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

**PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING**

**September 8, 2009**

The September 2009 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, September 8, 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: Tom Kraus, Maureen Brackey, Michael Toth, Liz O'Brien, Ray Morris and Steve Commers. Staff present were: Jake Sedlacek, Assistant to the City Administrator, Guy Kullander, Parks Project Manager, and Nancy Bauer, Recording Secretary.

**VALLEY PARK SITE TOUR**

Commissioners Toth, Kraus, and Commers, Chair Portz, Mr. Kullander, and Mr. Sedlacek went on a tour of Valley Park at 5:30 P.M.

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Morris made a motion to approve the August 11, 2009, minutes.

Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

**AYES 6**

**NAYS 0**

**PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT**

Chair Portz reported that simple steps was continuing into the fall.

Ms. Gangelhoff reported on August 19<sup>th</sup> was the dog days of summer at Mendakota Park.

Chair Portz asked if there are any numbers for people that went through the golf programs.

Mr. Sedlacek reported he did not have the numbers. It was a very successful summer for golf programs. No programs were canceled and three more camps were added this year.

Chair Portz reported that safety camp was a success as always. He also reported that the fall trips are coming up with horseback riding and a trip to Grand Slam.

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Ms. Gangelhoff reported that Grand Slam has batting cages, mini golf, laser tag, arcade games and then roller skating for the kids.

Chair Portz asked where the winter bowling trip was.

Ms. Gangelhoff reported that bowling was at Drkulas in Inver Grove Heights and then a movie at the theater right up the road.

Chair Portz reported that Nickelodeon was also a winter trip. Gymnastic would be available this fall. He also reported that park permits were popular for the soccer fields.

Mr. Sedlacek reported that prices may be too good for park permits. At a City Council meeting a couple of field users complained about the process of getting park permits. A study will be done about field use comparing our policy to other cities, the school district's, user groups will be looked at and charges will be looked at also.

Ms. Gangelhoff said she would like to look at the users that use the fields that are not Mendota Heights' residents. Mr. Blum, Parks Leadperson has a hard time keeping the fields in shape with all the use.

Mr. Sedlacek said there are sufficient fields for Mendota Heights residents but with so many groups scheduling use of the fields then maintenance becomes an issue. It will be a useful study.

Ms. Gangelhoff reported that she had to go through old files and come up with a report for the parks celebration and will have the report later.

## **VALLEY PARK AND MENDAKOTA PARK SITE VISITS**

Chair Portz reported there was a field trip to Valley Park before the meeting. It was a well organized site visit organized by Mr. Kullander.

Mr. Kullander said that thanks to Mr. Wiley Buck the tour was very informative. In 2002, the City commissioned a report from Barr Engineering to prepare a natural resources management plan of City park land. The report identified invasive species in Valley Park. The Parks and Recreation Commission recommended to City Council that a management and restoration plan be prepared for Valley Park. Because of budget constraints funding is not available to commission this work. Wiley Buck, Restoration Ecologist, with Great River Greening was asked to look at the park and locate the areas of invasive species. Mr. Buck's report was handed out tonight with his recommendations and the cost estimates for control of the invasive species. The work/tasks he has indentified as top or high priority is between \$5,500 to \$16,200.

What is proposed to be done is take money left in this year's budget that would have been used for removing buckthorn and ask Council to authorize Great River Greening the funds to remove some of the invasive species in Valley Park.

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Commissioner Morris said he would like to commend Mr. Kullander for doing this. Money is tight, but invasive species does not stop at property lines. It will help keep growth down if something is done now. Again I commend you for getting Great River Greening to come out and look at the park.

Mr. Kullander responded that the City Council has been supportive in getting rid of buckthorn in the past when it was a hot issue. There are limitations on the budget though, and commends the City Council for taking on the issue.

The south part of Valley Park was not looked at – it is a very low land area and is highly infested with canary reed grass. 150 years ago Valley Park and the surrounding area was oak savanna.

