

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

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES**

**MAY 9, 2006**

The May 2006 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 9, 2006 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 Paul Portz, Dave Libra, Tom Kraus, Raymond Morris and Larry Craighead. Commissioner Missie Hickey was excused from the meeting. 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. Also in the audience was former Commissioner Stan Linnell.

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Morris moved approval of the April 11, 2006 Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes as revised.

Commissioner Kraus seconded the motion.

**AYES:       6**  
**NAYS:       0**

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

Chair Spicer provided an update on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

Chair Spicer said that on Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Village of Mendota Heights there would be an ice cream social, a wine and cheese tasting, and music. Chair Spicer said that Saturday morning beginning at 8:30 there would be a 5k event and a run sponsored by Gateway Bank. Chair Spicer continued that there would also be a pet show, a sudoku contest, and a 50-year history event. Chair Spicer added that there will be a MHAA baseball tournament and a putting contest. Chair Spicer said that there would be many games including a sack race, a bean bag toss, a balloon relay race, and a water balloon toss. Chair Spicer said that there would also be historical tours of the City's three cemeteries.

Chair Spicer said that there would be a classic car show and a parade at 4:00 pm. Chair Spicer said that "Golden Residents" who have lived in Mendota Heights for 50 consecutive years or more will receive plaques. Chair Spicer said that the evening will

be topped off at Mendota Plaza with food, beer stands, and fireworks. Chair Spicer said that the City is always looking for volunteers for the events.

Mr. Kullander remarked that Commissioner Libra is still looking for more entrants for the car show.

Chair Spicer said that there will be drawings for prizes, including airline tickets from Sun Country.

Commissioner Libra said that there will be dash plaques for cars and prizes for selected cars. Commissioner Libra said that he still needs additional cars from the 1950s, although more recent cars would also be welcome, and that there would also be a street dance featuring the Rockin' Hollywoods. Commissioner Libra said that to enter a car into the car show one could call either City Hall at 651-452-1850 or Commissioner Libra at 651-451-9700. Commissioner Libra added that there is a registration form available on the City's website.

Chair Spicer added that complete information about the events is on the City's website, mendota-heights.com.

## **RECREATION PROGRAMMER'S REPORT**

Chair Spicer noted that Ms. Gangelhoff's report listed upcoming recreational activities, including Safety Camp, the Clifford Timm Memorial Fishing Derby, a Tennis Block Party, Tennis Lessons, Softball teams, Valley Fair, a Light Rail Ride, a Twins Game, Wild Mountain, Cascade Bay and the Arboretum. Chair Spicer also noted that summer Performances in the Park would begin on Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Chair Spicer commended Ms. Gangelhoff on the number and variety of programs for this summer.

Ms Gangelhoff said that both Safety Camp and the Fishing Derby are now full.

## **RESIDENT REQUEST FOR A VEGETABLE GARDEN AT IVY PARK**

Mr. Kullander said that Mr. David Byrne requested permission to use a portion of Ivy Hill Park for a vegetable garden on behalf of himself and a neighbor, Ms. Deb McConnell. Mr. Kullander said that Staff thought that it might be a good idea, since the portion of the park in question is an unkempt area.

Commissioner Morris said that he is not against the idea, but that the City should have some guidelines for who uses parkland for this purpose and what the timeline is, in case the City gets other similar requests. Commissioner Morris said that there is an advantage to cleaning up a portion of the terrain. Commissioner Morris said that it might be good for the City to set up an area for a community garden and have a sign-up sheet.

Chair Spicer suggested allowing people to apply for use of the park in this manner and have a sign-up-sheet.

Commissioner Morris suggested making the gardening opportunity available to all through the City newsletter. Commissioner Morris said that the City should charge a nominal fee to make sure that people are serious about it.

Chair Spicer suggested that Staff check with other cities to see what their policies are. Chair Spicer said that Mendota Heights could adopt a similar process to other cities and be in a better position to implement the policy for next year.

Commissioner Kraus said that he himself was interested in this idea. Commissioner Kraus agreed that there should be some sort of process. Commissioner Kraus said that he was concerned about this particular site and whether or not it was appropriate. Commissioner Kraus said that if the site were not suitable for growing, the result could be unsightly. Commissioner Kraus said that there may be other land that would be suitable for a community garden.

Commissioner Morris said he also liked the community garden concept.

Chair Spicer suggested that the PRC find a process from another City and bring it back to the Commission for consideration in June.

Commissioner Libra said that this is a good idea. Commissioner Libra said that the Gibbs farm at the University is a good example of this kind of thing. Commissioner Libra said that there should be a few basic rules.

Commissioner Craighead expressed concern that if this item waited until the June Parks Commission meeting and then went to the Council agenda for approval that this year's growing season would be over.

