

EAST BETHEL PARK COMMISSION MEETING
March 13, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Kenneth Langmade, Bill Zimmerman, Sue Jefferson, Denise Lachinski, Stacy Voelker, Bonnie Harvey

ABSENT: Public Works Manager Nate Ayshford, Tim Hoffman

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Jack Davis
City Council Liaison Tom Ronning

1. Call to Order Chair Langmade called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. Adopt Agenda **Commissioner Zimmerman moved and Ms. Harvey seconded to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion carried.**

3. Oath of Office **Commissioner Harvey took the Oath of Office.**

4. Approve Minutes **Commissioner Lachinski moved and Commissioner Zimmerman seconded to approve the February 13, 2019 minutes as written. Motion carried.**

There was a question as to what was meant by the following item in the minutes, "*Ms. Gessner clarified that for 2019 the Commission wants the following projects listed:*

- *Bataan trail segment*
- *Norseland Park/Jackson St. Trail connection*
- *Playground equipment at Carlisle Park*
- *Oak Brooke Acres park with playground equipment and trail segment.*"

Mr. Davis suggested addressing this question to Ms. Gessner at the next Park Commission meeting.

5. Park Financial Information Mr. Davis asked if there were any questions on the 2019 Parks Operating line item budget.
 - Line Item #151 Worker's Comp Insurance Premium – Why is this at 167%? Mr. Davis said there were two substantial workers comp claims in 2018 (not for Parks) of which the costs were spread out to all the departments. So the 167% represents the increase that the City received from the past two-year claim history.
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- Line Item #102 Full-time Employee Overtime – What was that for? Mr. Davis will check with Mr. Ayshford to find out. The commissioners thought that this fund paid for all snowplowing overtime. No, that is charged to the Roads Commission. Commissioner Voelker asked what is snowplowed in the parks. Mr. Davis answered that the trail around the pond, the ski trail is groomed and the *1/2 parking lot by the Fish Lake shelter, and generally Booster East and Booster West are opened. After clean-up is done, the John Anderson parking lot is opened and the little trail system there.

The Park Acquisition and Development Fund balance is \$89,363.13. Received was a park dedication fee from the Cedar Creek Senior Living project for \$13,600 and \$290.81 of interest earned. No payment has been received for the Cambia Hills project; that park dedication fee will be paid when the City issues the Certificate of Occupancy, most likely in December, for approximately \$41,000. Also received was \$2,000 from Sherco Construction Company for a lot split approved last night. There is a preliminary plat for a subdivision in the northeast portion of the city. Depending on the outcome of how it will be serviced with streets, a park dedication fee will be \$12,000 to \$27,000, roughly an additional \$68,000 in the account bringing it to about \$132,000 for 2019. This account is growing with development.

The Park Capital Fund's current balance is \$147,898.81, this reflects the transfer of \$80,000 from the General Fund.

The combined total of the Park Acquisition and Development Fund and the Park Capital Fund will be close to \$300,000 in 2019 for parks development and improvement projects.

During the 2020 budget discussions there will be a recommended increase of the City transfer to the Parks fund to get back to the \$100,000 annual transfer amount.

The commissioners were very happy to hear of the efforts being made to increase the annual transfer amount.

6. 2020-2024 Parks CIP

Background Information:

The Parks Commission prepares a Capital Improvement Plan annually which updates projected projects, evaluates priorities and establishes funding for these works for the coming year and for each of the subsequent years for a five-year period. This plan is presented to City Council for their approval and used for preparing the coming year's budget.

The 2019-2023 Parks CIP and a draft 2020-2024 Parks CIP developed from comments made at the February 13, 2019 Park Commission meeting were available for review and discussion. As part of this discussion, Mr. Davis exhibited proposals that recommended classifying the parks as to priorities for funding. Each park would be analyzed for its specific needs. Request recommendations for the Capital Improvement Plan would then be based on those needs.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Ayshford have been talking extensively about the 2020-2024 Parks CIP. One thing Mr. Davis would like the Commission to consider is a different way of determining what the park priorities are and how things are done. Mr. Davis said he and Mr. Ayshford looked at the park system and classify the parks into different categories which could then be prioritized. No parks would be abandoned, but some may only be maintained until demographics in the area change, postponed for improvements unless there are safety issues to address and/or there is more demand for a park usage.

Regional parks for the whole city – Booster East, Booster West, John Anderson Park and potentially Norseland Manor because it is the closest park to the new high-density housing.

Neighborhood parks that still have significant use – these are well spread out throughout the City.

Parks that have fallen into less usage than when built – there are four such parks Deer Haven, Carlisle, Eagle Ridge, and Bonde Park.

Recreational facilities that are not part of the City – East Bethel Elementary School and Cedar Creek Elementary School which have ballfields and playgrounds, walking areas and trails around Cedar Creek, Sandhill Crane area, and the County park. Others are Mallard Marsh Wildlife Management Area off Klondike with walking trails to Deer Lake, Gordy Mickelson Wildlife Management Area off County Road 74 which is approximately 160 acres, and the University of Minnesota’s facilities that are used around Fish Lake including the walking trail, cross-country ski trails, and bison observatory area.

