

1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included, Patty Acomb, Kyle Gallagher, Tim Goodyear, Marvin Puspoki, Elise Raarup and Patrick Robben. Staff members in attendance included Geralyn Barone, Jo Colleran, Dave Johnson, Janet Larson, Mike Pavelka and Perry Vetter.

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

2. Approval of Minutes

Acomb moved and Gallagher seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of October 6, 2010. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

Nick Wyers of Scout Troup 345 presented his plan for his Eagle Scout project that included repair of eight existing deer exclosures at Big Willow Park. Wyers explained that work included cementing in new posts and replacing existing fencing with galvanized welded wire. He reported that the project was approved by staff in August of 2009 with work completed from September 18 – 27, 2010. A total of 206 hours were donated to the project that included 40 volunteers of which Wyers donated 30.

Gallagher asked if there were any changes Wyers would recommend if he were to do the project over. Wyers indicated that he would have preferred doing the project during the summer months when more daylight was available; and also suggested that he may have used a different method to pour concrete for the posts.

Goodyear asked for a summary of the benefits this project provides the city. Janet Larson, Natural Resources Specialist, indicated that the exclosures protect deer from impacting the natural state of the area and as a result, native wildflowers that are rare to the park system have been rediscovered in Big Willow Park.

The entire board thanked Wyers for his contributions, and congratulated him on his Eagle Scout designation.

4. Business Items

A. 2010 Athletic Field Fees summary

Mike Pavelka, Facilities Manager through Recreation Services, provided the introduction and background. He indicated that athletic fields available for community wide use are defined in two primary classifications; "dedicated fields" that are prepared for a specific sport; and "non-dedicated fields" that are maintained for different sports depending upon the season of use.

Pavelka explained that dedicated and non-dedicated fields are provided at parks throughout the city, and can be reserved by any interested program that meets the minimum qualifications for liability and participation as required by the city. Dedicated fields are provided at Guilliams, Big Willow, Lone Lake and Civic Center Parks, and non-dedicated fields are provided at Oberlin and Gro Tonka Parks.

Pavelka further explained that the city also provides designated complexes/fields to four youth associations that serve residents of the city. These include 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.

Pavelka reviewed action taken to date by the park board and council that began with the park board conducting a public meeting followed by a regular meeting on October 7, 2009, and concluded with final recommendations for a fee schedule being developed at the October 7, 2009 meeting. At that time, staff had indicated that fees would increase from approximately \$12,400 in 2009 to an estimated \$24,600 in 2010 if adopted as proposed. Pavelka reported that stipulated in the approval, the board recommended that the fees remain in place with no further increases through the 2011 season, and that 67 percent of the amount collected be assigned to general operations, and 25 percent to a capital fund for future upgrades to fields. Pavelka indicated that the city council reviewed and approved the park board's recommendation, without changes, at their meeting on December 7, 2009.

For the 2010 season, Pavelka reported that revenues collected in 2010 were \$23,769, within \$850 of the estimate. He noted that the approved fees were accepted well by the user groups and added that in comparison to the 2010 estimated hours of use, some fields had less scheduled activity while some had more, but eventually totals were about 250 hours less than anticipated. The majority of the reduced hours were attributed to one past user group who declined to reserve field space in 2010. Pavelka summarized that the benefits of the new fee schedule included more efficient and responsible use of city fields by athletic organizations; as well as a more fair distribution of field space. Perry Vetter, Assistant Public Works Director, added that the new system resulted in far fewer occasions where field crews would prepare a field for use and have no one show up.

Pavelka closed by indicating that the allocation of revenues based on the approved plan will result in \$15,854 (67%) being designated for operational expense and \$7,915 (33%) designated for capital expense. Pavelka noted that he was recently informed that these fees may be subject to sales tax and, if so, these amounts would be reduced by approximately \$1,600.

Robben questioned if the park board should consider adjusting the fees to compensate for sales tax. Pavelka noted that with the two year recommendation in place, any adjustment should occur for the 2012 season.

