

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
May 1, 2002**

1. Roll Call

Park Board Members: Jim Calkins, Diane Hayden, Paul Lehman and Steve Watkins were present. Attending staff was Geralyn Barone, Dave Johnson, Mike Pavelka, Mark Simenson, Craig Sinclair and Perry Vetter.

2. Approval of Minutes

Lehman moved and Hayden seconded a motion to approve the minutes of April 3, 2002. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

3. Business Items

a) Review of Park Renewal Schematic Plans

1. Mini-Tonka Park

Vetter provided an overview of the planning process and noted that neighborhood meetings were conducted on March 11 and April 16, and 50 surveys were returned from residents interested in the project. Vetter noted that resident desires for upgrades to the park centered around new play equipment, fencing and improved access to the site.

Vetter introduced the recommended concept plan for Mini-Tonka Park as developed by the residents participating in the process. Improvements included an extension of the existing fence to the parks perimeter to provide a larger secured area for play. Play equipment was proposed for two specific age groups, ages 2-5 and 6-12.

Watkins invited Park Board discussion.

Hayden questioned why detailed information was not available for the 2-5 year old play area. Vetter noted that equipment for this age group was standard and not able to be customized like the equipment for ages 6-12. Hayden asked if the equipment for ages 6-12 met the neighborhood's expectations. Vetter responded that it did, adding that interested neighbors actually chose the equipment specified for the park.

Watkins asked where entrance gates would be located. Vetter responded that gates would be located near the northeast corner and the parking lot.

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Lehman suggested that waste cans be located outside of the fence so that pedestrians using the sidewalk have access to them. Vetter added that mutt mitts will also be provided at the site.

Calkins asked what the concept plan included for landscaping. Sinclair noted that trees would be added and replaced within the park, and that shrubs would be planted along the eastern fence section.

Watkins opened the discussions to public comments.

Marcy Winson, 4142 Tonkawood Road, indicated support for the concept. She added a request for a future sidewalk to the park along Tonkawood Road. Barone indicated that the City staff trails team would research the possibility of a sidewalk on Tonkawood Road.

After hearing no additional neighborhood comments, Watkins closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Lehman moved and Calkins seconded a motion to approve the concept plans prepared by staff for improvements to Tonkawood Park. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

2. Orchard Park

Vetter provided an overview of the planning process for Orchard Park and noted that two neighborhood meetings were conducted on March 12 and April 2 after surveys were mailed to residents in the neighborhood surrounding the park. Jeff Schoenbauer of Brauer & Associates Ltd. provided an overview of the concept plan. Schoenbauer noted that two concept plans were developed based on input collected at the first neighborhood meeting. The concept presented to the Park Board was a result of input collected at the second neighborhood meeting. Schoenbauer reviewed the following themes involved in the neighborhoods' desired improvements to the park:

- Keep it simple – don't over develop
- Keep active areas to the north
- Improve play equipment
- Restore natural areas
- Provide a casual picnic area

Specific improvements to the park included the following:

- Restore natural areas in southern area of park
- Locate new play equipment and picnic area in the central area of the park
- Eliminate basketball court and convert to green space

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- Buffer homes to the east of the park

Watkins opened the discussion for Park Board review.

Watkins asked if staff had accounted for maintenance plans needed for both the long and short term. Johnson noted that prior to the Council's review, cost estimates for continued maintenance will be established.

Schoenbauer indicated that, as proposed, improvements to the park are estimated to cost \$224,000.

Lehman questioned if neighbors residing to the south of the park expressed any concerns regarding the concept plan. Schoenbauer indicated that no concerns were expressed at the neighborhood meetings.

Watkins questioned if buckthorn was a major concern within the park. Simenson noted that buckthorn was not a major problem at Orchard Park, adding that the transition of grasses within the park will be a higher priority.

Watkins asked if the park had any storm water runoff issues. Schoenbauer indicated that he was unaware of any but that this question will be further reviewed in the design process.

In response to a question from Calkins, Schoenbauer indicated that the restoration of vegetation would be phased.

