

**Minutes of the Minnetonka Park Board  
September 5, 2007**

**1. Roll Call**

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

**2. Approval of Minutes – August 1, 2007**

Lambert moved and Gefvert seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of August 1, 2007 as submitted. All voted “Yes.” Motion carried.

**3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda**

None.

**4. Business Items**

**A. Consideration of a Master Plan Concept for Oakhaven Park**

Vetter noted that staff presented three concept plans of Oakhaven Park to the park board for review at the August 1, 2007 meeting. As a result, staff worked with Amanda Prosser of Brauer & Associates, Ltd. to develop a single concept plan that incorporated resident and park board feedback from the August 1 meeting. Vetter introduced Prosser who summarized feedback received and presented a concept with the following:

- Two play area containers for ages 2-5 and 5-12
- Designated swing set area
- Picnic shelter (small)
- Pathways and trails
- Horseshoe court
- Restroom enclosure
- Small basketball court (relocated)
- Accessible parking spot
- Landscaping, buffers & seating areas.

Goodyear opened the floor to park board questions and comments.

Lambert expressed appreciation for the concept developed, noting that he felt that resident requests from the August 1, 2007 meeting had been incorporated into the plan.

Gefvert voiced appreciation for relocating the basketball court to address resident concerns.

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Greves indicated support for the plan and thanked Prosser for including buffers for safety and relocating the basketball court. Greves inquired as to the cost for grading in the court at the new proposed location and asked if it was a concern to staff. Vetter responded that an overall cost estimate for the project will follow recommendation of a plan. He noted that if costs are too high, prioritization of desired amenities would need to be done to determine immediate and future improvements.

Goodyear took note of the residents in attendance and asked if they had any comments or questions regarding the plan.

Nancy Corniea, 13624 Spring Lake Road, informed the board that she was unaware that the August 1, 2007 meeting took place and had only attended the initial May 2, 2007 meeting. She expressed concern that other neighbors might not be aware of planned improvements. Johnson informed the board that an initial mailing for the May 2, 2007 meeting was sent to residents residing within 500 feet of the park. As indicated in that mailing, Johnson explained that residents were given the option for providing contact information to be kept informed of future meetings. Johnson explained that only those who requested to be kept informed were notified of the August 1 and September 5, 2007 meetings. Corniea indicated that she had not provided her contact information.

Sue Knott, 13600 Lake St Extension, indicated that she was also unaware of previous meetings.

The park board directed staff to conduct a mailing notification to all residents residing near the park and reschedule further review of the Oakhaven Master Plan for the October 3, 2007 meeting.

The park board further requested that cost estimates be prepared for the concept plan developed, along with possible phasing plans.

Corniea asked that grading of her driveway be considered as part of any park improvements to improve sight lines and improve safety. She noted that her property is next to the park. Vetter indicated that Corniea's request would be reviewed and reported on at the October meeting.

**B. Consideration of 2008 Gray's Bay Marina Slip Rates and Facility Budget**

Pavelka provided an introduction to the item and noted that slip rates for the 2007 season were initially increased 7% by the park board to assist in covering operational expenses for the facility. Pavelka added that subsequent to the park board's 7% recommendation, rates were increased an additional 13% or \$379 to help fund a portion of the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD) fees charged to the city. Pavelka indicated that this change was made during the city's budget process with the intent of covering 20% of the \$55,000 LMCD fee in

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2007, and increasing the percentage paid by 20% each year until the entire amount was covered by slip rate fees. Pavelka noted that future increases would be considered based on the market and would not be adjusted if the market did not allow.

Pavelka reported that 2006 slip rates were \$2,940 and increased to \$3,524 in 2007. He noted that staff was recommending that no operational increases be implemented in 2008, and that the park board only consider an increase to address the LMCD fee.

Pavelka reviewed the 2007 operations budget and reported that the marina will meet 2007 budget objectives.

Gefvert asked what the impact was on slip renewals when the 20% increase for 2007 was announced. Pavelka responded that 9 slip holders did not renew and several others indicated that they would not renew if comparable adjustments were made in future years. Pavelka added that the initial lottery conducted when the facility opened attracted 250 applicants compared to only 58 at the 2006 lottery. He noted that present experience indicates that it takes 8-10 applicants on average to fill a single slip vacancy.

