

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2003
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Council Present: Brad Wiersum, Ken Tauer, Jan Callison, Al Thomas and Dick Allendorf, Alternate Acting Mayor

Excused: Mayor Anderson, Terry Schneider

Staff Present: John Gunyou, GERALYN Barone, Ron Rankin, Dave Johnson, Craig Sinclair, Jenny Garvey, Perry Vetter

Alternate Acting Mayor Dick Allendorf called the study session to order in the Council Chambers at 6:30 p.m.

1. Reports from City Manager and Council.

City manager John Gunyou noted that there would not be a council meeting on Monday, January 20, due to the Martin Luther King holiday and that the next regular meeting will be January 27. He also reminded those present of the public reception planned for Linda Koblick from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. prior to the meeting on the 27th.

2. Review of Park Renewal Concept Plans for Covington and Linner Parks.

Gunyou introduced this item with a brief review of the parks renewal process. Allendorf requested that, if major changes are suggested for a particular park, the group go back through the process.

Dave Johnson, Director of Recreation, began with Covington Park. He reviewed the park's characteristics and budget as well as the neighborhood meetings about the park and the proposed plans. Craig Sinclair, Park Maintenance, continued the review of the proposed plans for the park.

Council Member Callison asked what lighting improvements were planned for the park. Sinclair answered that the area by the turnaround tends to be a "hang out" at night and that lighting would be improved in that area.

Noting that Pioneer Park had high requests for horseshoes, Callison asked if people wanted to add horseshoes to Covington. Johnson answered that the same types of surveys and planning process had been used and that the lack of an attendant was the main reason horseshoes were not added to the plan for

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Covington. Otherwise, he said, they are relatively easy to add as long as there is an attendant present and interest is high.

Council Member Tauer asked why an attendant was required, if it was a liability issue or the chance of having equipment stolen. Johnson answered that the equipment could be stolen. Tauer pointed out that it seems like a minimal cost to have horseshoes. Callison noted again that numbers and interest in horseshoes at Pioneer Park were high. Allendorf asked if a fulltime attendant is necessary. Johnson answered that there will not be an attendant at either Pioneer or Covington and that it's nice to have horseshoes when there is an attendant available.

Council Member Wiersum asked staff to describe the new warming house as compared to the existing one. Sinclair reviewed the changes and noted that there have been vandalism issues in the past. Tauer asked if the lighting would be downcast. Sinclair said yes. Tauer said he was pleased to hear this, adding that downcast lighting illuminates nicely.

Allendorf asked if anyone in the audience was interested in further discussion of the plans for Covington. No one was.

Perry Vetter, Parks Renewal staff, reviewed the process that led to the Linner Park concept plan. He described the characteristics of Linner Park and reviewed survey results. Based on the survey participation and results, he said interest in Linner Park is very high. He then reviewed the proposed changes to the park.

Allendorf commented on how unsightly portable restrooms can be, adding that this should be kept in mind when considering plans for all of the parks. He then asked what the "stairwell" is. Vetter answered that it is a set of stairs to a landing, a turn, and then another set of stairs.

Council Member Thomas asked what the Engineering Department plans to do with the wetland. Vetter responded that, in terms of a treatment process, they plan to slow down the water to allow it to drop its sediment in a natural process.

Tauer asked about the volleyball court and if there would be problems with a net and no attendant. He also asked about vandalism issues regarding the boardwalk. Sinclair responded that the boardwalk would be similar to the one near Brown Lane as opposed to the one at Big Willow. As to the volleyball

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question, Sinclair said posts for the net would be in the ground in summer and the net up all summer.

Allendorf asked if there were anyone in the audience who wished to comment. No one was.

3. Pioneer Park Design Approval.

Gunyou introduced this item, noting that Pioneer Park is one of the new parks and that the same process was used as for the renewal of the other parks.

Jenny Garvey, Recreation, reviewed the history of the planning process for Pioneer Park and the schedule for its construction. She also reviewed the park's amenities.

Gunyou noted that park dedication funds would be used for this project as opposed to parks renewal bond money.

Allendorf pointed out that this park will be on church property, but signage will show that it is a city park.

Callison asked if the change from sand to grass for the volleyball court was significant. Garvey responded that play is different on grass, adding that the nets won't be up all the time. She also pointed out that there is an open grass area for open play and that the church will store the nets in their shed.

Callison asked if horseshoes could be added. She said that the emphasis has been on play areas and that there's been a push for other activities for various age groups. She added that she is assuming the "adopt-a-garden" will get participation. Garvey answered that it has had good participation.

Wiersum noted that the church is the "gatekeeper" for the volleyball equipment and asked whom neighbors would contact if they want to use it. Garvey replied that if the city were approached, the city would contact the church or try to encourage use at another park.

Wiersum asked about restroom facilities. Johnson noted that Minnetonka has 42 parks and the practice is to only use portable restrooms in parks where summer programs are located.

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Allendorf said he sees a potential problem with the church being the gatekeeper for the volleyball net, but, that, on the other hand, the open space play area is worthwhile. He then asked if there was anyone from the church present who wanted to speak about the park plan. No one answered.

Tauer commented that staff did a very nice job and that the "bottom up" process has worked well and developed nice plans. Gunyou agreed, saying that the neighborhood planning process is working better than hoped. He said survey returns are high and good comments have been received from neighbors.

4. Update of 2001-2002 Council Targets.

Gunyou discussed the targets, saying that they were developed two years ago as a means of setting city priorities and identifying areas on which staff should focus. He reviewed the four targets of open space, community development, integrated mobility and community building. He reviewed the achievements in these areas over the past two years, plus other significant achievements. In particular, he mentioned the new public works building and the removal of the old facility.

Allendorf said he had received some inquiries about ICA using the old facility, but said it was obvious now why that wasn't possible. Gunyou added that there were health and safety concerns.

Gunyou then asked if there were any questions about the targets.

Tauer asked for a description of the north/south bus routes. Ron Rankin, Director of Community Development, gave a description of the route from Plymouth, through Minnetonka, to Eden Prairie.

Tauer responded that it is an excellent improvement and that a few years ago it wasn't thought to be possible. He noted that it is a result of the city's partial opting out.

Gunyou discussed recommendations on where to go from here. He recommended that the council review the nine strategic goals, which are broader goals that should be reviewed even if no major changes in them are necessary. He suggested a facilitated session, soliciting public feedback before the goals are

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officially adopted. He also suggested a review of major changes in the city over the last 10 years.

Tauer agreed, saying it's good to take another look at the goals, either to change or reaffirm them. He then asked how the Police Department gets interpreters.

Gunyou answered that city staff includes people with language skills and the city also uses an outside service. Allendorf added that it would be interesting to see some diversity figures for the Minnetonka and Wayzata school districts.

5. Adjournment.

The study session adjourned at 7:34 p.m.