



**Minutes
Minnetonka Park Board
Wednesday, February 3, 2021**

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Park Board Members Present: Elliot Berman, Korey Beyersdorf, Chris Gabler, David Ingraham, Ben Jacobs, Katie Semersky and Chris Walick.

James Durbin was absent.

Staff members in attendance: Carol HejlStone, Kathy Kline, Kelly O'Dea, Sara Woeste and Leslie Yetka. Information technology staff: Jeff Dulac and Gary Wicks.

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

3. Reports from Staff

Recreation Director, Kelly O'Dea noted that an addenda was sent out today. He thanked Gabler and Walick for being elected to serve as the chair and vice-chair. O'Dea welcomed Byersdorf and Semersky to the park board and asked them to introduce themselves.

Beyersdorf has lived in Minnetonka for four years and moved from Florida for work. They have two kids, a 15 year old who goes to Minnetonka High School and a 12 year old that goes to Minnetonka Middle School West. She worked in television for most of her career which is why she moved here. Now she is on her own doing some graphic design and starting her own business. She is excited to get more involved with the city and looks forward to getting to know everyone.

Semersky has lived in Ward 4 of Minnetonka for the last eight years with her husband and two boys. Her sons are 10 and 13 years old. One attends Deephaven Elementary and the other attends Minnetonka Middle School East. She is an avid outdoor adventure and recreation enthusiast. That is what spurred her interest in this board. Her career experience is in marketing with a few large global companies in town. She is really happy to be joining the board and working with this great team and serving our community.

4. Approval of Minutes

Ingraham moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 6, 2021 as submitted. Beyersdorf and Semersky abstained. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

Kayla DonFrancesco thinks we should have a skate park because she wants to have a skate community in our own city. She thinks it is kind of weird to go to other towns. When visiting other communities she feels as though they only like locals and thinks if Minnetonka

had a skate park that it would be welcoming to everyone. DonFrancesco thinks it would be a good addition to Minnetonka because it would affect her generation and future generations. She feels like skating is the new thing and that more people are starting to do it and are getting attracted to it.

Walick asked where she goes to skate around here.

DonFranscesco replied that she usually goes to Eden Prairie Skate Park or 3rd Lair, which is an indoor skate park. She feels as though it is hard to access because you have to drive about 10 minutes to get there and you have to pay even if you are a member. There are a lot of skate parks that are far away, but a lot of people can't drive there.

Else Goll has been a resident of Minnetonka since 2002 and is a mom of two skateboarders. She is a teacher at Minnetonka Middle School East and has been a teacher in the district for 15 years. Goll wanted to give a little education as a mom of skateboarders. She thinks it is important to know that it took a little time to be educated on what skateboarding means. Her son started as a preschooler and she quickly learned about the unique and wonderful skateboarding community. It was very hard to watch him get into what looks like complete chaos. As a four year old, there were all these adult sized people skating all around him. She very quickly realized that these people are very organized and cooperative. There is a lot of safety in mind and these really experienced skaters were giving her four year old equal time in the rotation. You have to take turns and be constantly aware of one another. There is a very cooperative element to skateboarding that if you weren't aware of it you wouldn't know. She loved how inclusive they were of her son, how they celebrated every small win he was having. He entered into a competition when he was about 11 years old and he was trying really hard to get his skill. He got it and all of his competitors lifted him up in the air and cheered for him. It warmed her heart to see all these people cheering for someone that just beat them at something. You wouldn't see a soccer team pick up a player from the opposite team after they just scored on them. Skateboarders are all part of this community and they care so much for each other and their achievements.

Else Goll added that being a middle school teacher and wanting to bring skating to her middle schoolers, she started the Minnetonka Skateboarding League four years ago. She thought she was bringing skateboarding to her kids and she actually ended up bringing her kids to skateboarding because there was no place for them to go in their community. She has been collectively getting parents to run carpools and go in different ways because their school doesn't have transportation. The cost for transportation is prohibitive to kids being able to participate. There is a real focus on especially middle and high school age kids to be in team sports. They are expensive and you need your parent to put it all together, pay for it and transport you. Skateboarding is something you can pick up and do. She watched her kids who were not participating in team sports have an immediate sense of belonging, which is a school board goal for Minnetonka. It's that inclusive culture that was really centered on creativity and being supportive to one another that changed lives. As the leader of this Minnetonka Skateboard League you are going to be hearing from other kids that have written in and are calling in tonight because we want to see a skate park in our parks. We love our Minnetonka parks and it should reflect the people that live here. There is an immediate need in our community. She has on average 50-60 kids signed up and that is only students at Minnetonka Middle School East. We haven't really roped in the high schoolers or the Minnetonka Middle School West kids and if that happened it would probably be bigger than what she could manage. Skateboarding is an Olympic sport, it was supposed to launch in Tokyo in 2020 so it is only going to grow and isn't going anywhere. If

