

Approved

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

PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING

October 13, 2009

The October 2009 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, October 13, 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 Kraus was excused. Staff present were: Jake Sedlacek, Assistant to the City Administrator, Teresa Gangelhoff, Parks and Recreation Programmer, and Nancy Bauer, Recording Secretary.

MINUTES

Commissioner Morris made a motion to approve the September 8, 2009, minutes.

Commissioner Commers seconded the motion.

AYES 6

NAYS 0

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

Ms. Gangelhoff reported she has part of the Parks Celebration report done and will have it completed for the November meeting.

Chair Portz replied that was good there is still time to plan for the spring celebration.

Chair Portz asked about Simple Steps.

Ms. Gangelhoff reported that it is still going for the next month or two and people need to continue logging in their minutes. 10 seniors have signed up.

The school flyer went out to the schools a couple of weeks ago. The information is also in the Heights Highlites.

Commissioner Brackey asked if all the fall trips were full.

Ms. Gangelhoff responded the fall trips were canceled. The City had almost filled their allotted spots but the other cities had low enrollment. The cost of the bus does not make it worthwhile if there are not enough kids.

Commissioner Commers said he signed up his two older daughters for ice skating at City Hall and it was a smooth process.

Approved

Ms. Gangelhoff reported that the first smalls and tall classes have filled – so people can call City Hall and get on a waiting list and if there are enough kids a new class will be added.

Ms. Gangelhoff said the winter trips are set for bowling, lunch and a movie and Nickelodeon Universe at the mall of America.

Chair Portz asked about credit cards.

Mr. Sedlacek responded residents can use their credit cards online to sign up for classes. Credit cards will soon be accepted at City Hall – not sure of a date yet but it is being worked on. Next year Par 3 should be set up to accept credit cards.

Ms. Gangelhoff responded that gymnastics starts in November and the beginner's class is full. Call City Hall to be put on a waiting list.

Applications have been sent to past rink attendants and new applicants are applying for ice rink attendant positions which she will be reviewing soon.

PETITION FOR AN OUTDOOR SKATING RINK

Chair Portz reported that at one time half the past commissioners used to be hockey coaches such as Dick Spicer, Larry Craighead and himself.

Mr. Sedlacek reported that there was a petition from the neighborhood for an ice rink at Ivy Park. There used to be an ice rink at Ivy Park that was well used for awhile and the neighborhood changed over and it wasn't used as much. It was a difficult site to keep good, quality ice. When the ice rink was removed the area was regraded and trees were planted. There is about a \$5,000 cost to establish a temporary ice rink for this year and next year if it is used the issue could be revisited in the spring to add improvements.

Commissioner Morris asked if the old rink was by the tennis courts.

Commissioner Commers responded that it was by the parking lot and tennis courts.

Mr. Sedlacek said the pines that were planted are doing well.

Commissioner O'Brien asked how the soils are compared to the soils at the Friendly Hills Park.

Mr. Sedlacek said there is more clay soil at Ivy Park and it does not hold moisture very well in the fall. You need soil to freeze before putting ice down, it would get warm, parts of the ice would boil over and would not stick. That was a challenge to keep the ice.

Chair Portz asked which rink had the asphalt surface.

Ms. Gangelhoff responded the hockey rink at Friendly Hills has asphalt.

Approved

Commissioner Commers said there were problems with the hydrant at Friendly Hills last year which affected the ice rink.

Mr. Sedlacek said Angie Ohmes submitted a petition for an outdoor skating rink. Mr. Kullander and Mr. Blum put together a proposal for a very basic sheet of ice with no boards, warming house or lights. Benches may be considered.

Mr. Mike Ohmes, 1022 Brompton Place, said this started with our son, Sam, asking why there wasn't a skating rink at Ivy Park. His wife called City staff and they were very helpful. She got a lot of background information. A petition was put together and they went out in the neighborhood and knocked on doors. 55 neighbors signed the petition and it was well received. They understand the decision to close the rink in 1997 since it wasn't being used.

The Ohmes moved to the neighborhood in 2005. In 2004-2006 five houses turned over with families moving in with kids.

Commissioner Commers asked how many hours the family would use the rink.

Mr. Ohmes responded his family would use it on weekends during daylight and several times a week. The family would be happy to help the Park Board to get this up and running from a maintenance standpoint.

Chair Portz asked how many kids were in organized hockey.

Four kids in the audience raised their hands.

