

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
June 5, 2002**

1. Roll Call

Park Board Members: Jim Calkins, Diane Hayden, Paul Lehman, Bob McFarlin and Steve Watkins were present. New Park Board members (pending approval on June 10, 2002) Lanise Stuftt and Sue Woodrich were also in attendance as non-voting members. Attending staff was Geralyn Barone, Dean Elstad, Chris Handrahan, Dave Johnson, Mark Simenson, Craig Sinclair and Perry Vetter. Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:34pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

Calkins requested the addition of comments he had made regarding Victoria-Evergreen Park to provide access to the hill located in the park. Noting this change, Hayden moved and Calkins seconded a motion to approve the minutes of May 1, 2002 as amended. All voted "Yes." Motion Carried.

3. Business Items

a) Review of Special Project Request for Meadow Park

Johnson provided a brief introduction noting that staff had received a request from Bruce Stillman to design and construct a miniature golf course and nature garden in Meadow Park. Johnson noted that staff was presenting Mr. Stillman's request as a special project to be considered independently of the park renewal process for Meadow Park.

Stillman introduced Susan Jepson, 2415 Sherwood Hills Road, to speak on his behalf. Jepson indicated that she wished to reframe Stillman's request and read a revised proposal, which was not included in the Park Board's packet. She described the proposal as being creative and expressed concern regarding how Stillman was characterized in correspondence sent to the city. She further noted that she felt that the city's introduction of Mr. Stillman as being a contractor was inaccurate.

In describing Stillman's proposal, Jepson indicated that the project could include a 12-hole miniature golf course at a cost of \$75,000. She noted that this proposal does not include tennis courts, basketball courts and an extended drive improvements found in the current Meadow Park concept plan estimated to cost \$500,000.

Stillman then spoke on his behalf. He then noted that his initial plans were too big and he has since reduced his plan. Stillman proposed that the existing warming house be retrofitted to include concessions. He added that equipment

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including shuffleboard, bocce ball and checkers could be made available for park users. He added that the cost to staff the site could be supported through equipment rentals and a cost of \$4.00 per round to play miniature golf. He indicated that he had received several e-mail messages from kids and seniors interested in working as attendants and added that the work could be viewed as community service.

Stillman began to critique the current plan concept and noted that city staff had not been very cooperative in providing him information regarding the park renewal process. Watkins requested that Stillman focus his comments on his proposal and save comments regarding the park renewal process for later in the evening's agenda.

Stillman closed by indicating that he would have preferred to introduce his concept earlier in the process but was not allowed to.

Watkins opened the review to Park Board questions.

Woodrich questioned what the surface of the proposed course would be. Stillman described the construction components and indicated that concrete would be used for the surface. Woodrich expressed concern for the amount of concrete needed considering the resident comments received indicated a desire to keep green space within the park. Stillman noted that the project could be reduced to eight or even two holes.

Stuftt questioned if operating expenses for the proposal could be funded from referendum dollars. Barone responded that referendum funds could only be used for capital improvements and not operations. Stuftt questioned what the cost to staff the proposed amenities at Meadow Park would be. Johnson noted that existing staffing cost for park services range from \$13,000 (Skate Plaza) to \$20,000 (Lone Lake Park). Stillman responded that golf fees could cover the cost of an attendant.

Woodrich noted that she was new to the Park Board process and questioned what the initial intent of referendum funds was. Barone answered that funds were intended to be used for recommendations included in the POST Plan and general improvements requested by residents who utilize each of the 42 parks.

Watkins opened the discussion to public comments.

Dee Thibedeau, 2504 Cherrywood Road, informed the Park Board that the letter distributed by Mr. Stillman upset her and added that she strongly opposes commercialization of Meadow Park by charging for use of a recreational amenity.

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Judi Stucki, 2704 Cherrywood Road, noted agreement with Thibedeau. She added that some rock designs would be o.k. but did not like the mini-golf concept. She concluded by indicating that she likes the park as it is.

Margot Barry, 12900 Sheffield Curve, indicated that she was not in support of the miniature golf concept. She added that sculptures or other forms of art would be o.k.

Ian (Last name not provided) voiced support for previous comments opposing the miniature golf proposal. He added that his parents would not allow him to go to Meadow Park if the miniature golf course was constructed due to increased traffic and park users.

Shirley Lloyd, Oakland Road, voiced opposition to the miniature golf proposal and preferred keeping the park as it is.

Mark Wilson, 14711 Wellington Road, opposes the proposal and is against commercialization of the park. He added that rock gardens would present long-term maintenance at an added expense to tax payers.

Watkins closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

Watkins noted that during his Park Board tenure he did not recall ever receiving either a proposal or request for art in the park system.

Stillman informed the Park Board that Johnson had turned down his request to display his artwork in front of City Hall.

Hayden noted that while working on the referendum, she had heard residents express a desire for art forms in the park system.

Watkins suggested adding the discussion of art in the parks to a future Park Board agenda. As for the miniature golf concept, Watkins suggested including the proposal with the overall discussion of Meadow Park later in the agenda.

