

**CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
DAKOTA COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

JUNE 14, 2005

The June 2005 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, June 14, 2005 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

The following Commissioners were present: Chair Richard Spicer and Commissioners Dave Libra, Larry Craighead, Stan Linnell, and Missie Hickey. Commissioner Paul Portz was excused from the meeting. Commissioner Raymond Morris arrived late. City Staff present were Operations and Projects Coordinator Guy Kullander, Recreation Programmer Teresa Gangelhoff, and Administrative Assistant Patrick C. Hollister. Mr. Hollister took the minutes. Councilmember Ultan Duggan was also present for the discussion of the 50th Anniversary Celebration.

MINUTES

Commissioner Libra moved approval of the May 10, 2005 Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes.

Commissioner Craighead seconded the motion.

AYES: 5

NAYS: 0

**CHAIR SPICER'S REPORT ON COMMITTEE MEETING TO PLAN
2006 PARK CELEBRATION/50TH ANNIVERSARY RECOGNITION**

Chair Spicer provided a report on the planning committee meeting which took place the same evening from 6:00 to 6:30 pm. Chair Spicer said that Councilmember Mary-Jeanne Schneeman and Commissioners Craighead and Libra were also at the meeting. Chair Spicer said that he and Ultan Duggan are co-chairing the committee. Chair Spicer said that the following preliminary decisions had been made at the first committee meeting:

1. The date of the event will be Saturday, June 3, 2006, and it will coincide with Celebrate Mendota Heights Parks.
2. Featured entertainment/activities will include the Teddy Bear Band, the Vulcans, a Petting Zoo, Face Painting, a Putting Contest, a Free Throw Contest, a Bike Rodeo, and Duggan's Dashes.

3. The committee will invite pageant winners such as Princess K and Winter Carnival Royalty, Miss Minnesota, and Mrs. Minnesota to the event.
4. There will be an antique car show and a parade from Mendota Plaza featuring past Mayors and Councilmembers.
5. There will be music on the main stage, shirts, and buttons. NDCTV will film the event.
6. There will be a MHAA in-house tournament. There will be a tennis tournament at either Saint Thomas Academy or Visitation, and a 5K run.
7. There will be fireworks in June at Mendakota Park.
8. The Committee will meet again at 6pm on July 12, 2005 immediately before the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Commissioner Craighead invited anyone watching the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on television to call City Staff if they have any ideas for the celebration or want to work with the planning committee.

[Commissioner Morris arrived at this point.]

Chair Spicer pointed out that Mendota Heights is made up of many different neighborhoods and invited anyone who considers themselves to be a “neighborhood leader” to come to the next meeting of the celebration planning committee at 6:00 pm July 12th at City Hall.

Commissioner Libra added that the Committee is looking for people to volunteer or make financial contributions to the event.

Councilmember Duggan thanked Chair Spicer for chairing the meeting. Councilmember Duggan said that the first committee meeting was an excellent meeting. Councilmember Duggan explained that the possibility of combining the event with the Fourth of July was seriously considered, but that for various reasons that idea would not work. Councilmember Duggan said that too many vendors and other entities are already committed for next year’s Fourth of July, and too many residents, including Councilmembers, will be gone during that time. Councilmember Duggan said that he would like to see all Mendota Heights businesses participate in some fashion and that he would like to invite politicians such as State Senators and Representatives from the area as well as the Governor to attend the event and be part of the parade. Councilmember Duggan also thanked Mr. Kullander and Ms. Gangelhoff for their help. Councilmember Duggan then excused himself from the meeting, saying that he had to go learn a new dance.

RECREATION PROGRAMMER'S REPORT

Ms. Gangelhoff provided an overview of this summer's recreation activities and the June 4, 2005 Celebrate Mendota Heights Parks event. Ms. Gangelhoff said that despite the rain, she estimated the attendance to be about 500 people. Ms. Gangelhoff thanked the Commissioners and City Staff who volunteered for the event.

Chair Spicer overviewed the summer and fall recreation events planned, including the youth trips, valley fair, golf, fishing derby, safety camp, and Splatter Sisters.

Chair Spicer and Commissioner Craighead volunteered for the Fishing Derby this year.

Ms. Gangelhoff reminded the Commissioners that the Paul Heffron Band would be playing again on August 24.

