

Approved

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

PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING

August 11, 2009

The August 2009 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, August 11, 2009, in the City 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 Paul Portz, Commissioners: Maureen Brackey, Michael Toth, Liz O'Brien, Ray Morris and Steve Commers. Commissioner Tom Kraus was excused. Staff present were: Jake Sedlacek, Assistant to the City Administrator, Guy Kullander, Parks Project Manager, and Nancy Bauer, Recording Secretary.

MINUTES

Chair Portz said since the tour in June the two interpretive monument signs have been changed at the Pilot Knob site. The signs were changed because they were not in two languages as proposed.

He also asked Mr. Kullander about the solid green color of the shade shelter at Victoria Highlands Park.

Mr. Kullander responded that the City Council added a shade shelter at Victoria Highlands Park – not the sail type – the color was picked to complement the play equipment.

Commissioner Morris made a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Toth seconded the motion.

AYES 6

NAYS 0

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

Chair Portz said he appreciated getting the Parks and Recreation report in advance. The Parks Celebration was tough because of the rain. The animals were all hunched down and the ducks loved the weather. There is a request about having the Parks Celebration run by a volunteer. It's a big project.

Mr. Sedlacek responded that the Parks Celebration has grown pretty large since the 50th year celebration. The first step would be to have a small group to meet and go over what we offer now. Ms. Gangelhoff does not have enough time to do regular programming, adult athletics, and the Parks Celebration up to what it has been the last couple of years. She is seeking some input about keeping it the size it is with a lot of donations or scale it back to what it was before the 50th year celebration. The last two years a part time staff person has helped with the paperwork and that has been cut from the budget. She is looking for someone to volunteer to help with the paperwork. Maybe a couple of Parks Commissioners could meet before or after the September Parks meeting to discuss the celebration.

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Commissioner Morris said it would be a good idea to meet in September before or after the meeting. Maybe develop an adjunct committee to this body comprised of a few Parks Commissioners, some of the businessmen in Town Center and any interested volunteers. It could be put in the Heights Highlites. There may be people and business people interested in volunteering.

Chair Portz commented that he liked Mr. Sedlacek's idea of meeting in September, Commissioner Morris' idea of forming a committee, and getting as many people involved as possible.

Chair Portz asked if anyone wanted to be on the Committee.

Commissioner Commers said he would be.

Commissioner O'Brien asked when Ms. Gangelhoff started planning the celebration.

Mr. Sedlacek said typically when the skating rinks started winding down in January. Do we want to have a meeting outside of Parks and Recreation or have it on the agenda next month?

Commissioner Morris said it would be worthwhile to have on the agenda.

Mr. Sedlacek said a memo could be provided at the next meeting of the history of the celebration before the 50th and after the 50th. So the Parks Commission could make a policy decision to have a big committee or a small committee.

Chair Portz said that would be a good idea to have it as part of the meeting. It's always been a great family event.

Mr. Sedlacek said the memo will be prepared for the next meeting. If there are any ideas or questions they could be emailed to him or Ms. Gangelhoff to incorporate into the memo.

Commissioner Brackey asked when the next Heights Highlites went out.

Mr. Sedlacek responded in September.

Commissioner Morris said it might be worthwhile to put in a request for volunteers for the committee.

Mr. Sedlacek said he could contact the four or five names on the Love the Parks listserve to look for volunteers.

Chair Portz continued with the Parks and Recreation Report. Simple Steps is the summer walking program. There is the 55⁺ program. There are activities going on throughout Dakota County and in Mendota Heights on August 19th at Mendakota Park there will be free lemonade and a band.

The skateboard camp had 10 youths participate at Rogers Lake Park.

The fishing derby was maxed out at 60 kids.

Commissioner Morris commented that the fish are getting bigger and a 2-1/2 lb fish was caught.

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Chair Portz reported that 170 kids participated in the tennis program and Commissioner Brackey commented that the new tennis coach did a great job.

