

## **Minutes of the Minnetonka Park Board Meeting of September 2, 2020**

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### **1. Call to Order**

### **2. Roll Call**

Park Board Members Present: James Durbin, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, David Ingraham and Ben Jacobs. Student member: Elliot Berman.

Excused: Elena Imaretska and Chris Walick.

Staff members in attendance: Jeff Dulac, Darin Ellingson, Ryan Engelen, Mike Funk, Carol HejlStone, Kathy Kline, Kelly O’Dea, Mike Pavelka and Sara Woeste.

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

### **3. Reports from Staff**

None.

### **4. Approval of Minutes**

Ingraham moved, Gabler seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of August 5, 2020 as submitted. Durbin abstained. All voted “yes.” Motion carried.

### **5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda**

None.

### **6. Business Items**

#### **A. Review Gray’s Bay Marina Slip Fees**

Community Facilities Superintendent, Mike Pavelka gave the staff report.

Ingraham said the overall cost looks like a bargain for the provided services. He asked how the waitlist turns over.

Pavelka explained that eight seasons is the maximum amount of seasons a person can lease their slip. After eight seasons they must give up their slip, however, they can go on the waitlist after that. Every year there are one or two people that decide not to renew their slip. Reasons could be due to changing financial situations, didn’t use it as much as they thought or they move out of Minnetonka and are no longer eligible. The most turnover staff has seen is about 10 slips in one season. There is a provision in the waitlist guidelines that allows somebody to pass on their opportunity one time before they would lose their spot on the waitlist. There are times when three or four people are contacted before staff finds someone that is interested. The number of years that people can stay on a waitlist is hard to determine.

Ingraham asked what the waitlists are like for their competitive comparison. He said it would be interesting to add that next year.

Pavelka was not sure about other marinas but knows that Deephaven has a long list. He said that is something he can look into.

Evenrud thinks it's a good deal and that a 2.5 percent increase is very fair and appropriate. He was looking up slips for a friend and he researched other marinas compared to Gray's Bay Marina. He said that his friends wished they were Minnetonka residents so that says a lot about our slip fees at Gray's Bay Marina.

Durbin appreciates the 2.5 percent increase which is about 100 dollars per slip. He asked if that covers wage increases for the attendants. He wants the city to be able to attract good talent and give them a good wage. Durbin asked if the increase also helps cover that inflationary aspect of building materials and labor costs for future projected things.

Pavelka replied yes to both questions. We are in a good position escrow-wise and that would certainly cover any wage increase for 2021. It would also cover some of those increased costs this year for purchasing gloves, masks and sanitizer.

Gabler asked if Pavelka was going to come back next year with another increase. Gabler was also curious what Pavelka predicts moving forward regarding pricing.

Pavelka responded that we are in a good position but we don't want to wait too long and have it catch up to us. He doesn't think they would have to increase every year but possibly every other year. Some of it will be dependent on what we see next year. It only takes one slip not to be rented to really hit us pretty hard.

Gabler asked if you see or foresee much turnover due to a price increase.

Pavelka replied that the last time there was an increase; only one person mentioned it and did not return. Pavelka doesn't think that \$100 would be a reason for someone not to have a slip there especially when alternatives are generally much higher.

Ingraham said a year ago he was considering a boat and didn't want a trailer. His first question before buying a boat is if he can get a boat slip. Of all the commercial marinas he called, only one returned his call because all of them were booked. Greenwood was nice enough to return his call to say it might be three years before there would be an opening. For our pricing and our proximity to the city and everything else, it's very attractive and he has a feeling they could do a much larger increase.

Jacobs moved, Gabler seconded a motion to accept staff's recommendation to increase the slip fees at Gray's Bay Marina. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

## **B. COVID-19 Update - Recreation**

Recreation Director, Kelly O'Dea gave the staff report.

Ingraham asked if Rec Box was new this year. His daughter and grandsons took advantage of it and really enjoyed it. It seemed like a really good program given the

environment and kids being home all summer. Ingraham also asked if there any requirements or responsibility for testing these teams or groups for COVID-19.

