to a lot of possibilities, but in essence it is pretty narrow.

Acomb mentioned that people have different definitions of parks and open space so the awareness of what the restrictions are and being clear about what is and is not allowed is important. Acomb compares this to the preserve title at Lone Lake or designation. She thinks it is important to document those restrictions along the way because looking back at Lone Lake, when it was designated a preserve what was the intent of that designation. She wants to insure that it is clear since we do not necessarily have that clarity at Lone Lake.

Calvert thought she read that dogs were restricted.

Colleran said that she does not believe they are. Horses and motorized vehicles are not allowed.

Schack said it would be nice to have a one-sheet or something on the website that outlines what some of the restrictions are and accurately sets forth what the parameters are. Schack thinks this process has to be handled fairly delicately because there will be a lot of comparison to other projects that are being worked on in the city. The question of why certain parcels get special treatment from others may come up. Schack recommends coming up with a process to delineate some of the higher level points to make that distinction. She finds history being the guide because potentially there could be a few disputes on that.

Mayor Wiersum commented that he has been around long enough to recall the city acquiring this property. When the public process topic came up, Wiersum said he winced a little because this is not a typical property. The property has significant restrictions on it and would have to be carefully moderated. To Schack's point it would really have to be clear about what is off-limits and what things can be considered publically. The dog conversation may raise. Are there additional restrictions that may be appropriate that go beyond what Cullen Smith indicated because she did not think of it?

Wiersum believes that we learned a lot with mountain bike consideration and the issues that were raised along the way at Lone Lake Park. Wiersum does not have all the facts straight but with the preserve designation, he think if you are a neighbor of Lone Lake Park you think that somebody set it and it is perpetuity and it is unchangeable. Wiersum does not think that perception exists but if that needs to be the case, staff needs to work with Minnesota Land Trust, the people who are responsible for the conservation easement. They really need to delineate what we want public comment on and what is off-table. If staff thinks other things should be off the table; maybe that should be part of the conversation easement because this is a unique property with unique usage that will be unlike anything else in Minnetonka. Wiersum thinks there are properties around the country that have similar limitations on them. Prior to the public process, what learning can we do from those properties so that we know what we are getting into from the public's perspective and can lay out some ground rules? Wiersum believes we need to be quite specific, detailed and hold a public process.

Seveland agrees with the public process and wants to do something earlier to guide the plan. First, she wants openness about the project and not to come up with a plan and then ask for public comment. Seveland requested to educate people and then allow the public to have dialog where they see this project going.

Kvam asked what the difference is between a preserve and a reserve. She asked if this is more of a reserve because it is restricted to certain activities and would be more than just a nature place.

Trail and Park Planner, Carol Hejl says that a reserve is land set aside for future use, whereas preserves are lands set aside to preserve natural resources and provide passive recreation.

Calvert said thinking about one of the public meetings she went to for the mountain bike trails at Big Willow. She agrees with Seveland on getting that kind of feedback from the public but thinks it also has to come with a really complete context so they are making their suggestions with a lot of knowledge. This means having knowledge presented to them before and at the meeting about the restrictions that apply from the actual purchase agreement and so forth. This would help so people are not wishing for things that are unrealistic or impossible.

Walick mentioned that with mountain biking there was a lot of incomplete information. He suggested to be clear and simple when presenting the information.

Schack was very pleased with the community engagement process with the newly proposed Ridgedale Park. That was more of a brainstorming exercise to the extent that it was open ended. That process as far as community engagement and really starting at the ground level has been making the community feel like they have a say and some input at this. The appropriate approach is not to come in saying this is what we have, what do you think. There would be a much larger first step before the community engagement, which would be really defining those parameters so that we are working within the four corners of what is available. For something that is a community use, community input is important for getting ideas and is also something to refer to when people ask, "what have you done to involve the community?" A great thing to inform people about is what community involvement opportunities there were and then presenting a plan based on the ideas from those opportunities.

Acomb was thinking about titles and how they are described. She gave the examples of the Cullen Smith Preserve and Lone Lake Preserve and later we are talking about the Crane Lake Preserve. When there are titles that have different allowable activities, it can cause confusion. Maybe there is a way to label these things differently so that preserve is not confusing. The activities at Crane Lake are probably going to be different than the activities at the Cullen Smith property so maybe consider calling it a different title.

