

Agenda Minnetonka Parks & Recreation Board

Wednesday, August 7, 2019

7 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center – Council Chambers

Parks & 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**

___ James Durbin

___ Chair Nelson Evenrud

___ Chris Gabler

___ Elena Imaretska

___ Ben Jacobs

___ Cynthia Kist

___ Chris Walick

3. **Approval of Minutes**

A) April 3, 2019

4. **Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda**

5. **Business Items**

A) Opus Placemaking Project Update

6. **Park Board Member Reports**

7. **Information Items**

8. **Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

9. **Adjournment**

Minutes of the Minnetonka Park Board Meeting of April 3, 2019

1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included James Durbin, Chris Gabler, Elena Imaretska, Ben Jacobs, Cindy Kist and Christopher Walick. Excused members included Chair Nelson Evenrud. Staff members in attendance included Darin Ellingson, Carol Hejl, Kathy Kline, Christine Petersen, Perry Vetter and Sara Woeste. Excused: Chair Nelson Evenrud.

Vise Chair Kist called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Gabler moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of March 6, 2019 as submitted. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

None.

4. Business Items

A. Review of the 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Program

Assistant City Manager, Perry Vetter reported on the 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Imaretska asked Vetter to explain the difference between funded and unfunded.

Vetter said that unfunded could be either an idea or project that is in the CIP that staff has not yet identified funding for. It is understood that there is a need, however, it has not risen to the point where dollars have been dedicated to it. This gives staff an opportunity to secure grants or additional sources for funding. There are some technical reasons to actually put it in the CIP if it is unfunded and that is if the potential source could be the Community Investment Fund.

One of the requirements to use the Community Investment Fund dollars is that it has to be in the CIP for two years. When it is listed as unfunded, it is also there to help meet requirements if we need to be opportunistic.

Durbin was looking at the rank order of the 71 trail segments that need to be built and wondered why we are not going from the top down.

Vetter explains that those listed were previously ranked higher than the ones on the unscheduled list. Looking at the Excelsior Boulevard's, those were ranked higher when they were on the other list and they came over because now they are funded. The one exception is the top one that is Baker. It is there because Three Rivers Park District is also doing a north/south study and the city wants to be opportunistic. This says that if Three Rivers Park District is committed and can also bring funding, this is really important for the city too.

Hejl commented that trails now funded and moving onto the funded page are removed from that list in the next iteration of the sheet. They will be shown on the list so they are not seen as missing and it will show what year they are programmed for.

Durbin clarified that we are going in rank order if it is financially feasible. He likes keeping it on there and seeing what year it was done.

Vetter replied that Baker would be too expensive to do on our own.

Durbin mentioned that he is passionate about Baker because the Hopkins West Junior High is there. Kids walk on the road in the dark during the winter time without any kind of safety reflective gear. There are no sidewalks or trails, but there is a big cross walk. For public safety, Baker Road is huge for protecting kids walking to and from school.

Vetter commented that the Sojourner house is also on Baker Road. One reason why staff is trying to get Three Rivers Park District interested in Baker Road is because it would connect the Lake Minnetonka and the River Bluffs trails.

Imaretska questioned if the Minnetonka Boulevard/Marsh to Fairchild section would be a trail on Minnetonka Boulevard.

Vetter confirmed.

Imaretska informed everyone that a safer route her family takes from the LRT is turning on Steele Street to get to Fairchild Avenue. Imaretska asked if something could be communicated about this route so more people would know about it. Minnetonka Boulevard is very dangerous for walking and should be made a priority because it is near Groveland School. Sidewalks should also be constructed there. Last year a lot of residents were very interested on how that area could be made more walkable for kids to walk to school.

Durbin agreed and mentioned wherever there is a school, it should be made a priority. Near Minnetonka High School there have been tragedies due to these things. This is a great opportunity where the park board can mix public safety and recreation.

Vetter replied that the Minnetonka Engineering staff has done a lot of planning work around Minnetonka High School. Vetter was unaware of the details but he believes there is a project page on the city website.

Kist asked if the Ann Cullen Smith property is included in this.

Vetter responded that based off the last discussion with council, it is staying under natural resources management for now. Natural resources will continue working on that for the next several years; then bring in a possible planning project for that in the later years. Planning and implementation will probably be coming in a future CIP.

Kist asked how the park board feels about how things are ranked and prioritized.

Durbin responded that for bullet number one, he agrees and to the best of his recollection it was the same as last year's priorities.

Imaretska moved, Jacobs seconded a motion that they agree with the prioritization ranking presented by staff and the draft CIP. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

B. Review of the Natural Resources Division's 2019 Education and Outreach Plan

Natural Resources Program and Outreach Coordinator, Christine Petersen reported on the 2019 Natural Resources education and outreach plan.

