

Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

APRIL 15, 2021

6:30 P.M.

WEBEX MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT	Bill Ganzlin, Bryan Belisle, Victoria Biehn, Mark Cermak, Mike Shepard
MEMBERS ABSENT	Anastacia Davis, Ginny Davis
STAFF PRESENT	Andy Wietecki, Paul Kauppi
VISITORS	
NOTE TAKER	Andy Wietecki

AGENDA TOPICS

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from March 18, 2021 was moved by Mark Cermak and seconded by Victoria Biehn.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the April 15, 2021 agenda was moved by Bryan Belisle and seconded by Mark Cermak.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Update on Matoska Gazebo

Andy Wietecki reported to the Park Advisory Commission members that the City Council awarded the contract for the Geist Gazebo restoration to Pelco Construction on Tuesday, April 13th. The contract was signed Wednesday afternoon with a short meeting on site to go over some basic information with the contractor before the start of the project. Pelco is a local contractor with deep roots in the community. Pelco Construction has completed many projects for the City of White Bear Lake in the past with the most recent being the flag pole restoration project at 3rd Street and Hwy 61. Paul Kauppi mentioned that the request for proposals was sent to three contractors. The unique way the City is constructing the Gazebo limits the number of contractors able to handle such a diverse project.

The contract gives a July 1st due date but with the building materials supply chain issues it might not be completed on schedule. The City is working aggressively to unveil the updated Gazebo during Manitou Days this summer.

b) Update on the Memorial Beach Wall

Andy Wietecki updated the Commission on the retaining wall project that is anticipated to be built this year. The landscape contractor provided us with dollar amounts to determine if the project will fit our budget. The option with larger boulders to match the rest of the walls at the beach with wall, steps, railings, plants and mulch for roughly \$100,000 or less with the City staff planting and mulching. The second option with the large style blocks would cost roughly \$150,000 to complete the project.

Paul Kauppi did mention that the City Council would like the Parks Advisory Commission to start looking at projects on the south side of town since it seems a lot of effort has been put into parks on the North side of town. Andy mentioned that the wall is last piece that needs to be addressed in this area. This project will be a dramatic improvement in a heavily used park in the City's park system.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Park Inspection Findings

The Park Advisory Commission members were tasked with performing an inspection of a few parks each and then report back with what was found during their adventure.

The members were asked to look for:

- How the park is being used?
- The number of park users
- Condition of infrastructure: buildings, playgrounds, picnic tables, benches, garbage cans, grills, fences, basketball nets/poles, bike racks, drinking fountains, yard lights, boardwalks, signature, etc.
- Park hazards
- Overall condition and appearance
- Improvements both long and short term
- Challenges with the park

Findings will be attached to the end of the minutes for each park.

b) Summer Park Tours

Now that summer is upon us, the Park Advisory Commission is moving their meetings to a different park every month. Andy Wietecki has come up a list of parks that haven't been visited in recent years. Andy suggested that since we are celebrating Arbor Day at Ebba Park planting trees along the Water Treatment Facility that is only fitting to start our tour there.

The Summer Park Tour list is as follows:

- May – Ebba Park
- June – Jack Yost Park
- July – Matoksa Park
- August – Lions Park

- September – Memorial Beach

Andy and Bryan suggested that the July and August tours may be reversed so the Commission can visit Matoska once the Gazebo is finished.

6. OTHER STAFF REPORTS

a) Early Spring – Parks are Open

Andy reported to the Park Advisory Commission that the City parks were opened earlier than normal this year due to an early spring. The launch docks are already in at Matoska as well as the sail boat mooring buoys. The City did not have any ice damage to the Boatworks Marina this year and it was opened a month earlier than scheduled. Andy Wieteki is very hopeful that all park restrooms will be open by the first weekend in May. Andy also mentioned that both West Park and Lakewood Hills Parks have park reservations this coming weekend – April 24th and 25th. He projects that this year will be another busy year for park rentals.

7. COMMISSION REPORTS

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on May 20, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Park Commission, the meeting was adjourned. Moved by Mark Shepard and seconded by Victoria Biehn.

Park Inspection Reports

Anastacia Davis

Podvin Park:

Podvin is a wonderful example of a multi-use park. I visited the park at 4pm on a weekday. I observed folks in fields, on the basketball courts, on the skate park ramp, using the covered picnic area for a birthday party. All picnic tables were being used for family picnics- it was a warm day. I wonder if there is some other use for the hockey rink during the off season. I think we talked about this in the last meeting - drawing court lines or something.

Weyerhaeuser Park:

We arrived as baseball practice was starting. Teams in all fields. It did seem like there could be a couple more benches/tables, as teams were setting up on the ground for what looked like a team picnic or giveaways for other teams. Is there a sign designating this as a White Bear park? I see Babe Ruth signs, but not White Bear Lake.

Bill Ganzlin

Matoska Park:

There is significant erosion of the shoreline by dog park. I understand that you have already identified a contractor to install a retaining wall. What is the status of this project? Old White Bear Facebook Group commented on the erosion problem and were concerned that nothing was happening to stop the erosion. There are many panels kicked out on Gazebo (this is not anything new). The rain garden in good shape! City staff did a good job removing trees and saplings. The bathrooms are locked; and porta-potty is in use.