Chair Portz said the golf programs were all filled up and successful at the Par 3. The kid's tournament is August 22nd. The event is for 6-11 year olds and is $\frac{3}{4}$ full.

Mr. Sedlacek said participants should arrive at 9:30 A.M. to start at 10:00 A.M. The cost is \$13.50 and includes a light lunch. There are prizes and the grand prize is a set of youth golf clubs.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if information is on the website.

Mr. Sedlacek said it was. Registrations are taken at the golf course only - not on the city website.

Commissioner Brackey said if all goes well it would be nice to offer to older kids next year.

Chair Portz reported that there are 2 performances in the parks left on Wednesday, August 19th at Mendakota Park from 6:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. with Leroy's River Ministrels and August 20th at Market Square from 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M with the Andra Suchy Band.

Commissioner Morris said he saw the July performance and it was well attended and everyone had a good time. He would highly recommend that everyone go.

Chair Portz continued that the Minnesota Thunder Soccer came to Mendota Heights to hold a soccer camp.

Summer Playhouse is done for the season.

Safety Camp is being held now starting today. The school flyer is going out in mid September. The Revtrak online registration is working well.

Mr. Sedlacek said he has only received two complaints about the online registration out of hundreds of sign ups.

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the youth trips are done for the summer. Mendota Heights was well represented at every trip. Summer playgrounds was a huge success with 226 kids going through the program. The program started with Commissioners Brackey and O'Brien's ideas.

Commissioner O'Brien said Ms. Gangelhoff's daughter was the biggest hit of the program and she was great. Parents raved about her. We hope to get her back next year.

Commissioner Brackey said her whole group did a great job.

Chair Portz asked what the summer playground programs were Commissioner O'Brien said there were themed events. There was bike safety, nature, they made crafts, went fishing and played park games.

Mr. Sedlacek said the MinnAqua program provided a grant for equipment for the fishing derby and summer playgrounds. MinnAqua was pleased how the money was spent on the equipment.

Approved

RETIREMENT FROM CITY EMPLOYMENT

Chair Portz congratulated Mr. Kullander and said he would miss his expertise.

Mr. Kullander said he was taking advantage of a phased retirement option from PERA and set his date for retirement. He will be working 50% of his hours and training a person to take over his duties until retirement.

Commissioner Morris said he would like to commend Mr. Kullander for all of his hard work for the City of Mendota Heights. He was outstanding the whole time I have been on the Commission. He has been a terrific voice for the City Council and a terrific person to work with. His knowledge of the parks and Mendota Heights parks is going to make it tough shoes to fill. I would like to thank you for all your hard work and assistance to me, the Commission and City Council.

Chair Portz concurs with Commissioner Morris' comments. His expertise came into play the last time the Commission met, there was a list with 50 or 60 projects that the Commission was suppose to pick which ones were the most important. Mr. Kullander picked five or six that were big priorities and the Commission agreed with the priorities. We appreciate your help. We will use your expertise while you are here. Congratulations.

2010 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Kullander reported that two capital improvement projects were recommended in a budget memo to the Finance Director, City Clerk, City Administrator, and Assistant to the City Administrator for inclusion in the 2010 draft budget to be presented to City Council.

The first project is at Mendakota Park originally constructed in 1990. The play equipment has been maintained and still sound but does not have a designated two to five year old age appropriate play structure. One third of the playground area would be replaced with two to five year old age appropriate play equipment. The playground has pea gravel right now for safety and is not handicap accessible. Under ADA guidelines 50% of the play components need to be handicap accessible. Installing a rubberized surfacing with the two to five year old equipment would give the city more flexibility in the future. Installing the new surfacing would make the budget \$52,000.

The second project is to replace the backstop at Friendly Hills Park. The existing backstop would be removed and overhead netting added. There is an area where water puddles by the players benches and that would be fixed to correct the water problem.

The third project the Commission recommended is a planning effort and would not be funded with Special Parks Funds. The funds would come from the Parks Maintenance Budget which comes from property taxes. This could be an easy target to cut from the budget. Council will be holding a budget workshop to discuss their priorities for the 2010 Budget on August 25th.