O'Dea responded that Rec Box was new this year. Youth Recreation Programmer, Becca Sytsma did a great job compiling those boxes and getting them out. As far as COVID-19 and participants, staff has sent out some guidelines for participants to follow. Whether it is per program or per facility, many of those are standard guidelines from the state such as maintain distance and if you feel sick, stay home. Staff doesn't administer any of the testing but they laid out some of the guidelines that they want participants to follow.

Evenrud asked if there is the ability to count passive people on the trails or if there is any sense of whether or not there are more people using the trails in the passive park area.

O'Dea said he would like to try and figure out how we can better capture those types of parks and trails numbers. Staff doesn't have set numbers, however, residents and many staff members have commented that the usage of the trails and parks are much higher than what they have been in previous years.

Evenrud said that seems accurate. The trails are busier and it is a good thing.

Gabler asked with E. coli at Shady Oak Beach if there is any talk about getting rid of the geese there.

O'Dea replied that staff can talk about it in the off-season. He thinks part of it is due to having reduced staff. Normally there would be more people out there helping to maintain and help clean up. The beach was staffed from noon – 6 p.m. this year and normally it would be staffed from 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Durbin complimented staff on doing a fantastic job in an unpredictable situation to maintain safe and effective programming. Some of those huge events like Summer Fest and Theater in the Park needed to be canceled due to the big crowds they would generate and being impossible to be socially distant at. He appreciated how that before the state mask mandate came out, the city was trying to be proactive and considerate with having the first hour at the farmers market as a mask only session. He thought it was a good compromise to try to be delicate about protecting people without offending them. As things progressed with the city mandate and then the state mandate, it seemed to work out nicely.

Durbin had a concern with Shady Oak Beach being open without lifeguards and the safety aspect of it along with the possible liability of the city. His recommendation would be when a facility like that is open we treat it just like the Williston Fitness Center. The Williston Fitness Center wouldn't open their doors without having staff there for safety reasons as well as logistics. Durbin explained that STRAVA and Google Maps have been discussed before on trying to gain some insight or maybe some google analytics on people using the trails. Potentially ways of getting quantitative data showing that as soon as the doors opened this spring, everyone ran out and used the trails and parks probably like no other year.

O'Dea said he talked to Parks and Trails Planner, Carol HejlStone about certain types of ways to track and one of the ways they talked about was STRAVA. It is definitely a challenge but we know there were many people out in our parks and trails. It would be nice to capture that data to really figure out if there are certain parks that are more highly used than others.

### **C. Eagle to Bryant Lake Regional Trail Masterplan Engagement Process Overview**

HejlStone gave the staff report.

Danny McCullough from Three Rivers Park District gave a presentation. Their primary objective was to update the park board on the project. He did a quick review of the route, provided a few details on work they have been doing and then talked about public engagement a little bit. They are looking for permission to move forward with public engagement within our community.

The Eagle to Bryant Lake Regional Trail masterplan touches four cities, Maple Grove, Plymouth, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. At the end of the masterplan they will have one preferred alignment for the project. They hope to wrap up the masterplan in early 2021.

McCullough briefly reviewed the Maple Grove and Plymouth segments.

McCullough continued from Maple Grove and Plymouth to the trail area that enters Hopkins Crossroad. In that area, the public is advocating for the trail to be on the east side. When public engagement is shared they will be showing the trail alignment on the east side of Hopkins Crossroad. They feel like throughout field analysis and some of the work they've been doing over the last few months that there is plenty of right-of-way along that roadway to accomplish what they need to achieve.

Around the Fairfield Road area it would cross to the west side as they approach Interstate 394. There is an existing, somewhat narrow pedestrian crossing Interstate 394 near the Metro Transit Park and Ride.

