

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
MARCH 6, 2002**

1. Roll Call

Park Board Members: Jim Calkins, Diane Hayden, Paul Lehman, Bob McFarlin and Steve Watkins were present. Attending staff was Jo Collieran, Dave Johnson, Mark Simenson and Perry Vetter. Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Hayden noted that she was not present at the February 6, 2002 meeting as stated in the Minutes. Calkins requested that item 4b be corrected to read, "Calkins cited a lack of Park Board and neighborhood support."

Calkins moved and Lehman seconded a motion to approve the minutes of February 6, 2002 as amended. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

3. Business Items

a) Review of the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) Mapping Process

Jo Collieran explained that the City has applied for a grant with the Department of Natural Resources to purchase and implement the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS). She explained that this program is capable of providing several layers of mapping information related to land cover features within the City's boundaries. Collieran added that the MLCCS system was compatible with GIS.

Collieran introduced Dave Thill from the Hennepin Conservation District (HCD). Mr. Thill is the Natural Resources Specialist for the HCD.

Thill explained that the HCD has been involved in four MLCCS projects throughout the county. HCD provides fieldwork, mapping, analysis, and quality control services to complete the MLCCS program and would partner with the City to complete the work. Thill explained that a DNR goal is to have the entire metro region mapped under the MLCCS program by the year 2020.

Thill explained that the MLCCS system is a hybrid of the existing Natural Vegetation Classification System. He clarified that MLCCS identifies land cover patterns and not land use patterns. Information is collected and entered into a five level system. Examples of each level were provided.

McFarlin questioned how information was collected. Thill explained that polygons are established on a map and the field checked. Thill noted that HCD

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time is not charged back to the City, however the cost for a botanist to field check and digitize the information is approximately \$25,000-\$30,000 per 36 sections of land.

McFarlin asked what the top uses for MLCCS would be for the City. Thill indicated that benefit would be provided to open space referendum work the City is in the process of, also the ability to abstract information such as percentages of forest or impervious surfaces. Colleran added that the mapping of private properties throughout the City would be beneficial for the Natural Resources Stewardship Program.

Thill acknowledged that the process of updating information will be an on-going challenge for users of MLCCS.

Calkins asked if soils will be checked against the soil maps. Thill indicated they would not due to cost for this information. Calkins noted that he finds the soil information as highly suspect due to the removal of native soils during development. Thill noted that original soil maps were completed in 1968. Changes have been made and new soil survey maps should be available in the next 2-3 months. Thill added that assumptions for soil conditions and other aspects of the MLCCS process will still take place.

Calkins noted that he feels MLCCS provides excellent information, however soils which have been brought in for developmental purposes will affect the vegetation in place.

Calkins followed by asking if MLCCS work completed by the MCWD would be used in the City's project. Colleran indicated that the information collected by the MCWD went to level 3. The City will be able to expand the information to a level 5 and provide the new information back to the MCWD.

Watkins pointed out that various organizations including the City, DNR and MCWD will need to share information in order to maintain updated databases and synchronize their MLCCS programs. Thill acknowledged that a weakness of the program is that each organization has their own database that is not interactive with other databases.

Colleran noted that the Met Council, through their 2020 Greenprint Plan, is requesting that all cities have a MLCCS inventory completed by the year 2020.

McFarlin asked if referendum dollars could be used to help fund the MLCCS implementation. Johnson noted that this may be a possibility and that software has been purchased for implementation of Parks Renewal projects using referendum funding.

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Colleran noted that she has applied for a DNR grant which, if approved, will fund 50% of the project's \$40,000 cost. She added that the City's \$20,000 responsibility includes \$10,000 in the form of in-kind services and \$10,000 in funding. These funds could possibly come from several budgets including Engineering, Forestry, and Planning.

Colleran concluded by saying that without a successful DNR grant, the MLCCS program would not be implemented by the City in 2002.

McFarlin asked if the Planning Commission and other City related Boards have been provided the MLCCS presentation. Colleran indicated that the City Council had and was required to adopt a resolution in support of implementing the program. She added that the Park Board had requested a presentation from staff on the MLCCS program.

