

Approved

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

PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING

November 10, 2009

The November 2009 meeting of the Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, November 10, 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, Ray Morris and Steve Commers. Commissioners Michael Toth and Liz O'Brien were excused. Staff present were: Jake Sedlacek, Assistant to the City Administrator, Guy Kullander, Parks Project Manager, Teresa Gangelhoff, Parks and Recreation Programmer, and Nancy Bauer, Recording Secretary.

MINUTES

Commissioner Kraus made a motion to approve the minutes with a couple of changes. Commissioner Commers seconded the motion.

AYES 4

NAYS 0

RECREATION PROGRAMMERS REPORT

Chair Portz commented on the simple steps walking program through Dakota County and asked what the prizes were.

Ms. Gangelhoff reported that after six weeks you get a zip up lunch box. There are also gift cards given away.

Chair Portz said there is a senior center.

Ms. Gangelhoff reported the senior center is Thompson Parks Activity Center for northern Dakota County that includes Mendota Heights. It's in West St. Paul off of Butler Avenue and 52.

Chair Portz asked how many programs were listed on the school flyer.

Ms. Gangelhoff responded that skating, gymnastics, two youth trips and the rink hours are listed on the flyer.

Approved

Mr. Sedlacek stated that the Revtrak program is a nice program and that residents already in the system don't have to reenter their information if they sign up for another parks and recreation program.

Chair Portz said there are two youth trips for December - bowling and a movie and Nickelodeon Universe at MOA.

Commissioner Commers asked if not enough kids signed up for the youth trips from other cities if Mendota Heights could provide its own transportation.

Ms. Gangelhoff replied that at least 30 kids are needed to cover the cost of a bus and has looked into renting a van but that is too expensive and is not encouraged because of insurance and liability issues.

Commissioner Brackey asked how many chaperones are used on youth trips.

Ms. Gangelhoff replied for water trips it's one chaperone per seven kids and on other trips it's one chaperone per 10 kids.

Chair Portz said the skating instructor is back for her ninth year.

Ms. Gangelhoff said another class has been added to the skating lessons.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the classes are added on the same date.

Ms. Gangelhoff responded yes they are.

Commissioner Brackey asked if Rebecca was the only instructor.

Ms. Gangelhoff responded that she is. She is a school teacher.

Chair Portz said the skating rinks are scheduled to be opened on December 19th and the rink attendants have been hired for the season.

PARKS CELEBRATION DISCUSSION

Chair Portz reported that the Parks Celebration is held on the first Saturday in June and he has enjoyed it for the last seven years. This years the celebration was rained out. There are a lot of families that attend. It's good for the community. It's held in conjunction with the MHAA tournaments. It should be maintained like it has been in the past.

Commissioner Commers said he seconds those beliefs. He has been at the Parks Celebration the last three years and he has enjoyed it. There are a lot of events that appeal to a lot of families. The event doesn't need to be grown and keep it as it is so it's not too much from Teresa.

Chair Portz said Ms. Gangelhoff does a majority of the work and does a great job. The Commission does support her. Her help has been cut from the budget.

Ms. Gangelhoff said some of her programs have exploded, especially with tennis and summer playground in the parks. There are over 500 kids between those two programs and has trouble keeping afloat with getting the programs up and running and planning the Parks Celebration. The helper, who helps with the Parks Celebration a few hours a week, has been cut from the budget and was wondering if the celebration could be turned over to a volunteer committee. West St. Paul and South St. Paul run their events with a volunteer committee.

Commissioner Morris said it looks like Ms. Gangelhoff's work load has blossomed which is a good thing for parks and recreation. The best thing is to see if any interested citizens are interested in volunteering for a committee. Maybe move more events to Town Center and get the businesses more involved. We don't want to burn out Ms. Gangelhoff. She does a good job. Barring that, activities could be scaled back or the event could be held every other year and make it bigger.

Mr. Sedlacek said he was interested in getting the general scope of what the Commission is looking for such as maintaining it as it currently is. It wouldn't take a committee. There is an existing structure for the event. It may take one or two volunteers to complete and send out the mailings, receipting donations, making signs and coordinating the day's activities.

