

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
August 4, 2004**

1. Roll Call

Park Board members Jim Calkins, Bruce Gefvert, Tim Goodyear, Paul Lehman, and Sue Woodrich were present. Attending staff was Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Dean Elstad, Lee Gustafson, Dave Johnson, Pat Kehr and Perry Vetter. Chair Lehman called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Goodyear moved and Calkins seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of June 2, 2004. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

3. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

None.

4. Business Items

A. Gray's Bay Area Trail and Headwaters Park Master Plan

Barone provided an overview of the report included in the meeting packet. She noted that the park board had previously reviewed and approved Phase I and Phase II concept plans for Headwaters Park and is now being asked to amend the plan to include a trail alignment through the park and immediate area.

Regarding the inclusion of a trail to the park and surrounding area, Barone reviewed the history of the loop trail system and city council support for the development of this trail segment dating back to 1988 when the loop trail system plan was adopted. Barone explained that the latest plan to provide a trail from Linner Park to Crosby Road, across the Gray's Bay spillway and dam, and South through the neighborhood to Minnetonka Boulevard, came to be as a result of two recent property developments that have recently occurred in the area, Portico and Crosby Cove. Barone noted that due to trail easements included in the Crosby Cove development, the original route of the trail included in past trail plans has changed creating an opportunity to complete the trail at this time.

Barone estimated the cost for construction of a proposed boardwalk north of Headwaters Park is \$150,000 to \$200,000 depending on the final length and design. She added the bridge to be placed across the channel within the Crosby Cove development and the bridge across the dam are estimated to cost \$50,000 to \$100,000.

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Barone noted that a second option (option B) is being explored that would relocate the boardwalk to the northerly shore of the wetland, instead of crossing the wetland as proposed in option A. The trail would then cross the spillway. She added that the cost and feasibility of this was under review and asked for park board input regarding both options.

Barone explained that south of the park and throughout the neighborhood, the trail would be designated as on-street along Gray's Bay Boulevard to the marina. She added that the on-street trail would also branch off at Cottage Grove Avenue to Groveland and Gro-Tonka Parks. Barone noted that with boat trailer traffic no longer an issue along Gray's Bay Boulevard to the Headwaters, it is possible that the speed bumps that currently exist could be removed. She asked that the park board consider whether small trail identification and directional signs should be placed throughout the neighborhood to assist users.

Barone closed her introduction by noting that approximately 600 notices were mailed to residents in close proximity to the proposed trail and park improvement projects. She indicated that approximately 20 residents responded to the city with concerns. Barone reviewed the themes of the concerns expressed which included fears that the on-street trail would become an off-road trail in the future, neighborhood safety, reduced property values, and the public process that has occurred to date.

Chair Lehman opened the floor to Park Board member questions and concerns.

Woodrich asked when option B would be reviewed. Barone responded that this could occur at a future meeting and would include a cost analysis for the board's review.

Gefvert asked if option B would impact fishing. Barone responded that it would not. Gefvert asked if the outlot identified north of the shoreline within Crosby Cove would be developed. Barone responded it would not be developed and would only include passive recreational amenities.

Lehman opened the floor to public comments.

Joel Koonce, 16524 Gray's Bay Boulevard, expressed his concerns regarding the proposed trail and raised several questions:

- Is the Headwaters Park a city park?
- If so, why no posted hours?
- How will trail security be provided?
- Has a cost/benefit analysis been completed?

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- Does a past precedent of a street trail converting to a regular trail been set in the city?
- Why the route change from previous plans?
- What will the impact on the flood plain be?
- What is the landscaping plan? (The landscaping plan at the marina is unacceptable).
- Have outside agencies with jurisdiction been contacted?

In addition to the questions posed by Mr. Koonce, he commented that boat traffic has been reduced on Gray's Bay Boulevard but not eliminated, adding that this was the first he heard that the speed bumps were tied to the boat launch removed from Headwaters Park.

Koonce asked for data on the impacts to property values when located near a trail, as well as who uses the city's trail system.

Garrett Gardner, 2953 Fairchild Avenue, commented that he is an avid biker who has supported the trail in the past but has concerns about the current proposal. Gardner's concerns included providing bike access on narrow streets, and a belief that either the streets will be widened or an off-street trail will be constructed in the future. He asked if the city can guarantee that this will not occur.

Gretchen Maglich, 16500 Gray's Bay Boulevard, voiced concerns related to Headwaters Park including the number of cars often exceeding available parking and an increased number of people fishing. She stated that the trail plan will make the parking situation even worse.