Schoenbauer indicated that Minnetonka may not be as open to the concept of art in the park system as other communities, but added that Meadow Park, being a small community park, may not be an appropriate place to display art. He added that Minneapolis is an example of a city that advocates art in the parks, however they have displayed art only in larger dedicated areas, and not in neighborhood or community parks.

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Barone suggested that the Park Board review the concept of art in the parks along with other funding requests the Park Board has reviewed. She added that vandalism should also be considered.

Schoenbauer added that if artwork is displayed in the park system, competition among artists is an important aspect to consider. He noted that competition increases quality.

Schoenbauer added that liability issues need to be considered when artwork replaces functional equipment such as benches.

Watkins requested that the issue of art displays in the park system be added to the July 17, 2002 agenda.

b) Review of Park Renewal Concept Plans for Meadow Park.

Vetter provided an overview of information included in the staff report and requested by the Park Board at the May 1, 2002 meeting.

Watkins reminded those in attendance that public comments on the plan were received by the Park Board during a Special Meeting held from 6:00-7:30 p.m. prior to the Park Board meeting.

Schoenbauer suggested that he take the consensus of information collected during the Special Meeting and develop a revised concept for the Park Board to review at the July meeting. Schoenbauer indicated he would focus on resident concerns regarding the amount of paved surface within the park. He added that his staff could continue with completion of the design development phase of the project so that questions related to soil conditions and amenity locations could be addressed with updated information.

Hayden noted that she had attended the first Meadow Park meeting and feels that the current plan addresses input received from residents at that meeting.

Calkins asked what the use season for the outdoor skating rinks was. Sinclair indicated that ice is generally maintained from mid-December to mid-February. Responding to a question raised by Calkins, Schoenbauer indicated that the location of the ice rinks was not considered a wetland. Calkins asked if fill could be added to the rinks. Schoenbauer indicated that a further review of the site would be needed to determine if fill could be added.

Calkins questioned if the proposed full basketball court could be overlaid on one of the paved ice rinks. Schoenbauer indicated that it was possible, however considerations would need to be given to grading requirements, rink confinement and the displacement of other potential summer activities on the rink.

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McFarlin indicated support for studying the possibility of adding the basketball court to one of the paved ice rinks.

Sinclair noted that rink surfaces and stripping would also need to be considered.

Calkins expressed support for keeping the park as natural as possible. He added that he has concerns about making significant changes to the neighborhood plan. Providing direction to Brauer & Associates, Ltd., Calkins supported the basketball court being placed on one of the rinks; no significant changes to the tennis courts with the possible exception of screening (possibly with plantings); favored the new playground design; did not support miniature golf; and was not convinced changes to the parking lot were needed.

Woodrich indicated support for the new play equipment design, indicating that the improvement could possibly increase use at the park. In addition, she supported the possibility of placing the basketball court on one of the ice rinks, and did not support placing a miniature golf amenity at this park.

McFarlin indicated a lack of support for the extended parking lot/drop off area. He requested that portable dasher boards be considered for the hockey rinks and noted that a miniature golf amenity might be a good addition at a future location, but did not support the amenity in Meadow Park.

Hayden noted that the extended drive was proposed to address issues of maintenance and security, and was not intended to be used only as a drop-off. Vetter added that ice rink staff attendants have requested transfers to other sites due to security concerns and a lack of visibility at Meadow Park.

Stuft indicated support for reducing the amount of new paved areas within the park. She also expressed support for additional basketball amenities in the park, noting the positive input for teens.

Calkins noted concern for security within the park, adding a suggestion that police actively walk the park and not only patrol from their cars.

Watkins indicated support for no changes to the existing tennis courts and placing a full basketball court on one of the paved rinks. He noted that he did not support a miniature golf amenity in the park and was not convinced that a turn around drive was needed.

Schoenbauer indicated that he would take the feedback provided by the Park Board and revise the plan for consideration at the July 17 Park Board meeting. Barone added that residents who had indicated an interest in the Meadow Park Renewal process would be notified of the July 17 meeting.

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c) Consideration of Petitions Supporting and Opposing A New Neighborhood Connection to Meadow Park.

Johnson provided a brief overview, noting that an initial petition (Petition A) received in May requested the City to construct a new neighborhood connection to Meadow Park from the north. The petition requested a new trail due to concerns that the existing was too steep, causing unsafe conditions. Johnson noted that a second petition (Petition B) was received by City staff in mid-May requesting that the City not construct the new trail.

Barone provided a history related to the development of the existing trail. She noted that the City obtained an easement for the trail at the time the neighborhood was platted.

Stephanie Eaton, 2382 Cherrywood Road, spoke in support of Petition A. She indicated support for a new trail connection, citing the steep grade of the existing trail and the needs of park users who could not access the trail due to safety concerns. Eaton indicated that the need for a new trail was justified and supported by the Open Space & Trail Plan completed by the City. Eaton also expressed concern regarding the ecological health of Meadow Park.

McFarlin questioned if the grade of the existing trail was Eaton's only concern. She indicated that it was, adding that it was a major concern.