Durbin mentioned that the mountain bike project was different and this property is more defined. This is not a park and it would have that connotation. Durbin asked if there is a timeline with the invasive species removal.

Colleran replied that restoration takes several years. In 2017 restoration was started by staff, volunteers, contractors and goats. Four weeks of restoration was done in 2017 and three weeks in 2018. There are some bigger areas of buckthorn that are being knocked down and controlled. Garlic mustard has been smaller areas but a lot of attention is paid to that because that will continue to spread. Part of the reason for not wanting dogs from the staff's perspective is that they can easily spread garlic mustard, whether on-leash or off-leash. Deer also spread it but if we can minimize the amount being spread, we can be more successful. Colleran said there are at least seven more years of restoration

Vetter agrees with the feedback of the process. He sees the similarities in both mountain biking and this area. One being that there is a dedicated group of individuals that wants to see success at the site. The VANTAGE program for mountain biking and we have the volunteer group that is actively out there at the Cullen Smith property. We want to insure that volunteers know they are valued. Colleran and Van Sloun do a tremendous amount of work and they rely on dedicated volunteers. Volunteers are a true success to their program and it shows when you see the number of volunteer hours in natural resources across the city. Vetter asked how to harness those volunteers and insure that they know they are valued so we can continue this work knowing that they are in for the long haul. Vetter sees this parallel as a place for these dedicated groups that want to see something well. For staff, we have to ask how the process and those expectations can be managed. We can learn a little bit from mountain biking.

Mayor Wiersum asked what types of restrictions the Minnesota Land Trust and the Conservation easement put on the property just initially as part as a conservation easement. What can and cannot be done within the constraints of their authority.

Vetter said there are some general items:

- Utilities - what can and cannot be installed, or where some of those utilities can be installed.
- Restroom – if a restroom structure was onsite, it would have to be within that footprint.
- Signage – Billboards or other signage is not allowed.
- Roads, trails and parking exemption - is a little unique about what is allowed and not allowed for passive recreation educational use. They are pretty specific to the topic but then they are a little vague.
- Horses, bicycles, motorized recreational vehicles - are prohibited. A driveway and parking lot may be installed to serve passive recreational uses.
- Other items - fencing, vegetation management, handling water on the site, how vehicles can enter the site.

It is different than what normally is accepted on other parcels. Staff will continue with the natural resources work. When it comes to public process, maybe a focus on education and the opportunities at this site prior to. Having a greater emphasis on education about the site. Educating people why it is there and what the restrictions are rather than jumping into wishes and wants would benefit the process. What can we learn from the Ridgedale engagement process to utilize in that asset?

Mayor Wiersum explained that he likes the idea of a public process. However, with the invasive species work and the time required to get the site really ready, he recommended to consider delaying the public process. It sounds like staff is ready to start thinking about what it could be used for, however we really are not ready to do anything because we have a lot of site preparation left to do. We do not want to worsen the problem by getting too far ahead of ourselves. As we utilize resources the public has the right to know and have input.

Vetter says he concurs with that.

Calvert commented that she read about dogs and it was a comment from someone in the park board meeting minutes from September 5, 2018, page 4. Someone said they heard there would be no dogs.

### **C. Ridgedale Park – Community Outreach Results**

Hejl gave a presentation that included: project background, the approach to community outreach & engagement, the results of those efforts, how those results will be incorporated into concept designs and project next steps.

#### Background and context, why are we talking about a brand new park at Ridgedale:

- In 2012, the City of Minnetonka completed the Ridgedale Village Center Study to develop a vision for the future that would keep the area vibrant and successful.
- Currently, a number of improvements identified in the study are in phases of implementation.
- This study identified the need for a new community level park space as well as enhanced natural features at Crane Lake.

#### Unique location and project approach:

- The parcel for the new park is unique from other Minnetonka community parks in that it is located in a regional destination and is a much more urban setting.
- The unique opportunity to build a new park, especially in this dynamic location, led staff to undertake a robust community outreach and engagement process, meant to identify values preferences for park features and programming
- Community Outreach and Engagement efforts were aided by an Active Living grant through Hennepin County and the State Health Improvement Program.
- This process and timeline was reviewed with the city council in August.

