

PARK COMMITTEE MEETING
September 3, 2019
Minutes

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Wendy Duren called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She noted that Patrick Regan will be stepping down from the Park Committee. She said that she would like to discuss park committee assignments later in the agenda.

Members Present

Wendy Duren, Scott Hemink, Lindsey Carr, Tom Erdmann, Kaisha Rafferty, Tracy Corens, Tony Jewett, and Zoning Coordinator Dale Cooney

Members Absent

Patrick Regan

June 4, 2019, 2019 Minutes

The Committee approved the June 4, 2019 Park Committee minutes on a motion by Hemink, seconded by Erdmann. Motion carried 6-0.

Council Updates

Jewett said that the fountain and gazebo at Children's Park is being championed by Steven Streeter who is taking the lead on private fundraising. He said that there was a skate park request for Thorpe Park. Jewett said that, regarding a street sweeper, the city is not going to purchase one at this time and noted that they cost about \$225,000. He said that the city is getting bids to sweep Vine Hill to Highway 7 and Minnetonka Boulevard west of the bridge. He said that hopefully this takes care of the issue.

Hemink asked about sweeping the main roads a couple of times a year. Jewett said that is his goal to not just talk about street sweeping and do it this year. Erdmann asked why this happens only once a year and that the safety of the shoulders deteriorates during the year. Jewett said that the spring sweeping is mostly for the salt.

Gabrielle Rohde, of 18400 Minnetonka Boulevard, said that it would make sense to get bids next year for two times a year.

Jewett said that the city talked about golf carts. He said that the city council was not supportive of an ordinance amendment, but that some are made to be street legal and that does not need any city approval. Duren asked if we ticket the vehicles. Jewett said that he doesn't know about ticketing.

Rafferty asked what was the basis for opposition to golf carts? Jewett said crossing busy streets, and that there could also be some city liability issues. He said that the existing street legal vehicles were always an option.

Jewett noted that the beach chair discussion by Warren Nelson was referred to the Park Committee.

Jewett said that the Shuck Park tennis court bids came in very high and that next steps will be discussed later in the meeting.

Jewett said that the new warming house has kids in it late at night and neighbors are complaining. He said police enforcement will be increased. He said that the goal was to keep it open all the time as a community amenity. Carr asked about an automatic lock for the bathroom. He said that is a possibility, but that the goal is that the bathrooms remain open 24 hours a day.

Corens asked about park hours. During said that she thought it was 6 a.m. to midnight.

Duren asked about other street projects. Jewett said that the projects were Highland/Parkway, which are done, and Easton/Northern.

Jewett said that, due to the road projects, the tax increases on a \$625,000 house would be \$88 per year. Rohde said asked about the total cost. Jewett said the bond issuance was \$1.5 million. He said that there were other road projects that were able to be worked in this year.

Erdmann asked if the money that came out of the bonds could be used on other roads. Hemink said that the money has been spent.

Park Reports

Dale Cooney reported that baby changing tables have been installed in the Thorpe Park restrooms, the Children's Park Gazebo will be repaired by the public works crew this month, and the Thorpe Park hockey rink will be repainted by the public works crew in October.

Duren asked about warming house mats. Jewett said that he needs to ask Dana.

Erdmann said that the City Hall Park gazebo has stairs that are rotting and need to be addressed as well.

Hemink said that the Minnetonka Baseball Association gave very positive feedback about the Thorpe Park baseball fields. He said that they request that public works does not remove the mound, since doing so would require that the mound be rebuild. Hemink said that there was a request for fences and benches from the association.

Duren asked if they would fund any of that. Hemink said they would not since they are putting money into the fields.

Erdmann asked about City Hall Park baseball field. Hemink said that it is a backup park for other programs that has not received usage in a couple of years. Hemink said that the Minnetonka Baseball Association only would use it as a backup field and is more interested in the upkeep of the Thorpe Park fields. Erdmann asked about help for making that field more usable. Hemink said that it just needs to be regraded so that it drains properly. Erdmann said that public works needs a little guidance to make it right. Hemink said that the Minnetonka Baseball Association would be happy to provide that expertise.

