

**MINUTES OF THE
MINNETONKA PARK BOARD
August 1, 2007**

1. Roll Call

Chair Goodyear called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Board members present included Kyle Gallagher, Amber Greves, Tess Komarak and Denny Lambert. Bruce Gefvert arrived at 7:15 p.m. Attending staff included Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Dave Johnson and Perry Vetter.

2. Approval of Minutes – June 6, 2007

Lambert moved and Greves seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of June 6, 2007 as submitted. All voted “Yes.” Motion carried.

3. Special Matters

A. Recognition of Ryan Anderson for his Eagle Scout project at Big Willow Park.

Janet Larson, Natural Resources Manager, introduced Ryan Anderson who completed an Eagle Scout project at Big Willow Park involving the addition of gates and improved fencing at the park’s eight deer exclosures.

Anderson noted that he was with Troup 345 in Minnetonka. He explained that his project involved planning, constructing and installing the new gates and fencing. He concluded noting that the project was completed on time and added that he valued the assistance and support he received from Janet Larson.

Chair Goodyear thanked Anderson for completing a significant project.

4. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

A. Natural Resources Volunteer Program Update

Janet Larson provided the park board with an update on volunteer programs taking place within the park system.

Projects she reported on included restoration of the Lone Lake Park prairie; native plantings in Green Circle Park; purple loose strife control programs done jointly with elementary students; and the planning of a successful Arbor Day tree planting activity at Gro-Tonka Park. In addition, Larson reported that a total of seven parks have volunteer programs geared towards improving the natural resources. Larson concluded by noting that a total of 785 volunteer hours were donated to natural resources projects in 2006.

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5. Business Items

A. Consideration of concept options for the development of Oakhaven Park

Vetter provided background for this project noting that the park board conducted a neighborhood meeting on May 2, 2007 to receive input from residents to help determine potential improvements to this park property obtained from the State. Vetter explained that from the input received from residents, Brauer & Associates, Ltd. has developed three concept plans for park board and resident review.

Vetter noted that the property was being referred to by staff as Oakhaven Park and he introduced Amanda Prosser from Brauer & Associated, Ltd. Prosser provided the following summary of resident requests received at the May 2 resident meeting:

- Small picnic shelter
- Play equipment
- Games/basketball court
- Trails
- Parallel parking
- Tables/benches
- Adult amenities

In addition, residents asked for all trees to remain on the site, natural areas to be included and a mini arbor setting. Prosser noted that all concepts developed retain existing trees and buffers to adjacent properties.

Prosser proceeded to review the three concepts prepared for Oakhaven Park. The following are summaries of the three concepts:

Concept #1: Included two horseshoe courts, picnic shelter, play equipment (elementary & pre-k), walkways, restroom, enclosure, and an accessible parking stall.

Concept #2: Included a single horseshoe court, picnic shelter, combined pre-k and elementary play equipment, walkways, restroom enclosure, climbing structure, swing area, and an accessible parking stall.

Concept #3: Games court (half court basketball, hopscotch and 4-corners), picnic shelter, combined pre-k and elementary play equipment, walkways, restroom enclosure, swing area, footbridge on extended walkway area.

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Vetter closed the presentation of concepts noting that it was staff's desire to reduce the three concepts to a single plan by either eliminating two of the concepts or combining aspects from two or more concepts on a single plan. Goodyear opened the floor to public comments.

Roger Anderson, 13615 Spring Lake Road, commented that he liked all the plans presented with his only objection being the location of the basketball court on concept #3. He noted that the location of this court would be directly across the street from his home.

Jodi Lipshultz, (no address provided), commented that she liked all the concepts presented and had questions related to what the play area surface would be, and if a parent would be able to view both play containers from the picnic location in Concept #1. Vetter responded that the city is primarily going with woodfiber safety surfaces due to several reasons. He added that the play containers for pre-k and elementary ages would be located so that visibility of both from the picnic shelter and most locations would be possible.

Ann Herzog, 4217 Kristi Lane, voiced support for Concept #3 due to the amenities provided for a wide age range for kids. She indicated that she likes the idea of a sport court and felt that it would not be abused as a hangout location, noting that older and more serious players will travel to the full court at McKenzie Park.

Marie Carlson, 13915 Spring Lake Road, commented that she was impressed with all the options developed; however, her desired option was Concept #3. She noted that her preference was for a games court over enhanced play equipment. She asked that an alternative location for the court be considered, and closed by indicating she liked the provision of swings in a final plan.

Rachel Dorey, (no address provided) Prince Place, informed the board that she has children ages 2 and 4 and is excited about the possibility of having a new park and meeting neighbors. She indicated that she liked any option with swings and prefers separate play containers for younger and older children.

Jack Torborg, 13816 Spring Lake Road, noted that as a child who would use the play areas, he thought they should be separate so that older kids playing do not accidentally injure younger children.

Reed Fischer, 13736 Spring Lake Road, voiced support for Concept #3, noting as an older youth he would enjoy a basketball court.

Susan Wilson, 4261 Queens Way, noted that she and her family are active users of several of Minnetonka's parks and was excited to find out that a park in this area of the city might be a possibility. She voiced support for Concept #3, but

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understands neighbors' concerns about the location and would like to see it moved further to the southeast.

Tyler Torborg, 13816 Spring Lake Road, voiced support for Concept #3 if the location of the court could be moved. He also favored separate play areas for older and younger children.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Chair Goodyear closed the public input process and invited park board member questions and comments.