Chair Portz asked if he wanted to support the planning effort at Valley Park what should he do.

Mr. Kullander responded the City Budget Workshop is on August 25 is an open meeting. An agenda can be requested from the City Administrator.

Approved

Mr. Sedlacek responded that the levy limit is set at less than a 1% increase over the 2009 budget. Getting anything non essential in the budget is very low. The existing plan, part of Barr Engineering's report, was shown to Representative Hansen and he believes that it is a strong candidate for Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council Funding.

Commissioner Morris believes there are funds available from the Federal level pushed down to the State level that are available now, but will not be available in the future. If the invasive plant issues are not addressed they will only get worse. The invasive species don't respect boundaries. There may be funds out there. If Representative Hansen is behind this project that is be even better.

Chair Portz believes this is a high probability project. The Mayor said Representative Hansen is looking at the project.

Mr. Sedlacek said there is a plan that could be submitted for funding and it should be shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission. Representative Hansen says the plan is good enough to submit. There is not a formal grant application for the Lessard Funding yet.

Chair Portz asked about Representative Hansen's involvement in the Lessard Funding Committee.

Mr. Sedlacek he is a member of the committee and a staunch supporter of the environment.

2010 PROJECT – SITE VISITS

Chair Portz commented that he liked site visits. The first one was to Wentworth Park. It's easier to visualize when discussing projects and the parks.

Mr. Kullander recommends visiting Mendakota Park because that will probably be a project approved for the budget. The visit would take about 15 minutes before the meeting. The second site visit would be to Valley Park which would take an hour or two to walk the trail. The trail could be driven with care. The Commissioners could see the expanse, denseness and get a feel of the park.

Chair Portz commented that he rode his bike through the park and ran into some people that said they would help clean up the park.

Mr. Kullander said he knows a lot of people that do walk through the park and often pick up trash as they go.

After a lengthy discussion, it was decided to have an informal tour of Valley Park at 5:30 P.M., prior to the start of the regular Parks and Recreation meeting on September 8th.

Commissioner Toth asked if treating the Ash Borer and budgeting for it has been discussed by Public Works or the City.

Mr. Kullander says he has brought it up at staff meetings in which the budget was discussed. If placed in the budget it would go in the parks or streets budget for the removal of dead trees in parks and boulevards. When Dutch Elm came through there was State and Federal money at that time to replace lost elm trees. The City entering private property is a tricky issue. There is nothing in the budget now.

Approved

Commissioner Morris said he has talked to colleagues and they feel all the trees will be lost. Michigan tried to treat trees and it was a complete failure. It's not cost effective to treat the trees.

Mr. Sedlacek said Representative Hansen provided information regarding the ash borer. The City or County doesn't have a role in treating trees. If anyone is looking for information on the Emerald Ash Borer they should go to State Department of Agricultural website and the web address is www.emeraldashborer.info/files/MultiState_EABpos.pdf or come to City Hall and pick up a flyer. The Department of Agricultural is working on the claims tree companies are making about treating trees for Emerald Ash Borer.

Commissioner Morris said there is misinformation out there and to check with the US Department of Agricultural and State Department of Agricultural. There is not a pleasant outlook. There has been a lot of research on this issue.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Chair Portz reported there was a hand out regarding playground safety on the agenda.

Mr. Kullander responded that he included it on the agenda as information only for the Commissioners to read about playground safety.

PAR 3 UPDATE

Chair Portz reported that he read that Minnesota has the most rounds of golf played in Minnesota per capita.

Commissioner Morris said there are more golfers per capita in Minnesota also.

Mr. Sedlacek reported that Par 3 has had a successful year so far. 2,636 walk-up rounds of golf were played in July of 2009 which is down from last year (2,824 in 2008). April was fantastic this year and last year there was snow. June was an average month and was very hot. A month by month analysis is included with the memo. This provides information such as where we are at today and projections of where we will end up at the end of the year. With a strong spring and slow summer it is anticipated to end the year with \$26,346 as a net profit. The new format does not show year to date net profit.