The Commission thanked Ms. Gangelhoff for a successful 2005 Parks Celebration and for all of the activities that she has planned for 2005. The Commission gave Ms. Gangelhoff a round of applause.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS IN CITY PARKS – FUNDED BY CDA

Mr. Kullander explained that the CDA provides CDBG funding to cities and that the CDA had recently suggested that Mendota Heights should use their share of the money or risk having it allocated to another City. Mr. Kullander said that he was therefore proposing that some of the money be used to remove access barriers for handicapped individuals in the City's parks. Mr. Kullander said that he had prepared a list of eligible projects for Council review and that the City Council now wanted the input of the Parks Commission. Mr. Kullander said that his proposed improvements included making the picnic shelters accessible by having a hard surface to walk on. Mr. Kullander said that the money could also be used for the removal of barriers in public buildings. Mr. Kullander said that the Parks Commission had previously considered putting in concrete bleacher pads but had removed that item from the CIP to make room for other projects. Mr. Kullander said that he is now proposing to put the bleacher pads back in the CIP. Mr. Kullander estimated the cost at \$15,000. Mr. Kullander said that one improvement would be the replacement of the wooden footbridge with a culvert and a paved pathway in Friendly Hills Park. Mr. Kullander said that concrete pads are not currently in the five-year plan.

Chair Spicer asked about the status of the anticipated Special Parks Fund contribution from the OPUS redevelopment of the EcoLab site.

Mr. Hollister explained that it was still anticipated that if the Council approved the development, OPUS would be contributing slightly over \$300,000 to the Special Parks Fund. Mr. Hollister added that there is currently a discussion about the possibility of using some of that contribution for stormwater improvements along Wachtler Avenue in conjunction with the proposed trail. Mr. Hollister said that the Council and OPUS appear

to have different opinions about how much of the cost of the stormwater improvements could be legitimately paid for out of the Parks Contribution. Mr. Hollister said that at the last Council meeting the Council appeared willing to pay for only that portion of the stormwater improvements that truly related to construction of the trail, not the whole stormwater project.

Chair Spicer asked Mr. Hollister to record in the minutes that the Parks Commission is against the use of the Special Parks Fund for non-parks purposes and that the Commission hoped that the entirety of the Parks Contribution from OPUS would be preserved without being diverted to stormwater improvements.

Commissioner Linnell moved to recommend that the Council approve Mr. Kullander's proposed usage of the CDA money for handicapped accessibility purposes.

Commissioner Morris seconded the motion.

Commissioner Linnell suggested heavy duty drinking fountains at Kensington and Mendakota.

Commissioner Morris said that the trails have lots of barriers for handicapped individuals in the form of cracks. Commissioner Morris asked if some of the CDA money could be used for filling in the cracks.

Mr. Kullander said that the cracks are a maintenance issue and that filling them in would not be an eligible use of the CDA money. Mr. Kullander added that the heavy duty drinking fountains may be a permitted use of the CDA money, and could be done at Mendakota.

Chair Spicer asked that Commissioner Linnell's idea be considered a friendly amendment to the motion.

Commissioner Linnell said that in order for the bleachers to meet code, the hard surfaces next to the bleachers would have to allow someone in a wheelchair to sit next to someone else, and provide a level area.

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0

MENDAKOTA PARK – NEW PLAY AREA STRUCTURE

Mr. Kullander displayed a 3-dimensional model of the “Space Net”, his proposed new play structure for Mendakota Park. Mr. Kullander said that the equipment is manufactured in Germany and involves steel cables. Mr. Kullander said that he thought that it would be a good idea to install this equipment in time for the 50th Anniversary. Responding to a question as to when trails would be constructed, Mr. Kullander said that OPUS intends to finish their proposed development in 2007 and that that would be a good time to pave the trail. Mr. Kullander added that the amenities at Town Center should be installed by 2007, and the Commission’s requested trail north on Dodd Road would be built at the same time.

Chair Spicer asked Mr. Kullander how much would be left in the Special Parks Fund at the end of 2005.

Mr. Kullander said that about \$200,000 would be left at the end of 2005, not including the dedication from OPUS. Mr. Kullander said that if the Space Net is approved another \$20,000 would have to be deducted.

Chair Spicer asked what Mr. Kullander would propose to take out to make room for the Space Net.

Mr. Kullander said that the Victoria Highlands and Ivy Falls play equipment could be postponed. Mr. Kullander said that the City is currently paying the vendor an additional \$500 - \$1000 to store old components removed from Marie Park which can be reconditioned and re-installed in another park.