Happe asked how much the grant was for.

Hejl said the grant was for \$10,000.

#### We reached a lot of people:

- We did our best to make people aware of the project and to get their input for park design and features through a variety of means.
- This was aimed at getting input from traditionally underrepresented groups including youth, seniors and non-residents.

#### Outreach Timeline & Activities:

- This process began in August and included a survey, community meetings, social media and special events including Rock at Ridgedale, the Ridgedale Library grand opening and the City of Minnetonka Open House.
- Hejl showed some slides that elaborated on the survey, site activation and the dot voting exercise.

#### Who did the Survey Reach?

- The survey was for people to rate their preferences, not as a vote for specific elements.
- We had 700 respondents, who were mainly Minnetonka residents between the ages of 31 through 70.



- Dot voting exercises and tactical urbanism activities helped supplement the survey results.

Tactical Urbanism & Site Activation:

- Tactical urbanism is small scale interventions that are meant to change the way people think about a space in order to guide long term improvements.
- For this new park space that included outlining the park boundary and filling it with fun play elements that doubled as engagement activities during Rock at Ridgedale.
- We were able to help people think of the space as a park rather than empty pavement, and get a lot of really good feedback.

Dot Exercise:

- The dot voting exercise was intended to rate participant preferences rather than as a vote for specific elements.
- It included inspirational images and options for people to add their own ideas.
- In all, there were nearly 2,500 dots placed on these boards at multiple events.

So, what did we learn from this outreach and engagement process?

Frequency & Companions:

- People already visit the area regularly, and would continue to do so once the new park is implemented.
- Most people want to visit the new park with their family and friends.

Mobility Choices:

- Compared to regional travel behavior data, there is a significantly higher percentage of people wanting to walk or bike to these parks rather than drive.
- This will be made easier by trail improvement along Plymouth Road and Ridgedale Drive, which will be more like a parkway.

Programmed Activities:

- Over two thirds of respondents want to participate in programmed activities (such as story time, group fitness, etc.) at the new park.
- There may be opportunity to partner with nearby stakeholders including the YMCA, Ridgedale Library, and others to provide programming opportunities.

Events:

- 86 percent of respondents want to attend events (such as outdoor movies or concerts, festivals, cultural activities, etc.) at the new park.
- There may be opportunity to partner with nearby stakeholders including the YMCA, Ridgedale Library, and others to provide events.
- There is a need to determine an effective way to schedule and communicate details for programming and events.

Frequency of Events & Activities:

- We heard that people want to participate in programming and events pretty regularly.
- City staff should lead collaboration efforts with adjacent stakeholders to program the park spaces to the appropriate levels.

Multi-Season Features & Elements:

- People would like to be able to comfortably use and appreciate the parks in all seasons.
- Respondents want the spaces to reflect the seasonality of Minnesota.

Plants and Materials:

- Natural materials and plantings are important to respondents.
- Shade trees, native plants and lawn are the most preferred type of plantings for the new park.

Technology:

- A majority of survey do not think technology elements are important to include.
- However, a number of kids specifically requested video game elements be incorporated.
- This will mean some creative thinking during the concept design phase and project decision making.

Welcoming Community Gathering Space

- We specifically asked people how we could create a welcoming community gathering space, and received a variety of answers.
- Prominent themes include a number of elements already discussed: access, activities and elements for all ages and abilities in all seasons.

Park Features & Elements:

- Again, people are wanting to use the park spaces year round.
- Water elements and iconic features are important to people.
- The variety of users and desire for programmed activities and events will lean toward creating flexible and multi-functional features.

Park Vibe:

- People want the park spaces to reflect the aesthetic of Minnetonka using natural elements but in a modern, urban atmosphere.
- The New Park at Ridgedale should be a place to see and be seen.
- Crane Lake Preserve should be a place to experience nature in an urban environment.

