

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

1. Roll Call

Park Board Members Jim Calkins, Bruce Gefvert, Paul Lehman, Freinde Mills, Lanise Stufft and Sue Woodrich were present. Attending staff were Dave Johnson, Craig Sinclair and Perry Vetter.

Lehman welcomed new member Bruce Gefvert to the Board. Lehman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – June 4, 2003

Calkins moved and Woodrich seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 4, 2003 as submitted. Calkins, Mills, Stufft and Woodrich voted “Yes”. Gefvert and Lehman abstained. Motion carried.

3. Business Items

A. Park Renewal plan review – McKenzie Park

Vetter provided an overview of the planning process to date noting that two neighborhood meetings were previously conducted on May 29 and June 18. In addition, Vetter informed the Board that a survey was mailed to residents living within 1500 feet of the park to obtain feedback used in the planning process.

Vetter reviewed significant improvements proposed for the park resulting from survey responses, neighborhood meetings and POST Plan recommendations. Proposed improvements include relocating and upgrading of the play equipment, relocation of the hockey rink, hockey rink lighting upgrades, improved parking, construction of a loop trail within the park with access to Williston Road, construction of a full basketball court, warming house improvements, and construction of an enclosure to house the portable restroom.

Vetter elaborated on the relocation of the hockey rink noting that although it was paved only a few years ago, the current configuration makes it difficult to maintain ice on the northern end of the rink. Related to the use of the park for informal athletic use, Vetter noted that neighborhood meeting discussions centered around a desire to use the park for neighborhood uses such as T-ball and soccer with a higher quality turf if possible. Concerns were voiced by residents that use of the informal play area for skating in the winter resulted in less than ideal turf conditions.

In reviewing the proposed concept plan, Vetter noted that at the request of several residents, the basketball court and play areas have been separated due to the ages of youth using both amenities. Vetter also noted that a new shade structure would be located near the new play structure, along with a small games court for hopscotch, foursquare and other games. In reviewing the informal play areas, Vetter noted that an area on the east side of the park would provide field accommodations up to a 180' baseball/softball field with improved turf due to the

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

relocation of the general skating area. A second informal use area would be available where the general skating area was proposed to be located in the winter.

Vetter closed by requesting Park Board direction in two areas, 1) Does the Board agree with the improvements presented; and 2) Does the Board request any additional amenities at the site?

Lehman thanked Vetter for the overview and opened the discussion to park board member comments.

Stuftt noted that the POST Plan mentioned the possibility of a trail link to Victoria-Evergreen Park and asked if neighborhood meetings involved and discussion of a trail link. Vetter responded that the same question was asked during the neighborhood process for Victoria-Evergreen and there was considerable opposition to a trail link at that time. Vetter added that without easements in place, the process would be difficult to consider at this time. Stuftt added that she liked the overall plan but in attending the second neighborhood meeting she did not recall a strong desire for additional paved areas and questioned if more green space could be provided by eliminating the games court or by combining the informal play areas.

Woodrich indicated that she felt the flow of the proposed plan works well and balanced winter and summer activities very well. She questioned if landscape buffering, as noted in the POST Plan was considered to enhance landscaping, improve site aesthetics and buffer adjacent properties. Sinclair responded that the existing plan would primarily address additional planting of trees throughout the site, which presently is fairly open. He added that additional plantings would be provided to help buffer the neighbor residing to the west of the park. Woodrich questioned if buckthorn removal was required. Sinclair responded that only a small amount of management would be required on the southeast corner of the park.

Woodrich inquired about the age ranges the play equipment would be provided for. Sinclair responded that equipment would be grouped for ages 2-5 and 5-12. Woodrich closed by stating that overall, the plan looks good.

Calkins asked if people generally walk to the park and if parking was prohibited on Walker Place to the north of the park. Vetter reported that parking was not prohibited, adding that as an informal play field, practices are not scheduled at this location with expectation that travel to the park will be light.