Lehman questioned if stairs would help the situation if constructed. Elstad noted that steps would require increased maintenance and may even be more difficult for bikes and strollers to access. Eaton confirmed.

Sinclair noted that the new trail proposed in Petition A included the same grade changes in elevation over a longer trail length.

Kristen Sarff, 2605 Cherrywood Road, spoke in support of Petition B requesting that the new trail not be constructed. She noted that an alternative safe trail exists along Oakland Road and takes users seven minutes to get to Meadow Park from the Cherrywood neighborhood. Sarff added that the new trail would be intrusive to neighbors adjacent to the proposed location.

Debra Armel, 2500 Cherrywood Road, indicated support for Petition B, noting that the new trail proposed in Petition A would be located only three houses down from the existing trail. Armel added that she was concerned about the cost for a new trail that would still be considered a steep grade.

Michael Armel, 2500 Cherrywood Road, questioned staff if there were any documented concerns for safety on the existing trail. Elstad indicated that he was not aware of any formal complaints.

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Bruce Eaton, 2382 Cherrywood Road, indicated support for Petition A and a new trail. He noted that while the grades for the existing and proposed trails are 12%, the existing trail covers this grade in approximately 60 feet, while the proposed trail would be approximately 150 feet.

Sandy Jones, 2390 Cherrywood Road, questioned staff about the reasons for constructing the Oakland Road trail. Elstad indicated that the trail was constructed in response to a neighborhood petition.

Bruce Eaton expressed concern that heavy traffic on Oakland Road has resulted in un-safe conditions on the Oakland Road trail. He added that the trail is simply an extension of the roadway with no elevation change.

Shirley Lloyd, 2312 Oakland Road, indicated that Oakland Road trail is heavily used and considers it a safe trail.

Watkins expressed concern over the cost and impact of a new trail on the wetlands.

McFarland asked if a handrail on the existing trail would be an option. Stephany Eaton indicated that a handrail would not be helpful because those using a stroller would have to keep both hands on the stroller. Woodrich warned that the use of a handrail at this site might set precedence for other trail locations with steep slopes.

With no further discussion, Lehman moved and Watkins seconded a motion to deny the Petition A request to construct an alternative neighborhood trail to Meadow Park from Cherrywood Road. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

d) Eagle Scout Project Request to Develop Location Signs for the Loop Trail System.

Johnson introduced John Bauer, 13319 Crestwood Drive E. Bauer distributed a request for the Park Board to allow him to construct and display five "You Are Here" signs on the Loop Trail system at designated locations. Bauer requested that the City install the signpost, and he would complete the rest of the project.

Responding to a request from Watkins, Bauer informed the Park Board that the signs would be constructed using UV protected plexi-glass and a design uniform with other park signs. The maps would also include distances and be 4' x 2.6" in size.

Stufft asked staff what an approximate cost to the City would be. Sinclair estimated \$100 per sign.

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Hayden questioned why five signs were identified. Bauer responded that he had worked with City staff to determine which locations would benefit from such signs.

Watkins questioned how the City would fund their share of the cost for the signs. Sinclair suggested the Trail Maintenance account.

Watkins questioned what the life expectancy for the signs would be. Simenson indicated that similar signs were constructed in Lone Lake for the interpretive trail and are still in good shape after 5 years of use.

Hayden voiced support for the initial installation of five signs, and if deemed necessary more signs could be added in the future.

Hayden moved and Lehman seconded a motion to approve John Bauer's Eagle Scout Project Proposal to design and construct Loop Trail location signs at five approved locations, with the City providing assistance to install the signs. All voted "Yes." Motion Carried.

e) Consideration of Changes to the City Council Policy for Use of the Burwell Property.

Barone reviewed proposed changes to the Burwell Property Use Policy as recommended by the Minnetonka Community Heritage Commission.

Calkins requested a clarification regarding the user fee and reservation fee included in Appendix A of the staff report. Barone indicated that the reservation fee was in addition to the user fees listed for both residents and non-residents. Barone clarified that the total fee for resident use is \$300 and for non-residents use \$375. Calkins requested that this information be clarified in the revised policy.

Calkins moved and Hayden seconded a motion to recommend to the City Council proposed changes to the Burwell Property Use Policy as developed by the Minnetonka Community Heritage Commission, with clarification to the fee schedule. All voted "Yes." Motion Carried.

4. Park Board Member reports

Lehman requested that the City website be updated and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that correct information is included.

Lehman pointed out that the July meeting date for the Park Board was incorrectly listed as July 3 on the City Calendar.

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Lanise Stufft and Sue Woodrich were introduced as new Park Board Members with their appointments officially beginning on June 10, 2002.

5. Informational Items

6. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

The Park Board requested that Joint Recreation Board meetings be added to the six month calendar.

Johnson noted that a discussion related to art in the parks would be added to the July 17 meeting agenda, along with a follow-up meeting to review revised plans for the Meadow Park Renewal project.

7. Adjournment

McFarlin moved and Hayden seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:13pm. All voted "Yes." Motion Carried.