Mr. Kullander also reported that the replacement of 2-5 year old play equipment was included in the 2010 preliminary budget along with the back stop at Friendly Hills Park. It is intended to get more imaginative equipment at the park. A play structure, sand tables, a shade canopy and play panels will be put in to replace the existing equipment.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if the existing jungle gym type equipment would be moved.

Mr. Kullander responded that old equipment is coming out.

Chair Portz said it will be a nice addition to the park.

Mr. Kullander said he would get extra catalogues to send to Commissioners for their input of what type of equipment to put in the park.

Commissioner Brackey said she would love to give some input.

## **INFORMATION AND UPDATES**

Mr. Kullander reported that he included a newspaper article that listed tree species that could be used to replace lost ash trees. It was included for information only.

Commissioner Morris said it was good list that included a different number of trees that could be planted to replace ash trees and planting different trees could save ourselves from the next blight.

Commissioner Kraus asked if it was known how many ash trees are in the parks.

Mr. Kullander said he does not know since the City does not have a forester.

Commissioner Kraus said it would be good to invest in the future now by planting trees.

Mr. Kullander said there is \$5,000 to \$7,000 in the parks maintenance budget now to replace trees in parks. The City Council may want to increase that amount in the budget down the road.

Commissioner Kraus said it would be a good idea to plant trees now since we know the emerald ash is coming. So when they start dying off there are mature trees instead of an area that is wiped out.

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Mr. Kullander said there are a lot of a variety of trees in the parks.

Chair Portz asked about the tennis court repairs.

Mr. Kullander reported that all tennis courts were built in 1972 with asphalt. With the frost there is cracking and heaving. To replace an asphalt tennis court is about \$75,000 to \$80,000. Over the years the courts are patched to repair the cracks and heaves and resurfacing is done every four to seven years. This year Council approved a new method to repair the tennis courts. This is done by cleaning off the old surface down to the cracks and putting down a tape application and then putting the surface back and color coating. I saw some courts that had this done 10 years ago and the cracks haven't shown through. This method is a little more expensive. It will cost about \$13,000 and is going to be done at the Friendly Hills Park tennis courts and hopefully extend the life of the tennis courts. The color coat and surface will have to be redone every 4-5 years.

Commissioner Morris asked if other cities in the twin cities have used this new technique.

Mr. Kullander responded yes other cities like it and it has been successful.

Commissioner Morris said the brochure says it's good down to zero degrees and we get colder than that.

Mr. Kullander said he has seen it and the cities that used it on their tennis courts still look good. The only courts in the city that have experienced a lot of heaving is the Ivy Court tennis court and that was repaired in 2003.

Chair Portz says it is worth a try.

Mr. Kullander said that it costs about \$2,500 to \$3,500 to fill and fix cracks at each park and the cracks again appear the next year.

Mr. Kullander said that Great River Greening is organizing an oak tree planting event at the Pilot Knob site on September 12<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 to 12:30. They are looking for volunteers to help plant the trees. Other restoration efforts will be also done.

The Pilot Knob Preservation Association and the Mendota Medwakton Community will be holding a "pipe ceremony" on Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at noon. Dakota spiritual leaders will be attending this event. The ceremony will last about an hour. It is open to the public.

## **LILYDALE REGIONAL PARK**

Mr. Kullander reported that information has been included regarding the Lilydale Regional Park. An article was published in the paper that a funding source has been identified for development of the park.

Mr. Sedlacek said that [www.stpaul.gov](http://www.stpaul.gov), if you search for Lilydale Regional Park, has the adopted plan on its website that gives you a sense of what is being done, including a dog park.

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Chair Portz said that funds are from the Metropolitan Park System and from federal funds or state legacy funding. Has the City applied for any of the grant money?

Mr. Kullander said the money comes from the Metropolitan Greenways Program – The City has also received some money for Pilot Knob in the past. Great River Greening is aware of the money. St. Paul acquired property years ago from Mendota Heights and Lilydale to develop the park.

Mr. Buck looked at grant money for Valley Park. Valley Park effort would be best be identified under trail and recreation improvements and the Lessard funds at present are for acquiring property so Valley Park does not qualify for that type of grant money.

