

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
October 4, 2006**

1. Roll Call

Chair Lehman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Board members Bruce Gefvert, Tim Goodyear, Denny Lambert, Paul Lehman, Freinde Mills and Cathy Rude were present. Attending staff were Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Dave Johnson, Janet Larson and Perry Vetter.

2. Approval of Minutes

With one minor change requested by staff, Lambert moved and Goodyear seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of September 6, 2006. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

2. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

None.

4. Business Items

A. Consideration of the 2006/2007 Outdoor Ice Rink Volunteer Program

Johnson provided an overview of the item noting that the park board initiated the program for the 2005/2006 season with a pilot program at Spring Hill Park. He indicated that four volunteers completed all the requirements for the program including a background check and orientation session. Johnson reported the program was successful even though the volunteers were limited to only nine hours worked due to poor weather conditions. Johnson closed by indicating that the park board included an action step in their strategic plan related to assessing the 2005/2006 program and plans for the 2006/2007 program. He added that options range from continuing the pilot program for one more season to implementing the program at all eight Minnetonka ice rink locations.

Rude asked for staff's assessment of how the program should be offered this season. Johnson replied that he had no concerns expanding to eight locations if interested volunteers could meet the needs.

Rude asked what the expected season for maintaining the outdoor rinks was. Vetter responded that the goal is to maintain ice for skating from approximately December 17 through February 15, weather permitting.

Mills asked what responsibilities were given to the volunteers. Johnson replied that the volunteers essentially had the same responsibilities given to the paid staff. He indicated that volunteers are to be used to enhance the "regular" hours worked by the paid seasonal staff. During the hours worked,

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Johnson informed the board that volunteers open/close the warming houses, enforce rules, report problems to the appropriate city staff (i.e., police, public works, recreation services), and complete required reports such as attendance and injuries.

Lehman asked if there were any additional maintenance related responsibilities that volunteers could assist with. Vetter indicated there were not, noting concerns related to volunteers performing maintenance responsibilities without adequate supervision from city employees.

Vetter provided a demonstration of the computerized lighting central system for the outdoor ice rinks that was installed during the park renewal upgrades. He reported that lights can be programmed to turn on and shut off at designated hours and adjusted by phone, computer or manually.

Lehman opened the floor to any comments from those in attendance.

Angie Luedtke, 16421 Creekside Circle, asked if maintenance of the ice rinks could be upgraded by assistance from the volunteers. Vetter informed the board that he recommends not expanding the program to ice maintenance and noted two specific incidents that occurred at Boulder Creek Park and McKenzie Park, both resulting in damage to the ice that made conditions worse for skating. Vetter reported that maintenance conditions last winter were less than ideal due to a winter with temperatures well above normal from late December.

Lambert noted that if staff was willing to expand the program, the park board should support expansion to eight locations if volunteers can be found. Mills agreed.

Goodyear noted that he was one of the initial volunteers last year at Spring Hill Park. He agreed with staff that the program was well established and volunteers were prepared to assist as needed but unfortunately the weather conditions did not allow.

Lehman also supported expansion of the program, adding that the number of volunteers for each site was essential. He suggested having a minimum of four per location for adequate supervision.

Johnson reported that staff would begin recruiting volunteers and report back to the board on progress at a future meeting.

B. Amendment to the Glen Lake Park Renewal Plan

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Barone provided background to this item. She reported that the park board considered park renewal options for Glen Lake Park in 2005 and accepted a master plan at the September 7, 2005 meeting. The park board's recommendation was approved by the city council on February 6, 2006. Barone indicated that subsequent to the council's approval of the master plan, changes to the master plan were made due to the relocation of Alano as part of the larger Glen Lake Redevelopment Project. Barone noted that the city already owned the property located north of field #1, and acquired a second lot to the north for relocating the displaced Alano facility. As part of this project, parking will be provided for both park users and Alano needs. As part of constructing the two parking lots, topography required a large retaining wall be installed causing concern by staff and representatives of the Glen Lake Mighty Mites (GLMM) program. To address these concerns, an amendment to the master plan was prepared.

Barone briefly reviewed the primary changes to the plan including shifted and expanded parking, an expansion in the number of batting cages from two to four, the shortening and relocation of the new retaining wall to provide improved site lines, installation of amphitheater seating for spectators on field #2, and improved access paths and elevated viewing areas.