Goodyear expressed appreciation for the work done in accurately estimating revenues for the season.

Gallagher asked if the change did indeed result in reduced maintenance costs. Vetter confirmed that it had, primarily due to reduced field prep time.

Hearing no other comments, Robben thanked Pavelka for the report.

B. Update on recommended changes to park regulations and off-leash study

Vetter provided the introduction noting that during the November 3, 2010 city council and park board joint meeting, recommended changes to the Park Ordinance 1135 (park regulations) were reviewed. He noted that these changes were approved by the park board in the fall of 2008 after receiving input from residents and staff during spring and summer meetings.

Vetter noted that all of the general regulation changes remain intact. However, based on the joint meeting discussion on the voice and sight command requirements, he indicated that staff has revised the regulations without a permit system and kept the remaining requirements in order to clarify and define the privilege. Vetter reported that since the park board's recommendations last year, reports of negative encounters between voice and sight command users and non-dog users have dwindled. Staff can only attribute this to the discussions that took place with park users and their willingness to self police and educate other users about the privilege. If approved, the changes would go into effect after an intensive educational effort, utilizing various formats including the city website, Minnetonka Memo and announcements at specific park locations.

Vetter reported that staff has reviewed potential locations for multiple off-leash areas and toured potential sites with Mayor Schneider. He noted that while the potential for locations may seem abundant due to the number of parks and the corresponding acreage, each location has unique characteristics that either eliminates or allows for further discussion. Vetter reviewed five remaining locations for further discussion that included Big Willow Park, Lake Minnetoga, Tower Hill Park, Crane Lake Park and the Kelly Park Gardens. Vetter provided the following comments regarding each location;

Big Willow Park

- Big Willow is currently targeted to remain a voice and sight command area
- Potential off-leash area located in SW portion of the park
- Unsure of exact size of the area
- Open & wooded site
- No street access, only by trail off of Plymouth Road

Lake Minnetoga

- 48 acre site
- Not considered part of the city's park system
- Combination of high and low lands (wet/dry)
- Provides access to lake Minnetoga

Tower Hill Park

- Park is centrally located within the city
- 5 Million gallon water reservoir buried underneath which would require further study

Crane Lake Park

- Smallest area under consideration
- Existing shared parking could require a use agreement

Kelly Gardens

- Current location of the community garden plots managed by the city
- Displacement would require relocation of the gardens
- Connection to Purgatory Park
- Parking infrastructure in place

Vetter added that a sixth location at Lone Lake Park had previously been included but was left off of the current list due to the park boards previous action taken to reject a proposal in a different location within Lone Lake Park due to its proximity to Bryant Lake Park operated by Three Rivers Park District.

Vetter closed by indicating that there were two discussion points at hand that included feedback on changes staff was proposing to the park regulations; and which, if any, of the proposed off-leash areas the park board would like staff to explore a more detailed master plan for.

Robben asked if there is a connection between the park regulations and the off-leash park locations. Vetter responded that there was not, adding that with no administrative process being recommended by staff (fees or documents); language included in the ordinance could stand on its own.

Robben opened the floor to park board member questions and comments.

Gallagher asked Vetter which of the potential off-leash locations has the least amount of traffic concerns, citing the high volume of Plymouth Road and Cedar Lake Road as examples for Big Willow Park. Vetter responded that staff was not at the point in exploring the options to address that question, adding that the next step of a master plan would take traffic into account.

Robben suggested that the park board first review the ordinance changes and make recommendations; then proceed to the issue of potential sites for an off-leash area.

Gallagher voiced concern that he could not consider the ordinances without knowing where a dog park would be located. Vetter responded that the addition of an off-leash area should be considered as another amenity that would be available for residents to use who are not comfortable with their dog being off-leash in a voice and site command area. Johnson added that the language currently included in the ordinance language is generic and included only for the purposes of any future off-leash area that might be added. He stated that as written, an off-leash area does not have to be provided. Gallagher expressed comfort in moving in the direction Robben recommended.

