



**MINUTES
PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2023
6:30 P.M. AT CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

Chair Bill Ganzlin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ginny Davis, Bill Ganzlin,

STAFF PRESENT: Andy Wieteki, Parks Working Foreman, Paul Kauppi, Public Works Director/City Engineer

VISITORS PRESENT: None

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Motion carried 5:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of November 17, 2022

It was moved by member **Anastacia Davis** seconded by member **Victoria Biehn**, to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2022 meeting as presented.

Motion carried, 5:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Nothing Scheduled.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nothing Scheduled.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Youth Baseball Investment/Lakewood Hills Ball Fields

Andy Wieteki shared with the Park Advisory Commission that he was approached by the White Bear Baseball Association (WBBA) about future use of the Lakewood Hills fields. Last year, the City entered into a license agreement that allows Youth Baseball to use two of the softball fields and the complex for their games, practices and tournaments. The association had a great experience with the Park and what the complex has to offer. The

Youth Baseball Association is impressed with the impact that the complex has made on the players and their families and asked to expand their use of the fields. They have raised a decent amount of money and would like to explore investing significantly in the Lakewood Hills Park complex to help make it an even better experience.

The three areas that WBBA would like to invest in are: installing protective netting around the backstops and down the 1st and 3rd base lines to protect players and spectators from pop fly and foul balls, turn one or two of the fields into 75-80 base lines with grass infields around the pitcher's mound, and lastly to build a batting cage onsite. With the potentially large investment, the one stipulation that WBBA is asking for is to have priority use of this complex from April – July. Andy and Paul have spoken a little on this topic but will need to have more conversations to understand how other associations in WBL use this complex to make sure that it is still available for all to use. Andy has already reached out to Jon Anderson with the WBL School District to ask some questions about how this could affect others that use the Lakewood Hills Park ball fields.

Paul Kauppi asked where all the softball players are going if they aren't playing here. Andy did not have an answer to that question but he did ask Jon Anderson if this would interfere with softball. Jon answered that long term for softball is not good and he doesn't see the school district doing anything in the near future. Jon did not state the changes that the baseball association would like to make would not interfere with any future softball plans.

Bryan Belisle questioned the idea of permanently converting all the fields and asked Andy to maybe market our fields to help bring more softball players/games back to Lakewood Hills Park. Bryan believes that if we allow basement to install pitchers mounds that softball won't be able to play on them. Andy replied that the softball can still play with a grass infield and maybe the conversation with WBBA is they use portable mounds instead of a permanent mound. Mike Shepard likes the idea that WBBA is wanting ownership and looking to invest a substantial amount of money to make the improvements that are needed. He also likes that the upgrades will not have to come from the Parks Capital Improvement Budget. Bryan did agree that the improvements are needed as he has encountered foul balls in the spectator's area. He would like to see two of the fields remain dedicated to softball. Anastacia Davis supports the idea and it will elevate the park with many improvements from the WBBA. A vote is not needed tonight and the discussion is for information purposed only. Andy only learned of WBBA's intent two weeks ago and we are still in the very early stages of the process. He only wanted to get the conversation started with the Commission.

B. RFP for Downtown Reconstruction Project

Paul Kauppi shared with the Commission that the City is preparing for the reconstruction project in the areas downtown that were not touched in the early 2000s when the City previously made improvements. He explained that the City is interviewing engineering firms for mobility studies, designs, wayfinding. The City will be looking for a volunteer

from the Parks Advisory Commission to help with some of these decisions. The Committee will be put together later this summer/fall once the engineering firm is hired.

C. 2023 Parks Capital Improvement Projects - Review

Andy reviewed the 2023 Parks Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) budget with the Commission explaining all of the projects that will happen in 2023. He reported that they are planning to shift the money that was budgeted to paint the exterior soffits at Podvin Park and put those dollars towards the dog beach fencing and swimming barrier. The exterior soffits at Podvin are holding up better than they anticipated and the painting isn't needed this year. Andy will update the Commission at the next meeting.

The Commission should look through the entire CIP document and make notes. If there is something listed and they feel it is important to add to a City Park, bring it to the Commission for discussion.

Andy also reminded the Park Advisory Commission that the new park signs are not added into this budget yet. A solid budget number is needed and then there will be some discussions on how to fit it into our CIP. Mike Shepard suggested the Commission members look at the signs currently in the parks during their summer park tour and report back on how many signs each park needs.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

- Recap Workshop with City Council – The Park Advisory Commission took a few minutes and discussed the workshop, how it went and what they felt needs more discussion. The Commission enjoyed the opportunity and look forward to meeting with the City Council and Mayor again.

B. Commission Member Updates

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Mark Cermak** seconded by member **Bryan Belisle** to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 5:0