Furnishings:

Thinking about providing multiple options for people so considering some amount of moveable seating or permanent seating. Really focusing on universal design so that all ages, abilities and backgrounds can understand how to use it. Limiting additional lighting, it is within an urban area and there is already a lot of parking lot lighting so limiting additional lighting to more human scaled will really bring that down and make you feel enclosed. Materials should be unique from the complimenting the materials that are within the Ridgedale Public Realm guidelines. The spaces are seen as unique areas. Going back to that mobility element, providing an appropriate amount and type of bike parking or pedestrian elements that make it comfortable to arrive either on foot.

Features and Elements

Considering removing communication barriers with something like a visual symbol or an annunciator buffering parks from adjacent roadways and parking lots. How can we protect people from the elements prior to shade trees reaching their maturity? That way the park spaces will be comfortable to use and enjoyable in the near term as well as the long term. Thinking really hard about safe and direct convenient connections to the adjacent spaces. We know people want to be able to walk and bike around and get from either Crane Lake preserve or the new park space to the library or to the mall.

Programming:

Some additional takeaways for programming include the ability to store some amount of programming elements onsite, programming multi-cultural or free events, getting back to the dog elements. Determining a strategy or policy for dogs within these two spaces so we are upfront about what is allow and what isn't. City of Minnetonka staff will be proactively collaborating with adjacent or additional stakeholders so we can determine what types of programs and events we can host onsite.

New Park

It is approximately a two acre community level park. There will be a lot of multi-functionality to it. The goal is to create a vibrant, welcoming and inclusive community gathering space. Also, acknowledging it is a piece of a larger whole. It is connected to Crane Lake Preserve via Ridgedale Drive which will be more of a parkway so really thinking of this new park and Crane Lake Preserve as connected. Thinking about how to improve the natural resources and habitat at Crane Lake Preserve but also achieve something that is sustainable both environmentally as well as financially or how do we own and manage a preserve like this one. Providing enhanced access to wetland or water as well as improving and expanding reusable upland areas.

The project's next steps, right now we will be asking if there is additional feedback to consider before moving into concept design. With the idea that the next step for this project is to move into the concept design phase. The public will still be included as we are coming up with these concepts and asking for feedback about that. People will be informed when those opportunities are available. The idea now is to have two concepts ready in early 2019, with a final concept sometime in spring of 2019. Following an approved concept plan, we would move into more specific details.

Happe asked how video games will be incorporated.

Hejl explained it may not necessarily have video game elements. However, thinking about how kids play video games, a lot of them meet up at certain locations to do online gaming as a group. There could potentially be this opportunity to host an event. You would just need to have WiFi and electricity. The idea is not to design a video game park. If we are able to think about the need of those people now, we can potentially incorporate elements that would allow them to do that on-site. Even thinking about incorporating iconic public art that people will want to take their selfie with and post on Instagram is another way to think about it.

Evenrud asked about the water quality from going from a parking lot to a park. It is a great opportunity to reuse water.

Hejl said they are just moving into concept design tomorrow and wanted to get feedback today. Part of the concept design phase would be determining what type of water

elements or what type of water quality will be collected. From that we can determine the appropriate way to revisit if possible and be able to speak more to that.

Acomb said it was a great presentation and is really exciting to think about what this can become. Acomb thinks Hejl did a great job of giving us potentials and ideas. Acomb was wondering if with the closing of Sears if anything is changing about location or size. Also, is there flex to this location or is it set and moving forward.

Barone said she does not have any information about Sears. However, there has been conversations at the council level that if other property became available and we could somehow work with the multiple owners of Ridgedale to try and get a larger space, it may shift a little bit. Barone thinks we would want to take that into account. That is somewhat evolving and she thinks we could still go forward with this process on the concept plan.

Acomb confirmed that it is a consideration being brought along as the concepts are being made.

Mayor Wiersum said that when you look at the Ridgedale plan and what is being done from a park perspective, it really becomes a two acre park and creates a region and opportunity. Wiersum thinks this small park has the potential to really be exciting. One of the challenges is if we have more ideas and he thinks Hejl may already have many ideas. One thought he had was a four-season park idea. Wiersum asked if there is a way to take some creativity and some challenges to make it four different parks seasonally. So in the winter it is one kind of park, in the spring it is different, etc. Maybe that is four times a year or maybe only two times a year but because it is only two acres, with so many ideas the park could get crowded. If it was different parks seasonally it would be really unique and it would really generate a lot of excitement.