Gefvert noted that retaining walls were shown on some of the concept plans and asked what the height of these walls would be. Prosser responded that the plan has not been developed to that detail, however no retaining wall would exceed 30" in height. Gefvert continued by asking if the game court was located as shown in Concept #3, would a barrier be placed between the court and Spring Lake Road. Prosser indicated that some form of barrier would be provided. Gefvert asked if there were any other potential locations for the court. Prosser indicated that placing it more in the center portion of the park might be an option.

Gallagher noted that he favored Concept #3 and felt the inclusion of a basketball court was needed. He added that he favored moving the location.

Hearing no further comments, Goodyear summarized what he thought the park board was requesting. He indicated support for Concept #3, keeping swings, separate play areas and the games court possibly relocated. The park board expressed comfort with this direction and requested staff to revise Concept #3 and bring it back to the board for consideration at a future meeting.

B. Consideration of Park Renewal Plans for Guillian Park

Vetter introduced the item noting that neighborhood meetings were held on February 8, 2007 and March 8, 2007. Vetter reviewed primary improvements targeted for the park including:

- Parking lot improvements
- Upgraded backstop on the baseball field
- Relocation of baseball batting case
- Fence realignment
- New entrance gate to the softball fields
- New batting cage for softball
- Additional landscaping and slope restoration
- Addition of new playground site

Goodyear opened the floor to public comments.

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Paul Ansolabehere, 4475 Gaywood Drive, noted that he was representing the Glen Lake Girl's Athletic League (GAL) Softball organization. Ansolabehere requested that storage space for softball and field equipment be considered, along with the relocation of the batting cage. He added that the proposed location is the only area available for warming players up prior to their game. Ansolabehere closed by complimenting staff for the plan developed and expressing his appreciation for the parking design upgrades, batting cage addition and other improvements proposed for the park.

Goodyear asked Vetter to respond to Ansolabehere's questions. Vetter indicated that he had previously not heard a request for equipment storage space but felt that could be accommodated. Regarding the batting cage location, Vetter indicated that the trail and cage can be adjusted to the south to provide space for warm-ups.

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

Goodyear noted that board member Lambert attended both of the neighborhood meetings and asked Lambert if he felt the plan mirrored discussions that took place. Lambert responded that he felt the plan did incorporate the requests of those in attendance at the meetings. Lambert appreciated the baseball backstop improvement included, noting that historically baseballs onto Minnetonka Boulevard have been a concern.

Gefvert asked if bike racks would be a needed addition at the park considering the shortage of parking and the considerable number of youth using the park. Gary Code, representing Hopkins-Minnetonka Babe Ruth, responded that several youth ride their bikes, however, he felt that adequate areas to lock bikes are already in place.

Komarek asked if upgrades to the softball bleachers were required. Vetter and Ansolabehere both responded that they felt the bleachers present were adequate.

Lambert moved and Gallagher seconded a motion to approve the plan for Guillian Park as prepared by staff and forward it to the city council for consideration. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

C. Consideration of Park Renewal Plans – Big Willow Park

Vetter provided background to this item noting that the neighborhood meetings for Big Willow Park occurred on February 1 and April 17, 2007. As a result of the meeting process, a draft master plan has been developed for the park board's review. Vetter reviewed the plan in detail, including the following primary improvements:

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- Improved trail surfaces
- Creation of additional trail loops with improved access to Minnehaha Creek
- Improved playground area with sports theme
- Potential boardwalk connecting active and passive areas of the park
- Reorientation of parking areas for additional capacity.

Goodyear opened the floor to public comments:

Scott Condon, Big Willow Baseball Association (BWBA), indicated that in general, he supported the master plan, however, added requests for improved netting to protect players and spectators on adjacent fields from foul balls off of field #4, and relocation of the play equipment for similar safety concerns.

Vetter responded that the existing netting system was installed recently and meets all requirements as recommended by the city's insurance advisors. Regarding the play equipment location, Vetter responded that there was not adequate space within the park to move the equipment. He also noted the proximity of the existing equipment to the restroom facility as reasoning to not relocate the equipment.

Hearing no further requests to speak, Goodyear closed the meeting to public comments.

Gallagher supported moving the play equipment if possible, noting that foul balls reaching the existing location are a concern, also spectators are not able to see the play area from the bleacher areas to watch children who are playing on the equipment.

Goodyear noted that Lambert had attended all the neighborhood meetings involving Big Willow Park and asked if the plan covered the interests of those in attendance at the neighborhood meetings. Lambert indicated the plan did address issues discussed and commented that he appreciates the continuation of natural resources management, the addition of trail loops, the attention to parking concerns, and the possible boardwalk connection. Lambert indicated that dogs off leash continue to be a major concern in the park and he looks forward to future discussion related to the leash ordinance.

Goodyear requested that staff implement all park improvements into the long-term maintenance plans once they are approved by council.

Greves moved and Lambert seconded a motion to approve the park renewal plan for Big Willow Park as submitted, and forward to the city council for consideration. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

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6. Park Board Member reports

Goodyear suggested that any park board members interested in a ride-along with the police department's community services staff, call to arrange a date and time. He noted that he and several members had done so and he feels it will be beneficial to the park board in discussing park regulations at an upcoming meeting.

7. Informational items

No additional informational items were discussed.

8. Upcoming Park Board Agenda items

No amendments were made to the upcoming six-month meeting schedule.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.