Commissioner Morris said that is the way to go or if a committee is assembled the event could be grown. If a committee is not assembled then look at a volunteer.

Commissioner Kraus asked how many hours the helper worked.

Ms. Gangelhoff responded she didn't have the hours, but she would start in February sending out letters and come in April or May to receipt checks.

Commissioner Kraus said the scope of this is to find a volunteer to do the work of the helper and with a couple different volunteers you would need to train two different people which could make even more work instead of helping. What is the long term solution to the City's role in this event? Why was there a significant amount of money left over from this year's event?

Mr. Sedlacek said it was the weather. A lot of vendors didn't show up because of the rain.

Commissioner Kraus said this could be a fund raising opportunity for MHAA.

Commissioner Morris said a committee could consist of MHAA, businesses from Town Center, and scouts. This would be a great venue for a consortium of groups to plan the event.

Mr. Sedlacek said there is good feedback to bring to Council.

Chair Portz said what he is hearing is there are a lot of strong volunteers in the community and doesn't think MHAA would take this on, their programs are all run by volunteers. He likes Commissioner Morris' idea of getting a group started to plan the event.

Commissioner Morris said developing a group is a good idea with support from the City - running money through the City accounts and the impact should be minimal on Ms. Gangelhoff.

Approved

Chair Portz said the committee would plan the event and do the administrative work. It's a great event and would be good to get the community behind it.

Commissioner Commers made a motion that the Parks Commission would like the Council to review the get together in June and ask them to try to find volunteers to help Teresa to grow the event over a period of years with outside help from volunteers.

Mr. Sedlacek asked if he could simplify the motion to be - the Parks and Recreation Commission would request the Council reconsider the structure of the Parks Celebration.

Commissioner Commers responded perfect.

Commissioner Morris made a friendly amendment to the motion to include the special interests involved to make the event a success.

Commissioner Commers accepted the friendly amendment.

Commissioner Brackey seconded the motion.

Chair Portz recommended changing special interests to community members.

Commissioner Commers asked if he could say both special interests and community members.

Mr. Sedlacek said he could and asked Commissioner Commers if he accepted that as part of the motion.

Commissioner Commers said he did.

Commissioner Brackey accepted the second friendly motion.

The motion restated that the Parks and Recreation Commission voted on – **The Parks and Recreation Commission would request the Council to reconsider the structure of the Parks Celebration and include special interests and community members to make the event a success.**

AYES 5

NAYS 0

ICE RINK USAGE

Chair Portz said he asked Ms. Gangelhoff for a report on the ice usage at the ice rinks and she has provided a memo. The numbers are from 1200 to 1700. There is a new ice rink at Ivy Hills. There are three rinks that already exist. It would be good to have numbers to look as to how the other rinks are being used.

Approved

Commissioner Commers said the people using the rink at Ivy Hills will keep track of people using the rink and email the numbers to Mr. Sedlacek and would like the flooders to look at how the rink is being used.

Mr. Sedlacek said another method proposed would be to put up a sign and users could sign it to keep track of people using the rink.

Commissioner Kraus said the information was interesting but doesn't know how it will be used to determine how the Ivy Hills rink is being used. The numbers can cut both ways.

Chair Portz said the numbers can be used for prospective to make decisions about the Ivy Hills Park ice rink next year.

Commissioner Kraus said he wouldn't rely on the numbers to make a decision.

Commissioner Morris would question how accurate the numbers are.

Commissioner Commers said if a person stays at the rink for three hours that person is counted as three people.

Commissioner Kraus doesn't know how relative the numbers are for making a decision. Incremental improvements may be made based on feedback from the community.

Commissioner Morris said it's a good addition to the community.

