

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
December 18, 2002**

1. Roll Call

Park Board Members Jim Calkins, Diane Hayden (7:10-8:50 p.m.), Paul Lehman, Bob McFarlin, Lanise Stufft, Steve Watkins and Sue Woodrich were present. Attending staff was Geralyn Barone, Dave Johnson, Craig Sinclair, Perry Vetter and Jennifer Garvey. Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Stufft moved and Calkins seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of November 20, 2002 as submitted. Calkins, Lehman, McFarlin, Stufft, Watkins and Woodrich voted "Yes". Motion carried.

3. Business Items

A. Park Renewal review- Covington Park

Vetter provided an overview of the item as detailed in the staff report. He noted that significant improvements included an improved play area, bridge replacement, a new warming house, and pavement of the hockey rink, a new basketball court, and trail expansion. Vetter added that vandalism to the warming house facility has been an ongoing concern.

Watkins opened the floor to any Park Board member questions.

McFarlin asked for clarification regarding the hockey rink and questioned if the surface had previously been paved. Vetter indicated it had not. Watkins asked if the Covington rink was scheduled for organized use. Vetter indicated that Minnetonka Youth Hockey does utilize the rink. Watkins questioned if parking was adequate and Vetter indicated that it was.

(Hayden arrived at 7:10 p.m.)

Watkins asked if the proposed ball field and green space would be programmed. Vetter indicated that this space was requested by the neighborhood for informal use and would not be programmed.

Woodrich noted that the POST plan included a recommendation for a central gathering area and asked if that had been considered in the concept. Vetter responded that the neighborhood had requested expanded planting areas similar to the adopt-a-sign program and indicated that this area may provide a central location. He added that the new warming house design could incorporate a central gathering area as well.

Vetter noted that a common concern of neighbors involved in the planning session was that the park did not have a "neighborhood park" feel. He added that the Police Department was active in the planning process and that

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communications regarding concerns with the park should now be much improved.

Woodrich questioned what the cost for bridge replacement was and why it was needed. Vetter responded that the bridge had deteriorated significantly and will cost \$20,000-\$40,000 to replace.

Woodrich asked if a drinking fountain would be incorporated into the park. Vetter indicated that the new warming house facility would include an exterior drinking fountain. With regards to the picnic shelter, Woodrich asked how the facility would be used. Vetter indicated that residents requested the picnic area for informal use, adding that the City would not market the space for use by larger groups.

Woodrich closed by noting that the POST Plan had suggested the addition of bike racks and horseshoe pits. Vetter indicated that bike racks would be included but not horseshoe pits at this time.

Stuftt questioned if vandalism was a concern when planning for construction of a new facility. Vetter noted that preliminary concept plans call for a block construction that would be more resistant to vandalism. He added that the current building has a wood roof that can be accessed by vandals. Vetter noted that the new proposed building will be much more visible.

Calkins inquired about the condition of the natural areas. Sinclair responded that the wooded areas are primarily overland species and the wetlands mixed with reed canary grasses. Sinclair indicated that buckthorn was also found in the park. Calkins asked if the park renewal plan for the park included any restoration work. Sinclair indicated that it did not, adding that for budgeting reasons restoration work is occurring primarily in the larger natural areas of the park system.

Calkins observed that the wetland appears to have been ditched at some point in time and questioned whether the ditch could be removed. Sinclair indicated that he would research Calkins request.

Calkins inquired about the proposed boardwalk included over the wetlands. Vetter indicated that options might be available to create the trail on higher grounds without the need for a boardwalk. In response to a question from Calkins on the length of this boardwalk if needed, Vetter indicated the distance was shorter than the boardwalk proposed from Civic Center to Jidana Park.

Hayden questioned if the warming house design would be similar to park shelters constructed at other city parks. Vetter indicated that designs for each park would vary in an effort to match the needs and surroundings of each park.

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McFarlin questioned where the future connection of the trail to 101 would take users. Vetter indicated that along 101, the trail would likely connect to Purgatory Park to the North and the CR62 segment to the South. Vetter added that improvements to County Road 101 are currently planned for 2007.

Watkins opened the floor to public comments.

Susan Hocker, 5730 Covington Circle, indicated that she appreciates plans for a new warming house and felt that the new location will help control vandalism. She added that she also likes the plan for added trail routes. She questioned if the proposed ice rink over the sand volleyball court would work. Vetter responded that frozen sand actually serves as an ideal surface to create ice on, noting that indoor ice arenas often have a sand floor base.

With no one else from the public wishing to speak, Watkins closed the floor to public comments.