Lehman reminded the park board and those in attendance of the process taken to date. He noted that although the park board had approved a conceptual master plan in September of 2005, the approval of all park renewal plans has never been considered final. The park board's approval of park renewal master plans has always been done with the expectations that changes could be made in the field once more detailed planning takes place. Lehman acknowledged that the proposed amendments to the Glen Lake plan are more significant than past park renewal plans and appreciated the opportunity for the park board to review the changes. Barone indicated that staff felt the changes were significant enough to bring back for reaction.

Vetter provided a review of the initial plan and revised plan as prepared by staff. Vetter noted that in addition to the park plan changes, a sidewalk on Woodhill Road adjacent to field #1 would be added as part of the Glen Lake Pedestrian Study.

Lehman asked for a summary of park improvements made to date. Vetter replied that curbs and pavement have been placed and the new retaining wall is completed, although modifications as indicated by Barone are yet to be made.

Lehman asked for park board member comments and questions.

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Mills asked what the intended purpose of the retaining wall is. Vetter indicated that it is needed due to the change in elevation from the new parking areas to field #2.

Rude noted that several changes were already in progress and asked what aspects of the plan the park board could even react to. Barone provided examples such as the design of the hill for spectacular viewing, batting cage location and design, and options for the retaining wall modifications.

Rude asked if it is possible to lower the retaining wall as proposed by staff and still control erosion. Vetter responded that it was, noting that as proposed, the wall would be tiered for safety reasons and also to improve site lines.

Goodyear questioned when the Alano project became part of the project. Barone responded that the relocation of Alano to the area north of Glen Lake Park was approved as part of the Glen Lake redevelopment project. She added that this process was placed on a fast track and due to timing bypassed the park board.

Lehman opened the floor for comments from the audience.

Tom Mooney, 5128 Woodhill Road, voiced concerns that the project was already in process and there was no opportunity for residents or the park board to be a part of the process. Barone asked that residents focus on providing input that can be used from this point forward, noting that it is too late to dwell on past actions. Mooney noted that he was just warming up for the upcoming council meeting on October 23. Lehman indicated that he could sympathize with Mooney's concerns, but added that the park board could only control what is asked of them at the present time. Mooney noted that if he was a park board member, he would be concerned that the proposed plan is vastly different than what was previously approved.

Barone again asked Mooney to comment on aspects of the plan that could still be revised. Mooney's response was to remove the entire parking lot and fine the city for removing trees that came down as part of the process.

Mark Gregg, 12700 Greenwood Trail, noted that he was representing the GLMM Board. Gregg indicated that initial concerns GLMM had related to the expansive retaining wall have been somewhat alleviated with the changes recommended by staff to move the wall back and tier it. He appreciated the addition of space for two additional batting cages over what was included in the initial plan. He closed by stating again that the GLMM Board was satisfied with changes made to the retaining wall.

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Ginger Guggenberger, 4851 Westminster Road South, identified herself as a past GLMM Board member. She informed the park board that it is difficult for her to explain to her children why the retaining wall was placed in its location. She noted that she appreciates the proposed changes but still has several safety related concerns. Guggenberger went on to state that the concession area patio is no longer shown on the plan and questioned if it had been removed. Vetter responded that he had prepared the plan for the meeting and inadvertently left it off at the revision. Vetter indicated that the patio would be constructed at a later date, possibly with assistance from Tree Trust who the city has used on occasion for similar projects. In response to a follow up question from Guggenberger, Vetter indicated that the patio would most likely be completed after the next baseball season.

Guggenberger concluded by asking what was planned for the top of the retaining wall to provide safety. Vetter responded that the city's engineering staff is working on that level of detail, however, the plan calls for fencing and possibly a guardrail.

Rude asked if a landscape buffer was possible at the base of the wall to help prevent people from attempting to climb it. Vetter replied that staff would take that recommendation into consideration.

Guggenberger asked if signage will be placed in the parking lot to inform users where and when to park. Barone responded that she has previously spoken to Mark Gregg of the GLMM and suggested that GLMM and Alano meet to discuss each other's needs.

Dennis Johnson, 5725 Lake Rose Drive, indicated to the board that the time to discuss the changes now being presented was back in May when the city purchased the second home to the north of the park. He went on to explain that previous concerns such as access to the wall between fields #2 and #3 could have been addressed, as well as the placement of the bleachers on the first base side of field #3. Johnson asked if the city or GLMM would be responsible for building the four batting cages shown in the revised plan. Vetter responded that the city would complete the work but noted that it was up to GLMM to determine what uses would be provided. Responding to Johnson's previous concern, Vetter indicated that access to the wall would be available from the north side of the new parking lot.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Lehman closed the floor to public comments and asked for park board comments.