Watkins opened the meeting to public comments.

A resident residing at 3810 Huntingdon Drive, questioned why an asphalt trail was needed in the park; expressed concern regarding the lack of shade near the play equipment; questioned where soccer could be played; and voiced concern regarding the loss of an existing buffer between the park and her property to the east of the park. She noted that she had not attended any of the previous meetings for Orchard Park.

Schoenbauer responded that adequate green space would remain for informal recreational use. He added that the trail was proposed to be paved to accommodate use by residents of all ages, and would be easier to maintain. Schoenbauer noted that options for providing shade in or near the play area will be explored during the design phase.

Larry Sharp, 3726 Farmington Road, noted that he had attended all previous neighborhood meetings and is in full support of the current plan. He added that the trail planned for the park is widely supported by many residents in the neighborhood.

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Seeing no additional requests for public input, Watkins closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Hayden moved and Lehman seconded a motion to approve the concept plan for Orchard Park as recommended by staff. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

3. Victoria-Evergreen Park

Vetter provided an overview and indicated that the concept plan prepared for review was in accordance with recommendations included in the POST plan. He added that two neighborhood meetings were conducted on March 12 and April 2, and that a total of 37 surveys were completed by neighborhood residents.

Schoenbauer reviewed the concept plan and noted improvements including:

- Redesign of the parking lot for 9 vehicles
- Retain existing informal picnic area
- Removal of existing driveway within park
- Trail redesign to address wetland issues
- Implementation of Natural Resources Management Plan

Schoenbauer noted that residents were very involved in the planning process.

Watkins questioned why the revised route of the trail still included a segment through floodplain elevations. Schoenbauer responded that this portion of the trail may only be available on a seasonal basis and was still under review. Watkins asked if discussion took place on the development of a formal trail to the industrial development northeast of the park. Schoenbauer indicated that this discussion took place, and added that, if completed, this connection could be costly. Schoenbauer indicated that his staff would review alternatives for a connection. Sinclair added that an easement would be required because the trail would connect to private property.

Watkins inquired about the process to be used for removal of the existing drive within the park. Sinclair noted that due to compaction, use of a dozer to re-grade the drive would be required.

Sinclair noted that a method to correct drainage problems in the northeast portion of the park had recently been formulated. He added that these corrections would be completed in the next 2-3 weeks.

Calkins questioned what the wetland classifications were within the park. Schoenbauer indicated that he was uncertain but would review. Calkins followed by asking if water runoff from the trail would impact the wetland. Schoenbauer indicated that he would also research this impact to the wetlands.

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Calkins suggested looking into a possible trail extension to the top of the hill located in the park. He added that an overlook may be of interest to park users.

Calkins questioned how secure and safe the eastern portion of the park is due to the distance from the main entrance. Schoenbauer noted that the next step in the process will be to review plans with City staff, including police and fire personnel, to see what enhancements can be made, if any.

Hayden questioned what surface the trails would be made of. Schoenbauer noted that residents strongly favored aggregate trails unless maintenance needs dictated a paved surface.

Watkins opened the hearing for public comments.

Jean Robin, 13104 Sheffield Curve, Hopkins, suggested not using woodchips for a trail surface. Schoenbauer noted that a notation to a woodchip trail on the concept plan was an error.

Ingrid Berkholtz, 15403 Robinwood Drive, Minnetonka, noted that she was pleased to hear that the drainage problems would soon be corrected. She also asked for the location of buckthorn concerns within the park. Simenson noted the areas of concern.

Judy Bjork, 12010 James Road, voiced support for minimal changes to the park. She also questioned whether the plan for nine parking spots was too much. She further commented that security within the park should not be a major concern and indicated that she liked the presence of honeysuckle within the park.

Hearing no additional requests for comments, Watkins closed the public comment portion of the review.

Calkins noted that natural resource restoration within Victoria-Evergreen Park will be an ongoing challenge.