Erdmann asked if the city would get behind improving that field. Jewett said that if the Minnetonka Baseball Association does not advocate for it, it might not be the highest priority. Erdmann said that the field is close. Jewett said that the question can be asked of Public Works.

Erdmann said that Steven Streeter is working with a fountain expert. He said that Streeter likely has some bigger ideas about cleaning up the park and the fountain area, including getting rid of the gravel.

Duren said that she noticed a pretty large uptick in the usage of the parks this summer and that it was nice to see and thanked the City Council for their support of the improvements.

Rafferty said that there is a lot of erosion at the entrance to Cleveland Park and said that it should be cleaned up.

Discuss Placement of Private Chairs on City Beaches (Warren Nelson)

Jewett stated that Warren Nelson, 3540 Hamilton Avenue, was at the city council meeting to discuss whether it was appropriate for him to leave his lawn chairs down at Robinson's Bay Beach for the public to use. Jewett stated that the City had removed approximately 8 of his chairs due to the rather shoddy appearance of these chairs and the liability of having non-city owned chairs stored for weeks on end at a public beach.

Carr said that some kind of permanent structure would be better. Hemink said space is limited and storage could be a problem.

Rafferty said that she was supportive and that a lot of people walk the beach and the chairs are better than benches. She said maybe the city could buy some chairs for beaches rather than private chairs.

Erdmann asked that if someone donated better chairs, would that be acceptable. Rafferty said that Adirondack chairs are stackable. Erdmann said that he was looking for a compromise rather than no chairs or junky chairs.

Duren said that a policy would extend to all the beaches. She asked how they were removed. Jewett said that storage of the chairs has not typically been allowed.

Carr said that she worried about clutter at the beaches and the chairs being blown around and causing damage.

Corens said that she likes the idea of permanent chairs there, but doubted the budget would allow for that.

Erdmann said that if a citizens group wanted to advocate for chairs, then maybe there would be more consideration.

Corens said that maybe there could be donated permanent chairs, similar to the memorial bench program. Erdmann and Duren said that was a good idea.

Duren said that there is not a formal recommendation, but that a memorial request could potentially be a chair instead of a bench. She said that discussion would happen at the time of a memorial bench request.

Discuss Request for Community Garden

Duren introduced the item that was a request from Maggie Brandt at the last meeting to locate a community garden at one of our local parks and Committee members were asked at that time to consider where a Community Garden could be located.

Hemink said that he looked into this and that the only spot that made sense was Thorpe Park. He said that, similar to the chairs, he'd want to see a citizen group advocate for this rather than an individual.

Duren agreed that a petition would be helpful. Other members agreed. Duren said that the recommendation is to respond to Ms. Brandt that the Park Committee is recommending moving forward with that request at this time.

Stopped at 58:59

Discuss Free Library at Thorpe Park (Ann Cates)

Duren introduced the agenda item.

Hemink said that there are several of these and asked if there a need for more of these.

Duren asked where the request originated. Cooney said that he received the original request from a nearby neighbor. He said that it would be within the park itself near the path.

Hemink asked why it would need to be on city property. He said that they need more specifics: the proposed location, public/private property, who would pay the cost for the structure.

Duren said that she likes the idea to bring more activities to the park. She said that the request should come back with more specifics and they would consider it further in October.

55:39

Discuss Buckthorne on the Thorpe Park Pond Island

Dale Cooney stated that a request had been received from Gabrielle Rohde, a property owner bordering the park, to consider removing the buckthorne on Thorpe Park Pond Island. He stated that, according to staff, past Park Committee's had always wanted the island to remain natural.

Discuss Shuck Park Tennis Court Project / Playground Equipment

Other

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Park Committee will be held on October 1, 2019.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by _____, seconded by _____. Motion carried 7-0. The meeting adjourned at _____ p.m.