Mr. Ohmes read an email from the Tracy family on Knollwood Lane. "My family and I live at 1420 Knollwood Lane in the Ivy Falls neighborhood and I understand there will be a discussion this evening regarding a proposal to reopen a recreational skating rink at Ivy Falls Park. Unfortunately, we are not able to make the meeting, however as the parents of four children ages 12, 11, 10 & 6 my wife and I want you to know that we strongly support this idea. I grew up on Laura Court in Ivy Falls and recall many fun afternoons and evenings playing hockey at the Ivy Falls rink during the early 1980's. As the neighborhood is clearly turning over and welcoming new families with young children it would make sense to maximize the use of this beautiful park during the winter months. I am hopeful the City moves forward with the rink at Ivy Falls Park following tonight's discussion. If you have any questions, please let me know. Tom Tracy".

Commissioner Morris asked if the rink would be like the rink in West St. Paul by Dick's.

Mr. Sedlacek said it would be for this year. It would be pretty informal.

Commissioner Brackey asked if a spot has been eyeballed yet.

Mr. Sedlacek said yes, soil would have to be brought in.

Commissioner Brackey asked if trees would have to be taken out.

Mr. Sedlacek said two trees would be moved for a temporary rink.

Commissioner Toth asked if there was a product like a poly liner to absorb water.

Approved

Mr. Sedlacek said there are residential products but didn't know if there was one for the size of the rink being proposed.

Mr. Jack Ohmes, 7th grader at St. Thomas would like an ice rink put in the neighborhood because during the winter there is nothing to do and the park isn't used except for sledding and it would be fun to have an ice rink there.

Mr. Tommy Fenelon would like an ice rink because no one ever uses it and we are mostly inside during the winter and I want to get out there with the neighbors and skate. I don't play hockey and would like to learn.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if he went around and got signatures and asked how many he got.

Tommy responded he got about 10 signatures and Sam and Chase did most of the work.

Commissioner O'Brien said they did a good job and they came to her house.

Chair Portz said outdoor skating is the best skating there is.

He also asked if counts could be taken to see how the rink is being used.

Commissioner Commers said as the City takes care of the rink they could look at the marks on the ice.

Commissioner Morris said maybe the police could look at it while on patrol.

Commissioner O'Brien said it would get good use based on the number of kids within walking distance of the rink.

Mr. Sedlacek said you will be able to tell if the rink is being used by the City employees working on the rinks.

Chair Portz said the numbers will be important if the Commission decides to add a warming house and boards next year.

Commissioner Morris said it was a worthwhile venture for \$5,000.

Alicia McMonigal, whom is associated with hockey in West St. Paul and Mendota Heights and was a hockey manager last year, said she has trouble finding outside rinks to practice on. This could be used for hockey practice.

Commissioner Brackey said the other rinks get booked up with older kids for practice.

Ms. Gangelhoff said she takes rink reservations and tries to stagger the bookings at the rinks so they are all not being used on the same night for hockey practice.

Mr. Sedlacek said he knows some people who use the rinks for broomball practice.

Mr. Jake Rascher, Sam Ohmes, Joe Gimberlan, and Chase Garrett came to the podium and Sam said he is in hockey and sometimes goes in the garage and it gets muddy so he can't use the garage and it would be fun to skate on some ice.

Approved

Commissioner Toth asked if a temporary structure could be put up for 3 months for putting on skates and warming up.

Commissioner Morris made a motion to spend up to \$5,000 to move the trees, develop a temporary ice rink for this year and gauge it's participation for future enhancements next year.

Commissioner Commers seconded the motion.

Commissioner Commers asked if the risers by the baseball diamond could be moved by the parking lot for skaters to put on their skates. It needs to be gauged how many users use the rink before adding a structure.

Finn Van Haden, 1126 Sylvandale, came up to the podium and said he didn't skate much but it would be fun to have a rink out there so he could learn to skate.

Commissioner Brackey commented that girls hockey has exploded and there a lot of players in the community. There are a lot more female players now then when the rink was last open.

Commissioner O'Brien asked what would be acceptable numbers to consider improvements for next year.

Mr. Sedlacek responded that he didn't know but would take up Mr. Ohmes on his offer for him and neighbors to monitor and email how many kids are using the rink. It will be up to the Parks and Recreation Commission in the spring to determine if they should recommend to the Council any improvements that should be made.

Chair Portz asked who on the Commission lives close by.

Commissioner Commers said he lives close by but can not see it because there is a hedge and a fence in the way.

Commissioner O'Brien asked if Mr. Kullander could email the size of the hockey rink to the Commissioners.

Mr. Sedlacek said there would be a number of qualifiers such as no lights that determines if the rink usage was good.

Chair Portz asked if there was any more discussion about the ice rink and asked to put the motion to a vote.