you go to skate parks in Eden Prairie, Plymouth, Mound, St. Louis Park, Minneapolis and other surrounding communities, there are a variety of things going on throughout the day. There are kids on scooters in the mornings that evolve into middle schoolers and eventually high schoolers later in the day. It really brings a modern age to our parks, vibrancy and it is a one-time investment and there are a lot of matching grants and funds for us. City of Skate is willing to work with us to help make it happen. Unlike a lot of other things we have in our parks, there is not any maintenance. It is investing in our youth and really helping to foster creativity, problem solving, patience, cooperation and perseverance which are all qualities that as a teacher and a mother she strives to install in all her kids.

Bridger Goll has skated for eight years and he has always enjoyed the community. It is where he has made friends and met his idols. Whenever a new skater or pro skater gets a new trick, everybody treats them as if they just got a huge trick. People respect your turn even if you are a little kid learning how to go down a ramp. Pros will respect that and give you your turn. He would love to bring that community to Minnetonka. Since a lot of people can't drive, we need one in our city to be accessible to the youth. A lot of people will be graduating in five years, and we have to get it done now. It would also benefit the BMXers, rollerbladers and scooters.

Carmen Papp is a student in the Minnetonka Middle School Skateboard League. As Else Goll mentioned, we are partnering with City of Skate to attempt to get a new skate park in Minnetonka. Our skateboard club is actually one of the largest clubs in the school with so many people willing to give it a try. It's a really important social event for a lot of kids where they can try new things out of their comfort zone. It is such a great and supportive community. Papp really believes that Minnetonka needs a skate park as an active and accessible location for kids to get to walk and bike to, a place to get off their screens and get outside and hang out with friends and practice a sport they love. The designated place needs to be easy to access. It would make a safer environment for a lot of kids and a lot of people who are out there skateboarding along streets, sidewalks and other places that are not ideal. Unlike many other sports facilities like basketball courts and baseball fields, skateboard parks actually require little to no maintenance. Importantly, most skate parks around here are really far away or indoors making it more of a COVID risk than an outdoor park. Papp believes that a skate park would be the perfect addition to our city to support outdoor youth engagement.

Gabler thanked all of the speakers and added that 50-60 kids in the club is impressive. He asked what City of Skate is.

Else explained that City of Skate is a nonprofit organization that helps to build professionally designed skate parks in communities. They assist with finding grants and federal and state monies to help fund these parks. They actually have about 18 skate parks that they have helped get approved in the city of Minneapolis. Minneapolis is doing a huge push on skate parks right now and they are becoming these centers of amazing community and are in areas that needed some vibrancy returned. City of Skate is a nonprofit and she knows they have already been in contact and started a conversation with O'Dea. They are a great partner and all they want is to help make it happen.

Walick commented that what they are doing is awesome. He thinks the skate park idea is great. There is a current skate park at Glen Lake and he saw in some emails that it is terrible. He questioned what makes that skate park bad.

Else Goll said she will speak from the perspective of what she has heard from her skaters. She took her son there once and it was terrifying. It was not designed by skaters and as a result it won't be used. It's one of those things where she thinks obstacles and ramps were put on asphalt and then people can say, "Nobody went to skate there, I guess people don't want skate parks." Unfortunately, it just wasn't designed to actually work well for skating. If you go to other cities you will see that the parks that are always busy are these beautiful smooth poured concrete parks rather than this metal like material. They are not suited well for skating so as a result people just don't use it.

Kayla DonFrancesco agrees with Else Goll. She feels like the park is rather dangerous for a lot of people especially younger children trying to learn. From her experience, the ramps kind of lift up a little bit at the ends. When you are trying to go up and try a trick on the ramps, they lift up and they make you trip and fall forward. Her brother also skates and last time they went there he hit his face really hard on the side. She feels like it is not a safe environment which is why nobody wants to use it. It is a rather lower-end skate park.