FREE SKATING RINK AT IVY HILLS PARK

Mr. Kullander said the City Council did accept the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation for an ice rink at Ivy Hills Park at a cost of about \$5,000. About \$2,000 will be used for the water for the ice and the extra flooders for the rink. The rink is not as big as planned it is about 100 feet x 65 feet (the same as the Wentworth rink) to save some trees. It has been graded and the extra material saved for a berm to hold the ice. Mr. Kullander looked at installing a light with the extra money at the most it would be about \$5,000 with a used light head. The concrete base is about \$1,000 and the pole is about \$1,000. There is power up there from the old warming house. When the building left so did the light. If the wiring can still be used it would bring the cost down \$500 to \$1,000. Council would have to authorize the expenditure to install the light. Council may balk at taking the money from the general budget for park maintenance. This could be a capital improvement item and the funds could come from the Special Parks Funds. The light would have a dusk to dawn sensor with a 400 watt light bulb.

Chair Portz asked if \$10,000 would be spent on the rink at Ivy Hills Park rink this year.

Mr. Kullander responded the light would cost \$5,400 at the worst.

Commissioner Kraus asked about the original \$5,000.

Approved

Mr. Kullander responded that the grading was \$500 and the ice is about \$2,000 or \$2,500 at tops. There would be about \$3,000 out of pocket costs for the rink this year.

Commissioner Kraus said an additional \$3,500 is needed for the light.

Mr. Kullander responded that the parks maintenance budget is being overspent this year. By taking the funds out of the Special Parks Fund it would not have an impact on the budget.

Commissioner Kraus asked if the entire amount would be taken out of the Special Parks Fund.

Mr. Kullander responded yes.

Commissioner Commers asked how much money was in the Special Parks Fund.

Mr. Kullander responded there should be about \$250,000 at the end of the year with the dedication from the Mendota Plaza redevelopment.

Commissioner Brackey asked if all the other parks had security lights.

Mr. Kullander responded they did.

Commissioner Brackey asked if the light was required.

Mr. Kullander responded no. It's a security feature.

Commissioner Brackey asked if there was light there before.

Mr. Kullander responded there was when there was a warming house there.

Chair Portz asked if the neighborhood was in favor of a light.

Mr. Kullander responded that there used to be seven or eight lights there and there were no complaints. There will not be a lot of spill light from the one light.

Chair Portz asked if it could be put in next year.

Mr. Kullander responded yes it's up to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Commers asked if the Commission thought the rink would get more use if a light was put up.

Mr. Kullander responded yes later in the night.

Commissioner Brackey said it would be nice to have a light there but understands it's not in the budget. But as it gets dark earlier in the winter and it might get more use if there is a light. It is a dark park.

Approved

Chair Portz said he is a little uncomfortable asking for more money for the rink. There was a group discussion with the community and it was approved at \$5,000.

Commissioner Brackey said she agrees with that, they come here with the ideas and it is up to the Commission to come up with the what ifs.

Commissioner Morris said it's more than just a rink. It's also a security feature. It would be a benefit for the park. There are lights in the other parks.

Commissioner Kraus said we created this rink and have created a reason for people to come to the park especially at night. There is a security concern.

Commissioner Kraus asked about the financing - Council has agreed up to \$5,000 and we're only going to spend \$3,000 why can't the \$2,000 and the real cost is \$4,000 to \$5,500 and why does the whole amount have to come from the Special Parks Funds.

Commissioner Morris said maybe the cost could be shared.

Mr. Kullander said it could be proposed either way.

Commissioner Morris made a motion to use the balance of the \$5,000 left over from the project toward the light with the additional balance coming from the Special Park Fund but looking at it as a cost share basis because there was an existing light there and there is existing cable there and this would make it a maintenance issue and some new construction for the pole and light would come from the Special Parks Funds.

Commissioner Kraus seconded the motion.

Mr. Sedlacek clarified the motion to be - the Parks and Recreation Commission makes a motion to recommend a security light be installed at Ivy Hills Parks.

Mr. Kullander suggested that the cost be split between the Parks Maintenance Budget and the Special Parks Fund.

Chair Portz asked if splitting the funding is right because it's all City money.

Mr. Kullander responded the Parks Maintenance Budget is from the City levy and Special Park Funds are not from levies.