Calkins pointed out that the fences proposed on the south side of the park along McKenzie Boulevard would require users of the east side of the park to walk around the fence entering on the west side. He questioned if the turf would wear

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

due to this traffic pattern. Sinclair expressed his opinion that traffic volumes should not be heavy enough to cause problems.

Calkins noted that in previous renewal projects basketball courts have been overlaid on the paved hockey surface and questioned why this wasn't considered for McKenzie. Vetter responded that adequate space exists to separate the two amenities at McKenzie, adding that the McKenzie rink will be used for multiple uses including the placement of portable skateboarding equipment. Sinclair added that the McKenzie rink also receives a high level of in-line skating use during the summer months. Calkins indicated that the reasoning was reasonable.

Calkins questioned the location of the portable restroom enclosure, suggesting that it might be located in a more central location. Vetter agreed, indicating that other options for a location will be explored.

Lehman expressed concern that the size of the informal play area had been reduced. Vetter acknowledged that the area was smaller in size and informed the Board that this request came from residents in attendance at the first neighborhood meeting. Vetter indicated that the request was made from residents to provide a turf area for t-ball, kickball or other informal activities for younger children. Neighbors expressed the desire for the play area to be available for neighborhood uses and not outside youth leagues. He added that as an informal play field as defined in the Cities Field Use Policy, no formal activities are scheduled at the park. Vetter closed by saying that a soccer goal could still be added to the site in either the primary play area or the turf area where winter ice is placed for general skating.

Lehman opened the floor to public comments.

Glen Menzie, 14700 Oakwood Road, indicated that his family uses the park on a regular basis. He indicated that his concerns were similar to Chair Lehman's, adding that residents expect to have new amenities at their parks as a result of the referendum, not fewer. He noted that a reduction in the size of the informal play area would be a disappointment to many in the neighborhood.

Menzie added that he estimates that 40% of the park is devoted to hockey and questioned the need due to the indoor arenas located just blocks away. He commented that too much space was being allocated to hockey and not enough to baseball and football. Menzie noted that he had not attended any of the previous meetings held on the park.

Jeff Mine, 3925 Williston Road, noted that he had attended both neighborhood meetings and felt that staff had been very responsive to the residents' requests and needs. He thanked staff for listening as well as they had. Mine added that

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

the park should be designated for younger aged athletic needs due to the park's size limitations. He closed by thanking the Park Board.

Menzie questioned why Mine felt that the park had been designed for younger age athletic needs, adding that he felt the purpose of this meeting was to determine how the park should be used.

Mine responded that by attending the first two planning meetings it was evident to him that residents preferred use by younger ages groups adding that use by 15 and 16 year olds would result in balls flying into the street and playground areas.

Lehman thanked both Menzie and Mine and asked for additional public comments. Hearing none, Lehman closed the meeting for public comments.

Lehman asked Vetter to respond to the comments of Menzie and Mine. Vetter noted that by scale, McKenzie Park, without a hockey rink, or other amenities, could only provide space for two fields roughly 180' – 200' in size. With respect to the indoor ice arenas, Vetter reminded the Park Board that Youth Hockey Associations are not charged for use of outdoor ice rinks as they are for indoor use.

Stufft voiced support for increased green space within the park and suggested combining the proposed areas of the informal field and skating areas to create one larger area.

In response to a question from Gefvert, Vetter informed the Board that the existing backstop location is the same as the location proposed in the plan. Vetter added that as proposed, a 180' softball/baseball field is possible and an approximate 200' soccer field if orientated from the northwest to southwest.

Mills suggested switching the playground equipment with the general skating area to provide half the park as open play space. Vetter expressed concern for locating amenities for different age groups (play equipment and basketball court) in close proximity. He noted that as proposed, two groups wishing to utilize the park could be separated with one using the designated play area and the other the skating area.