Bridger Goll added that it is literally just two ramps and a box in the middle set onto asphalt. It is not a good park and like DonFrancesco said, you can clip the edge. It is just not a good park in general.

Else Goll thinks the big idea for us to get this right as a city is to partner with someone like City of Skate to have a well-designed skate park. It will be enticing for skaters to come and ride and actually be safer if it is done well.

Jacobs asked if that is a good location for a park and if it is a good size.

Else Goll said it is too small. She thinks you want to go big on a skate park and if you observe any of the quality skate parks, they are constantly busy. If there are only one or two ramps, that could get old after about 15 minutes. If you take the time to go there, you would probably like to stay one or two hours. For it to be well done it would have to be big enough that there is enough challenge to it. She thinks the location is great because of the visibility. If we have a skate park, we would want to have it in a place where people driving past can see the young kids out there and demonstrating what a cool sport it is. She thinks it is something that people enjoy watching so she thinks the location is great. She isn't sure about the size of that location but there are a lot of parks that don't have a lot of activity going on. She is sure in this large city that they could find something.

Ingraham asked from a footprint perspective, how big is a good park and how much parking would be needed to support that kind of park.

Else Goll said 12-15,000 square feet would be ideal. If you go to the Eden Prairie Skate Park near the high school, it is at Round Lake. People are biking, walking and riding up on their skateboards so they don't need a lot of parking. It is located in a pedestrian friendly space and it is near trails and by a school. Goll thinks it is all about location, if it is located somewhere that is kind of removed from pedestrian and bike access then you will need way more parking because people will be driving there. If you are strategic, there is the Lake Minnetonka Regional Trail (LRT) and all the middle school kids could hop on the trail after school and ride down to the skate park near the trail. She thinks parking would become less of an issue that way.

Ingraham asked if the Round Lake Skate Park in Eden Prairie is a good size skate park to view as an example.

Else Goll thinks it would be a great place to look at. She would suggest going a little bit larger than that. St. Louis Park went way too small on their skate park and she thinks their skate park would be way too small. She thinks Eden Prairie is a good start but if you go big than it will be used. There won't be any quiet space and once you see all the skaters and scooters, you will see that you need space to move for it to be safe, challenging and entertaining.

Kayla DonFrancesco said if you have ever looked into skating, you might know there is a lot of different types of skating. There is street skating, there is park skating, there is freestyle and there is a lot of different branches that come off of just skating. She thinks there should be a lot of options and that requires a rather bigger park. She thinks that a decent size park would be definitely ideal.

Else Goll said Kayla's point was a really good point that we have kids who ride street, which is a little more of a freestyle look. There is bowl skating which looks kind of like a drained swimming pool and that is really cool. The Mound Skate Park has a bowl and that is really fun to ride. There is also vert ramp which looks kind of like a half-pipe and that is a different type of skating as well. The more variety you have in your obstacles, ramps and bowls, the more fun it will be and the bigger success it will be in the end.

O'Dea said these questions are great questions. He asked the park board that if they are wanting more information about a skate park then they should direct staff to work with City of Skate and interested residents. That way it can be on the agenda as a business item and staff can bring back more information and have some answers for you.

Gabler said it is worth following up on, staff should work them.

O'Dea appreciated the callers and staff will bring it back to the park board.

6. Business Items

A. Route recommendation for the Eagle to Bryant Lake Regional Trail

Park and Trail Planner, Carol HejlStone gave the report.

Associate Planner with Three Rivers Park District, Maggie Heurung gave a brief overview and PowerPoint of where they are at with the project.

Regional Trail System Manager with Three Rivers Park District, Danny McCullough asked for questions about the engagement process.

Ingraham said that they got the Toole design memorandum and it mentions that the design is before the public engagement. Did the public engagement reinforce what is on the design or were there any questions about that.

McCullough responded that it did support what their route recommendation was.

McCullough showed a PowerPoint of the trail alignment through Minnetonka.