At Crane Lake they would cross over to the south side of the road so they could follow along the existing city trail. They are well aware of all the wonderful improvements in this area and they would be proposing that the regional trail follow the existing trails that have been recently reconstructed. They are aware of the colors and the pavement in that area and would not propose to change any of that. It would remain the same but they would be identifying it as part of the regional trail route. The look and the feel of your local park trail and trail development would stay the same.

Along Plymouth Road, there is an existing trail on the east side that will be used for most of the way down to Minnetonka Boulevard. Crossing Minnetonka Boulevard, they realized this is a very busy bicycle and pedestrian area. There is a little bit of retail there so they will be doing a little bit more analysis when they write the plan in terms of that crossing and making some general recommendations of what they think would be an acceptable crossing upgrade in this area.

Moving west of there, they are briefly on the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail (LRT) and then they head south onto Baker Road. Baker Road is already a very popular cycling and pedestrian destination. More for the cyclist that uses it as a north/south route,

fortunately there is a very wide shoulder there and a lot of right-of-way. During the public engagement process, they will be showing two options down Baker Road. They are really looking forward to public feedback on which side of the road they think the trail should be served. The right-of-way is a little bit wider on the east side, however, each side has their advantages and disadvantages. There are utilities and other things to think about so they look forward in engaging the public on that and hearing from the residents to find out which side of the road they would prefer.

Moving on from Baker Road, they would go onto the northeast side of Rowland Road. Portions of this area already has an existing city trail. Three Rivers Park District is aware of the activities going on in Lone Lake Park and they also realize there will be a trailhead in this area. They would be avoiding going into the park in this area, however, they will be analyzing this area of Rowland Road. They prefer to be on the east side and that is probably how they would show it through public engagement. They are open in this area to working with the city and putting the trail where they feel it needs to be. As it goes down Rowland Road, it would enter into Bryant Lake Park Reserve. The trail is already fairly developed through Bryant Lake and actually all the way up to the Lone Lake Park area. They would be utilizing existing alignment through that area. They would probably propose that the current area that is gravel be paved through this area to their regional trail standard.

Durbin thanked McCullough for the graphics with the explanatory windows in it. That made it very easy to follow. He appreciated the connectivity of this path. Durbin asked if there are utility poles on one side of the road. If so, that might steer the path into one way if they have to be moved.

McCullough said there are utility poles on both sides of the road in some places and they also switch sides of the road. Three Rivers Park District has built trails before where they had to move utility poles but they try to avoid it if possible because it raises the costs quite a bit in some cases. McCullough shared the existing conditions report that will go into the masterplan. It shows some of the things in the environment around the trail corridor; these are also some of the things they want to connect to. They will be taking a deeper dive in the next phase while public engagement is going on. They will look at costs if they move utility poles and what it would look like if the utility poles are moved. There might be more right-of-way to work with on one side but it might be less expensive on the other side. We don't want the cost of some of that to outweigh what the community wants to see in terms of what side of the road. We want to make sure it is done the right way.

Durbin appreciates that because you want the residents on the side of the street that will be affected to have that major satisfaction for the disruption that it is going to cause during construction. He thinks that minimizing the disruption is probably a major factor in all of this with cost and which side makes sense for the right-of-ways. Durbin explains that once the trail turns onto Rowland Road, it turns rather than staying on Rowland Road to get to Shady Oak Road. He understands it does that because it then connects to Bryant Lake Park. He wants to bring to the attention of everybody on the board and city staff that there is an existing sidewalk that is on Rowland Road but then it abruptly stops and then continues to get to Shady Oak Road. That is kind of a major thoroughfare to get to Opus. He wanted to point that out because it seems like with the construction that is going on with the trail and the disruption that would be on Rowland Road; it would be nice to coordinate and carry that trail onto Shady Oak Road if it is feasible with cost

and logistics. When he was commuting to work, he would always see bikers, dog walkers, runners, and pedestrians in general on that big stretch of Rowland Road with all the curves and hills. It is kind of a dangerous road to be out there on the street and Minnetonka is shy on sidewalks or trails in some of these connecting alignments.