Durbin mentioned he thinks he is in the demographic they are targeting and that we are missing an opportunity to target the youth. The youth have to be educated to keep them from being aloof. Kids should be targeted while they are in elementary school and build on that into high school so they can understand the science of why these diseases are going through trees. A lot of engaging can be done with the schools but also with the literature that is being distributed. Give parents the tools to be able to do something because they need help educating their children.

Petersen explains that this is on her mind a lot and the limiting factors are time and staff. A lot of our engagement is about trying to get adults on board to do what we need and want them to do. Staff worked on engaging the youth with a pullout that was designed to be a little more fun while providing the information.

Petersen and City Forester Hannibal Hayes have been talking about a YouTube series. It is a matter of time and putting it together really well. Another thing staff could do is point people to existing resources and make sure existing programs are not overlapped.

Durbin recommended including a kid's page in brochures and really break it down to their level. Kids won't be just passionate, they will drive their parents into doing the right things because kids naturally do the right thing. If the kids are educated they will keep a check and balance system for the parents.

Petersen explained that there is a program for water quality education and storm water education in the elementary and middle schools. It is done by a contractor but we are trying to get the word out there and get them thinking about that. A couple years ago, she had an opportunity to work with the schools for a little bit when they did the pet waste campaign. Staff can continue to look at ways to do that.

Vetter asked Durbin if he wanted natural resources information to target children.

Durbin clarified to engage all of the population demographic.

Vetter stated the standard opener click through rates for campaigns are about 10 percent. Staff is very proud that we are in that 35 percent. In other areas, they are reaching 50 percent. Against industry standards, our residents are reading.

Jacobs remembers Ranger Rick and suggested adding a fun mascot or little activity for the kids. An example is adding a recycling maze to get their items to the correct bin.

Petersen replied that they did that last year. Staff's restraints on space in publications makes it very difficult. They would have to work with communications to see if there is an option for that.

Jacobs understands staffing is hard but asked about programs with the high school or having high school students take initiative in doing some of that work. Are there any programs or ideas regarding that?

Petersen said that the main issue is the difference in time in which things move. In a school, things move very fast and they are driven by the curriculum of a school. The City has a different pace that is driven by the variety of programs that staff may be working on at that moment. For example, last year a Hopkins High School staff member said they had a Geology class that could make some interpretive signs to go along the creek. The school had a month and a half to do that project. Petersen is responsible for the content of the signs and that is not enough time to coordinate with the school what is needed and make sure the content is correct and have the signs put up. In the meantime, other programs are running and there are deadlines to meet. Something could be possible if it was planned out far enough in advance. Petersen would love to find ways to have career days so that students could see what our work is like and for them to participate in intern opportunities.

Imaretska highly recommended they pursue the YouTube series because it is a huge platform in terms of searching how to do something. Imaretska said that staff could use their calendar and transform some of the things they are working on into quick YouTube videos. She stated that it could be a short video recorded via phone and it does not have to be perfect. Currently, she noticed that the City's YouTube channel is not well attended and not very engaging.

Imaretska mentioned that there are about 1,000 some people reading the newsletter but we have 50,000 people living in the city. She commented that it is a smaller group and that they could potentially be ambassadors and help carry the messages that staff wants carried. In addition to giving how to tips, consider stories from actual residents. Stories and storytelling is a way to impact and influence people. Have residents or volunteers inform people of what they are doing in their own yards and tie that to a subject you are promoting at that time.

Imaretska loves the idea of involving help such as interns. Having an intern would alleviate some of your staffing needs potentially. Minnetonka schools have the VANTAGE program, which is more of a project based program. Maybe there would be less restrictions with timing.

5. Park Board Member Reports

None.

6. Information Items

Park Board Tour

Woeste noted that it is on the second Wednesday in May starting at 5:15 p.m.

Summer Registration

Woeste gave an update on the first day of registrations. There were over 2,600 registrations on March 12. Registrations are done online, in-person and over the phone. The most registrations were done online within the first five minutes. There were over 1,900 registrations in the first hour. It slows down around 10 a.m. but is consistent that week. People also call for help with their online accounts.

Outdoor Ice Rink Report

Woeste explained that it was difficult getting ice down in December because of warm and cold weather, which made it hard to make a solid base. That caused some poor ice conditions, which lead to closing them often in December. January was a good month but February had a lot of snow. In February our resources to clear the rinks were busy plowing and shoveling due to the continuous snowfall. Out of 66 planned days of operation, rinks were open 38 days. In total, the decrease in days open was a 36 percent decrease from last year, however, it only decreased our numbers by 23 percent. When the rinks were open, they were heavily used. January was the heaviest use month and Gro Tonka was the most popular location for skating.

