



**MINUTES
PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2022
6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

Chair Bill Ganzlin called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Ganzlin, Victoria Biehn, Mark Cermak, Anastacia Davis, Ginny Davis, Mike Shepard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bryan Belisle

STAFF PRESENT: Andy Wieteki, Parks Working Foreman

VISITORS PRESENT: None

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by member **Mark Cermak** seconded by member **Ginny Davis**, to approve the agenda as presented with the addition of Mountain Bike Trail in White Bear Lake being added to New Business.

Motion carried 6:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of November 18, 2021

It was moved by member **Mike Shepard** seconded by member **Victoria Biehn**, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2021 meeting as presented.

Motion carried, 6:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Nothing scheduled

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2022 Parks Capital Improvement Projects

Andy Wieteki reviewed the Parks Capital Improvement projects for the year. As we have done in previous years, Andy went through each park and explained the details of the projects and the reasons behind the project. The Park Advisory Commission is excited for the new improvements that are scheduled for 2022.

Bill Ganzlin did ask about the proposed trail through Hidden Hollow Park. Bill was curious if the plan was to pave a circle around the interior of the park or just the existing trail. Andy explained that the City is paving the trail that is currently made of millings. The newly paved trail will start from the existing paved trail that comes down from Myrtle Avenue and will wrap around the south side of the park to the paved trail that comes off Jay Lane. The trail will continue to head east on the inside edge of the wood line and curve to the north ending in the northeast corner of the open space in the park. Bill also questioned if there were plan to pave through the woods to connect to the new trail on South Shore Boulevard. Extension to South Shore Boulevard will be part of another project once South Shore Trinity Church finalizes their expansion plans.

B. Parks Capital Improvement Budget Discussion

Andy Wietecki started the discussion with the Commission about the City's long term vision for the parks. They discussed the many great improvements made to the City parks over the past 4-5 years. Andy requested the Commission look closely at future improvements to see if there is anything the Commission members want to shuffle around to future years in order to incorporate new ideas into the near future. The conversation was very constructive and sparked a lot of discussions on new ideas the Park Advisory Commission would like to see added into Park CIP.

With the growing popularity of biking, Mike Shepard suggested that the City incorporate more bike racks throughout the City's park system.

Bill Ganzlin circled back to the Pickle Ball discussions of late last year and suggested portable Pickle Ball nets be purchased. With the high amount of play Bill sees in Florida, the City should consider looking into the cost to purchase a few sets of portable nets and utilize the basketball courts as a location for this activity. Anastacia Davis asked how the City would facilitate renting the portable nets. Mike Shepard suggested that there could be a dedicated time for Pickle Ball in the parks of our choosing. Podvin, Stellmacher, Spruce and McCarty parks were suggested because of their storage capabilities and basketball courts. There will need to be some internal discussions regarding the logistics of storage, rental and the time for set up and take down of the portable systems. The Parks Advisory Commission did like the idea of portable systems to gauge the popularity of Pickle Ball and the long term viability of the sport before investing into dedicated courts in our parks.

Anastacia suggested we improve the marketing of our parks on the City website to be more interactive. She would like to see information and maps that help direct residents and visitors to the amenities in our community such as trails, bike fix stations and outdoor exercise stations. The website would need to be easy to navigate and display our entire park system. Andy Wietecki reported to the Park Advisory Commission that the City's website does highlight all the parks with a narrative including the amenities offered.

The Commission discussed a Marketfest booth which would be staffed by 1 or 2 Park Advisory Commission members to educate the public on what the City parks have to offer.

The booth could display maps showing the parks and trails or brochures with a quick overview of the park system. The booth could also have a suggestion box to gather information from people on what they would like to see added to City's parks in the future. Andy is in full support of this idea as it would be a great way to market the parks and gather useful information that will help the City better understand how residents want to use the park and the type of amenities that should be featured in our City parks.

