

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

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

APRIL 12, 2005

The April 2005 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, April 12, 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, Raymond Morris, and Paul Portz. Commissioners Missie Hickey and Stan Linnell were excused from the meeting. City Staff present were Parks Project Manager Guy Kullander, Recreation Programmer Teresa Gangelhoff, and Administrative Assistant Patrick C. Hollister. Mr. Hollister took the minutes.

RECREATION PROGRAMMER'S REPORT

Chair Spicer welcomed Ms. Gangelhoff back to the Parks Commission meetings after her recovery from surgery.

Ms. Gangelhoff provided an overview of this spring's recreation activities.

Commissioner Portz offered to volunteer for the June 4, 2005 Celebrate Mendota Heights Parks event.

Ms. Gangelhoff said that she was trying to put together one more Men's Over 30 softball team and was looking for softball players for the team.

Commissioner Craighead asked if Par 3 would be open for golf this summer regardless of the outcome of the current litigation.

Chair Spicer said that Par 3 would be open this summer for golf regardless of what happens at the State Supreme Court.

OPUS REDEVELOPMENT OF ECO-LAB SITE

Chair Spicer acknowledged Michael Ramme of OPUS Corporation in the audience.

Mr. Ramme explained that OPUS was now showing the trail along Wachtler Avenue and Highway 13 in accordance with the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. Ramme also said that it appeared to be the preference of both the developer and the City thus far to provide the required Park Contribution in the form of cash rather than land.

Mr. Kullander said that the Engineering Department was placing an item on next Tuesday's Council agenda for a feasibility study for a trail connection further west from the development to complete the connection to the Great Rivers Trail.

Chair Spicer asked about the timing of the development.

Mr. Ramme said that assuming that the approval process goes smoothly, OPUS planned to close on the property in September of 2005, begin demolition and construction, and have units available for sale by June of 2006.

Chair Spicer thanked Mr. Ramme for attending the meeting.

MINUTES

Commissioner Morris moved approval of the March 8, 2005 Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes.

Commissioner Libra seconded the motion.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0

SOMMERSET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Kullander informed the Commission that the Council agreed to contribute \$10,000 from the Special Parks Fund for the playground improvements at Somerset Elementary School, contingent upon the necessary planning approvals. Mr. Kullander said that the Planning Commission would discuss Somerset's applications for a Wetlands Permit and a Conditional Use Permit for fill at their April 26 meeting.

2006 IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE SPECIAL PARK FUND

Mr. Kullander presented his list of five projects for 2006 to be funded out of the Special Parks Fund:

1. Victoria Park Playground Equipment and Accessibility Upgrades
2. Ivy Hills Playground Equipment and Accessibility Upgrades
3. Friendly Hills Park – Replace Wooden Footbridge with Asphalt Trail
4. Softball Backstops in Three Parks
5. Friendly Hills Hockey Lights

Chair Spicer said that he was not willing to approve any expenditure that would place the Special Park Fund balance below \$200,000.

Mr. Kullander said that the expenditures would not come at this time, but would occur next year. Mr. Kullander said that there may be neighborhood opposition to the Friendly Hills Hockey Lights, and so he certainly would want to give that neighborhood an opportunity for input.

Commissioner Portz commented that Staff should alert the Parks Commission if during the review of the OPUS redevelopment it appeared that the anticipated \$300,000 Park Contribution might be in jeopardy.

Commissioner Libra asked what the Eco-Lab trail might cost.

Mr. Kullander said that it might cost \$50,000-\$70,000.

The Commission instructed Mr. Kullander to go forward with planning for the five projects for 2006.

FUTURE TRAIL PROJECTS

Mr. Kullander presented information regarding two future trail projects:

1. Dodd Road from Town Center to Marie Avenue, and
2. Wachtler Avenue and Sibley Memorial Highway to the Valley Park Trail adjacent to the EcoLab redevelopment site.

Mr. Kullander recommended that the Commission request that the Council direct the Engineering Department to prepare a concept plan and/or engineering feasibility study for each of these trail segments and to authorize use of the Special Park Fund for City Staff time and expenses related to preparing the necessary documents for these trail/park improvement projects.

Chair Spicer remarked that he did not feel that Mr. Kullander's time spent on these projects should be paid for out of the Special Parks Fund. Chair Spicer said that Mr. Kullander's salary is an annual budgeted expense which will be paid regardless of whether or not he works on these projects, and therefore his time should be paid for out of the City budget.

Commissioner Portz said that in accounting school, students are taught to differentiate between "direct costs" and "allocated costs", and that both should be included in a budget to present an accurate picture of what is happening. Commissioner Portz said that therefore paying for Mr. Kullander's time spent on parks projects out of the Special Parks Fund was a legitimate practice.

Commissioner Morris moved to authorize Mr. Kullander to begin work on the trail projects with a maximum total withdrawal from the Special Parks Fund for Staff time of \$9,000 for each project. Commissioner Morris further moved that any expenditure from

the Special Parks Fund for Staff time beyond \$18,000 would have to be reviewed by the Parks Commission.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Chair Spicer suggested separating Commissioner Morris' motion into two separate motions.

Commissioner Craighead moved to recommend that the Council authorize the Engineering Department to begin work on the two trail feasibility studies.

Commissioner Libra seconded the motion.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0

Commissioner Morris moved to place a limit on the amount of the Special Parks Fund that could go to for Staff compensation to \$9,000 total per project, and that any expenditure beyond \$9,000 would have to be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Libra seconded the motion.

AYES: 3
NAYS: 2 (Spicer, Craighead)

Chair Spicer explained his negative vote by saying that salaries should not be paid for out of the Special Park Fund, but rather out of the City's own budget.

Commissioner Craighead said that he agreed with Chair Spicer and that the Special Parks Fund should only be used for capital items such as equipment and contractors.

Commissioner Morris said that he agreed with Chair Spicer and Commissioner Craighead in principle, but given the reality of how the City budgets these projects it was better to go forward with the projects than not go forward. Commissioner Morris said that the Parks Commission should discuss the budgeting process with the Council.

Mr. Kullander explained that he is paid for out of the Engineering Enterprise Fund, which is its own entity for budget purposes.

VERBAL UPDATES

Staff provided the following updates:

- Police Report

OTHER COMMENTS

Chair Spicer congratulated Council member Krebsbach's daughter Katie on her participation in the Boston Marathon.

Mr. Hollister said that at this morning's Council Goal Setting Workshop the Council had discussed the 50th anniversary of the City of Mendota Heights next year. Mr. Hollister said that the Council had decided that the observance of this anniversary should occur at the 2006 Celebrate Mendota Heights Parks event and that the Parks Commission should plan the activities over the next year.

Chair Spicer asked Staff to place this item on the Commission's agenda as soon as the 2005 Parks Celebration is over in June.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Portz moved to adjourn.
Commissioner Libra seconded the motion.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.