Rude indicated that she felt the process needed to slow down so that concerns mentioned tonight can be addressed before the project moves on. Barone indicated that she had concerns with this direction, noting that staff

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would like to complete the redesign of the retaining wall as soon as possible to avoid delays that would prevent the work from being completed prior to the next baseball season.

Gefvert asked how long the process would be delayed if other options were reviewed. Vetter responded that if approved at this time, contractors will be able to complete all improvements by next spring. Vetter added that staff had initially reviewed three options, but eliminated two for obvious reasons.

Lambert asked Rude if what she was proposing was to complete the retaining wall but delay the other park related improvements. Rude agreed.

Barone suggested that the park board approve the plan with noted stipulations to concerns. The board indicated that they would be favorable to Barone's suggestion.

Lehman summarized the issues as follows:

1. Address retaining wall landscaping and safety concerns.
2. Incorporate the overlook deck and pathways into the plan.
3. Add a stairway from the play area down to field #2.
4. Address concerns related to elevation changes (i.e., tiered seating, space between retaining wall and field #2, utility access.)

Lehman moved and Rude seconded a motion to approve the amended park renewal plan for Glen Lake Park with the stipulations noted related to retaining wall safety, inclusion of the overlook deck at the concession stand, pathways and stairway as noted, and consideration of concerns related to elevation changes on field #2. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

C. Update of 2006 Park Board Action Steps Pertaining to the Natural Resources Division

Colleran provided a summary of information contained in the staff report and provided a status report on the five objectives, included in the park board's strategic plan under the goal to "protect natural resources and open space".

Colleran noted that 132 acres of conservation easements have been acquired by the city since 2000. She added that 238.4 acres of land underwent restoration efforts this year, with an additional 260 scheduled for 2007 and 275 in 2008.

Colleran recognized Janet Larson for her efforts related to volunteer and educational programs.

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With respect to objective #5 related to ordinance changes pertaining to the natural resources, Colleran reported that after three years of review, an updated shore land ordinance is scheduled to go to the Planning Commission and City Council this winter.

Lehman noted that he owns shoreline property in the city and would excuse himself from any discussion or decisions that took place with the park board. Colleran noted the report was purely informational.

Goodyear asked Colleran to provide an update of the proposed changes to the shore land ordinance. Colleran explained that the city and DNR have two different sets of requirements and reviewed specifics that were included as an attachment with the staff report.

The board thanked Colleran and Larson for their efforts and status report.

D. Consideration of Discussion Items for the Joint Meeting of the Park board and City Council

Johnson provided a brief summary of the staff report, noting staff's recommendation to include on the joint meeting agenda a report from the chair, along with status reports of the Open Space and Park Renewal referendum projects.

Gefvert asked if the park renewal update would include a review of the revised schedule developed by the park board. Vetter indicated it would be included.

Lehman asked if the board had any concerns to address with the council. Lambert voiced frustration with the commitment of the Hopkins Park Board to the Joint Recreation Board. Johnson noted that this concern is shared by the park board's staff liaison Steve Stadler, and extends beyond the Joint Recreation Board to the Hopkins Park Board in general. Johnson explained that Hopkins is currently having difficulty recruiting and retaining park board members.

Rude noted her concerns related to the Glen Lake Plan discussed earlier in the evening and the lack of notification to the park board regarding changes.

Johnson noted that he would meet with Lehman to develop the chair's report.

5. Park Board Member reports

Mills reported that residents in her neighborhood seem to enjoy the new amenities at Boulder Creek Park, especially the new basketball court. She

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asked if the ice rink would be color coded and Vetter indicated it would not be due to past adhesion problems with the ice. Vetter did indicate that hockey lines would be provided.

Mills noted concerns regarding the use of motor scooters and asked if they were permitted in the parks. Vetter responded that the park ordinance prohibited motorized vehicles, but noted that the description included in the ordinance is vague. He noted that the park board is scheduled to review the park regulations in early 2007 to update language as needed.

6. Information Items

No additional updates were provided.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

The board reviewed the upcoming 6-month schedule and made no changes.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.