



**MINUTES  
PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022  
6:30 P.M. AT MATOSKA PARK**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE**

Acting Chair Mike Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bryan Belisle, Victoria Biehn, Mark Cermak, Ginny Davis, and Mike Shepard

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Anastacia Davis, Bill Ganzlin

**STAFF PRESENT:** Andy Wieteki, Parks Working Foreman

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Councilmember Heidi Hughes, Terry Honsa, Debra Schneider, Dave Peterson, Brian Bonin, Rachel Bonin

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was moved by member **Bryan Belisle** seconded by member **Mark Cermak**, to approve the agenda.

Motion carried 5:0.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Minutes of July 21st, 2022

It was moved by member **Ginny Davis** seconded by member **Mark Cermak**, to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2022 meeting as presented.

Motion carried, 5:0.

**4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Nothing Scheduled

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Nothing Scheduled

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Dog Beach Discussion

Andy Wieteki began meeting by asking each Park Advisory Commission Member to present what was observed at their site visits. See attachment for each member's observations.

After each member presented their findings, Mike Shepard opened up the discussion for any of the visitors to offer input on the dog beach.

Debra Schneider, a resident of White Bear Lake and also owner of All Breed Obedience (a behavioral school for dogs) and a professional dog trainer is in attendance in support of the dog beach. Debra's believes dogs need to be leashed at the beach because it is a public beach and not a dog park. Dog owners are responsible for keeping their animal under control and the only way to do that is by leash whether they are on land or in the water.

Terry Honsa, a White Bear Lake resident and avid dog beach user, agreed that the individuals using the beach need to keep their pets on a leash. Terry asked if they City can make the dog beach rules sign larger and redesign it to highlight the main rules so that people actually read them. Terry also suggested that we add permanent fencing to the area to help contain the dogs to the dog beach area. Andy is working with the MnDNR and WBLCD to see what is allowed for fencing on both land and in the lake bed. The water is receding and that leaves a gap for the dogs to run towards the 7<sup>th</sup> Street swim beach. Andy explained that he would like to install a fence on land that goes a little ways up the hill and down the shoreline to the water's edge. The fencing that would be installed in the lake bed area would be temporary and follow the water as it rises and falls. Terry also mentioned that she has been advocating in favor of the dog beach for the past 5 years and the leash issue seems to be the biggest problem. Terry believes most people respect the rules of the dog beach but there are a few that don't listen or follow the rules. The Park Advisory Commission all agreed that a fence and new sign would be good steps towards improving some of the issues with people with off leash dogs.

Councilmember Heidi Hughes introduced herself to the group and reported that the dog beach has been an issue for many years. The dogs leave the dog beach and end up on private property causing headaches for the residents that live along this stretch of Lake Avenue. Terry Honsa stated to the visitors that Councilmember Heidi Hughes is related to Brian and Rachel Bonin and that her property hasn't been affected by the dog beach. Councilmember Hughes responded that she has dealt with these issues with her sister and brother-in-law for many years and wants to make changes to this area. She has had many neighbors reach out with the same concerns that Brian and Rachel have been dealing with.

Brian Bonin stated that he was on the Parks Advisory Commission back when the dog beach was brought to the Commission for support and that he supported it 100%. Brian said he is tired of the reoccurring issues and thinks the dog beach needs to be relocated. Rachel Bonin stated that they are tired of the constant issues with the dog beach. Rachel mentioned that they cannot even start their grill without the dogs wondering over for handouts. She stated that many times she has to bring the dogs back to the dog beach where the pet owners are. Rachel also stated that over the years she has been asked to take pictures, videos and report back to the previous City Managers. Rachel would like to know what has been done with that information. Andy replied that he does not have any information on what she was tasked to do or who has reviewed that information at the City. Andy will check with the City Manager's office and continue those conversations

with the new City Manager.

Brian Bonin also mentioned the water quality of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street beach must be affected by all the dogs using the lake as a bathroom. This topic has been brought up before and the City started to collect weekly water samples and have them tested for E. coli at both the dog beach and at Memorial Beach. Andy reported that most of the readings were between 36 - 250 MPN/100 ml and at the 1260 MPN/100 ml is when a swimming area needs to be closed for safety reasons. Since taking samples, the City has never had to close either beach down for any type of water quality issue. Both Terry Honsa and Commission member Ginny Davis were surprised that we perform weekly water tests to ensure the safety for the users of our beaches.

There was continued discussion about closing the 7<sup>th</sup> Street swim beach due to the dogs crossing the fence/rope buoys. Two commission members suggested closing the 7<sup>th</sup> Street swim beach because there is a swimming beach is two blocks north of this area.

If the beach remains open, Brian Bonin asked if the City is willing to install no fishing signs at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street swim dock since its dangerous to have loose fishing hooks and lures in the water where we invite people to swim. Andy will discuss his requests with the Public Works Director.

There was another resident who did not provide their name but who showed up to the meeting to request a garbage can be installed at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street swim beach. There is a lot of trash left behind because there isn't anywhere to dispose of it. Andy mentioned that there is currently a trash can at the stairway to the south. Andy is reluctant to have one installed at the lake level as it is hard to carry a full can up the flight of stairs. Andy will look into another trash can at the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> Street swim beach stairs along the trail.

After the conversations started repeating themselves, Mike Shepard asked if anyone had anything new to add to the conversation or if he should close the open forum on this topic. Brian Bonin added that he likes the idea of the dog beach but would like to see the location change. When asked where he thought the dog beach should be moved, he suggested over by the road that leads to Manitou Island on the east side of the boat launch parking lot. Andy replied that there are too many hazards in that area, it wouldn't be a good location. The City hired a company to cut the trees down at that location when the water level was low but they were unable to remove the stumps and debris. Brian then suggested Lakewood Hills Park at Hanlos Lake or maybe even Goose Lake may be a good location to move the dog beach. The only other fact that was brought up was the dog beach seems to have gotten worse with social media. This platform allows a wide reach to invite many from surrounding communities and has since gotten a lot more traffic with non-residents. Mike Shepard closed the open forum on this topic. The Park Advisory Commission will have continued conversations at their upcoming meetings after gathering more information and before making a recommendation to the City Council on the future of the dog beach.

## 7. DISCUSSION

### A. Staff updates

- Andy updated the Commission on the playground mulch project. Ebba Park and Hidden Hollow transition from sand to engineered wood fiber has been completed. The Parks Department is finishing up the transition of Lakewood Hills Park. Next year, the City will continue this process at Ramaley Park, Spruce Park, Podvin Park and West Park.

### B. Commission member updates – None.

### C. Other Business

- No other discussion

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Mike Shepard** seconded by member **Victoria Biehn** to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 5:0