Zvi Leibovich, 3550 Fairway Lane, identified himself as the developer of the Crosby Cove project. He voiced concerns regarding the proposed trail and stated that he believes it should not need to go through the Crosby Cove project.

Patrick Alexander, 16540 Gray's Bay Boulevard, commented that low resident attendance at tonight's meeting was not a result of a lack of interest in the trail, but instead the belief by residents that the project is a done deal. He added that he is offended as a taxpayer that an expensive trail project like this can be funded when the city is providing fewer police officers, fire fighters and teachers.

Alexander expressed concern that the speed bumps will be removed and the trail will cross 41 driveways by his estimation. He agreed with previous residents the trail would at some time be permanent, meaning the loss of trees and property to residents. He closed by indicating that he hoped the park board was happy with the small turnout.

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Sandy Johnson, 16516 Gray's Bay Boulevard, noted that the visibility on Gray's Bay Boulevard was poor, causing unsafe conditions for the on-street trail. She asked staff for projections on how many people will be using the trail.

David Yasmineh, 2634 Crosby Road, noted that he has lived north of Headwaters Park for several years. He agreed that the meeting turnout misrepresents the neighborhood's opposition to the trail. Yasmineh indicated that the plan north of Headwaters Park seems appropriate, while the plan south of the park was not. He closed by voicing disappointment that a trail along the Hwy 101 causeway can not be completed, and voiced support for the option "A" boardwalk noting that any of the options would be devastating to the homeowner east of the outlet (Anderson property).

Patrick Alexander, 16540 Gray's Bay Boulevard returned to the podium to state that upon further review, the proposed trail would cross 85-87 driveways.

Ron Zamansky, 3901 IDS Tower - Minneapolis, indicated that he represented Ken Melrose, 2626 Crosby Road, who was unable to attend the meeting. Zamansky thanked the city attorney, Desyl Peterson for the information she has provided. He noted that Mr. Melrose did not support the plan currently proposed but is open and willing to work towards a solution.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Lehman closed the floor to public comments.

Calkins requested staff responses to the questions raised by residents.

Barone responded to the questions raised by residents. She confirmed that Headwaters Park was a city park, and as with all parks and trails, are available for use daily from 5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. She encouraged residents to contact the police department if problems occur after hours.

Barone informed the park board that she was unaware of any existing data relating to property values and trails.

Pat Kehr, Public Works Superintendent, responded to trail maintenance questions by indicating that the trail would most likely be maintained year-round and inspected on a regular basis for litter and repair. Barone added that funding for maintenance would come through the public works budget and require no additional personnel.

Responding to earlier security concerns in the area of the trail that are remote, Barone indicated that many of the city's existing trail segments are in remote areas and problems have been minimal.

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Addressing a request for data on who uses the trail system, Barone indicated that no previous census polls have been taken on the trail system. She added that regional trails are more likely to be used by people outside of the neighborhood.

Barone reported that a cost analysis is currently being prepared; however no cost/benefit analysis has been prepared. Barone added that annual community surveys indicate high ratings for the loop trail system by residents. She noted that through the park renewal process, residents have asked that internal trail loops be added to neighborhood parks.

Barone responded that she was unaware of any on-street trails that have been changed to permanent trails within the city.

Lee Gustafson, City Engineer, responded to parking concerns mentioned at Headwaters Park. He acknowledged the initial design of Headwaters Park was for a particular set of uses; however new uses have developed such as increased fishing. He compared the situation to that which occurred at the Marina and explained that through continued monitoring, changes were developed to correct any problems at the marina. The same process needs to occur at Headwaters Park, stated Gustafson. Barone added that with Libb's Lake Park, currently under construction, people interested in fishing might have relocated at Headwaters Park. She added that shoreline restoration efforts might have reduced the shoreline accessibility needed to fish.

Responding to concerns mentioned about the route change for the trail from previous years, Barone reminded the board that the change occurred because of the two recent property developments. In addition, the marina has been added as an amenity, and an internal trail is planned for Gro Tonka Park.

Regarding landscaping concerns at the marina, Barone noted that some of these concerns relate to the planting of natural grasses and flowers, a process that can take 2-3 years to show results.

Barone reported that all required outside agency approvals will be obtained.

Responding to concerns that the street will be widened to accommodate the trail, Barone indicated that she can not forecast what future city councils may do, but noted that such a project is not included in the city's 10-year street improvement plan.