Calkins asked if the City had developed a list of objectives regarding plans for use of the MLCCS program. Colleran indicated that this was completed as part of the grant process. Reasons indicated included use of the program as a tool to help identify high priority natural resource areas to implement use of referendum funds. Calkins suggested that all departments who could benefit from the MLCCS program develop use objectives for the program.

Watkins summarized that the Park Board was supportive of the purchase and implementation of the MLCCS program.

b) Review of March 14 Natural Resources Stewardship volunteer program

Simenson reviewed the proposed agenda for the March 14, 2002 Natural Resources Stewardship volunteer program. He noted that items for distribution will include a program survey, an information packet regarding buckthorn, and a history and future projects list. Simenson noted that volunteers who are unable to attend the March 14 meeting will receive the information by other means.

Hayden questioned if Meadow Park is scheduled for a controlled burn. Simenson indicated that there are no plans to conduct burns at Meadow due to the difficult control challenges the park has. Simenson noted that the most needed volunteer services involve planting, erosion control and seed collection. He added that he is working with Groveland School students to provide assistance with planting needs.

Colleran noted that six volunteers have signed up to assist with wetland monitoring, and that others have expressed an interest in assisting.

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The Park Board expressed support for the program agenda and requested a meeting summary be included in a future agenda packet.

c) Summary of Boards & Commissions Workshop

Park Board members updated Calkins on the outcome of the February 21, 2002 Boards & Commissions Workshop. Johnson reviewed the agreed-upon “opportunities” that were developed as a result of the workshop. These included the Park Board becoming more ‘pro-active’, a better balance between recreation and park issues; improved effectiveness of the Joint Recreation Board; and increased public involvement in Park Board issues.

Watkins suggested forming a sub-committee to review the determined opportunities. Hayden indicated an interest to serve on the committee.

A decision was made to activate a committee to review opportunities for Park Board development once the two Park Board member vacancies were filled.

d) Review of 2002 Glen Lake Skate Plaza operations

Johnson provided a review of the initial policies put in place for the 2001 season. He noted that one change to the Park Board’s recommendations for 2001 was made to accommodate skating hours for youth 11 years old and under. This change provided designated times Monday-Saturday from 10:00am-11:00am and from 5:00pm-6:00pm seven days per week. This change was requested by parents of younger skaters and came through Council Member Dick Allendorf.

The Park Board approved the Glen Lake Skate Plaza Operations Plan for 2002 with the added change to provide designated hours for skaters 11 years of age and under.

4. Park Board Member reports

None

5. Informational Items

In addition to the items included in the Park Board’s packet, Johnson provided project updates on Big Willow Little League lighting and Bennett Park.

Johnson noted that at the March 4, 2002 meeting, the Council approved the Minnetonka Big Willow Baseball Association’s (MBWBA) request to allow the use of their lights until 10:00 p.m. if needed. The Council’s approval required lights to be turned off 10 minutes following completion of the last game, with lights available for use no later than 10:00 p.m. In addition, lights may be used for maintenance until 10:20 p.m. provided that field #4 (regulation baseball field) lights are not in use.

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Johnson reported that staff is working with Bennett Family Park on a potential conservation easement on property the organization owns. If the easement can be worked out, Bennett Park may choose to apply the funding received towards construction of their new concession/restroom facility.

6. Upcoming Park Board agenda items

Vetter noted that the park renewal meetings for Glen Lake Station and Libbs Lake Beach have been moved from March 21 to March 28, 2002.

McFarlin indicated that he planned on attending the March 11 meeting for Mini-Tonka Park. Watkins indicated he would attend the Victoria-Evergreen meeting (March 12) and the Libbs Lake meeting (March 28). Hayden indicated she would attend the Meadow Park meeting (March 28), and Lehman plans on attending the Glen Lake Station meeting (March 28).

7. Adjournment

Lehman moved and Calkins seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. All voted "yes". Motion carried.