

Park Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

6:30 P.M.

MEMORIAL BEACH

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

AGENDA TOPICS

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mike Shepard at 6:30 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from August 19, 2021 was moved by Bryan Belisle and second by Ginny Davis.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the September 16, 2021 agenda was moved by Mark Cermak and seconded by Victoria Biehn with the addition of Park Vandalism added under Other Staff Reports.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Visitor Presentation

Mike Enz is a resident of the BoatWorks Commons apartments and lives in one of the flagship units directly above the community room. Mike advised the Commission about a smoking issue his wife and himself deal with when residents from the apartments or the community room occupants stand outside and smoke cigarettes. The smell of the cigarette smoke lingers in through their windows and makes for unpleasant living conditions. Mike and his wife are not against smoking as they are both former smokers but the smoke smell is constant. There are a few chain smoker residents that use the park to smoke since the building rules state that you only have to be 15 feet away from the building before lighting up. Mr. Enz has spoken to the property manager but everyone is following the rules so there is nothing they can do to stop people from smoking in this area as long as they are 15 feet away from the building.

Bryan Belisle suggested we make the park smoke free because of its unique situation of being in the middle of an apartment complex. Could City officials consult with the City Attorney and create a smoke free ordinance just for this

property? Mark Cermak stated that we would hate to lose residents due to smoke. Anastacia Davis also stated that it is our due diligence to make the park work with the homeowners that surround it. Mike Enz would like the Parks Advisory Commission to recommend to the City Council that our parks be declared alcohol and tobacco free like other community's that surround White Bear Lake. Andy does not believe the Police Department deal with many tobacco and alcohol issues so there may not be a need to address it system wide.

Mike Enz also asked about the dog bathroom issues at the green space at BoatWorks Commons. He doesn't even want his grandchildren to play there. Andy Wieteki stated that there will be a dog designated bathroom area made of either woodchips or pea gravel early next year. There will be signage for residents so they know where to take their dogs to go to the bathroom.

b) Discussion on Park Hours of Operation

Andy Wieteki wanted the Park Advisory Commission to review the hours of operation while the City is updating their ordinances. The City website states parks close at 11:00 pm, the ordinance states 10:00 pm and still others parks have signage that says sunup to sundown. Andy first recommended sunup to sundown but the Commission was unanimous that it would be too early for our parks to close in the beginning and at the end of the season. It was determined that all parks would close at 10:00 pm. Andy Wieteki will formally recommend to the City Manager.

c) Park Tour - Memorial Beach

The main reason for the park tour at Memorial Beach was to see the start of the retaining wall project. The contractor, however, had to push the start date back to the beginning of October due to delays on another big project. Andy showed the Commission members the contractor's markings on the hill so they could visualize where everything will be located. The Park Advisory Commission witnessed someone trying to walk down the hill and that reinforced the decision to put stairs going from the top of the hill to the lower trail. The stairs will prevent people from falling and get injured. The Commission members are excited to see the finished project as this will tremendously improve the area.

6. OTHER STAFF REPORTS

a) White Bear Lake Lions Accessible Playground Update

Andy Wieteki reported to the Park Advisory Commission on the progress of the all-inclusive playground. We are getting close to the first step of ordering equipment. The City is applying for a grant by the end of the week with GameTime for the equipment purchase. The White Bear Lake Lions Club is also applying for a grant with the Lions Club International to help fund the project. T.A. Schifsky & Sons is making a sizable donation for this project by donating all of the site excavation that is due to start in early October. Andy Wieteki hopes to order the equipment in the next month and store until the funds are secure. The rising cost of steel keeps raising the cost of the project. It was decided to purchase the materials now before we can no longer afford to build the project. Mike Shepard added that the White Bear Lake Lions Club is really excited about the design of the project and cannot wait to break ground.

b) Lions Park Bathroom Remodel 2022

Andy Wietecki received a rough budget number from Pelco Construction for the Lions Park bathroom facelift proposed for next year. The cost is higher than expected at \$128,000. Bryan Belisle asked a few questions about the work that would be completed at this price. Andy Wietecki believes that the project can be done a little cheaper and this is only a rough budget number. The quote from Pelco added to the work already scheduled for next year is higher than what is usually spent on an annual basis in the City's Park CIP. Andy spoke with Kerri Kindsvater, the City's Finance Director, to increase next year's Park funds to allow the entire project to be completed in one year and to avoid splitting the project into multiple years due to lack of budgeted funds.

c) Park Vandalism

Andy Wietecki reported that there was a lot of vandalism in the parks over the weekend. Podvin Park had significant property damage with a window smashed and a small fire in the Women's restroom. The restroom had to be professionally cleaned, painted and sealed to keep the smoke smell from lingering. The duct work will also be professionally cleaned of the soot so the smell isn't pushed throughout the facility. The following day the Men's restroom at Podvin was full of graffiti. A group of kids were caught after painting the three urinals, two toilets, mirrors and walls. Lions Park, Spruce Park and Stellmacher Park were all hit as well but less severely with toilet paper thrown around and no property damage. The Park Advisory Commission members were disgusted by all of the vandalism and suggested the City light these areas better. Andy stated that lights seem to actually attract kids who are ready to cause trouble. The Parks Department actually shuts off lights early when problems occur at some locations. The vandals seem to want to hang out under the lights at the pavilions. Bryan Belisle suggested that the City Council should be notified when vandalism happens and the Police Department should increase their presence to curb gathering by kids after dark.

7. COMMISSION REPORTS

None.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on October 21, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Park Commission, the meeting was adjourned. Moved by Mark Cermak and Anastacia Davis.