

**1. Roll Call**

Park Board members in attendance included, Patty Acomb, Bruce Gefvert, Denny Lambert, Elise Raarup, and Patrick Robben. Staff members in attendance included Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Ann Davy and Dave Johnson.

Vice-Chair Robben called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

Gefvert moved and Lambert seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of June 3, 2009. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

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

Natural Resources Specialist Janet Larson introduced Dan Flynn who reported on his recently completed Eagle Scout project completed in the Minnehaha Creek corridor. Flynn described the efforts involved in his "Oak Ridge Habitat Restoration Project", including caging 16 plants to protect them from harm and removing an estimated 400 – 500 buckthorn plants.

Lambert thanked Flynn for donating his time to the project and emphasized the importance of such projects to the community.

Robben agreed with Lambert's comments and added praise to Flynn for his leadership abilities required to adapt to the weather conditions that impacted the project's schedule.

**4. Business Items**

**A. Review of 2008/2009 outdoor ice rink scheduling changes**

Recreation Services Programming Division Manager Ann Davy reviewed changes to the outdoor hockey rink scheduling process that were initiated for the 2008/2009 skating season at the request of the park board. Davy reviewed the changes made that included a shift in available times from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., to 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.; along with ice rink staff's attempt to monitor the actual number of dates used by the Minnetonka and Hopkins Youth Hockey Associations.

Davy reported that 80 dates were initially reserved by youth hockey associations prior to the start of the season; however only 12 dates (15%) were actually used. Davy cited staff concerns that the general public was missing out on available ice time due to posted schedules at warming houses that indicated the ice was not available when in fact it was due to no-shows on most of the scheduled dates.

Davy indicated that staff was recommending that the process for reserving outdoor hockey rinks be modified even further by establishing a fee schedule for use of the

rinks and scheduling times on a permit system through the Recreation Services Facilities Division beginning with the 2009/2010 season. Davy closed by asking for park board questions and/or feedback.

Acomb asked if any of the no-show dates occurred during periods of the season when the ice was poor due to warm or cold weather, or snow conditions. Davy responded that dates canceled due to weather conditions were not included in the final summary. Acomb asked if all the reserved time was associated to resident use. Davy indicated that both youth hockey associations are resident based.

Robben asked if residents were turned away if the ice was scheduled and no one was actually skating. Davy indicated that skaters were not asked to leave unless the youth hockey team actually showed. However she reiterated that schedules are posted well in advance and general use skaters would most likely not visit the rink due to the fact that posted schedules indicated that the rink was scheduled to be used.

Lambert suggested that one option the park board could consider is to further reduce the number of dates and length of time the outdoor hockey rinks are available for use. Dave Johnson, Recreation Services Director, provided a brief history of relations between the city and local youth hockey associations. He noted that several years back, outdoor ice was in high demand by both associations and distributed by organizational boundaries. He speculated that the construction of several area ice arenas in an attempt to meet the weekday demand for ice has created an excess amount of weekend ice, possibly resulting in teams to schedule practices indoors that previously were scheduled on the outdoor rinks. He closed by indicating that requirements to pay for reserved indoor ice has not totally eliminated the problem of no-shows, adding that youth hockey associations will commonly pay for unused ice to prevent the possibility of losing the allotted time the following season.

Lambert suggested that the park board consider a deposit system that allows youth hockey associations to recover their deposit if in fact the time reserved is used. He added that times not cancelled in advance would be charged.

Gefvert indicated support for going to a permit process for reserving outdoor ice time, noting the need for accountability in the scheduling process.

Acomb noted that she was familiar with Meadow Park which provides two designated hockey rinks and on general skating area and asked if this was consistent with all Minnetonka park sites. Davy responded that all sites with warming houses have a general skating area and one hockey rink, with Meadow Park being the exception with two hockey rinks. Davy noted that for Meadow, only one of the hockey rinks is available for scheduling so that at least one rink is always open for general use.

Lambert requested staff to share the 2008/2009 use numbers with the youth hockey associations so they have a full understanding of the park board's concern. Davy indicated that she would send the use summaries to both the Hopkins and Minnetonka associations.

Johnson summarized the direction provided by the park board by indicating that staff would share the past year's use numbers with the youth hockey associations and develop an available ice schedule for youth hockey practices that provided less time and shorter periods. He added that staff would develop an ice rental deposit system that allowed associations to use the ice at no cost unless the reserved period of time was scheduled but not used by an association. Johnson indicated that staff's recommendations would come back to the board for review in October. The park board agreed with Johnson's summary and no official action was taken.

**B. Consideration of changes to the 2010 athletic field fee schedule**

Johnson provided background regarding past discussions by the park board related to the establishment of a fee schedule for athletic field use. He noted the park board discussed the concept of a city-wide fee schedule for athletic field use at meetings held on November 1, 2006 and February 7, 2007. As a result of these meetings, the park board recommended that organizations assigned designated use of fields shall be responsible for paying 75% of the city's cost for maintaining the fields assigned. Johnson reported that the park board further recommended that all fees collected from athletic field use be allocated to cover operational expenses (67%) and future capital needs (33%).

