

**STAFF SUMMARY
CITY OF MINNETONKA
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL STUDY SESSION
MONDAY, MAY 24, 2004
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Council Present: Jan Callison, Terry Schneider, Al Thomas, Tony Wagner, Brad Wiersum and Mayor Karen Anderson

Council Absent: Bob Ellingson

Staff: John Gunyou, Geralyn Barone and Kathy Magrew

Anderson called the special study session to order at 6:08 p.m.

1. Boards and Commissions Interviews.

Mayor Anderson welcomed the boards and commissions applicants and explained the process for the interviews.

The first candidate to be interviewed was Richard Morehouse, who had originally interviewed for the planning commission. Morehouse explained that he applied to be on a board or commission to set an example for his children about community involvement.

Since applying for the planning commission, he has become more aware of the park board and the number of Minnetonka parks. He was concerned his own lack of awareness of the city's parks reflected the knowledge of the greater community. He noted the wealth of information about the city on www.eminnetonka.com.

His children are aged 8, 10 and 16. They use Ford Park because it is closest to their house, but Big Willow is their favorite park because of the walking trails. Morehouse noted the great improvements to Ford Park through the park renewal project. While he did not participate in that process, he said he would have liked to have been involved. He wondered how much residents participated in the process.

Morehouse and his children participated in an Arbor Day activity through his daughters' 4H club and he and his children have noticed and commented on the Big Willow buckthorn removal project.

He stated he was comfortable with the time commitment required for the park board.

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John Powers was the second candidate. He said that after interviewing for the planning commission, he was urged by the mayor to apply for other opportunities. He is now considering the park board.

He recognizes the importance of parks. In Minneapolis, where he grew up, residents had a close identification with the parks. He wasn't sure this identification was as strong in Minnetonka.

Powers believes Minnetonka parks are well managed, but he has noticed tensions developing as large lots give way to more dense developments. With greater density, he believes parks will increase in importance. With his background in real estate, Powers understands the value of parks to properties.

He and his children use Gro-Tonka Park, and have attended soccer practice at Wilson Park. His children also use Bennett Park, which is near their home.

He related that an acquaintance of his feels there are no places for informal basketball in Minnetonka.

When asked about balancing the completion of the Loop Trail System with the rights of private property owners, Powers said he supported the trails – noting how much people like to walk – but said that the rights of private property owners must be protected. He did not think walking trails would rise to the level of infringing on private property rights.

2. Adjournment.

The special study session adjourned at 6:32 p.m.