Commissioner Morris clarified the motion that **the Parks and Recreation Commission make a motion to recommend to the City Council that we cost share installing a security light at Ivy Hills Park that 50% of the funding come from the maintenance fund and that 50% of the funding come from the Special Parks Fund.**

Commissioner Kraus seconded the motion.

Approved

Commissioner Kraus said we are asking for \$2,000 from the Special Parks Fund.

Commissioner Morris said there is a reasonable balance in the Special Parks Fund.

Commissioner Kraus said there should be a security light at this park where we created a use in the park.

Commissioner Morris said there is a need for the light in the park for security.

Chair Portz asked if the neighborhood would want the light.

Commissioner Morris said the light will be in the center of the park.

Mr. Sedlacek said to ask the Commissioner closest to the park.

Commissioner Commers said he was comfortable with the light and it is needed for security. He can't speak for his neighbors.

Commissioner Morris said the motion is for a security light for the sheet of ice and not a park amenity.

AYES 4

NAYS 1 (Chair Portz)

MENDAKOTA PARK PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Kullander said he was not at the last meeting but Mr. Bach presented a final concept plan for improvements at Mendakota Park at the October meeting. There will be sand box and free standing panels.

Commissioner Morris asked if they will be grouped as shown on the plan or plunked in the ground.

Mr. Kullander responded that is an option to think about. A fall resistance safety surface is not needed. Grass, if used, would be a maintenance issue. Wood chips would not be a good option either. Pea gravel or a rubberized surface are other options. Cost estimates have not been received for the surface. The costs were lumped together not separately for the components. I am not comfortable giving a recommendation without a detailed concept plan and budget. The range is within the budget. It is \$26,000 for the equipment and adding a resilient surface would cost about an additional \$18,000. The amount in the 2010 budget is about \$55,000.

Commissioner Kraus asked if a decision needed to be made tonight for this years pricing.

Mr. Kullander responded the price increases are less than they have been in the past. I would rather know what the equipment is. It should be less than \$1,000 price increase.

Chair Portz said Mendakota Park is a beautiful park and the equipment will add an extra dimension.

Approved

Commissioner Brackey said she had a concern about the equipment and it can't be added to and should it be done when the whole thing is redone.

Mr. Kullander said the equipment can be expanded because of the new guidelines. No fall zones are needed so there is going to be some flexibility.

Chair Portz asked if Mr. Kullander was going to study this issue a little more.

Mr. Kullander responded he would and wants to be prepared when he makes a recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioner Brackey said she would be happy to sit down with Mr. Kullander and go over some ideas to help pick out the equipment.

Mr. Kullander said that would be good and would contact her.

Commissioner Kraus asked about the surface.

Mr. Kullander said he thought for around \$26,000 they would fix the rubberized surface and touch it up and stay with pea rock. Adding pea rock would not meet ADA guidelines.

Commissioner Kraus asked if pea rock was a problem with kids throwing it and if wood chips would be better.

Mr. Kullander said 2-5 year olds could crawl in wood chips and they are large and different shaped. Wood chips need to be fluffed up each year. It's going to be about \$6,000 to replace wood chips next year in Hagstrom King Park.

Chair Portz said the Commission looks forward to his recommendation at the next meeting.

PILOT KNOB

Mr. Kullander reported that Ms. Lewellan from the Pilot Knob Preservation Association plans to apply for a grant from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for a brochure recounting the historical and cultural significance of the Pilot Knob site. They are going to ask the City Council for \$1,000 by the City for the preparation and design of the brochure. The City Council if they approve the request could have say about the brochure. There would be brochures here at City Hall for residents to pick up. Does the Parks and Recreation Commission have any comments to pass on to the City Council?

Chair Portz said a brochure would be interesting. The Parks and Recreation Commission should get to see a draft of the brochure.

Mr. Kullander responded the City Council could make that a condition.

Commissioner Commers asked if foot traffic that comes into City Hall take brochures.

Approved

Mr. Kullander said yes, the parks trails map needs to be replaced quite often.

Commissioner Morris said the brochure is a good idea.