AYES 6

NAYS 0

Chair Portz said the kids did a good job lobbying for their idea.

Commissioner Morris thanked everyone for coming in and said they did a good job.

Commissioner Brackey said it is more enjoyable to talk about what can be done to the parks when people participate. The kids and parents need to be commended.

Commissioner Commers said the proposal is now going to the City Council.

Approved

Mr. Sedlacek said the City Council is meeting on October 20th and everyone is encouraged to attend the Council meeting.

MENDAKOTA PARK PLAYGROUND 2010 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Mr. Bill Bach of Earl F. Anderson introduced himself and brought some information about the plan for improvements at Mendakota Park. The plan includes Weevos play equipment for 2-5 year olds from Landscape Structures. It's a non-deck and post system which is nontraditional. The older systems can be linked together. Sight lines are very good to observe play. It also encourages unscripted play. There are no free moving parts. It encourages upper body strength. The equipment is played differently every time. The footprint at Mendakota is a small footprint. In the knoll there will be play panels. There is a sandbox play area that will be replaced with a shaded area, digger, seats and play panels.

In the shaded area there will be a play piece with two panels, the ball maze panel and a driver's panel. The digger will be handicap accessible. An elevated sand table will also be handicap accessible. There will be a learning wall with seven different panels. It does not require a fall surface because there are no elevated elements.

Commissioner Toth asked if it was going to be by the berm by the pine trees.

Mr. Bach said it was.

Commissioner Portz asked if this was the only park with dedicated 2-5 year old play equipment.

Mr. Bach responded it was.

Commissioner Brackey asked if a little slide or bridge could be put in.

Mr. Bach responded they could not because of the footprint size and the size of safe zones needed.

Commissioner Toth said design six looked simple and basic and could another component be added to the original design.

Mr. Bach said adding pieces could be possible but you are somewhat limited to what could be added.

Commissioner Morris said he really liked the play equipment and it is a new type of design. If it is liked it could replace the older pieces.

Chair Portz asked how much it cost.

Mr. Bach said without a new play surface it costs \$26,650.

Mr. Bach said EFA (Earl F. Anderson) and LSI (Landscape Structures, Inc.) have taken different directions. A new line is being introduced by EFA. The new line is Xccent Play which is a new Minnesota family owned company. Xccent is building a new plant in Wyoming, MN. It is manufacturing IP certified structures which means it will meet required compliance standards.

Approved

Play equipment encourages play by climbing, crawling, swinging and sliding. Xccent is adding a fifth dimension which is motion. The intent is to add challenges and excitement. The advantages of the equipment is sight line, able to expand equipment, and the diversity of design. They use non pinch hinges.

Chair Portz asked if any action was needed tonight.

Mr. Bach responded to see the equipment and how it will be put together at Mendakota Park.

Commissioner Brackey asked if the new unscripted play equipment is was safer and asked what was prompting the change.

Mr. Bach said the demand is from the public asking for something different. To make the play equipment catalog it has to meet safety levels. The industry has changed because the fall safe zones are getting better.

Chair Portz said he liked the equipment and it's a good niche.

PARK AND TRAIL UPDATES

Mr. Sedlacek reported that 150-200 individuals including significant leaders in Native American cultures attended the "pipe ceremony" at Pilot Knob on October 4th. In late September Great River Greening did some oak tree planting.

Friendly Hills tennis court repairs ran into problems. More problems were found than anticipated but the contractor found a budget conscious way to repair them. The courts will be ready for play next year. They will need to be striped next year.

Commissioner Toth asked about tennis courts in Friendly Hills – the project is complete and there was additional asphalt on the sidewalk. Was that part of budget?

Mr. Sedlacek said he didn't know and would ask Mr. Kullander to respond to the question.

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the City Council authorized expenditures for the removal of invasive species in Valley Park.

Chair Portz said a wish list of what should be done at Valley Park should be made up. With the drier summers there is a lot of downed wood and could be a fire danger.

Commissioner Morris said it is expensive to haul it out and a controlled burn is out of the question. Removing the invasive plants is a long term project and applauded the City Council for doing it. It's the little plants that would get a fire going. To bring back native plants would help decrease the fire danger.

Commissioner Toth said there are beautiful oak trees in Valley Park. Is there any preventative measures for oak wilt?

Commissioner Morris said he does not know how to prevent oak wilt. Bringing back native plants will help. Invasive plants takes natural plants food and water.

Approved

Chair Portz said he is glad they are moving ahead and getting rid of invasive plants.

Commissioner Morris said a good scout project, especially Eagle Scout projects, is getting rid of invasive plants.