Barone commented it was shown a little with the skating rink in the winter. That would be a use separate than what you would have in the summer but even spring and fall.

Mayor Wiersum said that when the park is open, it makes the park bigger because it does not have to be a lot of different things all the time. The changeover could be something that can be done without being ridiculously expensive.

Barone commented that they were in Los Angeles, California for a conference. They were making the L.A. Live area seasonal for the holidays.

Mayor Wiersum mentioned they had an artificial Christmas tree up.

Barone commented that the tree was in the middle of the skating rink in L.A.

Evenrud said up until last year Southdale in the southwest corner had a refrigerated rink.

Mayor Wiersum asked if it looked like it was getting a lot of use.

Evenrud said yes but there is a restaurant being built there now.

Durbin commented that if there was a skating rink then businesses around can plan for it. Example, people will get cold so sell hot chocolate. It is two acres, if there is a way to

buy more land, Durbin thinks the city should do that. He likes how it connects to the new Wayfair and then goes to the Crane Lake Preserve. However, to make that park more than two acres would probably be a wonderful redevelopment.

Barone followed up on Durbin's comment. There are really two pieces to it. 1). There is the physical aspects – what amenities might be there. 2). There is the programming aspect – what kind of partnerships can we have to ensure there is programming all seasons.

Durbin said there were great programming ideas like summer yoga, and it is non-intensive in the fact that it does not take over the park. It does not require anything but something that can be there. Durbin wants there to be a reason to go there such as going ice skating or seeing a movie on a summer night.

Vetter said from staff's perspective it is reassuring to see the results of where the council's been on envisioning Ridgedale. It is not just commerce it is kind of that pseudo entertainment district that is more than shopping. Seeing the development occur in Ridgedale area, what it is trending towards and the results were really parallel. If the trends or results took a turn that would be one cautionary thing, but seeing them head in the same direction is encouraging.

Evenrud can see this as a fun place for people and they will need to check it out if they are in the area. Evenrud is looking forward to this and says that it needs to be done right. Two acres jumped out at him as a small footprint but if it is not going to be a giant concert, it is going to be a place to go through and experience. It kind of reminds him of Tuesday nights with Music in the Park and the Farmers Market. It could be a full night of fun and he can see this as being similar to it, but a little different.

Kist asked if staff got input at the Rock at Ridgedale event from the people that are putting in the new apartment complex, business owners or workers at Ridgedale. Did any of those people show up to the event?

Hejl replied that she cannot speak of how many showed up at the Rock at Ridgedale event just because there were a lot of people there. However, they have been speaking to property owners that are part of the Ridgedale Drive project.

Barone circled back to Durbin's request about acquiring additional property. Barone clarified that the city did not pay anything for the land because of the park dedication from the apartment building.

Durbin said he was in downtown Chicago near Lincoln Park Conservatory and it is about the same size. It was a gorgeous fall day, people were just hanging out, enjoying life and the beautiful day. Durbin thought about how people wanted to cross the street and hang out there even without a mall in the area. He hopes this spot will make people really want to come here. Durbin does not want people to show up only because they are already there shopping, he would like for people to want to go there.

Seveland requested that whatever water conservation is put in, Natural Resources should do education about it.

Gabler asked if anyone came up with any security concerns when looking at the Ridgedale area.

Hejl responded that the question of park security came up and that is something that can be addressed again. Certainly some amount of crime prevention will be followed through environmental design and people's safety will be considered.

Barone mentioned when Rock at Ridgedale was held, there was a huge security plan because staff was aware there would be many people in one place. A lot of time was spent making considerations for that. On the programming side, if there was a larger event, staff would pay special attention to that.

Evenrud said that is a good point because a lot is being invested. Evenrud wonders what the prevention will look like during evening hours, considering the location is right off the highway. There is always a difference with what you think is going to happen and what ends up happening.