Commissioner Brackey also said it's a good idea.

Commissioner Kraus asked how the City's input would be managed. Who's going to be the decision maker?

Mr. Kullander said the grant will be presented to the City Council and that the Parks Commission could make a recommendation to the City Council that the Parks and Recreation Commission would like to see the layout of the brochure.

Commissioner Morris asked if the comments could be passed onto the City Council instead of making a motion.

Mr. Kullander responded yes he and Mr. Sedlacek said they could draft the ideas to the City Council.

PAR 3

Chair Portz commented that the Par 3 had a successful year thanks to Mr. Sedlacek who did a good job with management and personnel decision.

Mr. Sedlacek thanked Chair Portz and said the clubhouse manager was a good asset who was a private business owner. Mr. Murphy is a legend in golf course maintenance.

October 2009 was a dismal month. There was a third payroll in October and the weather was terrible. There were 134 rounds of golf played in October. Maintenance staff thought the maintenance building needed to be taken care of and went ahead with the repairs. There was a net loss of \$12,552 for the month of October. There is a \$25,916 net profit for the year.

Maintenance has been halted at the golf course for the year. Some bushes were planted at the golf course today. Three trees were accidentally taken down at tee box four. If weather permit's the course will be opened. Maintenance costs were higher than anticipated and in the future staff will need approval before going ahead with projects so the projects could be spread out.

Chair Portz asked about rounds played in October.

Mr. Sedlacek responded that in October 2009 there was \$1,286 in fees and in October 2008 there was \$6,000 in green fees.

The Greens Committee is recommending not raising the fees for 2010. They are also discussing improvements projects. There is a push for more formal events such as adding an adult open. The City event is being moved to a week night instead of a weekend before leagues start up in the spring.

Chair Portz said events market the golf course.

Approved

Mr. Sedlacek said Saturday mornings and Sunday evenings are quiet.

The City of Eagan is back on board for leagues next year. There may be a new league on Friday mornings.

Chair Portz asked about the 2010 budget.

Mr. Sedlacek said the 2010 budget is done as part of the City's budget. Some improvements projects have already been budgeted.

Chair Portz said there is a \$47,000 reserve from 2008 and there is a \$26,000 reserve from 2009.

Mr. Sedlacek said that is correct.

Commissioner Morris commented that a new machine is going to be purchased next year. The course looks wonderful and it is a good viable park experience. It's a tribute to the committee and Mr. Sedlacek.

Mr. Sedlacek said he had hoped to have the annual draft report tonight but will have it ready for the next meeting.

Commissioner Commers said it is good to have \$76,000 in the reserves for those years when there is bad weather and if there was a \$20,000 loss for the year.

Mr. Sedlacek said the well was built into the maintenance building and the irrigation system was built in 1981. If any of these items needed to be repaired it could be a significant expense.

The reserve fund balance could be discussed next year at this time.

Commissioner Morris said when the City bought this golf course it was not to make money but be a break even venture.

Chair Portz said there will be credit card fees when credits will be taken next year. There is also administrative costs with cost of living increases.

DECEMBER MEETING

Chair Portz reported that the December meeting is usually canceled.

Commissioner Brackey made a motion to cancel the December Parks and Recreation meeting.

Commissioner Morris seconded the motion.

AYES 5

NAYS 0

Approved

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Brackey said the Pilot Knob brochure should be strongly considered with all the money, time and work that has been put into it to preserve the site.

Chair Portz reported there was another meeting of the University of Minnesota Alumni this Thursday at 7:00 in the City Council chambers. This meeting is "Sustainability for Agricultural Along the Mississippi Basin." The last presentation was excellent and an enlightening event regarding the environment.

Commissioner Commers said he wanted to comment on the parks celebration discussion he wants anything to be done that can be to relieve a lot of the stress off of Teresa and relay that to the Council and keep existing things that are there because it is a great event.

Mr. Sedlacek said a new City Administrator started last Monday, Mr. David McKnight and City Offices are closed tomorrow in observance of Veteran's Day.

Commissioner Kraus made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Brackey seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 P.M.