PAR 3 UPDATE

Mr. Sedlacek reported that September 2009 was a good revenue month for the Par 3. There were 1,350 walk-up rounds for the month compared to 1,131 in 2008. Weekend mornings were hot, weekend evenings were cooler, the weekday evenings were hot, and during the day it was cooler according to attendance. There was a \$7,018 net loss for the month.

The landscaping was done for less than the original quote for just the plants. A young landscaper did the project at a lower cost than anticipated.

Commissioner Morris asked if the landscape project pumped up the maintenance contract.

Mr. Sedlacek said no, it was because of deferred maintenance needed to be done to the course. Fall aeration was completed with no disruption to play. The turf is in good condition. The dollar spot on the greens was treated and they bounced back very well.

Staff will sit down with the maintenance supervisor and individual staff and try to figure out why the maintenance cost is so high.

The annual report is anticipated to be ready for the November meeting.

For the year with current projections it is anticipated to have a net profit of \$36,075. The carry over from 2008 is \$47,000.

Commissioner Commers asked about the new mower purchase.

Mr. Sedlacek said the rough and fairway mowers were \$11,000 each. It is anticipated to pay \$11,000 for a greens mower.

Commissioner Toth asked about the roof on the clubhouse.

Mr. Sedlacek said during construction the roof was looked at. There is no insulation and it will be needed to be decided in the future whether to add an insulated roof. The existing roof is adhered right to the ceiling and if there is any damage it will be seen right away. An insulated roof would double the cost of adding a new roof. It will need to be decided how the building will be used – do we want it open for cross country skiing?

It is projected to lose \$2,737 for October and \$1,915 for November. Right now the course is closed because of the snow. If there is warmer weather it could be opened.

Chair Portz said the golf course is a good community amenity. The report format is an excellent tool and asked if the overhead expense was running at 15%.

Approved

Mr. Sedlacek said the overhead expense is running at 15%.

Chair Portz asked what was being depreciated. Could that line be taken out?

Mr. Sedlacek said he would check with the Finance Director.

Commissioner Toth asked about the mileage expense.

Mr. Sedlacek it was the clubhouse manager running for products, concessions and to City Hall handing in time sheets.

Mr. Sedlacek showed a spreadsheet showing the 2009 golf numbers:

2009 Golf Numbers:

Program:	Enrolled:	Fees:	Non-Resident Fee
Adult Golf Lessons	18	\$954.00	\$20.00
Junior Golf Camps	121	\$12,947.00	\$165.00
Junior Golf Lessons	16	\$683.00	\$170.00
Parent/Child Golf Lessons	5	\$488.00	\$0.00
Women's Golf Leagues	27	\$2,700.00	\$75.00
Monday Morning Jr. Golf League	64	\$6,454.55	\$75.00
Wednesday Morning Jr. Golf League	93	\$9,300.00	\$65.00
Friday Morning Jr. Golf League	22	\$2,200.00	\$30.00
Totals:	266	\$37,726.44	\$600.00

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Commers said it was a good meeting, was excited about the new skating rink, hopes it gets passed and hopes it gets a lot of use.

Commissioner Morris said it was great to see all the young park users come out and give their opinions.

Chair Portz said about six years ago he, Sandra Krebsbach, Kevin Milbery, Cindy and Bill Manwarren started a University of Minnesota alumni chapter here in Dakota County. There are 12,000 alumni that live in the area. 2,000 are active members of the alumni association. Sandra Krebsbach is the actual founder. About a month ago we were notified we were chapter of the year. A speaker for the alumni group will here at City Hall to talk about the environment tomorrow night.

Commissioner Brackey said she is excited about the ice rink; it was wonderful everyone came in and hopes it gets done.

Commissioner Toth said anytime there is a concern residents should bring their concerns forward to the Parks and Recreation Commission or City administration. The young gentlemen that stepped forward should be applauded. Hopefully we get a rink for them.

Approved

Mr. Sedlacek reported that the City Council canceled the Halloween bonfire at their last Council meeting due to the lack of a site. The owners of the Mendota Plaza have had a change of plans – if it is back on there will be a press release released tomorrow.

Commissioner O'Brien is ending her term on the Commission at the end of year because of family commitments. There will be three spots open. Chair Portz's term is up at the end of January, send a letter or email if you would like to rejoin. Commissioner Toth is a short term and the term ends in January and send a letter or email if you would like to rejoin. Commissioner O'Brien position is a one year term that will need to be filled. Anyone interested should talk to City staff or any Commissioner.

Commissioner Brackey made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Commers seconded the motion.

AYES 5

NAYS 0

The meeting adjourned at 8:19.