When it comes to the number of facilities and parks, East Bethel has plenty. What is needed is to improve the quality of the parks and which ones really deserve the most attention. Mr. Davis believes those are the ones that get the most use.

From Mr. Davis’ and Mr. Ayshford’s discussions, they would like to see every park have a plan. So things that need to be done will be identified for each park, then a program can be set up to get those projects funded.

Mr. Davis presented drawings for the identified regional parks showing where trail systems are located, areas in the park that can be expanded, and potential property that could be acquired in the future for park expansion.

- Booster East Park – The plan would improve the walkway to the wetland island at Booster Pond, additional tree planting and identification of areas for future development .
- Booster West Park – Needs screenings and/or tree plantings as soon as possible. Mr. Davis would like to see the walking trail expanded from Booster East Park into this park. This would tie the two parks together more. The Commission needs to look at the improvement of the skate park and upgrading some of the facilities there. At

some point, additional parking may need to be added at Booster West Park. The sliding hill could be improved for better use.

With each park having a plan, it can be quantified and a means to achieve the funding can be identified.

- John Anderson Park is another good park because it has the lake surrounding it which is a wonderful water feature; it is one of the most scenic parks. The trail system within the park could be greatly expanded to provide a lot more opportunities. There are 8-10 acres on the west-side that currently is undeveloped and could be used for a parking lot and possibly a shelter and picnic tables. There is also a swimming beach there. Mr. Davis would like to see this park featured as a park amenity.
- Norseland Manor - There may be the opportunity to connect this with the Viking Preserve project, along with projects that tie-in south of Our Saviour's Church. A trail system could be developed here. Better parking facilities could be developed, along with a picnic shelter, a dog park and other facilities in the wooded area.

These are examples of the type of plans Mr. Davis and Mr. Ayshford would like to see for each of the parks in East Bethel. This will give the staff a better handle on trying to guide what the Commission is trying to accomplish with the funds to make improvements. Priorities need to be kept at the forefront when making decision. For the next several meetings, a park will be on the agenda for plan and priority discussion. When completed for all parks, it will be a guide for future CIPs. Ms. Voelker said it will also be useful to be able to see what amenities each park has when doing future planning.

Mr. Davis noted a feature on the City's website called pictometry that gives a high resolution of parcels which can be used for viewing parks, what amenities may be in the park, if there are wetlands, etc. Mr. Davis pulled up parcels for Oak Brooke (where residents are

wanting a playground and trail system) and John Anderson Park to show how the program works. Discussion followed on possible plans for these parks. Mr. Zimmerman clarified that a city-wide trail plan could also be a part of doing the park plans. Yes, that would help to prioritize trail connections. Mr. Davis believes stepping back and taking a different view of the parks will ensure the best utilization of funds and for drafting a complete CIP.

Ms. Lachinski referenced a Parks, Trails and Open Space comprehensive plan booklet that was done in 2008 that could be utilized and updated while park plans are done.

Many ideas were shared for park plans and items to consider, i.e. whether there is electricity, parking, playground equipment, etc. All the gathered information will help to determine what parks should be enhanced, maintained, have equipment removed, etc.

Proposed County Regional Trails were included on the Comprehensive Trails and Open Space Concept Plan that was provided.

Consensus of the Commission was to work on a plan for each individual park and then use the information to help with prioritizing goals and projects and future planning.

Mr. Davis further recommended, weather permitting, holding commission meetings at those parks that will be considered priorities to gather neighborhood input.

7. Council
Report and
Other
Business

City Council Liaison Tom Ronning stated it would be helpful to use census information to determine the demographics near parks. Mr. Davis said that it is possible and that depending on the information requested there may be a charge.

Mr. Ronning reported:

- Council approved Radja Lohse as the second East Bethel representative on the Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization.

Also noted:

- Council approved the hiring of an administrative assistant to fill the vacancy when Karen White retires.
- Council approved an Administrative Lot Split for 19832 East Bethel Blvd.
- Council tabled the Prairie Pines Preliminary Plat and Concept Plan until more information is gathered
- April 11 – COC Sunrise Breakfast
- April 11 – Signage Ordinance committee meeting
- April 11 – Townhall meeting at 6:00 pm
- April 26 – Pet Clinic
- April 27 – Recycling Day

Mr. Davis shared the following updates:

- Viking Preserve is expected to be built out in 3-5 years.
- The apartment complex moved slowly, but building is now picking up and be opened by fall of 2019.
- Cedar Creek Assisted Senior Living Facility will be starting excavation as soon as possible.
- Cambia Hills has been working through the winter and has footers poured; their goal is to be opened by December 2019.
- The Viking Blvd. RCI is going to start construction in April. MNDOT will be at the Townhall meeting with a booth set-up. That project should be finished by the end of June middle of July. Once it is completed the City hopes those people associated with a grocery store will see how great it works and it will elevate their fears about how the RCI will affect their location.

8. Adjourn **Ms. Jefferson moved and Ms. Voelker seconded to adjourn at 7:56 pm. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Gessner, Recording Secretary
Submitted 3/25/19