Lambert asked if 2007 was the first year that the city has been charged a LMCD fee. Barone responded that the fee has been in existence for several years but funded through the city's general fund. The shift for 2007 was to place responsibility for this fee on Marina users instead of property taxes. Barone explained that the city's \$55,000 LMCD fee, which will be increased for 2008, is based on a complicated formula that is based on city population and assessed value, not actual property that borders Lake Minnetonka. As a result, Barone explained that Minnetonka has the smallest amount of shoreline property, however pays the largest LMCD fee.

Goodyear noted that if the current plan continues to fund LMCD fees through Marina slip rates, \$2,000 from every slip rental will be applied to the total LMCD fees. He expressed concern for that trend.

Lambert asked what the thought process was to pass \$55,000 in fees to 29 people who have slips when the public users of the facility pay nothing. Pavelka responded that the Grays' Bay Marina facility is State owned and operated by the DNR and charging for public use of the boat launch is prohibited.

Goodyear noted that as a result, the park board is faced with keeping the operational budget flat to accommodate an LMCD increase. He questioned how long the facility can go without an operational increase.

Gallagher asked Pavelka what he saw happening in 2008 if fees are increased to cover the LMCD fee by an additional \$11,000. Pavelka indicated that it is difficult

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to predict the exact outcome, but voiced concern that the existing waiting list might not accommodate the number of vacancies that could occur.

Goodyear suggested that the park board consider only an additional 10% LMCD increase due to market concerns.

Greves expressed concern that even a 10% increase might be too much, especially if an operational increase was justified.

Gallagher expressed frustration regarding the formula used by the LMCD and asked if anything could be done to change it. Johnson noted that similar frustrations have been voiced by the city, and added that the finance department is in the process of hiring an intern to conduct research on the current arrangement.

Lambert indicated that he did not support any fee increases to address the LMCD fee at this time. He expressed concern that 29 people are being impacted too severely, and the increase would price us at the top of the market.

Lambert moved and Greves seconded a motion to establish 2008 slip rates based on covering 20 – 30% of the \$55,000 LMCD fee (\$11,000 - \$16,500) and no operational increases for 2008. Gefvert, Goodyear, Greves, Komarek and Lambert voted “Yes,” Gallagher voted “No.” Motion carried on a 5 to 1 vote.

The board asked that reasoning for their recommendation be reflected in the meeting minutes to include the following:

1. Concerns about an adequate number of interested applicants on the waiting list.
2. The need for future increases to address operational needs.
3. The large increase of 20% implemented in 2007.
4. Overall concerns related to marketability.

**C. Review of Community Park Snow Removal Policies**

Vetter provided an introduction to the items and informed the board that he had received a resident petition from the Spring Hill Park neighborhood requesting city consideration to plow the new walking trail at Spring Hill Park during the winter months.

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Vetter reviewed existing practices related to snow removal in the park system noting that three major areas are the focus of immediate response following a snow fall: Civic Center complex and facilities, sidewalks and trails to school locations, and other sidewalk and trails connecting business and inter-municipal links. Vetter noted that responsibilities such as ice rink snow removal and flooding continue as scheduled during snow events.

Vetter indicated that through the park renewal process, several internal neighborhood park trails have been added and are not plowed due to staffing and equipment needs. He indicated that staff was willing to use Spring Hill Park as a test site for one year to evaluate the impact on staffing.

Lambert asked if Spring Hill was one of the more utilized parks within the system for trail use. Vetter responded that other parks such as Purgatory, Meadow and Big Willow receive considerably more use. Lambert noted that with a lack of sidewalks throughout the city, trails are a priority of walkers and runners. He questioned if increased staff or use of a contractual service were an option. Vetter responded that the amount of equipment available to his crews was of greater concern, noting that the loss of one key piece of equipment can lead to delays.

Gefvert asked if allowing residents to remove the snow was an option. Vetter responded that liability, among other things, was a concern.

