

PARK COMMITTEE MEETING

May 7, 2008

Minutes

Present: Lucy Hicks, Darel Gustafson, Scott Ferguson, Bryan Sykora, Sarah Lien, Hans Larson and Council Liaison John Wheaton.

Absent: Peggy Beardsley, John Flynn and Jennifer Young

Guests: Bonne St. James, Pat Allar and Judy Brondahl

Call to Order

Chair Lucy Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. declaring a quorum.

Minutes – April 9, 2008

The Committee approved the April 9, 2008 minutes as submitted on a motion by Hans Larson and seconded by Sarah Lien. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Forum (for items not on the agenda)

No comments were made.

NEW BUSINESS

QuickStart Tennis Program – 2009

Pat Allar and Judy Brondahl with Kids Team Tennis were present to speak about a new USTA QuickStart tennis format for kids 7-10 years old with parents volunteer coaching. The program is offered in two five week session. Each two-court facility site hosts four teams. The kids meet twice a week for a total of 10 meetings. One practice and nine matches for 1 ½ hours each time. The USTA QuickStart program is scaled down to fit small children by using shorter courts, smaller racquets, lower nets and low compression balls combined with a simple scoring system. Kids Team Tennis will provide the nets, balls and equipment.

The goal is to bring the team sport of tennis to kids 10 years and under. Ms. Allar stated they would like the City to consider allowing 2 courts to be reserved for this program on either the courts at Shuck Park or the Village Hall Park. The program will run this year in St. Louis Park and Eden Prairie. Kids Team Tennis has spoken with Minnetonka Community Education Services to include the QuickStart program in the 2009 program book.

Ms. Allar stated that they are looking for a commitment of 20 dates, using two courts for 10 weeks twice a week from June 16 – August 30, 2009. The preferred time would be late afternoon. Each team will have seven kids for a total of 28 kids.

Darel Gustafson asked if Kids Team Tennis was a for profit corporation.

Ms. Allar stated that they are set up as a for profit corporation with the USTA program.

Hans Larson asked what the policy was for reserving courts and fields and whether the committee should consider use of the field based on profit vs. non-profit sports activities.

The Park Committee agreed to readdress the policy on sports activities at the park facilities at the September Park Committee meeting.

The Committee thanked Pat Allar and Judy Brondahl for the information and will get back to them on the program after the September meeting.

Bonne St. James stated that the City consider a policy to limit play of sports activities under certain weather conditions and require the teams to clean up the fields of litter following their games.

John Wheaton stated that the City may not have authority to dictate to the parents a dress-code based on temperature, however, agreed that a policy requiring cleaning up the courts and fields when play is done was a good idea.

Thorpe Park – Ditch Grass

Bonne St. James addressed the Park Committee concerning the grass in the drainage ditch at Thorpe Park and expressed concern that the park was treated prior to a week of heavy rain which caused the chemicals to be drained into the pond.

Ms. St. James stated that the ditch grass is full of seed bearing plants which provide food for birds. She requested that the City leave the grass uncut all year (365 days). Ms. St. James stated that the ditches are attractive with the tall native grass growing and with the abundance of rain the grass pulls the water off the sidewalks. After the grasses were cut there was standing water along the sidewalks.

Hans Larson stated that the ditches had always been mowed because that was the design of the park. Hans Larson noted that last year there was a compromise regarding the ditches and the grass was left uncut until the fall.

John Wheaton stated that this matter is a public works issue.

Scott Ferguson stated that native prairie grasses have a time that they should be cut.

Lucy Hicks asked if the public works director Jerry Hudlow and Administrator Dana Young could meet with Bonne and discuss this issue. Lucy suggested that Bonne attend the next public works meeting in June.

Darel Gustafson noted that the purpose of the ditch is to drain the park and if the grass gets long and thick it may not serve that purpose.

The Park Committee suggested that Ms. St. James attend the Public Works meeting on June 2 and invited Ms. St. James to attend the next Park Committee meeting with Dana Young and a MCWD representative to speak on this issue.

Park Improvements Plans and Specs

John Wheaton reported that the Council voted to name the space Haralson Park.

The Park Committee readdressed the park improvements.

Hans Larson suggested that the park boundary line be delineate with posts or trees.

Scott Ferguson stated that it becomes difficult to “dress up” the court if no landscape materials can be placed beyond the boundary around the court.

Scott Ferguson reminded the committee that it will be necessary to pull a permit with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) to change any grade and add fill. The permit will require information regarding silt fencing, erosion control measures and storm water pollution control measures. Scott suggested that the City Engineer review the park plan and improvements and assist with the MCWD permit. Scott noted that the existing slope is eroding and to control erosion and comply with a 3-1 slope ratio, some of the trees on the slope may be lost. The plan should include removal of the entire class 5 grade which will need to be taken away and new soils brought in.

Scott Ferguson stated that, Mayor Paul Skrede had mentioned at an earlier meeting, that the public works crew may help with removing the class 5 rock area. Scott noted that the gravel would have to be taken off site.

John Wheaton suggested that the park improvement bid include removal of the class 5 rock by the contractor and that possibly the public works crew could help with removal of the trees.

Scott Ferguson asked what type of material the 10’ x 10’ seating area should be constructed out of and suggested that a picnic table may get more use than benches. Scott suggested a granite chip area.

The Committee noted that the budgeted amount of \$35,000 for improvement would also include the engineers time and work.

Darel Gustafson noted that the past discussions regarding park improvements were to be low maintenance and resemble a natural preserve and prairie restoration area, not a manicured park

Scott Ferguson stated that he will email the committee pictures of different grasses that could be used.

The committee will review the park improvement plan in June.

Deephaven Days

The Committee reviewed the triathlon registration application and approved an increase in the entry fee (\$20 for individual and \$40 for family)

Darel Gustafson stated that there will not be many new capital expenses this year. The band is the largest single expense for Deephaven Days.

The Committee agreed that a minimum charge of \$5 for the picnic food was reasonable.

John Wheaton suggested the Committee consider adding some kid-friendly things into Deephaven Days like a water slide or inflatable jumping bag.

Scott Ferguson suggested the Committee consider creating a big finish line display for Thorpe Park.

Lucy Hicks stated that the small group planning meetings will start in June.

Council Update

Zamboni storage - John Wheaton reported that the Council liked the idea of the storage garage but not necessarily in the corner of the fenced area behind City Hall, as discussed last month. It was suggested that Dana Young, Mayor Paul Skrede and John Flynn meet to look at alternate sights for the garage. John Wheaton stated that running any water lines to the storage garage will have to come out of the park budget. John suggested getting a quote on the water line. John also reported that the zamboni is too heavy to trailer and moves too slowly to drive to Thorpe Park.

Other Business

Lucy Hicks thanked everyone who participated in the Arbor Day celebration.

The Committee agreed to meet in Thorpe Park for the June meeting to review the park amenities and assess the condition of the general facilities.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Hans Larson and seconded by Bryan Sykora. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 P.M. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Park Committee will be held on Wednesday, June 2 in Thorpe Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelley Souers