Lehman informed the Board that he is a current user of McKenzie Park and for the past eight years has conducted softball practices for girls ages 11-18. He acknowledged that for the older groups, balls do end up in the parking areas on the south side. Lehman indicated that the park is best suited for girls up to 14 years of age. He added that the existing quality of the turf is poor due to the use of the field area for winter skating. Lehman went on to say that while he is troubled as to the reduction in field space, he also sees a variety of additional

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

purposes and functions that are positive. He closed by indicating that he is not opposed to the plan as presented and if need be, an alternative location for his teams to practice can be found.

Jason Amberg representing the design consultant Brauer & Associates was present. Amberg noted a significant difference in grade between the existing hockey rink and general skating area making travel to and from the warming house to the hockey rink difficult for some. Amberg noted that the elevation change was approximately 4ft. Amberg added that these challenges were incorporated into the proposed concept plan.

Woodrich again indicated support for the plan noting that the balance of activities provided are in line with information collected in the surveys from residents. Woodrich added that she would support changes to the plan that would switch the play equipment and general skating areas if possible but realizes that there will be impacts.

Sinclair noted that from a maintenance perspective, the proposed plan greatly reduces the amount of travel needed by his crews to maintain the ice rinks.

Calkins questioned how much of the plan was centered around the existing location of the warming house. Vetter acknowledged that the plan was designed around the structure and estimated the cost of replacement to the \$150,000 - \$200,000 unless a pre-fabricated structure was used. Calkins asked if relocation of the structure could be examined. He added that he likes the proposed plans' availability of two play areas with green space on both sides of the park. Calkins added that he supported exploring options for providing a larger open green space.

Lehman asked that consideration be given to the addition of a second structure if demolition or moving the existing structure is cost prohibitive.

Vetter asked for feedback as to the age groups and use types the Park Board felt the informal plan areas should be targeted to. He added that input from the neighborhood meetings suggested that the green space be targeted for neighborhood use, with the Park Board's approach now leaning to more organized use for older youth.

Lehman responded that he was not concerned about using the park for more formal use, he was only looking at not detracting from the park's existing capabilities and staying flexible.

Calkins concurred; adding that he felt that the plan as proposed met the neighborhood's objectives but any opportunity to add flexibility to the plan should be explored.

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

Lehman summarized the discussion and concluded that from what he has heard, the Park Board is interested in having staff prepare a few more options for consideration.

Amberg noted the proximity of the play equipment to the informal play field. Lehman thanked him for that observation adding that as currently used, the play area is subject to having balls hit into it and that safety concerns needs to be taken into account.

Calkins commented that the discussion seems to be directed primarily on baseball/softball uses and reminded the Board to also keep in mind uses for soccer and football.

Johnson asked for the Board's expectations regarding future steps. With the August meeting only 2-3 weeks away, Johnson suggested scheduling the next review of McKenzie Park for the September meeting. Vetter agreed, noting that plans could not be ready by the August meeting. Vetter added that although the proposed schedule will be impacted, it would be in the best interest of everyone involved to take the time to complete the project correctly.

At the completion of the discussion, Jeff Mine addressed the Board with a question as to how residents could formally request a trail or sidewalk within the City. More specifically, along Williston Road, south of Highway 7. Johnson informed Mine that the City has a trails team, comprised of staff from several departments, that review trail issues including requests for new connections. Johnson suggested that Mine prepare a petition if interested and submit it to staff.

B. Park Renewal plan review – Gro Tonka Park

Vetter provided an overview to the discussion. He noted that two neighborhood meetings were held on May 29 and June 18, from which the concept plan before the Park Board was developed. Vetter added that a survey was also conducted and mailed to residents residing within 1500 feet of the park.

Vetter reminded the Board that as defined in the Comprehensive Athletic Field Use policy, the athletic field located at Gro Tonka Park is a non-dedicated field. He added that a picnic shelter able to accommodate groups of 25 or more people is located within the park, and is one of two available to reserve within the city.

