

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
November 5, 2003**

1. Roll Call

Park Board Members Bruce Gefvert, Paul Lehman, Lanise Stufft and Steve Watkins were present. Attending staff were Geralyn Barone, Craig Sinclair, Mark Simenson and Perry Vetter.

Chair Lehman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – October 1, 2003

Gefvert moved and Watkins seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of October 1, 2003 as submitted. All voted “yes”. Motion carried.

3. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

Boy Scout Ryan Sawyer, 5342 Woodland Road, informed the Park Board of a project he has requested to complete through Craig Sinclair. Sawyer described the project as improvements to Holiday Lake Park, including the addition of two benches for viewing and the clearing of undesirable vegetation. Sinclair added that Sawyer was instructed to survey the neighborhood and received 16 responses in favor of the improvements, 2 opposed, and one resident who requested more information on the effect the project would have on water quality. Sinclair added that this resident has since spoken to the City’s Environmental Resources Coordinator and received approval with the project proceeding.

Gefvert questioned if blue prints were necessary. Sinclair indicated they were not because the City’s standard installation policies would be followed.

With no action required on this request, the Board thanked Sawyer for his volunteer efforts.

4. Business Items

A. Concept review of acquired creek properties

Simenson reviewed information included in the staff report for the item. He noted that three of the four desired properties have been purchased by the City.

Barone added that the fourth property owner has accepted an option of purchase in the amount of \$25,000. This option allows the owner to live in the home for up to five years, then rent up to an additional five years.

Simenson indicated that of the three houses currently owned by the City, one would be demolished in 2004 and the remaining two houses would be rented until 2007 then removed. Simenson noted that the properties include native oak trees, hedges and maintained grass. Through the proposed concept, Simenson explained that the Oak Woods and Oak Savannah located on the properties would be incorporated with the restoration of the Burwell House once all homes are removed.

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Watkins inquired about the proposed trail near the creek and possible bridge locations. Simenson noted that the trail would be placed on the north side of the creek but would be required to be switched to the south side at some point. Simenson added that neighbors to the properties will be asked for input on exact locations at a later date.

Gefvert expressed support for the plan noting that input from neighbors will be requested once the final property has been acquired.

No formal action was taken on this item.

B. Review of Cross-Country Ski /Trail System

Sinclair provided an overview of the staff report including, a review of an assessment staff had prepared on the five trails currently maintained by the City. Sinclair noted that a sixth trail at Victoria-Evergreen Park was eliminated for this year due to input received through the Parks Renewal process.

Sinclair described challenges the Public Works Department faces in maintaining ski trails including unpredictable weather and snow emergency priorities that place ski trail maintenance behind streets, trails and ice rinks. Sinclair estimated the cost to maintain ski trails at \$10,000 annually, along with an additional \$1,500 annually for equipment maintenance.

Sinclair described other possible ski trail options that City Staff has explored. He noted that due to funding, the Three Rivers Park District has reduced their interest in jointly providing a ski trail at the Glen Lake Golf Course. Sinclair then described a staff recommendation to maintain a single trail site within the Minnehaha Creek Corridor from the Civic Center to Gray's Bay. Sinclair estimated that a total distance of approximately 5 miles could be developed with various loops included to provide alternative distances.

Sinclair closed by indicating that it is difficult to provide trails with the same quality as the Park District. As examples, Sinclair noted that the Park District actually makes snow to provide adequate snow depths and maintains their trails daily as compared to the City's weekly maintenance.

Stufft asked what the cost would be to provide the Creek Corridor Trail. Sinclair responded that it may be slightly reduced in comparison to current costs, however, he indicated that the benefit to the skier would be significant due to the provision of a quality trail.

Lehman inquired about use levels of existing trails. Sinclair responded that Lone Lake receives the most use, however the demand for walking trails at Lone Lake still outweigh ski trail demands.

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Watkins noted that he prefers Park District trails because he knows they will be groomed on a regular basis. He questioned the difficulty in creating the creek trail due to the heavy amount of cattails. Sinclair agreed that cattails can be difficult to groom at parks such as Meadow where water levels can be high. He noted that the Creek Corridor would not be as difficult due to monitoring of creek water levels at Gray's Bay.

Sinclair noted that if a creek corridor was developed, equipment rentals might be provided through the Ice Arena or possibly the Marsh.

Lehman inquired about the corridor's topography and questioned if it would meet the needs of all skiers. Sinclair responded that while 90% of the corridor is suited for a beginner skier, opportunities exist at Jidana Park and elsewhere to meet the needs of an intermediate skier.

The Board directed staff to receive community input on the creek corridor proposal and begin phasing out other locations beginning in 2004/2005. In addition, the Board requested that staff continue negotiations with the Park District on possibilities for maintaining a trail at the Glen Lake Golf Course.

5. Park Board Member Reports

None provided

6. Information Items

No additions made to information included in the packet.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Barone reminded the Board of the joint Council/Park Board Meeting scheduled for December 3. Lehman requested that new Council Members be invited to the meeting and that Council be allowed to add items to the agenda if desired. Stufft reminded the Board that her term ends in November and she will not be at the December 3 meeting. Watkins indicated that he also will be unable to attend the meeting.

8. Adjournment

Watkins moved and Gefvert seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.