Watkins asked if Park Board members had any concerns regarding the proposed plan for Covington Park. No concerns were indicated. Lehman requested that mutt-mitts be provided at the park. Sinclair indicated they would. Vetter noted that staff would research the impact of improvements on the wetland as requested by Calkins. Lehman moved and Stufft seconded a motion to recommend to the City Council the concept plan prepared for Covington Park. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

B. Park Renewal review- Linner Park

Vetter provided an overview of the concept plan prepared for Linner Park as detailed in the staff report. He noted that significant improvements to the park included an improved play area, a new picnic shelter/pavilion, the addition of a general skating rink, resurfacing of the tennis and basketball courts, a new sand volleyball court and additional trail segments. Vetter added that one amenity favored by some residents but not included in the plan was a sledding hill.

In addition to the improvements outlined, Vetter noted that the basketball court surface would be "skateboard friendly" so that portable equipment could be placed at the park if so desired. He also indicated that soil corrections would be required on the open play area located in the southern portion of the park due to the settlement of fill that had occurred several years ago. Watkins opened the floor to Park board member questions.

Lehman asked for clarification as to what the neighborhood requested for a sledding hill. Vetter responded that the request came from some residents for a maintained hill within the park dedicated for sledding in the winter.

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Johnson noted that, if designated as a sledding hill, the City assumes the responsibility that the area is maintained on a regular basis. He noted that during snow operations, Public Works currently is responsible for clearing snow from trails, ice rinks, parking areas and grooming cross-country ski trails, and that the addition of a sledding hill (or possibly more than one) would be difficult to ensure that the hill could be maintained in a timely manner.

McFarlin questioned why the City would be responsible for maintenance. Johnson responded that if the activity of sledding is being done informally, without the City's knowledge, the participant assumes the responsibility of risk. However, if the area were designated specifically for sledding, the City would be indicating that the area is maintained in a condition that is as safe as possible.

Woodrich noted that soil compaction was evident in areas of the park and requested that corrections be made if possible.

McFarlin asked if the wetland within the park was natural or a storm water holding pond. Sinclair responded that the wetland has been manipulated and that dredging had occurred at some point.

McFarlin questioned if fencing around the ponding area had been considered. Barone responded that City practice has been to not fence ponds. She indicated that the reasons for not fencing included the potential difficulty of accessing the area if a rescue was needed, and the difficulty of fencing a considerable number of wetlands and ponds located throughout the City. Barone added that this issue was previously discussed when Mayflower Park was developed a few years ago. Watkins noted that he realized trail connections to Linner Park had been opposed in the past, but questioned if any had been considered during the neighborhood meeting process. Vetter responded that neighbors opposed a connection to the north, and added that a connection to the south might be a possibility if tied to the open space acquisition plan, however the potential for this connection had not been discussed by neighborhood.

Calkins questioned the reasoning for a switchback trail section within the park. Vetter responded that this section provided an accessible route between the upper and lower portions of the park, and added that the switchback takes trail users past the original home site for the property. Calkins questioned whether trail users would follow the designated route and requested that staff and the design team review all options prior to finalizing the plan.

Calkins requested that required soil corrections be completed correctly and noted that the plan indicated the need for six inches of black dirt. He cautioned

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that black dirt may not be the best option and requested that other materials be considered, along with the depth needed for correction.

Calkins asked what classification the existing wetland was. Sinclair responded that he was not certain of the classification, but felt that the plan would not change the existing status.

Watkins opened the floor to public comments.

Lori Knudsen, 2330 Linner Road, indicated that she has used Linner Park for the past 11 years and was excited about the planned improvements. She voiced support for the improved basketball court and play equipment and supported not providing a sledding hill. Knudsen requested that grading be completed on the upper level of the park to bring all amenities to the same elevation. Sinclair indicated that this request would be extremely difficult and potentially very costly. Knudsen indicated that she felt the proposed trail segments may be too much, and questioned the need for the proposed loop around the wetland citing concern that the area may be used by groups to party. Knudsen closed by questioning whether the parking lot was large enough. Sinclair noted that the size could be adjusted in the future if needed.

Calkins questioned if there is an opportunity to provide plantings on the upper level of the park to provide screening around the trail, tennis courts and other amenities. He added that a green corridor could be provided in the northeast portion of the park. Sinclair responded that this was a possibility and could be considered.

Karen Arkesteyn, 1926 Deer Hill Court, did not support screening of the amenities as suggested by Calkins, indicating she would prefer to see what activity is going on upon arrival to the park. She indicated that drainage within the park was a concern, however she likes the plan as presented and added that she did not favor sledding at the park.

McFarlin asked if inappropriate activities within the park have been a concern. Sinclair responded that all parks have some level of inappropriate use, however Linner does not appear to receive any unusual amount of abuse.