Vetter summarized proposed improvements to the park as follows:

- New warming house and picnic shelter
- Relocated hockey rink
- Drainage improvements (park serves watersheds 801 and 802)
- New playground equipment
- Internal trail loop

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

- New/relocated parking areas
- Adult swings
- Miscellaneous amenities (i.e. benches, drinking fountains).

Vetter then reviewed the concept plan in detail. He noted that the property purchased in the NW corner of the park would be utilized under the proposed plan for playground equipment and the picnic shelter.

Lehman opened the discussion to Park Board member questions.

Woodrich asked if there was any opportunity to provide cross-country ski trails into the plan. She added that while the length would not be real long, the park does provide a nice setting. Sinclair responded that the trail would indeed be short and suggested a further review to see how a trail at Gro Tonka would fit in the overall plan for ski trails.

Woodrich asked about trail surfaces proposed in the plan. Sinclair indicated that while surface types had not been determined, trails to the north would most likely need to be paved due to the steep grades.

Stufft voiced support for the concept. She asked if the trail segments to the south would be susceptible to flooding. Sinclair responded that the trails Stufft referred to are actually somewhat elevated. Vetter added that a small bridge currently exists in this location, which would also help.

Calkins indicated that in general, he felt the plan was well laid out. Due to concerns about drainage, he questioned the status of the property and asked if it was classified as a wetland. Vetter responded that the consultant is working to determine the wetland edge and thus far has found that an edge exists to the south of where the trail is proposed. He added that the consultant's work is still in progress.

Calkins asked if there were any known concerns with residential properties bordering the park. Vetter responded that none had been reported.

Calkins concluded by questioning the location of the trail segment located just to the north of the athletic field and at the base of the hill. Calkins indicated that he felt this section would be underutilized. Vetter agreed and suggested holding off on placement of this section to determine first where foot traffic will actually flow.

Gefvert asked if there were any resident concerns with moving the play equipment and picnic shelter to the NW corner of the park where they will be in closer proximity to the homes to the west. Sinclair responded that one neighbor was present who lives directly north of the location and he was in favor of some sort of activity in this location.

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

Mills commented that she liked the new location for the play equipment and felt that it would be more accessible. Mills asked for clarification on how a person with a disability and in need of a wheelchair would access the site. Vetter responded that there will be a path outside the play equipment that will be available for anyone to use.

Lehman then opened the meeting to public comments.

Barbara Pieh, 3137 Shores Boulevard, noted that she used the park on a regular basis. She expressed surprise that no one had mentioned the sledding hill and felt it was one of the more popular aspects of the park. Pieh also indicated that she preferred the existing location of the picnic shelter due to its central location and provision of shade, and also added that she did not fully understand the benefit of a trail loop system and questioned who would use one.

Vetter responded to Pieh's questions regarding the sledding hill by noting that while the city does not attempt to control informal sledding in the parks, there are no designated or maintained sledding hills within the city. Johnson added that by designating an area as a sledding hill, the city assumes responsibilities associated with supervision, maintenance and liability. He noted that while the city will not attempt to restrict use of the hill for sledding, the city has not supported designating areas within the park for such use.

In response to Pieh's questions regarding the picnic shelter and trails, Vetter noted that at its current location, the picnic shelter is not accessible by ADA standards due to the steps needed to access the structure. He noted that the new shelters would be open-air structures providing air movement and shade. As for the trails, Vetter responded by saying residents with children in strollers and others who know the trail's distance will use it for exercise. He added that trails have proven to be great locations to meet other neighbors.

Pieh voiced concern for the trail at the base of the hill and its impact on sledding. Sinclair acknowledged her concern and stated that direction had previously been provided to remove this segment until it is determined where use patterns develop.

Eric Larson, 17411 Bay Lane, indicated that he also uses the park on a regular basis. He suggested that no additional vegetation be added to the hill where informal sledding occurs. He also questioned if the horseshoe pits would be relocated. Vetter noted that the horseshoe pits would be relocated but not made of concrete as they currently are.

Larson asked if the hockey rink would be built on level ground, indicating that a slope exists in the proposed location. Sinclair responded that as construction documents are developed, this issue will be addressed.