Johnson noted that the park board last reviewed options for adjusting city athletic field user fees at the October 3, 2007 meeting. As a result of this discussion, the park board provided staff with direction regarding the fields that would require a fee and fee ranges for each field to be charged.

Johnson further explained the city of Minnetonka provides athletic fields for a variety of community and city sponsored programs including the following:

<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Provider</b>
Youth Softball	Community Associations
Youth Baseball	Community Associations
Youth Football	Community Associations
Youth Soccer	Community Associations / City
Youth Lacrosse	Community Associations
Adult Baseball	Community Associations
Adult Softball	City
Adult Soccer	City

Johnson explained that athletic fields are defined in three primary classifications including dedicated fields, non-dedicated fields and informal play areas, noting that only the first two classifications warranted a fee for use. He noted that residents

requesting to reserve a field for personal use needed to be slotted into one of the three classifications and asked for park board input.

Johnson explained that the city provides designated complexes/fields to four youth associations that serve residents of the city, including two youth baseball fields at Glen Lake Park for the Glen lake Mighty Mites; three youth baseball fields at Big Willow Park for the Big Willow Baseball Association; one youth softball field at Glen Lake Park for the Girl's Athletic League; and one regulation baseball field at Guilliams Park for the Hopkins-Minnetonka Babe Ruth Association. He noted that, as recommended by the park board, these organizations would be charged a rate of 75% of the total cost experienced by the city to maintain their fields on an annual basis.

Johnson presented staff recommendations for an athletic field use fee schedule consistent with direction received by the park board at past meetings. He noted that this schedule included tiered rates for potential users and explained that potential users were defined in one of three categories, dependent upon the percentage of residents they serve and the openness of their registration process.

Johnson explained that the park board's approval of the fee schedule, as proposed, would result in \$29,450 of rental revenue for the 2010 season. He noted that this compared to \$14,421 collected in 2008 and an estimated \$12,350 to be collected in 2009. Johnson indicated that based on staff's estimates, funding allocated for future athletic field capital expenses would total \$9,807; and funding allocated to operations would total \$19,643 in 2010.

Johnson closed by recommending that prior to the park board finalizing any recommendations for athletic field use fees, a meeting with affected user groups is scheduled in order to receive public input. Johnson provided a table that summarized the financial impact certain groups would see if the recommended fees were adopted.

Lambert indicated general support for the fee schedule presented and supported the need for receiving input from the general user groups. Lambert suggested that the park board consider the split between capital and operations be increased from 67%/33% to 50%/50%.

Responding to the table that illustrated the potential impact on organizations, Acomb asked how impacted organizations would fund the fee increases. Johnson indicated that in most cases the fees would need to be covered by increases in user fees for each organization. As examples, he generalized that fees for the little league organizations might increase \$3 to \$5 per participant, while fees for other organizations may need to be increased as much as \$10.

Raarup asked what triggered the park board's desire to increase fees. Johnson explained that the primary reason was to recapture a portion of the cost that the city spends in maintaining all the fields provided for community use. He explained that

several of the fields provided have recently been upgraded as a result of the 2001 bond referendum; and expressed concern that this type of funding would not be available the next time fields are in need of upgrades, thus creating the need for developing a capital fund. On the administrative side, Johnson explained that there has never been a designated fee schedule meaning that some fields required a fee and others did not. Johnson added that there has also been no designation for user types meaning that non-resident groups were typically charged the same as residents.

Robben indicated support for the development of a formal fee policy that could be used for fields throughout the park system.

Gefvert agreed with Robben and also supported the need to hold a community meeting to obtain input. Gefvert suggested that the classification for resident use of fields be include in category B of the fee schedule.

Lambert suggested that the park board develop a fee schedule that would include no increases for the first two years so that user groups could adjust as needed.

Robben asked when the community meeting would be scheduled. Johnson suggested conducting the meeting at 6 p.m. prior to the park board's regularly scheduled meeting on October 7. He noted that the park board could then include a discussion on the regular meeting agenda that those interested community members could stay for. The park board agreed with that direction and asked staff to schedule the meeting for 6 p.m. on October 7, 2009.

## **5. Park Board Member Reports**

Gefvert expressed his appreciation for park renewal improvements made to Lone Lake Park. He asked if staff could report back to the board with pictures of the improvements made. Gefvert also reported on the feedback he and board member Robben received at the trails booth at this year's Minnetonka Summer Festival on June 27.

Acomb reported that with the water level being extremely low on Minnehaha Creek, several pieces of large garbage such as tires are now visible and unable to be picked up by the general public. She asked if a clean-up day is ever scheduled. Colleran responded that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District does schedule a clean-up day and recalled that it is scheduled for the end of August.

Raarup reported that there was a broken swing at Meadow Park and an active beehive under the boardwalk at Libb's Lake Park that both required staff's attention.

**6. Information Items**

Jo Colleran, Natural resources Division Manager, reviewed development projects that were included in the agenda packet. She also provided an update on concerns related to the Emerald Ash Borer.

**7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

The board reviewed their upcoming 6-month schedule and changed the start time of the October 7, 2009 meeting to 6 p.m. in order to receive public input related to the proposed athletic field fee schedule.

**8. Adjournment**

Lambert moved and Gefvert seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.