Commissioner Commers asked if part of the park was in Ramsey and Dakota Counties.

Mr. Kullander responded that it was in both counties.

Commissioner Commers asked if the counties were agreeing on the plan.

Mr. Kullander responded they both have been participating in the planning for this regional park.

### **PAR 3 UPDATE**

Mr. Sedlacek reported that up to August 31, there was 10,939 rounds of golf played compared to 2008 with 10,482 rounds last year. There is a clear delineation of the women's league rounds. 10,108 rounds played without leagues and the tournament. There were eight rainouts and 2 cold outs in August. In August 2,641 rounds of golf played. The projected numbers are italicized.

Commissioner Kraus suggested shading the projected numbers.

Mr. Sedlacek said \$1,600 was taken in yesterday (September 7<sup>th</sup> – Labor Day).

There are yearly numbers where we are anticipated to be at. Staff is confident in this report.

The benchmark has been set to carry over \$40,000 over to the next year. The projected number for December 31<sup>st</sup>, is \$41,737 in net profit.

Chair Portz said there is money from last year that will be added to the \$41,000.

Mr. Sedlacek said there is a reserve from last year. The irrigation system was installed in 1981 with no major repairs to it and the well is in the maintenance building. If the well needed to be worked on the roof would need to be opened to make any repairs so that could be expensive.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the capital expenses were in the report.

Mr. Sedlacek said they are included in the report. If the numbers play out the net profit should be \$41,000.

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The administrative secretary's time was discussed and how it was reported on the report. Supplies (offices and operating) is a catch all category.

Commissioner Morris said it's a much nicer report.

Mr. Sedlacek said it was a fabulous year so far and should be a fabulous fall. There was a problem with dollar spot on the greens and it is now being treated. The landscaping should be planted this fall and two quotes have been received and he is waiting for the third quote.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if it would be planted this fall.

Mr. Sedlacek said it would be planted this fall it's a great time to plant. The prices of the plants are lower now than in the spring \$1,600 versus \$2,400.

## **YOUTH TOURNAMENT**

Chair Portz took pictures of the youth tournament and Mr. Sedlacek showed some of them.

Chair Portz said the Greens Committee came up with the idea of a youth tournament and once it got going it was a success. It was a great family event. A seven year old won two trophies for the lowest score and closest to the pin. There was food – hot dogs, ice cream and pop. Trophies were awarded and prizes were handed out.

Mr. Sedlacek said in the 6-9 year old group, Austin W. won closest to pin (5 feet 3 inches), Jack R. won for longest putt (9 feet 4 inches) and Austin W. lowest score at 35.

In the 10-12 year old group, Myra S. won closest to pin (2 feet), Josh E. won for longest putt (9 feet 10 inches) and Myra S. lowest score at 37.

It was a great event and thanks to Clubhouse Manager Tom Perkins for taking the bulls by the horns, Chair Portz for making up the flyer and being there the day event and Mary Perkins, Tom Perkins' wife for making the food.

## **PARKS CELEBRATION**

Mr. Sedlacek said the report for the parks celebration was not ready for this meeting. Information needs to be gathered to figure what needs to be done to pull off a celebration. The report will be done for the October meeting to give the Commission the financials and time needed for planning the parks celebration.

Chair Portz said the celebration is a great event to get involved in.

## **COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the City Council held a budget workshop and could not go over a tax level increase of .83%. The City Council passed a budget with an approximate increase of \$20,000 (it should

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be noted that the increase is actually \$38,200) over the 2009 amount and the City will still be able to offer the same level of services. The property taxes for homeowners should also go down.

Chair Portz said that is quite an accomplishment.

Commissioner Morris asked if there was a reduction of staff.

Mr. Sedlacek said there is no reduction in staff.

Commissioner Kraus said there is not an overwhelming response to the one article in the Heights Hilites asking for email addresses for people that have an interest in the parks. Could an option be provided during the Revtrak registration process for providing an email address.

Mr. Sadlacek said it was a good idea and would look into it.

Commissioner Brackey made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Kraus seconded the motion.

**AYES 7**

**NAYS 0**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.