Vetter added that Tim Temple, a Senior Advisory Board member recently passed away. He was the person that requested the park board to invest in pickleball at Meadow Park.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

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

8. Adjournment

Walick motioned to adjourn, seconded by Gabler. Evenrud adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 5A
Meeting of August 7, 2019**

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Subject: | Opus Area Placemaking & Urban Design |
| Park Board related goal: | To renew and maintain parks and trails |
| Park Board related objective: | Identify areas of the city that are deficient of adequate park or trail amenities |
| Brief Description: | Opus Area Placemaking & Urban Design project update |

Background

Asakura Robinson was hired in the spring of 2019 to conduct the Opus Area Placemaking and Urban Design project. The goal is to guide the transformation of the Opus area into a cohesive mixed-use community positioned for future needs and enhance the area's already unique identity. This effort will also reflect the areas agriculture & business park history to serve as a catalyst for building community and creating an environment supportive of development opportunities.

To date, the team has completed:

- Meetings with internal and external stakeholders
- Public Outreach
- A needs assessment
- An existing conditions report
- Draft concept plan

The park board's feedback is desired as the firm moves into the final stage of the implementation plan.

Recommended Action:

Review the project update presentation and provide comment and feedback.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 7
Meeting of August 7, 2019**

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

Pickleball

Eight new pickleball courts opened for play in mid-May. The courts have been well used, particularly on weekday mornings. A grand opening and ribbon cutting was held at the courts on Thursday, June 13 at 5 p.m. with approximately 40 people in attendance.

On Saturday, June 22 the first annual Summer Fest pickleball tournament was held at the new courts offering two men's divisions and mixed doubles with 37 total participants. The tournament was well-received and our Tennis Coordinator will be offering an additional tournament in August due to the success of this tournament.

Finally, the shade structure and additional benches were installed the week of July 8.



Grand Opening



Summer Fest tournament



Summer Fest tournament



Shade Structure

Plymouth Trail Grand Opening

Staff are planning a Plymouth Trail grand opening to be held the week of October 7-11 (tentative depending on completion of construction). City Leadership, including Park Board members, will be invited to participate in this walk, bike, roll, stroll event from starting at the Ridgedale Library and ending at the Minnetonka Mills Park with a ribbon cutting and refreshments. Stay tuned for more information.

Mountain Biking

City staff presented the concept plan to the park board at the June 6, 2018 meeting. The board unanimously voted to recommend approval of the plan to city council. In July, 2018, the city of Minnetonka was informed that a petition was filed requesting the city to conduct an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the proposed mountain biking trail in Lone Lake Park. At its August 6, 2018 meeting, the city council voted to deny the EAW request.

In October, 2018, the city council's decision on whether or not to add mountain bike trails to Lone Lake Park was postponed indefinitely pending litigation. In June, 2019, the Minnesota Court of Appeals upheld the city council's decision – originally made in August 2018 – denying the request to conduct the EAW.

On Wednesday, July 17, 2019, the city was notified that a petition was filed with the Minnesota Supreme Court asking the court to review the ruling upholding the city council's decision to not conduct an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) in Lone Lake Park.

[Next Steps: Council to Vote on Whether to Move Project Forward on Monday, Aug. 26](#)

The city council will review the mountain biking trails plan and vote to approve or deny moving forward with it at its Monday, Aug. 26, 2019 meeting.

- If the council votes to move forward with the project, that decision will be contingent on a favorable ruling from the Minnesota Supreme Court regarding the petition for review.
- If the council votes not to move forward with the mountain biking trails project, the Supreme Court's ruling will be moot.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 8
Meeting of August 7, 2019**

| Upcoming 6-Month Meeting Schedule | | | | |
|--|-------------|---------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Day | Date | Meeting Type | Agenda Business Items | Special Notes |
| Wed | 9/4/19 | Regular | • | |
| Wed | 10/2/19 | Regular | • Shady Oak Beach Operations Report | |
| Wed | 11/13/19 | Joint 5:30 pm | • Community Facility & Programming Space Study Update • Penaz Barn Update | Joint Meeting w/City Council |
| Wed | 12/4/19 | Regular | • Review of 2019 Farmer's Market Operations and recommendations for 2020 | |
| Wed | 1/1/20 | | • No meeting | Holiday |
| Wed | 2/5/20 | Regular | • Consideration of 2020 Park Board Strategic Plan | |

Other meetings and activities to note:

| Day | Date | Description | Special Notes |
|------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Fri | 10/25/19 | Burwell Spooktacular | Burwell House |
| | | | |

Items to be scheduled: