

1. Roll Call

City council members in attendance included Mayor Terry Schneider, Dick Allendorf, Bob Ellingson, Amber Greves, James Hiller, Tony Wagner, and Brad Wiersum. Park board members in attendance included Chair Tim Goodyear, Patty Acomb, Kyle Gallagher, Bruce Gefvert, Denny Lambert, Elise Raarup, and Patrick Robben. Staff members in attendance included Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Dave Johnson, Mike Pavelka and Perry Vetter.

Park Board Chair Goodyear called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m.

2. Report from the Park Board Chair

Park Board Chair Tim Goodyear welcomed those in attendance and thanked the city council for dedicating the time to meet jointly with the park board to discuss and review common points of interest.

Goodyear noted that Park Board Member Gefvert is serving his 8th and final year on the board with his term expiring in January of 2010. Chair Goodyear thanked Gefvert for his contributions to the park board noting that Gefvert was involved in all of the city's park renewal efforts.

3. Discussion Items

A. Presentation on the Active Living Hennepin Communities Initiative

Dave Johnson, Recreation Services Director, provided an introduction to this item and informed those in attendance that Minnetonka recently joined the Active Living Hennepin Communities (ALHC) initiative that is comprised of 12 cities and eight agencies from throughout Hennepin County. Johnson explained that the initiative is funded by Blue Cross - Blue Shield and is dedicated to providing a healthier community by bringing attention to the importance of physical activity, reducing obesity and providing well designed communities that promote walking and biking.

Johnson introduced Kersten Elverum, Director of Planning and Economic Development for the city of Hopkins, who also serves as the Hopkins representative for ALHC. Elverum presented information on the history of ALHC, and addressed concerns related to low level of physical activity, and building and roadway design challenges. She discussed the principles of the complete streets concept that involves reducing widths of traffic lanes to 10' so that bike lane buffers and walkways can be incorporated into street designs. Elverum explained that those involved in ALHC understand that the complete streets concept is not always feasible due to space or cost constraints; however it is the goal of ALHC to evaluate each road construction project to see if using the complete streets principles are possible. She added that Hennepin County has recently adopted a complete streets resolution.

Elverum opened the floor to any questions.

Mayor Terry Schneider indicated that County Commissioner Jan Callison had encouraged Minnetonka to become part of the ALHC partnership. He added that he felt that a significant amount of the ALHC principles are consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, however the complete streets concept might be challenging to Minnetonka as well as other communities. Elverum responded that the primary objective for complete streets is to address primary roadways such as county roads and used County Road 4 through Glen Lake as an example.

Geralyn Barone, Assistant City Manager, indicated that the city's resolution to be drafted in support of ALHC can be amended to include the principles the city supports and will focus on.

Council Member Brad Wiersum cited the city's comprehensive plan and the desire to connect village centers throughout the city as possible projects that could incorporate the complete streets principles. He suggested that the ALHC recommendations be used as a template when possible.

Council Member Amber Greves asked what the city's benefit is financially if the complete streets concept is a County initiative. Elverum responded that the complete streets process represents a change in philosophy by the county that could be transitioned into county road projects undertaken throughout the city. She added that any discussions that take place should improve the partnership between the city and county.

Hearing no further comment, Chair Goodyear and Mayor Schneider, on behalf of the park board and city council, thanked Elverum for her presentation.

B. Review of Recommendations Related to Parks and Off-Leash Ordinance Changes

Perry Vetter, Parks, Buildings and Grounds Division Manager, provided background to the item with a review of the staff report and the following recommendations for changes to the existing park regulations:

- A requirement for horses to be ridden in designated areas only and for owners to pick up and dispose of feces in a proper manner.
- Prohibition of electric or motorized scooters designated for recreational use in park facilities.
- Requirements for geocaching and the placement of caches within the park system.
- Prohibition of fishing from boardwalks, trails or bridges designed for pedestrian use.

- Clarification of the voice command regulations as they pertain to dogs off leash in the park system. Those clarifications include:
 - Dogs are off leash but must stay within sight and under handler control.
 - Only two dogs per handler may be off leash at any given time.
 - Handler must have a leash for each dog they are walking.
 - All dogs utilizing designated voice command areas must be registered with the city by a permit system.
 - Recommended designated off leash areas include Big Willow Park, Purgatory Park, Victoria-Evergreen Park and Jidana Park

Vetter stated that the majority of the park board's discussion to date has involved changes to existing leash laws mainly due to several concerns the police department hears annually. These concerns relate to dogs being off leash in areas not permitted or dogs jumping on them while walking the park system. He noted that the existing regulations are considered to be subjective and difficult to enforce.

Vetter explained the park board's recommendation to incorporate designated off leash voice and sight command areas that would require purchase of a permit. In addition, the pet's owner would be required to sign an application form that clearly lists the requirements of having a permit. Vetter indicated that the recommended parks to include an off leash voice and sight command area include Jidana, Purgatory, Victoria-Evergreen and Big Willow. He explained that under the existing regulations, a dog may be off leash under voice command in any natural unmaintained area of the park system (amounting to approximately 36 parks).

Vetter closed by stating that a designated fenced in dog park site is still an interest of the park board. He noted that a proposal for a dog park at Lone Lake Park was denied by the park board in March of 2009, primarily due to the site's proximity to Bryant Lake Regional Park, where a dog park currently exists.

Chair Goodyear opened the floor to questions.

Council Member Wiersum asked if there is a fine for owners who do not clean up after their dog. Vetter responded that there is currently no fine; however under the proposed changes this would be considered a petty misdemeanor.

Council Member Dick Allendorf asked if the city requires owners to carry a clean-up bag while with their dog, noting that in his neighborhood there is social pressure to do so. Vetter indicated that currently there was not; however this too would be included in the regulation changes. Vetter noted that too often, owners expect to get to a park and have bags available; however the concern is what if a bag is needed on the way to the park; or if the bag container is empty upon arrival.

Council Member James Hiller commented that social pressure and education of the owners is critical as the new regulations are introduced.

Council Member Bob Ellingson asked Vetter to explain in more detail how the permit system would work. Vetter indicated that permits would be sold for a two-year period with dogs off leash being allowed only in the designated areas and under voice and sight command. He added that the owners would sign an agreement of understanding that would require a rabies vaccination, knowledge of designated areas, and an understanding of all related rules. Ellingson expressed concerns related to the reduction of possible locations from 36 to 4; and the amount of work required for seemingly little benefit. He voiced support for dogs being able to be in any of the parks off leash as long as they were under control.

Mayor Schneider indicated that he felt the park board has put a lot of thought into enforcement, adding that he felt enforcement is the most important factor.

Council Member Greves asked if there were other possible locations for a designated dog park other than the proposal rejected for Lone Lake Park, and asked if budget was an issue for completion of the project. Barone responded that the project has been included in the CIP for the past few years and that the primary issue was the proximity of Lone Lake Park to Bryant Lake Park.

Mayor Schneider expressed disappointment in the park board for rejecting the Lone Lake proposal, noting that a 14-acre site might not have been the best plan but possibly a smaller park in the range of 5-acres could have been incorporated into Lone Lake Park. Park Board Member Bruce Gefvert indicated that the proximity of Bryant Lake Regional Park, along with some resident opposition, played a role in the park board's decision.

Council Member Greves asked what requests residents requests have expressed related to size of a park; and if the 14-acre site at Lone Lake is what generated the interest. Vetter responded that several amenities have been requested including size to walk, fencing, access to water, and shade. He indicated that staff will continue to research other areas and then, if a location is found, include as many of the requested amenities as possible.

Mayor Schneider suggested the option of having several smaller parks throughout the city as opposed to a single larger park.

Council Member Allendorf suggested contacting those interested dog owners the city has on file to seek their desired park size and amenities.

Park Board Member Elise Raarup asked if over time, the amount of designated off leash voice and sight command areas could be increased if the demand exists. Vetter indicated that it could if other parks met the criteria needed such as size and access.

C. Review of 2010 Athletic Field use fee recommendations

Johnson provided background on the process the park board has used to date in developing recommendations for an athletic field use fee structure. He noted that the park board first started reviewing this issue in 2006 and finalized their recommendations at the October 7, 2009 meeting following a public meeting with impacted user groups. He noted that the recommendations developed are proposed to be in place for the 2010 season.

Johnson then provided a presentation that explained reasons for the recommended changes, definitions of field types, proposed fees for use and estimates of revenues to be generated. Highlights of the presentation included the following:

- The recommendations were developed by the park board to establish a fee schedule for all city-owned fields that is not currently in place; and to generate additional revenues to support annual operating and future capital needs for the city's athletic fields.
- A review of recommended fees for athletic fields located at Big Willow, Guilliams, Lone Lake, Glen Lake and Civic Center Parks.
- The development of three classifications of user types based on residency and the ability for participants to access the programs provided.
- Proposed increases in field use fees from an estimated \$12,400 in 2009 to \$16,400 in 2010.
- Allocation of fees generated to cover annual operations (67%) and future capital needs (33%)

Chair Goodyear opened the floor to questions and comments.

Council Member Wiersum indicated that he felt the recommendations were well thought out for three reasons; 1) increased revenue to protect the investment of parks renewal; 2) continue to maintain fields at a high level; and 3) places part of the responsibility on the people who use the fields.

Council Member Tony Wagner noted that the fee for use of the Civic Center soccer fields was only \$5 and questioned if that was worth the cost. Johnson responded that this was one change that came as a result of the public meeting that was held with user groups. He indicated that the fee was initially \$10 per field for each of the four small fields available at the Civic Center; and that often a user group will use the entire space as one field. The initial recommendation would have required a \$40 fee for the entire space and a suggestion at the public meeting was that this was too high. The park board reduced the fee to \$5 per field or \$20 for the entire field to be consistent with Big Willow Park.

Council Member Greves asked what the impact will be on the user groups if the recommendations are approved. Johnson responded that based on the estimates he's received from user groups, the range would be \$2 to \$10 per participant if the

user groups charge the participants directly. He indicated that the higher end would most likely be for youth softball organizations using Guilliams Park and for soccer programs using Civic Center Park, both of which previously had no charge for use.

4. Information Items

Information items included in the meeting packet were not discussed in further detail.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.