Calkins moved and Hayden seconded a motion to approve the concept plan for Victoria-Evergreen Park as recommended by staff. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

4. Ford Park

Vetter provided a brief history of Ford Park, noting that a cooperative ownership and maintenance agreement exists between the Cities of Minnetonka and St.

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Louis Park regarding the park. Vetter added that negotiations to update this agreement are currently underway.

Vetter indicated that two neighborhood meetings had been conducted on March 8 and April 10. He closed by indicating that the concept plan to be reviewed was in accordance with recommendations for the park identified in the POST plan.

Prior to reviewing the concept, Schoenbauer noted that residents began the redesign of Ford Park from a blank slate. Areas of concern expressed early in the process included retaining an existing buffer to residents living to the south of the park; managing the flow of storm water within the park; management of the natural areas within the park; and expansion of the existing 3 car parking lot.

Schoenbauer reviewed improvements to the park, which included:

- Expansion of the parking lot to accommodate 9 cars
- Expanding and replacing the existing play structure
- Providing open green space for recreational use
- Elimination of the baseball field
- Development of a small loop-trail segment
- Replacement of the existing bridge crossing the ravine
- The addition of an arbor gateway

Schoenbauer noted that a preliminary budget for these improvements is estimated to cost \$355,000. He added that this cost does not include restoration of the ravine to manage storm water runoff.

Watkins questioned if the open play area was large enough for programmed activities. Vetter responded that this area would only be utilized for informal activities, and would not be programmed for use through Recreation Services.

Watkins asked if a connection to the neighborhood south of the park was explored. Schoenbauer indicated it had not, but added that he would explore options with staff.

Watkins inquired as to the method to be used for prairie restoration. Simenson indicated that this process was still under review.

Hayden indicated support for the arbor gateway concept and questioned if any other parks included this concept. Schoenbauer indicated that no other Minnetonka Parks have this feature, and added that the idea has been well received.

Watkins opened the review to public comments.

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David Kok, 2318 Cedarwood Road, questioned what was involved in woodland restoration. Schoenbauer responded that management techniques would need to address buckthorn, prairie restoration, and the possible planting and re-seeding of native trees.

Lorraine Kent, 2017 Lancaster Street, commented that she favored the removal of the existing baseball field to eliminate parking problems that occur at the park. Kent also asked for verification of the timeline for natural resources restoration work.

Seeing no additional residents wishing to provide comments, Watkins closed the meeting to public comments.

Johnson noted that prior to a City Council review of plans for Ford Park, St. Louis Park residents will need to provide input for desired changes to the park.

Hayden moved and Lehman seconded a motion to approve the concept plan as recommended by staff and to forward the plan to the City Council for review contingent upon approval by the City of St. Louis Park. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

The Park Board adjourned for a 10-minute recess.

5. Meadow Park

Vetter provided an introduction noting that neighborhood meetings were conducted on March 18 and April 10. Vetter reported that a total of 191 surveys had been completed to date by residents.

Schoenbauer opened the concept review by noting that active areas of the park were the primary focus of those residents attending the meetings.

Schoenbauer summarized that common themes for renewal of the park included improving the play equipment and providing shade; improve the parking access to the ice rinks and tennis; provide needed restoration to natural resources where needed; and repair the parking area as needed.

Schoenbauer provided a review of the concept plan noting that two concepts were provided at the April 10 neighborhood meeting. Based on input received at the April 10 meeting, a single concept plan was prepared for review by the Park Board.

Schoenbauer reviewed improvements to Meadow Park including:

- The addition of a full basketball court to replace the existing ½ court

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- The relocation of the parking lot, including the addition of a circle drop-off area for users of the ice rinks, basketball court and tennis courts
- Development of a new play area constructed into the landscape
- Paving of the second hockey rink with lighting upgrades
- Grade corrections to skating areas and warming house access

Schoenbauer estimated a preliminary cost of \$500,000 for Meadow Park and added that this cost did not account for any soil corrections if needed.

Watkins opened the concept review to public comments.