Commissioner Morris asked if August with \$18,000 was an actual figure.

Mr. Sedlacek said that is a projected figure. Revenue is the top section, costs of sales (the costs directly contributable to the cost of the golf course) is the middle section, and the expenses are the bottom section which are the overhead expenses. Councilmember Vitelli didn't want to see overhead going over 15%. The target for the overhead is 15% or less.

Mr. Sedlacek said more compliments have been received this year then in the previous year and half combined. The course is in terrific shape and there has been great weather for growing turf. No fee changes are being planned for 2010. One of the older mowers was replaced.

Commissioner Morris asked how many mowers needed to be replaced. Mr. Sedlacek responded there is one more mower to be replaced, the greens mower. The rough mower and the fairway mower have been replaced.

Approved

Commissioner Morris asked if the clubhouse roof is still holding up. Mr. Sedlacek said he is hoping it would make it through the winter and next season. When it comes time to replace the roof it would need to be decided if the roof should be insulated, depending on how the clubhouse will be used.

Commissioner Morris suggested developing a website for the Par 3 and posting the report on the website.

Chair Portz suggested that the reserves should be built into the report.

Mr. Sedlacek said the administrative secretarial services which are charged to the Par 3 are ¼ of one full time employee to the golf course and was not in the budget last year but is in the budget now. Ten to twelve hours a week is spent by this employee on the Par 3 creating, maintaining and updating the Par 3 accounting system, recording of cash receipts and deposits, coding all golf registrations, ect.

Chair Portz asked where the 15% for reasonable expectation for overhead expenses came from. Mr. Sedlacek said Councilmember Vitelli recommended the number with his business history and suggested the structure of the report.

Chair Portz asked about the landscaping at the Par 3.

Mr. Sedlacek said he is getting five quotes for the installation of the landscaping. If the quotes are under \$2,500 Council approval is not needed. If over \$2,500 Council would need to approve the expenditure. It is prime fall planting season now.

Chair Portz asked when the Greens Committee is meeting again. A good time to meet would be in October after the City golf outing. The financial report is a good report.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Commers asked about the roof at the shelter in Valley Park and if it needed repairs.

Mr. Kullander responded he believes it was installed in 1970. Mr. Blum from Public Works would let me know when it needs to be replaced so that it could be budgeted. He will have Mr. Blum look at it for damage.

Commissioner Commers said he noticed the wooden fence at Ivy Falls Park around the tennis court had a huge chunk missing and could pose a danger to kids.

Mr. Kullander said he would mention it to Parks Leadsperson, Terry Blum for repair.

Commissioner Morris said he heard at his day job – the H1N1 virus is going to be worse this September and October than it was this spring. There are three good websites to check out pandemicflu.gov, health.state.mn.us, and redcross.org. It will make a lot of people sick – especially young people.

Chair Portz reported he is volunteering at the PGA Tournament and will be driving golfers around within reason.

Commissioner Brackey wanted to thank everyone that did a great job with the recreation programs this summer. She heard many good things and it can only get better. Good job!!

Approved

Commissioner Toth said Rogers Lake was treated June 22nd. The last five days the treated area looked good. The weeds are coming back though – maybe because of the low water.

Mr. Kullander responded that the contractor may put down two applications. They are monitoring the weeds and have not notified the City that it needs a second application.

Mr. Kullander reported that the contractor preparing the overlook site with the seven stones at the Pilot Knob site is starting work tomorrow and the dedication ceremony is September 26th at 10:00. The Pilot Knob Preservation Association is applying for a permit for a ceremony on the Pilot Knob site on October 4th. It will be a pipe ceremony and the highest ranking Chief in Minnesota will be there. The event will be open to the public.

Commissioner Brackey made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Commers seconded the motion.

AYES 6

NAYS 0

The meeting adjourned at 8: 15 P.M.