### **3. Information Items**

#### Franchise Fees

O'Dea says that annually, the city sends out a community survey and trails are included in that. There is always a high interest in having more trails and connectivity. There is a high level of interest and people are willing to pay for trails. The difficulty was really the funding methods. On August 27, 2018 the city council passed two ordinances. One was to increase the franchise fee and the second was implementing a gas franchise fee. With the addition of the gas franchise fee, a portion will now be earmarked towards trails. Every year in March or April, we bring you the CIP and the five year plan looking at parks and trails. Usually, there is one page that has a 65 million dollar mark unfunded. Hopefully in the next few years that will change and that there will be some specific projects that will be looked at. It is estimated to have about 1.8 million dollars per year revenue coming in for trail development and staff is really excited about that. Park board will see that annually with the CIP. Likely, when projects go through, the park board will get filled in with some key points during the process for each individual trail.

#### Sunrise Ridge Park

Public Works Operations Manager, Darin Ellingson gave an update on Sunrise Ridge Park. This project has been floating around for about a year and it was discussed briefly at last year's meeting. Sunrise Ridge Park is located on Minnetonka Drive and when the park was developed, there was a cul-de-sac street that was removed to build the park. South of where the basketball court is now was a vacant lot. That lot was never investigated on if anyone could build a home on it or not. Somebody bought it, did the research, did the survey and found out a home can be built on that lot. It has been sold. Ellingson is not sure where it is at in the permanent process and does not think anything has been formally submitted yet. However, the survey has been completed and the delegations that demonstrates a home can be built there. Staff went through the process to come up with a concept plan to move the basketball court into more of the center of the park. This will help keep the amenities the same as what was currently offered there but still allows access to this home. Last night, a neighborhood meeting was held. A mailing was sent to all 60 homes in the neighborhood. One family showed up to talk about it so it was a pretty short meeting. Ellingson showed the family the concept plan and they seemed to be open to it. They were happy to see the basketball court could still be part of the park. Staff explained how we will have to plow that

driveway into the park now as if it was a city street up to their driveway. The resident will do their snowplowing so it will be a good way to still offer everything in the park and get a home built there.

Durbin asked about the cost of this project.

Ellingson said between moving the park and realigning some trails and putting up the basketball hoop, it should be around \$4,000 - \$5,000 and the work will be done by public works staff assuming that the permit comes through. Expected start time is May if the weather cooperates.

Durbin asked how much of the park did we lose?

Ellingson said the court is about 30'x30' so in the middle of the park there are trails connecting the triangle. Where that triangle is located, is where the court will be.

#### Programming and facility space study

O'Dea said since probably 2012, internally we have done a number of studies looking at gym space, field space, etc. When programs open up on registration day, the programs that fill up necessarily are not those that are at the gym. Swimming lessons or tennis programs fill up very quickly. Staff wanted to take a step back and do a more comprehensive study to look at our facilities and space.

Currently, we are in the middle of that project. BKV Group was hired to help with that. It is going to look at the needs of the recreation department and the community. Staff has reached out to some of the stakeholders in the community and have looked at some of our facility's conditions. There are definitely some facilities that are busting at the seams. Staff wants to combine those three elements and eventually they will come back with a final study for us. Staff will share that study with the park board in early 2019. That will help staff guide some of our future decisions.

The preliminary findings are in and there is nothing too shocking. They know that Williston and the Community Center are very busy and that partnerships are going to be key to moving forward. Recreation Services has partnerships with multiple school districts within Hopkins and Minnetonka. Some of the preliminary findings were known, however, BKV Group will have some different recommendations to help us as we move forward. These recommendations will help us serve the community with what they need for recreation.

#### **4. Upcoming park board agenda items**

Evenrud thanked council members.

O'Dea reminded the park board that Seveland and Kvam will be leaving the park board and thanked them for their service. There is no meeting in January so the next meeting will be February 6, 2019.

Vetter reminded the park board that staff member Jo Colleran's last meeting will be in December because she is retiring in January.

Evenrud added one thing that was accomplished last year. The park board received iPads and email addresses.

Mayor Wiersum mentioned that a council member is also leaving in January. Acomb got elected to become a state representative; representing our area so he wanted to congratulate her. Acomb has a strong connection to the park board and not only being a former park board member, but also allowing her son to represent the park board as a student representative. Acomb will be missed on our council and everyone has really enjoyed working with her. This is not a goodbye for the council but it is perhaps for the park board.

**5. Adjournment**

Chair Evenrud adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