Chair Spicer remarked that the Special Parks Fund could save about \$70,000 by postponing the Victoria Highlands and Ivy Falls projects. Chair Spicer asked if any similar Space Nets existed in the Twin Cities.

Mr. Kullander said that Maple Grove has had one for about twenty years.

Chair Spicer asked what the surface would be underneath the equipment.

Mr. Kullander said that the surface would be shredded wood and that this met the fall safety issues and would be totally accessible to the handicapped.

Chair Spicer asked if this equipment would affect the City’s insurance.

Mr. Kullander said that it would not.

Commissioner Morris moved to recommend that the Council approve the purchase and installation of the Space Net at Mendakota Park in time for the 2006 Celebration.

Commission Craighead seconded the motion

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0

Commissioner Craighead moved to postpone the Victoria Highlands and Ivy Falls projects from 2006 to 2007.

Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion.

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0

Commissioner Libra moved to move the Valley View Heights project from 2007 to 2006. Commissioner Linnell seconded the motion

AYES: 6
NAYS: 0

Mr. Kullander said that the CIP still shows the replacement of hockey lights in 2006.

Chair Spicer suggested moving the hockey lights to 2007 and waiting to see what happens with OPUS.

Commissioner Libra suggested reviving the issue of selling the four vacant lots in Friendly Hills for housing.

Chair Spicer suggested not doing anything on either the Friendly Hills vacant lot issue or the hockey lights issue until the Parks Commission knows the outcome of the proposed OPUS development.

PARK DEDICATION FEE SURVEY

Mr. Kullander said that he had provided this as an information item only. Mr. Kullander said that the survey results show that Mendota Heights' park dedication is very much in line with what other cities are charging.

Chair Spicer pointed out that Bloomington is asking for \$4,500 per lot and Lakeville is asking for \$2,250 per lot.

Commissioner Libra asked about contributions from commercial/industrial land

Mr. Kullander said that those contributions are based upon 10% of the land value.

Commissioner Libra asked about the status of the Garron/Acacia properties.

Mr. Kullander said that that matter was still in court, but that it appeared that any future development proposals for that land would require an Environmental Impact Statement.

Commissioner Morris said that the Trust for Public Land was talking with the landowners about purchasing the property and that in his experience the Trust serves as a conduit to a final landowner. Commissioner Morris said that state and federal agencies may be interested in the land.

Commissioner Libra asked if a federal agency may wish to place a structure on the land.

Commissioner Morris said that a federal agency may be interested in preserving the historic landscape.

UPDATES

Staff provided the following updates:

- Police Report

NURT TRAIL

Mr. Kullander said that he had placed an additional item at the Commission's dais this evening, the proposed alternate alignment of the NURT trail. Mr. Kullander said that the original plan shows the trail along the north end of the pond along Market Street, but that Mr. Fefercorn had now expressed a preference for the trail to be along the south side of the pond. Mr. Kullander explained that Mr. Fefercorn did not like the look of the safety rail that would be required for the original alignment. Mr. Kullander said that he was looking for an opinion from the Parks and Recreation Commission about which alignment they would prefer.

Chair Spicer asked if MnDOT would even approve a re-alignment.

Mr. Kullander said that City engineering staff was currently scheduling a meeting between MnDOT, the County, and the City on that very question.

Commissioner Libra said that he thought the south alignment was as good as the north alignment.

Commissioner Morris said that he would prefer to go with the original design, and let the County install the railings, rather than the new design, which requires the City to build the railings if the original trail were to be built by the City.

Commissioner Craighead said that he sees the northern alignment as primarily serving walkers and the southern alignment as primarily serving cyclists.

Chair Spicer said that he thought that it was better to bring people toward Town Center, not away from Town Center.

Commissioner Hickey asked if the northern alignment required a fence as the only option to ensure safety.

Mr. Kullander said that that was the case.

Commissioner Morris moved to restate the Parks and Recreation Commission's preference for the original trail alignment on the north side of the pond as proposed by Dakota County instead of re-aligning the trail to the south side of the pond for the following reasons.

1. The north alignment is better for Town Center.
2. The north alignment is better for the existing trail.
3. The north alignment will have more users.
4. The north alignment will result in more customers for Town Center and more recreation opportunities.

Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion.

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0

OTHER COMMENTS

(None.)

ADJOURN

Commissioner Libra moved to adjourn.

Commissioner Craighead seconded the motion.

AYES: 6

NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.