McCullough added that during public engagement, they intend to show what side of the road the trail is on and what the cross-section would look like. They will show things such as the road, clear space, road shoulder, and trail and property lines. When they engage with the residents on Baker Road, they are going to do a lot of imagery, a lot of cross-sections and be able to communicate to them what they are trying to accomplish and what it is going to look like. They have already done a lot of broad-based engagement a few years ago in the West Metro study. With this project they are going to hone in more on people along the route.

Durbin commented that doing this correctly with their reports will be critical. He doesn't want people to feel like they are getting railroaded into something that will be disruptive during the construction process. After the construction process is done, they are going to have the best trail connection on this side of town. He supports the community engagement and how paramount that is for this particular project.

Jacobs thanked McCullough for the presentation. He said it is going to be an exciting trail and he is really looking forward to it. Baker Road is a very busy road so having a trail there would be great. When it goes onto Rowland Road, the report says no marked crossing. He asked McCullough to explain that. If you have to be on the west side there, it is a really dangerous spot even for pulling a car out.

McCullough said that is just identifying that there is no marked crossing there right now. For example, if the trail along this area of Baker Road was on the west side and we had to cross over to go onto the east side of Rowland Road, we would have a K for a crossing there. This is an existing conditions map and it was included to show you some of the work we have been doing and to share the route alignment with you.

Jacobs' other concern and something to pay special attention to would be talking about paving that gravel portion between Lone Lake and Bryant Lake. He isn't sure what kind of push-back they will get but it's an area that has a lot of interests.

McCullough said they are aware of some of the public engagement that has been going on around that park for quite some time now. Just because it's being proposing during this process, it doesn't mean that is how it is going to be and there can be more discussion on it. Generally their regional trails are paved except for the LRT. He would really be curious to see what the public engagement process brings to the conversation. They strive to connect parks with these regional trails and to provide a nature-like experience whenever they can and that is why they have chosen this route. Part of the goals of the regional trail system is not only to provide a recreation amenity but to also connect to regional and local parks. It gives people the ability to walk or bike to their local city park and to retail areas. They are more encompassing than just a bike trail. With that being said, one of the goals to this project is to connect local facilities. If they can do that and provide a park like experience, that is even better.

Ingraham thinks this is a great plan and these graphics are very helpful in terms of really understanding the route. Ingraham agreed with Jacobs' comment about Baker Road to

Rowland Road. That area is a nightmare and he knows they will do a good job on that. Even pulling out a car, you kind of hold your breath and hope it works. His question is regarding the area at Ridgedale. If we are successful with our plans, that will be a pretty good pedestrian area. If the trail utilizes the walkways that the city has put in for the pedestrian use in that stretch between Plymouth Road and Crane Lake, it might be interesting in terms of conflict. If that section around the new park is going to be very much pedestrian, it should be like a slow wake zone if that is possible on the trail.

McCullough replied that sometimes there is trail conflict between users. He doesn't doubt that this will be a heavy use area for walking. There is a residential development going in so he thinks those residents are going to be out walking. This isn't the only area where they have a regional trail around a major retail area. For example, there is a trail in Richfield that goes right down Richfield Parkway through a retail area and there are a lot of residents around. They don't seem to have the conflict issues there so far. He is predicting this trail to be a little busier but he thinks the area through there is wide enough. Another example, if you are familiar with the Hopkins Artery, there is a bikeway and walkway through that area. They are separated out in some portions. In some areas it is a cycle-track and in other areas it is mixed. There haven't been issues there as well. Bikers don't go through this area very fast either and there are a lot of retail entrances and exits.

Ingraham explained that they have a city park and a senior home across from a public library; he really isn't worried about the traditional retail thinking because most people drive to retail. He is thinking about the new residents in the senior area and the people dropping their kids off at the new park and maybe going back and forth.

McCullough said they have some safety messaging that they do on their trails.

Evenrud commented that they are moving towards the public input phase of this and that the details are a little tighter than last month. They are still looking at a plan that will be figured out with the public.