Bruce Stillman, 2404 Sherwood Hills Road, commented that the projected cost was outrageous. He added that he was scheduled to present an option he has developed to include a mini-golf/sculpture garden at the June 5 Park Board meeting. Stillman voiced concern over the addition of a new basketball court, commenting that he does not see adequate use of the existing court. Johnson noted that 61% or 121 of the residents completing a survey indicated support for a full basketball court.

Stillman continued by indicating that he felt the existing play equipment was adequate and that shuffleboard would be a desired addition to the park. He added that the changes to the parking lot are not needed.

Stillman requested public information from the City regarding any residents who have been involved in the Meadow Park planning process. Johnson indicated that he would provide any public information to Mr. Stillman.

Margo Barry, 12900 Sheffield Curve, questioned who uses the existing hockey rinks. Vetter responded that local youth hockey associations reserve the rinks on a regular basis.

Barry continued by indicating that she felt the parking lot was oversized and needed. Schoenbauer noted that the number of parking spaces was not expanding; only the design was proposed to change to accommodate use patterns within the park.

Barry added that she was concerned about the proposed location of the play equipment and felt it was too close to the proposed parking lot. She indicated that she likes the openness of the existing play area and was concerned about the safety of a multi-tiered play area.

Peg Palaskas, 2389 Cherrywood Road, questioned the cost-benefit of the new parking concept. She also voiced concern over the design of the play equipment into a hill.

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Stephanie Eaton, 2382 Cherrywood Road, expressed concern regarding access to Meadow Park from neighbors residing to the north. She noted that the existing connection provides too steep of a grade and is unsafe. Eaton added that access to the park should be considered during the parks renewal process and added that she had submitted a petition to the City recommending that a new neighborhood connection be explored. Eaton concluded by expressing concern regarding the overall water quality of the park's natural areas.

Harlan Lehman, 2961 Cedar Crossing, commented that he was very pleased with the plan presented and wished to remind those in attendance that Meadow Park is a community park, not a neighborhood park, and should address the needs of the entire city.

Seeing no additional residents wishing to provide comments, Watkins closed the meeting to public comments.

Watkins noted that several questions about the concept remained and needed to be discussed further.

Hayden expressed concern that residents who attended the second neighborhood meeting were not in attendance to share their input.

Johnson suggested scheduling a third review meeting prior to the next Park Board meeting on June 5.

Hayden asked how many concepts were presented at the April 10 neighborhood meeting. Schoenbauer indicated that two concepts were developed by his firm. As a result of the April 10 meeting, a single concept was then developed.

Watkins directed staff to schedule a 6:00 p.m. meeting to receive additional input from residents interested in the Meadow Park renewal project. Calkins requested further information from staff regarding Oakland Road improvements and screening for parking. Watkins added his request for information on the water quality found in Meadow Park.

b) Discussion on Future Skate Park Locations

Johnson provided an introduction noting that construction of the Glen Lake Skate Plaza has resulted in several requests for additional facilities in other areas of the City. Johnson reviewed a recent petition that was sent to the City for a skate park at Minnetonka Middle School East.

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Lehman indicated support for additional facilities, noting the high attendance he has witnessed at Glen Lake. He suggested one facility per ward as a possibility, and asked that staff explore possible locations.

Watkins requested that the paved ice rinks located throughout the City be considered when selecting potential sites. He also indicated support for additional facilities and suggested that Meadow Park may be an option.

Calkins requested that staff survey users of the Glen Lake facility to determine where users are coming from. He added that working with local school districts for potential locations seemed appropriate.

Johnson confirmed that staff would review potential locations in each Ward within the City and bring this information back to the Park Board for review.

c) Review of Itinerary for May 15 Park Board Tour

The Park Board discussed and finalized location to be included on the Park Board's annual tour of facilities scheduled for May 15, 2002.

4. Park Board Member reports

Lehman noted that Park Board meeting dates listed in the Weekly Information Packet were incorrect and asked staff to review.

5. Informational Items

No additional information was provided.

6. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Watkins reminded the Board that a special meeting to review Meadow Park improvements was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on June 5th, prior to the regular Park Board meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment

Hayden moved and Lehman seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 p.m. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.