Barone reported that if boat trailer traffic is still occurring, additional signage to better inform boaters there is no longer a boat launch at Headwaters Park would be added. Barone reiterated that it was her understanding that the speed bumps were installed initially to address boat trailer traffic prior to the closure of the boat launch at Headwaters Park.

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Regarding the number of driveways the proposed trail route will cross, Barone reminded the board that the same concerns exist on sidewalks and other trail segments throughout the city. Barone added that the city has no records of complaints received from residents regarding on-street trail use.

Gustafson responded to the resident comment regarding a trail across the Hwy 101 causeway by saying improvements of 101 from County Road 5 South to the marina are planned by the state in 2005; and from the marina north to Wayzata in 2009. He added that concept plans for a possible trail on these segments have been prepared. Gustafson added any future trail along 101 would be used more for transit purposes versus recreational, as the proposed Headwaters trail would be.

Lehman asked if any additional questions remained for the board.

Woodrich asked about the status of the McGinty Road trail. Gustafson replied that it is a County project that will be addressed when the road reconstruction occurs, currently unscheduled.

In response to several comments by residents, Calkins asked staff to comment about the public process that took place regarding this trail project. Barone replied that the project has been included in the CIP for several years as an unfunded project. As previously stated, Barone noted that the timing of this project was based on two development projects which provided opportunities for trail easements. Area residents were notified about the public hearings on those developments. Barone added approximately 600 notices were mailed to residents informing them of the process.

Lehman commented that the city council has made a commitment to the trail system by including easements for trails in new developments.

Woodrich questioned whether the added trail through Headwaters Park would increase parking needs. Gustafson responded that it should not and could possibly reduce the need for parking because biking would now be an option.

Calkins commented that he understands the neighborhood's concerns regarding past actions taken on the Headwaters trail project, adding that he has always supported a trail in this area. He requested further information before deciding which option (A or B) worked best for the boardwalk. Calkins indicated support for using the weir, noting that multiple crossings of the natural area were a concern to him. He closed by indicating that the decision to provide this trail for the community is bigger than the neighborhood.

Gefvert voiced support for the trail noting that it does not seem to invite alternative uses such as in-line skating or bike racing. Gefvert added that he also needs more

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information on options A and B before making a decision, and he supports the use of modest signage along the trail route.

Woodrich voiced support for the trail, adding that she did not have the past history only being on the park board for two years. She requested that staff work with the neighbor next to the outlot on an acceptable landscaping plan. Woodrich also requested further information on options A and B, and supported the use of signage.

The park board reviewed the questions asked of them in the staff report.

Lehman moved and Goodyear seconded a motion to approve the concept plan for a trail through Headwaters Park with provisions for staff to work with the Anderson's for an acceptable landscaping plan for their property and forward the concept plan to the city council for consideration. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

Woodrich moved and Gefvert seconded a motion requesting further construction and financial information regarding boardwalk options A and B to be presented to the Park Board for consideration at a future meeting. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

Woodrich then moved and Lehman seconded a motion supporting the use of small trail signage for trail identification, rule conformance and directional purposes for the trail segment from Headwaters Park to Minnetonka Boulevard. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

In closing, Calkins commented that city staff has done a good job of cooperating with the MCWD staff to finalize plans for the Headwaters site. Calkins moved and Lehman seconded a motion requesting staff to continue working closely with the MCWD to complete plans for the trail crossing and improvements to the dam. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

B. Status report on 2004 Park Board Action Steps

Johnson provided a status report on the park board's 2004 action steps. He noted that of the 40 action steps developed in January of 2004, 15 have been completed, 12 are in progress and 13 have yet to be scheduled for review. No action was taken on this item, the intent was to provide a progress report.

5. Park Board Member Reports.

Woodrich commented on the excellent job done on the completion of a retaining wall at Meadow Park. She added that she had received several positive comments regarding the Meadow Park renewal project and the changes that occurred as a result of the process.

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Calkins commented on the planters placed along Williston Road leading to city hall, stating that they looked great. He noted the reduced maintenance that will be required as a result of the planters being placed on cement slabs. Calkins added that the linden trees leading to the community center were in poor shape and will not recover. He asked if planting plans were included in the Civic Center plan recently approved.

Goodyear commented on the summer playground program provided at Spring Hill Park and the Jidana day camp program saying that his children enjoyed both programs.

6. Information Items

None added

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

The park board's 6-month schedule was reviewed. The Park Board asked that staff look into scheduling a Minnehaha Creek canoe trip still this summer or early fall.

8. Adjournment

Calkins moved and Woodrich seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15pm. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.