Ingraham thinks they have done a great job. He is very familiar with Baker Road and they ended up kind of where he thought they would. The difficult intersections that they mentioned, are really difficult intersections. He added that Rowland Road to Baker Road is so weird. When turning right from Rowland Road to go north on Baker Road, you will want to make sure there is plenty of room on that corner for the trail. This is because people tend to encroach as close as they can to the corner to try and make it. Ingraham asked when they drop into the clay trail that exists today, he sees them staying on Rowland Road and kind of dropping right onto the trail. That surprised him because he thought they would take that arch on the existing trailhead. There is a big storm culvert right next to that tunnel that you are going to use. He figures that would be a lot more work than just curling around the existing trail.

McCullough replied that they have looked at it and have been working pretty close with HejlStone and other city staff on this project. McCullough explained that this is a masterplan and they can only analyze so much. A masterplan will generally give us the general cost estimation, some concepts and they will want to know which side of the road the trail is going to be on. They don't get into the weeds about a lot of geometric details in a masterplan. They realize there are a lot of options in this area. They actually went out and looked at this public works property to see if they could utilize it. They decided to hold off for now about recommending a direct route through the city park. The city park seems to be in transition with a new mountain bike trail and new trailheads so they want to be respectful of that. They can tackle some of that in the future when they start designing and building.

Director of Planning for Three Rivers Park District, Kelly Grissman concurs with what McCullough said. They would look to the city to provide them with some additional guidance as to how they would like to see them maneuver through this area and help them set some parameters as to where they maybe could have some impact or route the trail and also maybe areas that are absolutely off the table. Since they don't have any construction funding or design funding in the immediate future, they want to come back and revisit this once they have a better understanding as to the long-term use of the park and how some of the recent improvements may have changed that visitation pattern.

Walick asked with previous projects if there was extra communication or outreach with property owners that are affected by this. He added that people have a way of being very protective of their space so he questioned if there is generally any negative reaction once the project starts.

McCullough replied that they generally have pretty good feedback. When they are constructing a trail through a residential area they have to give notice. They are required to do that but they also work closely with the city to get the word out that the project is coming. They work with homeowners on all sorts of things, however, there might be some things that are in the road right-of-way that might have to be moved, shifted or removed. They want to be good neighbors and they want to work with the neighbors. They have countless examples of working with residents on these projects to find common solutions. The biggest thing they hear when they implement something like this is privacy. If they have to plant trees and screening, they will do that.

Gabler noted that the intersection at Baker Road and Excelsior Boulevard is bad and he doesn't see the county improving it. He asked if traffic signals would be a possibility.

McCullough responded they won't get into the details on what should be done at this intersection with the masterplan. However, they will identify the need for an enhanced or safer crossing. There is a possibility that this whole entire intersection could get reorganized or reconstructed. If at that time, they would place the regional trail crossing where it is safest. Unfortunately, they have to show existing conditions. Another benefit of shifting the trail to the east is utilizing the existing crossings. While the existing crossings might not be ideal, hopefully those crossing will remain and a regional trail would follow that route with better signalization and better geometrics at the intersection.

O'Dea said Three Rivers Park District will take this to the city council in February.

B. Consideration of the 2021 Park Board Strategic Plan

O'Dea gave the report and asked the board for suggestions. He explained that the city council updated the city's strategic plan and made some big changes. Those changes included some things regarding diversity, equity and inclusion and also sustainability. Staff tried to reflect some of those changes with our strategic plan.

O'Dea went through all of the recommended changes to the vision, mission, goals and objectives. He asked for comment on each one.

Vision and Mission:

Walick said they look great. They are general but in a positive way.

Ingraham agreed that they look really good.

First Goal: To protect natural resources and open space

Ingraham thought they were good changes and aligned more with what the board would do versus what staff would do. The board aids in decision making and not management so he thought those were some good changes.

Second Goal: To renew and maintain parks and trails

Ingraham asked why rules was dropped under objective seven. He knows they set rules this year but he wasn't sure if there wouldn't be ongoing review of them depending on how the mountain bike was doing.

O'Dea said he would have to look back at what we were going to bring back.

Walick added that he sees the word metrics and that is a very broad term to him in terms of people. That could be people following the rules and also the impacts of people not following the rules. He feels it would be kind of rolled under there.

Assistant Recreation Director, Sara Woeste thinks that when it was presented to council and the park board that the recommendation was to bring it back to review the annual metrics. She does not think there is any reason we couldn't review the rules as part of that. When we presented the metrics to you, she doesn't think it listed the rules specifically but staff can certainly add that.