Raarup noted that by removing the permit process, it appears that some of the "teeth" has been taken out of the ordinance. Vetter replied that although there is no actual permit being recommended, those in violation are still bound by the ordinance. Raarup indicated that she could still support the ordinance but in speaking with her neighbors who use Victoria-Evergreen Park, a visible permit would be preferred. GERALYN BARONE, Assistant City Manager, added that the permit process was removed due to the success of dog owners following the ordinance that has been achieved; as well as the city's recent move to try and be less bureaucratic by reducing paperwork and fees.

Puspoki asked if staff was comfortable relying on education to control enforcement. Vetter responded that he was, adding that he has consulted with the police department and they have indicated that they are comfortable as well.

Goodyear indicated that he was comfortable with most of what was being proposed by staff. He supported the elimination of the fee and agrees that the less bureaucratic the process can be the better. Goodyear requested that the police department use enforcement for serious violations, but stressed concern for the use of enforcement over education for the minor violations. Lastly, Goodyear noted conflicting language in Definition #7 of the proposed ordinance relating to "Voice and Sight Command". He noted that at the beginning of the definition, the wording "first time" was used for a requirement for an owner dog returning upon being called; however later in the definition, the words "quickly and accurately" were used. Goodyear commented that very few dogs will return the first time called and was concerned that police could be too stringent with if "first time" was used as a requirement.

Acomb commented that she liked "first time" as the requirement, noting that "quickly" was too subjective. Robben and Pospoki agreed. Goodyear indicated that he could argue either way, but was concerned that the speed of response not be abused in enforcement.

Robben opened the floor to public comments.

Ed Freeman, 2700 Crestwood Circle, noted that Lone Lake Park was initially not included as voice and sight command area due to the prospect of having an off-leash area included in the park. He asked that Lone Lake now be considered as an

additional location now that the off-leash area will not be developed in Lone Lake due to the park board's action. Freeman agreed that dog owners have taken the responsibility of following the rules seriously and will continue to self-police each other.

Vetter responded that the proposed location for an off-leash area was part of the reason for not including Lone Lake as a voice and sight command area; however staff's recommendation intentionally left Lone Lake Park and Civic Center Park without voice and sight command areas so that non dog owners had areas to use without the concern of off-leash dogs being in the area.

John Brooks, 5704 Highpark Drive, indicated that he agreed with Goodyear's comments about the response time requirements included in the ordinance language and supported wording that would not be too strict. He added that he was not sure what the requirement should be but suggested possibly a time limit. Responding to Gallagher's earlier comment about the need for an off-leash dog park, Brooks indicated that the need for some sort of an off-leash area exists for owners with dogs that are unable to be trained to use voice and sight command areas.

Hearing no further comments related to the ordinance language, Robben entertained the possibility for a motion on the item.

Goodyear moved that the ordinance amendments proposed by staff be approved as submitted with one change that included the use of "quickly and accurately" for dog response time and the elimination of "first time" in the language. The motion was not seconded.

Gallagher asked resident Freeman if he could comment on the number of dogs that could respond the first time they were called. Freeman responded that very few dogs would respond on the first call.

Robben suggested having the requirement read "when you command the dog to come it does so".

Agreeing with Robben's suggestion, Goodyear moved and Gallagher seconded a motion that the park ordinance amendments proposed by staff be approved as submitted with one change that included the requirement for a dog to return to its owner to read "when you command the dog to come it does so". All voted "Yes". Motion carried.

Robben asked Vetter if this action will now allow for the park ordinance changes to be forwarded to the city council for consideration. Vetter said yes and that it would be scheduled sometime in January. Robben thanked board members and residents in attendance for their patience and understanding.

Robben directed the board to move to the discussion of potential locations for an off-leash dog park so that staff could follow up with a more detailed master plan of possible locations. He asked for park board member questions and comments on the areas detailed earlier by Vetter.

Goodyear indicated that based on last year's discussion, his criteria for a location included impact on the neighborhood, infrastructure requirements, environmental concerns, and the physical location (noting the proximity of Lone Lake Park to Three Rivers Park District's Bryant Lake Park).

