



**MINUTES
PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION
CITY OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, MINNESOTA
THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024
6:30 P.M. AT CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM
AT 4701 HWY 61 NORTH**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

Chair Bill Ganzlin called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bryan Belisle, Anastacia Davis

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

VISITORS PRESENT:

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Motion carried, 5:0.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of February 15, 2024

It was moved by member **Mike Shepard** seconded by member **Victoria Biehn**, to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2024 meeting.

Motion carried, 5:0.

4. VISITORS AND PRESENTATIONS

Nothing Scheduled

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nothing Scheduled

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Summer Park Tours

Andy Wieteck confirmed the proposed locations with the Commission. This year the Park Advisory Commission tours will take place at West Park (May), Hidden Hollow (June), Rotary Nature Preserve (July – Pizza Party), Jack Yost (August), and Ramaley (September).

B. Summer Park Inspections

Andy requested that the Commission wait until the parks are officially open (after April 15th) before

completing the inspections. The Parks Department needs time to get the parks and restrooms open and water turned on. The Park inspections should be completed by the June 20th meeting. Paul Kauppi suggested that the Commission should be visiting the parks when people are using them. Paul also asked the Commission to report items that look dated, worn out, and in need of replacing. The Parks Department is usually focused on the task of the day like mowing, weeding, building repairs and don't always have time to look at all the infrastructure.

C. Council Workshop recap/review

At the workshop, the two future projects that received the most attention were the proposed park sign replacement project and the highly demanded pickleball courts. The conversation on the pickleball courts centered on the high cost. It would cost more than \$400,000 to install 4-8 courts and the Commission doesn't have the funds available to install a project of that caliber. A couple of the Council Members mentioned that if there was a partner to share the costs that would change the conversation or at least start the conversation on developing this new amenity.

Andy Wietecki then summarized the conversation about the park signs. He believes that the project being labeled park monuments and not park signs makes the project sound more expensive than what is being proposed. During the conversation, Andy presented to Council that most of the park signs are failing due to rotting bases. The City seals attached to most of the signs are faded and falling off. Some of the parks don't have signs at entrances or the signs are outdated. Andy Wietecki shared his vision to standardizing the park signs by pulling in components from our other city monuments and historic markers. Andy reminded the Commission of the past conversations about park signs and incorporating some smaller signs at trail entrances and larger signs at bigger park entrances so there is some variety. For instance, Hidden Hollow will have three smaller signs and Lakewood Hills might have one smaller and two bigger signs.

Andy also shared positive feedback he received from the Mayor and Council regarding the interaction the PAC has been having with residents with the Marketfest booth. They really appreciate that the Park Advisory Commission is engaging with the public at City events and through our park tours and inspections.

D. EAC Presentation Discussion

Bill Ganzlin asked Andy to bring maps of the EAC presentation to the meeting tonight. Andy presented the maps to the Commission and quickly reviewed what was discussed and proposed at last month's meeting. He reminded the Commission that this is just the beginning of the conversation of adding pollinator/rain gardens in our parks. Andy's focus is re-establishing our current natural areas that have been under-managed since the day they were installed. Paul Kauppi reminded the Commission there is a cost to install these gardens but even more costs to maintain them after they are initially planted. The cost sometimes drives the under-managed approach since funds may not be available for the ongoing maintenance and the Parks Department has limited resources to complete the maintenance in house.

Connie Taillon will be redlining the current maps and making the changes that were suggested for each park. Once completed, the EAC and PAC will have another meeting together this fall to create a master plan for implementing these gardens into our parks. Bill Ganzlin asked what the plan is to fund these projects when there are park projects we cannot fund. Paul Kauppi stated that is one of the hurdles as the EAC does not have much of a budget. Due to lack of funding, the master plan may

be a 20-30 year plan and some of the project might never happen. However, if funding is secured, a long term plan will exist to follow.

7. DISCUSSION

A. Staff updates

a. Podvin Floor

Andy Wietecki updated the Commission on the floor coatings at Podvin Park. After the fire damage last year to the men's restroom, the City had to replace the floor coating. This year, the City is removing the women's restroom coating and kitchen/serving room at Podvin Park. The project is scheduled for the week of March 25th to ensure it is completed before the parks open for the year. Andy mentioned that the City is changing coating systems to alleviate the staining that occurs with the current systems in place.

b. 2024 CIP Project Update

Andy updated the Commission on this year's Capital Improvement Projects. The City is applying for the MnDNR Outdoor Recreation Grant to help offset the costs for the trail paving improvements that are budgeted for 2024. If the City is awarded the grant, the project would be moved to 2025. If the City is unsuccessful in obtaining the grant, the project will be completed in 2024, minus the trail in the woods that will be completed at another time. The other projects for 2024 include upgrades at the ballfield restrooms at Lakewood Hills, vegetation removal at Makoska boat launch, drinking fountains at Veterans and Railroad Parks, and the floor at Podvin Park.

c. Seasonal Update

Andy Wietecki advised the Commission that the Matoksa and the Veterans Park launch docks have already been installed this year. There was minimal damage to the Marina this year but the ice did significant damage to the stairs and ramps leading to the docks. Andy has two contractors lined up to make repairs and the repairs should be completed by the 2nd week in April.

d. Ash Tree Update

Paul Kauppi gave a brief update regarding the grant the City received from the MnDNR for removal and replacement of EAB diseased ash trees. The grant is a significant resource that will be used for the trees on City boulevards. With the grant, we will be working to update the City ordinance of trees in the public right-of-ways and implementing our EAB plan.

B. Commission member updates

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, it was moved by member **Mark Cermak** seconded by member **Victoria Biehn** to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm.

Motion carried, 5:0