Goodyear noted that to remove snow, prep work would be needed to indicate turning areas. That said, Goodyear asked if additional work would be required to repair sod damaged during the snow removal process. Vetter responded that while drivers possess the skills and understanding of the routes, plow damage still occurs and sod damaged during snow removal would require repair.

Greves suggested that staff place the plowing schedules for park and trail amenities on the website. She questioned the board on the designation of Spring Hill Park as a test location. Gefvert asked what the test would be for if the resources are not available to expand in future years.

Greves asked if Spring Hill was one of the larger neighborhood parks not plowed. Vetter responded that Gro-Tonka, Kinsel and Victoria Evergreen were parks that were larger in size.

Gefvert asked if a petition had not been received, would Spring Hill Park be considered as a priority location for plowing. Vetter indicated that his first locations would most likely be Kinsel or Victoria Evergreen.

Gefvert noted that he understood the resident's desire but could not support the request due to the lack of resources.

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Greves moved that the park board recommend that Spring Hill Park be plowed for the 2007-2008 winter season on a trial basis to determine the impact on available resources. With no second to the motion, the motion failed.

**D. Consideration of a Proposal with Three Rivers Park District for the Operation of a Dedicated Cross Country Ski Trail at the Glen Lake Golf Course**

Johnson introduced the item and explained that the desire for the city to work with Three Rivers Park District to provide a cross country ski trail at the Glen Lake Golf Course was included in the park board's 2007 strategic plan. Johnson presented a proposal to the board that included options for a 7-day per week option, or a weekend/holiday option. Hearing support for the 7-day option, Johnson provided specifics on this option.

Johnson noted that the 7-day option is estimated to cost the city \$24,180 for the 2007/08 season. He added that any revenue received from the sale of ski passes would reduce the estimated cost accordingly. As an example, Johnson indicated that 200 ski passes sold at \$25, and 900 daily passes (10 sold per day) at \$2 per pass, would generate \$5,900 for the season and reduce the net cost to \$18,280.

Gefvert noted that the proposed operation time was 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and asked if that could be adjusted if experience suggested better times. Johnson indicated it could with adequate notice to staff.

Goodyear asked if marketing of the trail could include a sign at the location. Johnson responded that all options, including signage, would be considered.

Lambert moved and Gallagher seconded a motion to approve the 7-day plan as proposed and forward it to the city council for consideration. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

Komarek asked if adjustments to the proposed hours would be considered at a later date. Johnson indicated that they would be. He informed the board that they will be kept apprised of progress on this item going forward.

**E. Development request related to Lone Lake Park**

Vetter detailed a request submitted to the planning department from United Properties Residential, LLC for a development of a 61 unit senior housing building. As part of the request, the developer requested a loop trail system that would extend into Lone Lake Park. Vetter noted the requirements placed on the developer by the City, including \$144,000 in park dedication funds that would be

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applied to future improvements at Lone Lake Park. Vetter noted that he was looking for park board direction to forward to the Planning Commission.

Greves asked if public access would be allowed on all portions of the trail. Vetter responded that with the exception of a small link to the housing units, all portions would be available to the public.

Gallagher noted that opposition to the project seemed high with 47 responses out of 86 not favoring the project. Vetter pointed out that the 47 responses not favoring the project were out of 441 properties surveyed, 13% of the total, and felt that was actually a relatively low percentage.

Gallagher moved and Lambert seconded a motion to indicate park board support for the project as presented. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

**5. Park Board Member Reports**

Greves inquired about the status of the Wilson Park renewal project. Vetter noted the project was behind schedule due to the contractor's decision to start at a later date. He added liquidated damages were under consideration, however progress had been made on the project within recent days.

Noting that Cathy Rude has left the park board due to her family's move out of the City, Goodyear noted the need to appoint a new vice-chair to the board.

Gefvert moved and Goodyear seconded a motion to appoint Denny Lambert as Vice-Chair to the park board for a term expiring on January 31, 2008. Gallagher, Gefvert, Goodyear, Greves and Komarek voted "Yes." Motion carried.

**6. Information Items**

No additional items presented.

**7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

The park board reviewed tentative agenda items of their upcoming 6-month calendar. No changes were made.

**8. Adjournment**

Gefvert moved and Komarek seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.