Gallagher indicated that parking and traffic were his primary concerns, as well as environmental impact.

Puspoki asked what the environmental impact would be on the second Lone Lake location that was identified. Vetter responded that that level of detail is currently unknown but could be answered as part of a master plan review. Puspoki questioned how many parks staff was proposing be built. Vetter indicated that the number of facilities needed depend on the size and location of the sights selected to explore.

Acomb indicated that she felt that a dog park of some size was needed to provide for dogs that cannot be off-leash in the voice command areas for various reasons. Vetter agreed noting that staff is proposing the addition of an off-leash area because of demand, not because it would just be a nice amenity to have. Acomb asked what the requirement for parking would most likely be. Vetter indicated that the previous Lone Lake Plan had included 15 – 18 parking spots.

Raarup asked if there would be use restrictions developed if a park is to be constructed. Vetter indicated that there would be specific rules for the off-leash park, as well as the enforcement of general park rules such as hours of use.

Goodyear analyzed the Kelly (garden) Park location and suggested that there would most likely be neighborhood related concerns, but added that the parking infrastructure in place would be beneficial. Jo Colleran, Natural Resources Division Manager, noted that most of Kelly Park and the Minnetoga area are in wetlands and cautioned that dog feces and urination can be harmful to these environments. She indicated that the Big Willow site appears to be the best location as far as impact on the natural environmental is concerned.

Goodyear suggested that the board eliminate two locations from consideration, Tower Hill Park and Lake Minnetoga. He indicated that he felt the remaining three locations had minimal potential.

Robben agreed with Goodyear's assessment, adding that he was still not convinced that a need for a dog park existed considering that neighboring communities and agencies such as Three Rivers Park District provide parks that are available for Minnetonka resident use.

Pospoki noted that he likes the new Lone Lake option, but noted that he was not on the board for the previous discussion that eliminated the previous Lone Lake option. Robben noted that a primary reason for eliminating the previous Lone Lake option was the park's proximity to Bryant Lake Park which already provides an off-leash area.

Robben asked if any board member was prepared to entertain a motion.

Pospoki moved and Acomb seconded a motion to direct staff to proceed with the development of master plans for consideration of Big Willow, Crane Lake, Kelly and Lone Lake Parks as potential off-leash dog park locations. Robben opened the floor to discussion. Goodyear suggested a friendly amendment to remove Lone Lake Park from consideration due to proximity issues with Bryant Lake Regional Park. Pospoki and Acomb accepted the amendment and Pospoki revised his motion to read direct staff to proceed with the development of master plans for consideration of Big Willow, Crane Lake, and Kelly Parks as potential off-leash dog park locations. Acomb seconded the motion. Acomb, Goodyear, Puspoki, Raarup and Robben voted "Yes". Gallagher voted "No". Motion carried.

C. Development of the Park Board's 2011 Strategic Plan

Johnson provided the background to this item, noting that the park board annually considers their strategic plan in December to set goals and objectives for the following year. Johnson reviewed changes as recommended by staff. Changes recommended were based on 2010 accomplishments, date changes and a request by Council Member Amber Greves to review options currently in place for the provision of adaptive recreation services.

It was requested by the board to add an objective to review the park boards approach to conducting business as recommended by board member Lambert at the joint meeting of the park board and council.

Hearing no further requests for changes, Johnson informed the board that he would make the changes reviewed and bring back the strategic plan in January for final approval.

5. Park Board Member Reports

None.

6. Information Items

No additional items were discussed beyond information that was included in the meeting packet.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Johnson noted that the February 2, 2011 meeting will be held at the Glen Lake Golf Course and will include a tour of the cross country ski trail which is jointly operated by the city and Three Rivers Park District. The board requested that a tour of the trail be held at 4:30 p.m., followed by the regular meeting at 6 p.m.

8. Adjournment

Goodyear moved and Acomb seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m. All voted "Yes." Motion carried.