

1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included, Patty Acomb, Kyle Gallagher, Bruce Gefvert, Tim Goodyear, Denny Lambert, Elise Raarup, and Patrick Robben. Staff members in attendance included Geralyn Barone, Dave Johnson, Mike Pavelka and Perry Vetter.

Chair Goodyear called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Robben moved and Lambert seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of August 5, 2009 as submitted. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

None

4. Business Items

A. Consideration of 2010 Gray's Bay Marina slip rental fees

Mike Pavelka, Facilities Manager provided background related to the establishment of slip rental fees for the Gray's Bay Marina, noting the park board's responsibility for recommending rate increases to the city council. He indicated the board had recommended a 2.7% increase in fees (\$100) from 2008 to 2009, noting that fees increases had occurred every year since 2006. Rate increases averaged 8% per year over that time.

Pavelka provided a revenue and expense report for 2009 that projected a break-even operating year and included an \$18,900 transfer to the facility's escrow fund. He noted the actual escrowed amount over the first six years of operation totaled \$189,644 exceeding the budgeted amount of \$117,600. Based on the operational information and projecting ahead to the 2010 budget, Pavelka indicated staff was not recommending slip rate increases for the 2010 season.

Goodyear opened the floor to park board member questions or feedback.

Lambert asked about the status of the waiting list to purchase a slip. Pavelka indicated that approximately 30 names remain on the waiting list, adding that the actual number of interested renters is probably less due to changes that most likely have occurred for some over the past two years.

Lambert noted an estimated revenue drop from 2008 to 2009 of approximately \$39,000 and asked what caused the reduction. Pavelka indicated that the primary cause was a reduction in gas sales due to the economy and less than ideal weather

conditions so far this year. Pavelka noted that reduced gas revenues are also matched by reduced expenditures in the purchase of gas.

Acomb noted that the city maintains a total of 29 slips and asked if that number could be increased. Pavelka indicated that the number of slips is capped by an agreement that was established with the DNR when the facility was open. Dave Johnson, Recreation Services Director, added that the number was also influenced by the Gray's Bay Task Force that oversaw the development of the site. Johnson indicated that the Task Force was comprised in part of area neighbors who had concerns about traffic and the impact on the neighborhood of a site that was larger in size.

Robben questioned if the city has had any problems with the transferring of leased slips to second parties. Pavelka indicated that regular checks are completed and to date, transferring has not been an issue. He added that the lease agreement includes language related to this issue.

Goodyear asked about the term limits in place for renewing slips. Pavelka indicated that all current slips can be renewed for a total of eight years; however initially slips were leased for six and eight year terms to prevent a 100% turnover in a single season. Goodyear asked what the average length of a lease has been. Pavelka estimated six years.

Lambert voiced support for maintaining slip rates at 2009 levels for 2010 due to the projected operating outcomes for the year and the fact that the escrow account remains sound. Robben and Gefvert agreed.

Lambert moved and Gallagher seconded a motion to recommend to the city council no increase in Gray's Bay Marina slip rental fees for the 2010 operating season, maintaining a fee of \$3,800 per slip. All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

B. Review of options for play equipment at Big Willow Park

Parks, Trails and Buildings Manager Perry Vetter provided the introduction and noted that Big Willow Park currently has a 2,500 sq ft playground area that was constructed in 1989. Vetter explained that as part of the approved park renewal master plan improvements for Big Willow Park, the existing playground equipment will be removed and replaced. He added that during the park renewal planning process other locations were studied for relocation of the playground; however none proved to be better options than the present location.

Vetter explained that the existing location would be expanded to approximately 4,000 - 4,500 sq ft in order to accommodate both larger equipment safety use zones and to provide a more engaging play experience, adding that fencing the perimeter of the new playground structure is planned.

Vetter explained that playground manufacturers have been introducing new equipment trends into their lines that could be incorporated into this upcoming project and provided examples of the trends in equipment offering. Vetter emphasized the fact that he wanted to consider non-traditional structures as an alternative, noting that he has been hesitant to incorporate this type of equipment into a neighborhood park setting but felt that a community park such as Big Willow Park might be an alternative.

Goodyear asked for park board member questions and feedback.

Acomb noted that she preferred designs to a playground setting that provided options for all age groups. Vetter responded that city specifications typically include designated areas for age groups of 2-5 and 5-12. He added that experience shows that younger children like to gravitate to the equipment for older children so typically the 5-12 area is larger. Vetter noted that swing area components are usually included as well. Acomb indicated that her children really enjoy the non-traditional equipment located at Civic Center Park, including the climbing rock and rope tower.

Goodyear voiced support for a variety of equipment in the park system, noting that the exposure Big Willow Park has from Minnetonka Boulevard and the large amount of use the park receives supports the opportunity to provide something unique in the way of play equipment.

Lambert added that there are different groups using the park from daytime to evening use due to the sports activities that typically take place at night. He added feedback he has received supports amenities such as bucket swings, climbing areas, tunnel slides and platforms. He encouraged several entrance points to the equipment; and the addition of recognizable characters and selection of colors is also important.

Raarup questioned what the goal of play equipment is; encouraging movement or making it challenging? She questioned one design that included slides with no sides and questioned how safe that style of slide would be. Vetter indicated that he felt the goal was providing new experiences. He noted that he was not too familiar with the new slide that Raarup questioned but would follow up how it has performed.

Goodyear noted that Bennett Family Park provides a safety covering for balls that may come to the play area from adjacent fields and questioned if that was needed at Big Willow Park. Vetter responded that the netting at Bennett Family Park is also offered as a shade alternative and felt that the location and Big Willow Park addressed both shade alternatives with tree cover and adequate safety from foul balls.

Acomb asked if any tree removal would need to occur to place the play equipment. Vetter indicated that it would not.

Gallagher questioned if a specialized theme such as a baseball park had been considered given the location next to baseball fields. Vetter indicated that indeed it had and that staff would continue to explore that possibility.

Lambert asked for a completion timetable and project budget. Vetter indicated that work could begin this winter and be completed in the spring, noting the project budget was approximately \$85,000.

Hearing no further comments, Vetter indicated the park board input would be used to further develop detailed plans to bring back to the board.

5. Park Board Member Reports

Gefvert expressed his appreciation for park renewal improvements made to Lone Lake Park.

Goodyear noted the excellent work completed by the Tree Trust program in Purgatory Park to address creek erosion. Vetter added that Tree Trust crews also rebuild hockey dasher boards at Covington Park and are also working in Opus to replace seating areas.

6. Information Items

Assistant City Manager Geralyn Barone provided an update on the new Minnetonka Farmers Market that was introduced this summer and runs through September 22.

Johnson provided updates on the Williston Center renovation plans and informed the board that the city had recently become a member of the Active Living Hennepin Communities initiative.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

The board reviewed their upcoming 6-month schedule and made no additions or changes

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.