West Park:

The bathrooms are locked and there is no porta-potty. The picnic tables and benches are in good shape except for one bench on the NE corner (needs to have board replaced on seat). The picnic shelter is beautiful. The seeded grass area is beginning to sprout. I would recommend planting 2 trees in far north parcel (across road from play equipment) where large tree was removed.

Memorial Beach:

The bathrooms are locked. The volleyball net is in good condition as well as the benches.

Bryan Belisle:

Inspected both Stellmacher and Ramaley Parks on April 11th at 11:30 am. The temperature was about 50 degrees and cloudy. The conditions have been rainy and cool the last week, with the next few days about the same. So, I only saw a couple of park users. Just a thought, maybe next year we should inspect the parks in May.

Stellmacher Park:

I observed one adult and child walking. The playground equipment was in very good condition. Shelter, tables, benches, basketball court/hoops, trails, baseball field all were in very good condition. The restroom was closed. On the South side of the park there was a newly planted tree line which will add future benefits. This park is adjacent to many apartments. It probably has more residents living within a few blocks, then any other park White Bear Lake park. I didn't see any park hazards and cannot think of any improvements needed at this time.

Ramaley Park:

I observed one adult walking a dog. The playground equipment was in very good condition. The shelter, tables, benches, basketball court/hoops, baseball field all are in very good condition. The restroom was closed. I didn't see any park hazards. I can't think of any improvements needed at this time. This park has great pine trees. One of the trees looks in perfect condition and has to be one of the largest and oldest in the city.

Mark Cermak**Lakeview Park:** (inspected on 4/15/21 at 9:30 am)

This is a very nice small park in the heart of Cottage Park. It was trash free, nice and clean. The park looked very nice along the shores of White Bear Lake. I really didn't know there was a park located in that area.

Lakewood Hills Park: (inspected on 4/15/21 at 10:00 am)

The playground was very nice and clean. There were kids playing on the equipment having a great time. I walked the grounds and found them to be very nice and clean. I didn't observe any trash. I checked out all the shelters and they were debris free and looked great. I walked the ballfields and found them to be groomed. The walking paths were very clean and neat. The parking lot in the Southeast corner had a lot of dirt piles, not sure if that's part of the Parks Dept. clean up. Overall the park looked very nice and clean and I did not see and problems or concerns that need to be addressed.

Mike Shepard**Railroad Park:**

There was a bunch of wood piled up by the pavilion. Will something be planted along the driveway of the bank?

Yost Park:

The stumps should be grounded or removed.

Victoria Biehn**Spruce Park:**

1. How being used: Play area equipment only

2. # of users: 7 (2 adults, 3 small children, 2 middle schooler's) – Saturday afternoon, cloudy & cool
3. Conditions: Good condition.
 - a. 1 of the basketball hoops rope was torn/gone. Other metal hoop in good shape.
 - b. One picnic table by restroom has some white paint on the top of it.
4. Park Hazards: Some broken glass around garbage by play area (I picked up larger pieces)
5. Overall Conditions: Good
6. Improvements: None
7. Any Challenges: Play area is very close to McKnight which is a pretty busy road for little kids to run into. Not sure if there is any consideration of a fence on that side of the park?

Rotary Park:

1. How being used: Walking, biking, running
2. # of users: 7 – around 5 p.m. on Sunday
3. Conditions: Great condition
4. Park Hazards:
 - a. Part of the path starting to buckle (1 down by Birch Street (caused by tree roots); other by the start of the decking going across wetland, path side of park)
 - b. A few of the boards on the decking across wetland starting to rot
5. Overall Conditions: Very good
6. Improvements:
 - a. Decking across wetland; when you reach “dirt path” side, some of the brush is growing over the decking.
 - b. Wondering if there could be any benches placed by wetland area for people to sit and view (for example, when you reach end of decking by dirt path side).
 - c. Some of the signage is starting to look weathered.
7. Any Challenges: Not really a challenge, but if you go across the decking to the other side and follow the wooded path, you end up on WB Parkway and there is no longer a path. Not sure it is an option to pave the WB Parkway side to make a “full loop” walking path from parking lot.

Veterans Park:

1. How being used: Monday morning, cloudy & cool; no visitors
2. # of users: 0
3. Conditions: Great
4. Park Hazards: 5 of the electrical outlets on the light posts on dock do not have plastic covering. Not sure that is a hazard?
5. Overall Conditions: Great
6. Improvements: None
7. Any Challenges: No

Ginny Davis:

I went early this evening to visit my assigned parks. All of the parks are in good condition. Nothing of big concern stood out to me. All 3 parks were in use on some level which was nice to see as well. Below, I will list each park individually...

Bossard Park:

One young boy was on the playground equipment. Everything looked in order. No one else was in the park at the time.

Ebba Park:

A family with 2 small children were just leaving as I arrived. No one else was present. This small park seems like a nice location for the neighboring houses. One of the picnic tables looked like the plastic coating had melted off in the center of the table (perhaps someone set something hot on the table). Otherwise, everything looks good.

McCarty Park:

A group of 4 young men were playing basketball. The playground equipment and climbing web all seem in good condition. I noticed the free little library on the corner of the park which is nice to see as well.