Chair Spicer suggested placing the item on the Council agenda next week to ask if the Council approved of the concept and then allow the Parks Commission to determine the details.

Commissioner Kraus said that it would be possible to allow the two individuals interested in gardening to do it now for this year only and create the policy later. Commissioner Kraus said that he was in favor of the idea, but that it needed to be organized.

Commissioner Morris said that he thought that a lot of people in Mendota Heights would be interested in this. Commissioner Morris said that the City should make sure to get people who are serious about it and get a contractor to build a frame around the gardening area.

Commissioner Portz said that he liked the idea of an application, but did not like the idea of fees.

Chair Spicer suggested that Staff go forward with the idea to the Council to see if they like the idea.

Mr. Kullander said that he could contact other cities to see what their policies are, and that the League of Minnesota Cities is also a good source of information. Mr. Kullander said that he would go to the Council with his idea first to see if the Council is interested in pursuing the policy. Mr. Kullander said that it would be difficult to allow gardening in all of the parks. Mr. Kullander also said that it was not known how much additional work this would create for the Public Works crew.

Commissioner Kraus agreed that gardening may not make sense in every City park.

Mr. Kullander said that he agreed with Commission Portz that small nominal fees can be more of a hindrance than a benefit, and said that the City could require a \$50 deposit instead.

Commissioner Craighead said that he could agree to allow the two interested residents to pursue the activity in Ivy Park this year, especially since there are not a lot of people walking by this area.

Chair Spicer asked Mr. Kullander to take the concept to Council. Chair Spicer suggested that if the Council agrees, the two residents could be allowed to pursue gardening on a one-year basis.

Commissioner Craighead said that depending on what is being planted, gardening could begin well into June.

Former Commissioner Linnell suggested that if there is sufficient Community interest, perhaps gardening could occur at one to three sites around the City, including near the water tower.

Commissioner Libra thanked Former Commissioner Linnell for his idea and asked him to help out at the car show.

## **USE OF CITY PARK FOR A BAND CONCERT**

Mr. Kullander said that the gentleman who was interested in organizing a concert in a City park, Mr. Matthew Dodge, had turned his attention to Mendota Plaza as a site and was now discussing the idea with the Police Department.

## **DNR INFORMATION ON THE VALUE/IMPORTANCE OF TREES**

Mr. Kullander shared with the Commission some information on the value/importance of trees. Mr. Kullander pointed out that the DNR says that trees add value to a property and help to clean up pollution.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the City had ever considered purchasing trees from the DNR for residents.

Chair Spicer recalled that the City had done that at one time.

Commissioner Krauss said that the DNR sells trees for a nominal expense. Commissioner Krauss said that the DNR sells trees in groups of 100, and that is too many for the average homeowner. Commissioner Krauss asked if the City could buy them and distribute them to residents.

Mr. Kullander said that several years ago Staff talked about doing that, but that the problem is Staff resources to carry out such a program. Mr. Kullander explained that Saint Paul had a program for several years along those lines.

## **WENTWORTH CELL TOWER**

Mr. Hollister explained that at the last Council meeting the Council had voted unanimously to terminate lease negotiations with T-Mobile for space at Wentworth Park. Mr. Hollister said that the associated planning application is still on this month's Planning Commission agenda, but that he anticipated that the Planning Commission would recommend denial of the application and that it would ultimately be denied by Council unless the applicant first withdraws the application.

## **SALE OF PROPERTY TO XCEL**

Mr. Kullander showed a map with a parcel of land that XCEL wishes to purchase from the City. Mr. Kullander pointed out that a City trail goes through the property now and that the trail would remain after the sale with an easement.

Chair Spicer said that the revenue from the land sale should go to the Special Park Fund.

Commissioner Craighead asked why Xcel wanted to buy the property, and if Xcel wished to build a road on the property.

Mr. Kullander said that Xcel merely wished to expand their site.

Commissioner Craighead remarked that right now there is a gate on the trail and lots of rubbish. Commissioner Craighead suggested a trash barrel for trash at the end of the gate.

Chair Spicer said that his three comments would be (1) its fine to sell the land, (2) the City should keep a trail easement, and (3) the proceeds from the sale should go to the Special Parks Fund.

Commissioner Libra said that the sale should have a clause that the City gets the land back if Xcel does not need it anymore.

### **PARKS POLICE REPORT**

There were no comments on this item.

### **OTHER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Portz requested that Amelia Olson of MHAA appear at the June Parks Commission meeting for another update.

Mr. Kullander reminded everyone that the next buckthorn removal session at Pilot Knob would take place at 9:00 on May 27, 2006.

### **ADJOURN**

Commissioner Libra moved to adjourn.

Commissioner Portz seconded the motion.

**AYES: 6**

**NAYS: 0**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.