Another topic that the Commission spent some time discussing was the lack of signage. The Park Advisory Commission unanimously agreed there was a need for more signs and monuments telling the City's story and history. Anastacia believes that the amount of people who stop and look at the monument on Lake Avenue about the burial mounds is proof that more signs and monuments are needed throughout the City. Ginny suggested signs that talk about projects and native areas similar to the ones they have been installing at Tamarack Nature Center the past couple of years. Andy has had some recent discussions with Sara Hanson with the White Bear Lake Historical Society about installing more history plaques and signs throughout the City. The City would like to install a sign at the Erd Geist Gazebo to tell the story of how the gazebo became a fixture at Matoska Park.

C. Rotary Park Restoration Project

Andy Wietecki explained the White Bear Lake Rotary Club approached the City last year with some projects they would like to complete at Rotary Park. One of the Rotary Club's main focuses is protecting and investing in the environment. The City has been working close with the Rotary Club in creating some phased projects that they are looking to complete over the next 3 to 5 years. The first project this year will be to restore the area just off the parking lot overtaken by Siberian Elm and establish a native pollinator garden which will serve as a welcoming feature for those that enter the park. The next big project the Rotary Club is working towards is complete restoration. This will include removal of the invasive Amur Maples on both sides of the trail, establishing a new Oak Savannah with under story plants and installing a new wetland native planting along the pond. The project would extend along the trail from the parking lot to Birch Lake Boulevard North along both sides of the trail. Andy stated that one of the biggest challenges will be the deforestation of the invasive trees since that is 95% of the canopy along the trail. It will be a great project that will include a lot of education and outreach to the community so there is not a shock when trees are removed.

D. Mountain Bike Trial in White Bear Lake

Mark Cermak had an individual reach out to him via e-mail inquiring about the City's interest or plans to build a mountain bike trail in any of the City parks. Bill Ganzlin doesn't recall this question being brought to the Commission in the 20 years that he has been involved. Most of the discussion centered on where a trail would fit into our parks. As the Commission discussed locations that would be appropriate for mountain biking, they came to the realization that most City parks are developed and not large enough to incorporate a mountain bike trail. Anastacia suggested that we ask the individual some questions to find out more information about his vision. What would a starter trail look

like? What type of an experienced rider would one need to be to ride this trail? Would this trail have to be long or something that is a small feature in the park? The only park that Andy could envision incorporating a mountain bike trail into would be Lakewood Hills Park on the southeast side that is not developed. The trail could be incorporated with the many other trails that are currently in this park and slated to be paved in the near future. This would give the rider the ability to not only have a mountain bike trail but also a trail system that would encompass the entire park. Mike Shepard doesn't believe Lakewood Hills is a good park for this activity due to the number of park users and traffic already using Lakewood Hills. Mark will reach out to the individual and relay the Commission's questions and extend an invitation to attend the next Park Advisory Commission Meeting to help gather more information.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

Memorial Beach Wall Update

Since this was the first time the Park Advisory Commission has met since the project at Memorial Beach was finished, Andy shared some pictures of the finished project. Andy also updated them on the landscape plan that will begin as soon as the weather allows.

Accessible Playground

Andy Wieteki reported to the Commission that he is still waiting to hear from Paul Kowitz on the award status of the much anticipated grant from Lions International to help offset major costs. Andy explained the funding details for the project and a rough estimate of what is needed to complete the project this year. Mike suggested that if the City is close with funding, the Lions Club may be willing to donate more to this project to make sure it is completed this year. The White Bear Lake Lions Club is launching a new website and the new website will be an instrumental part to public fund raising if the Lions Club decides to go that route. Andy strongly recommends that the public be engaged on this project as funding could exceed our expectations and public engagement could help add other components to this project that would otherwise be a few years out from being added.

B. Commission member updates

None.

C. Other Business

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Bill Ganzlin** seconded by member **Ginny Davis** to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 6:0