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

Larson expressed concern about the drainage needs within the park and questioned the note on the plan that the exact area is yet to be determined. He questioned if a size limit to the area could be stipulated. Vetter responded that work to determine the exact size is still in progress. He did not know if a size stipulation was possible.

Larson noted that if possible, a flow pipe running under Minnetonka Boulevard to connect drainage pipes located to the south and north would seem to help drainage within the park. Vetter responded that it is believed that this pipe exists although it is not shown on any asbuilts. Vetter added that if it does exist, it may have collapsed.

Hearing no additional requests from the public, Lehman closed the floor to public comments.

Stufft voiced support for the plan with the slight modifications of eliminating plantings on the hill and holding off on placement of the trail section below the hill until traffic use is determined.

Woodrich agreed with Stufft adding her desire to explore cross-country ski trails in all park concept plans.

Gefvert indicated that he felt the plan was appropriate.

Calkins also voiced support for the plan.

Lehman closed by voicing support for the trail and supported the revisions indicated by Stufft and entertained a motion.

Stufft moved and Calkins seconded a motion to adopt the plan as presented with two modifications; 1) remove the trail at the base of the hill to the north, and 2) remove plans for additional vegetation on the hill, and forward the plan to the City Council for consideration. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

C. Progress report on 2003 Park Board Action Steps

Johnson provided an overview and noted that progress on action steps developed by the Park Board for 2003 were identified in the packet under categories:

1. No action taken to date
2. In progress/ongoing
3. Completed

Johnson then reviewed the action steps included under each Park Board goal.

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

Related to Goal #1 (to protect natural resources and open space), Lehman indicated that he is looking with interest to see what the neighborhood match policy draft will include as it pertains to open space acquisitions.

Vetter then reviewed progress related to action steps for Goal #2 (to renew parks). Related to the action step of evaluating the process currently being used, Mills asked if this evaluation would include a follow up with surveys to parks already completed. Vetter responded that these evaluations were already in place. Vetter added that once a formal recommendation is developed by staff for changes to the process, the item will be brought to the Park Board for review.

With respect to Park Board representation in the process of park renewal, Lehman asked if there was representation on the McKenzie park plan. Vetter responded that Stufft attended the second meeting. Lehman noted that he hoped the Board did not let the staff down with regards to this action step. Vetter assured him the Board had not.

In his review of Goal #3 (to provide quality athletic and recreational facilities), Johnson noted Woodrich's earlier request to review an overall cross-country ski trail plan. Johnson also noted that a delay has developed in the Minnetonka School District's approval process for a skateboard park at Middle School East.

Vetter noted that staff had received bids for portable skateboarding equipment that will be used to rotate within the park system. Johnson added that the City Council would review the bids on July 28.

Calkins noted that some concerns had been addressed by residents regarding traffic and parking issues at Gray's Bay Marina. Johnson noted that there had been minor issues related to heavy weekend use, adding that staffs from Recreation Services and Police are working to resolve any concerns. Johnson added that a few issues were also discussed at a recent Gray's Bay Task Force meeting, adding that to this understanding, all issues discussed were acted upon.

No questions were asked by the Board on Goal #4 (enhance long-term Park Board development).

Calkins asked if it would be possible to add to the meeting agenda an item inviting residents wishing to speak on an item not on the agenda. With no concerns indicated by other members, Johnson said that staff would make the change for August.

4. Park Board Member Reports

Stufft asked if staff knew why piles of dirt are located on the property at Minnetonka Middle School East where the skate park is proposed to be. Johnson indicated that he was unaware of the dirt and would check on the reasoning.

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
July 16, 2003**

5. Information Items

No additions to the information included in the packet.

6. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Johnson noted that the August meeting will include a discussion regarding agenda items for the September 3rd joint meeting with the City Council. He added that the meeting will begin at 6:00pm.

7. Adjournment

Gefvert moved and Stufft seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50pm. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.