Susan Claiborn, (no address given) noted that she had not previously attended either neighborhood meeting and questioned whether other amenities such as a kiddy pool had been considered. Vetter indicated a kiddy pool had not been discussed, and added that staff had discussed the possibility of zero depth play areas similar to the Shady Oak Beach facility as a possibility in the community parks. Claiborn asked for clarification as to the final approval process for the park. Watkins responded that the Park Board's recommendation would be

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forwarded to the City Council for consideration at the January 13, 2003 Study Session.

Watkins asked the Park Board if anyone had additional concerns other than those mentioned throughout the discussion, and asked Vetter for a staff summary of points for further review.

Vetter noted that staff would review the following items prior to the City Council's review:

- Soil corrections/compaction
- Storm water management throughout the park
- Parking lot expansion
- Potential for full basketball court
- Wetland classification
- Options for trail connections from upper to lower level

Woodrich moved and Lehman seconded a motion to recommend the plan as presented to the City Council with a further review of issues pertaining to soil corrections, storm water management, parking lot expansion, basketball court size, wetland classification and trail route alternatives. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

Hayden was excused at 8:50 p.m.

C. Pioneer Park concept review

Garvey provided an overview of conceptual plans for the new park. She indicated that plans for the park were developed based on information received at three neighborhood meetings and 91 returned surveys. Garvey noted that plans for the park include play equipment for ages 5 and under and 6-12, an open green area for informal use, benches, walkways and buffering for the homes to the south and west.

Watkins asked if neighbors were comfortable with plans for buffering. Garvey indicated that staff has been working with both neighbors and progress is being made.

Stuftt asked if the existing green space is currently being used. Scott Erickson, representing the Church, indicated that the Church uses the area informally on occasion. Stuftt then asked about the status of an existing shed on the southwest portion of the property. Erickson indicated that the Church owns the shed and planned to continue using it for storage.

McFarlin expressed concern regarding the project's \$60,000 budget and questioned whether it was adequate for the project. Garvey indicated that much of the site work would be able to be completed by Public Works staff. She added

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that the most significant cost for the project is the play equipment, which can be sized accordingly.

Watkins opened the floor to public comments.

Doug Johnson, 12119 Pioneer Road, indicated that he was the neighbor to the west of the proposed park and still has concerns about screening and buffering. Mr. Johnson requested that a fence be placed from the southwest corner of the park to approximately the play equipment. He indicated that a fence from the play equipment to Pioneer Road was not needed.

McFarlin asked what type of fencing Johnson was requesting. Johnson indicated that he had a concern about plans for a two-rail fence but was open to other options. Sinclair suggested the use of a three rail wooden fence. Dave Johnson responded that staff would continue to meet with Doug Johnson to work out a compromise.

Scott Erickson indicated that the ability to play volleyball at the park was important to the Church. He expressed appreciation for the cooperative efforts of the City and Church to get the park concept completed.

Stufft moved and Lehman seconded a motion to recommend the concept plan as presented for Pioneer Park to the City Council for consideration. Calkins, Lehman, McFarlin, Stufft, Watkins and Woodrich voted "Yes". Motion carried.

The Park Board adjourned from 9:20 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

D. Development of long-term park maintenance plans

Vetter presented staff's design of systems to track costs associated to park renewal improvements. He presented separate systems for tracking annual maintenance, capital replacement costs and natural resources restoration costs for each park improved.

Calkins acknowledged that the systems developed were in line with his expectations and initial request. He stated that he would like to see implementation of systems such as these used to prevent the need for another referendum in 20 years.

Woodrich also expressed support for the systems developed and requested that inflationary costs be projected for future years. Vetter indicated that inflationary costs would be incorporated into the final documents.

McFarlin also supported the system designs and questioned how staff will utilize the information. Vetter indicated that CIP planning would be more accurate as a result of the information compiled. He added that by presenting the maintenance

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requirements for park improvements, future park renewal projects would be better defined.

Stufft questioned how the large amount of data required would be entered. Vetter responded that staff would first concentrate on upcoming park projects, and then if possible, expand out to future years.

The Board directed staff to proceed with the systems as presented.

4. Park Board Member Reports

None were provided.

5. Information Items

Vetter noted that the date of the first Park Renewal meeting for Headwaters Park would not be January 7, 2003 as initially scheduled. He added that the Park Board would be notified when a confirmed date is selected.

6. Upcoming Park Board agenda items

The Park Board requested that an informational meeting be scheduled for 6:00 p.m. prior to the January 8, 2003 meeting to inform athletic organizations on information included in the proposed comprehensive athletic field use policy.

Johnson noted that appointments of the Park Board Chair and Vice-Chair positions would be included on the January 8, 2003 agenda.

7. Adjournment

Calkins moved and McFarlin seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 p.m. Calkins, Lehman, McFarlin, Stufft, Watkins and Woodrich voted "Yes". Motion carried.