McCullough replied that they came to this group and the city council several months back to introduce the project. There was a big lag because of COVID-19 and they hoped to come back one more time but they didn't get to. They want to get some of the general public engagement going in the next month or two while the weather is warmer. This is because people are out and active and they can advertise their website and their initiative to the residents. By mid to late September they hope to get in the full swing of public engagement by having an interactive map online that people can leave comments on. They will start tracking that and start putting out signs in the community leading people to the project website. They plan to come back in November or December to talk about what they heard from the public and show them what their final trail recommendation is. That is where the real deep discussion starts happening.

McCullough showed a map of the Diamond Lake masterplan as an example of their project page. When people go to the project page they will be able to click on a map. The map will show the trail alignment and people will be able to leave comments in a specific location on the map. There will also be a short survey on the website for people to provide information.

Ingraham said this is a terrific tool and asked if it identifies who provided the comment.

McCullough replied that it does collect some information that they can look at. They require them to put in their zip code. They found that it's more of a barrier when more information is asked to be provided. They can tell where people are coming from such as who is coming from Minneapolis versus who is coming from Minnetonka. This is a great way to collect comments for their projects as well as some of the in-person events. They would like to set up at city hall so homeowners along the route can stop by and talk to them. They are doing some outdoor engagement activities being socially distant where people are able to talk to the project managers and ask them questions.

Evenrud thanked them. He said a north/south trail in Minnetonka will be nice to see.

Gabler moved, Jacobs seconded to go ahead and forward the public engagement. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

## **7. Park Board Member Reports**

Ingraham said that his wife and he drove by the Minnetonka farmers market and they were really impressed. It looked like a terrific attendance. Ingraham added that it looks like the Excelsior Boulevard trail work is progressing very well between Shady Oak Road and Baker Road. He thought that looked really good.

Evenrud agreed with Ingraham about the Excelsior Boulevard project. Evenrud thanked O'Dea about getting back to Ingraham and himself about the trail at Kinsel Park. The answer O'Dea gave them was that there was a bad drain that is allowing the water to come through and there is a very old clay situation. Evenrud asked if it would be feasible or possible to have a floating dock for the boardwalk.

Public Works Street and Parks Operations Manager, Darin Ellingson said they are very close to getting a pipe outlet restored at the lake. They are working with Hennepin County and other agencies. Soon, they will be starting the design phase and hopefully a new pipe valve will be in. Once that is open and functioning, the lake should be below the boardwalk. The water is about a foot to a foot and a half high right now. With a functioning pipe, the lake will normally be a foot lower which would get that boardwalk out of the water. A floating boardwalk could be an option in the future if it is needed.

Ingraham commented that the dock at Lone Lake Park is still fully submerged and it's late in the season. He asked if something different is going on there too and if there is a drain.

Ellingson said Lone Lake is landlocked so there is no way for the water to get out. It has been gradually rising with the rainfall the last few years. They really don't have an option to pump it. Staff is looking at a project this fall to possibly remove the whole dock and build something over the winter. Then they can get something installed in the spring.

## **8. Information Items**



**Lone Lake Park Multi-Use Mountain Bike Trail Update**

O'Dea reported.

**Oberlin & Gro Tonka Parks Tennis Courts**

Ellingson reported.

**Robinwood Park Update**

Ellingson reported.

**Excelsior Trail Project**

HejlStone said the trail progress is coming along great. They've had a pretty favorable construction season this year so they are seeing great progress along that corridor. They are right on schedule to open up in several weeks once they reach substantial completion. In the coming weeks you will see pavement and some revegetation with some seeding and an erosion control blanket.

**Trail Swap**

HejlStone reported.

**9. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

O'Dea reported.

Evenrud asked if the joint meeting would still be online.

O'Dea anticipates it will be online.

**10. Adjournment**

Ingraham moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Kline*

Kathy Kline  
Recreation Administrative Coordinator