Semersky commented that her understanding is that the new Ridgedale Park is a really big project and she noticed only Lone Lake was specifically called out. She asked if Ridgedale is big enough where it needs its own objective. She said it was crossed out of objective six and that the wording looks like it was for last year.

HejlStone said the design process for the new park at Ridgedale, which is now officially named Ridgedale Commons. The design is complete and we are out for bid on that project. It would be eliminated from the list because we are in a different phase of that effort.

Semersky wanted to confirm that it doesn't need to be reworded for this year's priority because there is nothing else you need from the board this year.

HejlStone replied not at this time. As those needs arise we would certainly look at adding those to the list in future years as needed.

Third goal: To provide quality athletic and recreational facilities and programs

Semersky asked if anything about safety should be incorporated in this section just given the year that we are in. She asked if that is something to pay extra attention to.

O'Dea responded that he thinks she is right and we would have to think about how to word it. He asked people to let him know if they have specific examples.

Fourth Goal: Enhance long-term park board development

Gabler and Walick thinks it looks good.

O'Dea said we will bring this back in March and changes can still be made.

C. Recommend Park Board Member to Sustainability Commission

O'Dea commented that the city approved a sustainability commission. The interviews for the sustainability commission were this past Monday at the city council meeting. Part of the make-up of that commission is going to include one member from the park board. He asked if anyone was interested.

Jacobs thought Durbin was interested.

O'Dea replied that Durbin asked a few questions but he never confirmed that he was interested.

Ingraham said he would be interested if nobody else is. He expressed that there may be others that have expertise or interest that are better qualified. He recommended O'Dea to talk to Durbin and if he is not interested, he would be happy to be the park board representative.

O'Dea responded that he will talk to Durbin and if he is not interested than he will recommend Ingraham. O'Dea asked if the board supported that plan and they indicated they were.

Gabler asked what the sustainability committee is.

O'Dea said city council has discussed sustainability for over the past year.

Berman added that he had a little background information because he advocated for it on behalf of the Minnetonka Climate Initiative and the Hopkins Earth Club. It really is just to advise the city council on any projects that they are doing and how to make them more sustainable for the future. It also thinks about how we can incorporate environment and make things better without producing more trash or producing more energy usage. Also how do we go from sustainable energy in our buildings and our public buildings in Minnetonka and how can we encourage those programs. Just to build a more sustainable Minnetonka for the future environmental wise and gas wise.

7. Park Board Member Reports

Gabler said that the pickleball courts at Lone Lake Park are exceptionally popular. A couple of people have approached him to see if they can get them lighted. Older folks tend to use them during the day but then after work more people want to use them. He was told that it gets dark and people still want to play.

O'Dea verified that the courts are very popular. People were out there in November when it snowed and people were shoveling the courts to play. He thinks when we get into lighting fields, it is something to discuss and look into. That is a process to go through but there are a lot of pickleball players and the courts are definitely busy.

Ingraham assumes that lighting the courts would be another area of interest for the Friends of Lone Lake.

O'Dea noted that whenever you talk about lighting at parks, people that live close have concerns with that.

Ingraham gave compliments on the Yeti hunt. He couldn't believe how big that was. He doesn't know how many people actually submitted their things in the end but every park benefited from a lot of interest. Plus, a lot of families got out and did things so it was great.

O'Dea believed we had about 150 entries each week so it was very popular.

8. Information Items

Gray's Bay Marina Summary

O'Dea gave the report.

2020 Athletic Field Use

O'Dea gave the report.

Recreation Services 2021 Summer Brochure

Woeste gave the report.

Ridgedale Commons and Crane Lake Preserve

HejlStone gave the report.

9. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

O'Dea mentioned that in April we have scheduled the 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan. That is being pushed back so it will likely happen at the June 2, 2021 meeting. That is a city decision to tie it to the strategic profile and some other things city wide. That gives us the opportunity to potentially move some things into March or April. As we heard, the skate park seems to be a popular item right now. O'Dea thinks they all received an email from Mrs. Holm regarding the neighborhood restoration project. She would like 15-20 minutes to talk about that. Those are two things that will likely be added onto the schedule in the next couple of months.

Gabler asked if the skateboard park would be added to the March meeting.

O'Dea said he will connect with them. He was thinking March or April would be appropriate.

10. Adjournment

Walick 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