

Medina Park Commission Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2017
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The Park Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in regular session on January 18, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at Medina City Hall. Park Commission Chair Steve Lee presided.

1) Call to Order

Commissioners Present: Steve Lee, Lori Meehan, Michelle Beddor, Lisa Cole, Elizabeth Weir
Commissioners Absent: John Jacob and Jeff Rumsey
Also Present: Assistant City Administrator Jodi Gallup, Public Works Director Steve Scherer, City Council member Lorie Cousineau and Mayor Bob Mitchell

2) Introductions of New Park Commissioners

A brief introduction of members took place.

3) Appointment of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair & Secretary

A motion was made by Weir and seconded by Meehan to nominate and appoint Steve Lee as Chair. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Meehan and seconded by Lee to nominate and appoint Elizabeth Weir as Vice Chair. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Lee and seconded by Meehan to nominate and appoint Michelle Beddor as Secretary. Motion passed unanimously.

4) Additions to the Agenda

None

5) Approval of the Minutes from:

November 16, 2016 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Meehan and seconded by Beddor to approve the minutes from November 16, 2016 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

6) Public Comments (on items not on the agenda): None.

7) City Council Update

Lorie Cousineau gave the Park Commission an update on recent City Council actions.

8) Wally Marx – Conservation Design Subdivision PUD Concept Plan – 2500-2900 Parkview Drive – Park Dedication Review

Gallup presented the staff report stating that the applicant has submitted a concept plan review for a Conservation Design Subdivision PUD (CD-PUD) at 2500-2900 Parkview

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Drive. The applicant is proposing to subdivide three existing lots into six lots and put 69.61 acres (11.47 buildable acres) in a conservation easement.

Gallup reminded the Park Commission that this is a concept plan review, which is purely advisory and no formal action needed to be taken tonight.

Gallup explained that a CD-PUD allows the City to grant flexibility to the underlying zoning regulations in order to encourage property owners to protect natural resources and open space with permanent conservation easements.

Gallup stated that the property and most of the surrounding land is guided and zoned as Rural Residential. She noted that Baker National Golf Course is located to the west of Parkview Drive. She also explained that the property includes good quality tamarack and ash swamp and moderate quality maple-basswood forests which have been identified in the City's Open Space Report.

Gallup further explained the CD-PUD purpose and objectives, noting the primary and secondary conservation objectives listed below:

The primary conservation objectives identified in the ordinance are:

- The protection and/or restoration of the ecological function of native hardwood forests (e.g. Maple-Basswood Forest), lakes, streams and wetlands.
- The protection, restoration, and/or creation of moderate to high quality ecological resources including the sensitive ecological resources identified as priority areas on the Composite Map of the Open Space Report as updated from time to time.
- The reservation of land connecting these aquatic and terrestrial ecological resources in order to restore and/or create new ecological resources suitable for habitat movement corridors.

The secondary conservation objectives are as follows:

- The protection of scenic views and viewsheds including the views from roads identified as "Scenic Roads" on the Scenic Roads Map of the Open Space Report as updated from time to time.
- The reservation of land for incorporating public and private trails in order to create connections to existing or planned trails as identified in the current Parks, Trails, and Open Space Plan.
- The reservation of land for incorporating public and /or private Open Space in order to achieve goals as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Gallup explained that the City could take land, cash or a combination of the two for park dedication purposes. If the City took 10% of the land for park dedication it would be

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approximately 4.81 acres. If the City took the 8% cash-in-lieu it would be estimated as \$24,000.

Gallup noted that the applicant proposes a private trail in approximate location of an existing private horse trail. She stated that the Park Plan does not identify active parks in this area and the draft Trail Plan does not identify trails in the area, but the existing Master Plan identifies a potential widened shoulder along Parkview Drive. She stated that if public access to the conservation area is of interest, a shoulder trail along Parkview could be reevaluated or a potential bicycle “trailhead”.

Gallup referenced letters from the neighbors that were included in the packet, stating that some neighbors raised concern about public trails connecting to existing private trails would encourage trespass.

Staff suggested that trespass concerns should not be the only factor in determining if public access to the conservation area is designed. Staff could work with the applicant to come up with a thoughtful design to mitigate trespass, by signage, physical barriers, or entirely separate trails.

Kristin Evanson, 3072 Willow Drive, stated that she lived across the street from School Lake and could not speak for the residents that live on the lake, but felt that they would not be happy about a public trail. She noted that the existing private trail was narrow and wet in spots and would not be large enough or adequate as a public trail. She explained that the trail is very private, and it requires neighbors to ask permission to use it every spring and fall.

Sam Evanson, 3072 Willow Drive, stated that he has walked the trail many times and has concerns if the trail were to become public. He stated that it would probably be too much land to purchase for the park budget. He also noted that a public trail around the lake would devalue the landowners' property.

Kent Williams, 1632 Homestead Trail, stated that he represents the applicant. He noted that this is the third time Marx has brought a concept plan before the city and provided some history on the last two applications. He stated that the first application did not meet the 30% threshold; the second application met the threshold, but the applicant withdrew because his property was not coming out of Ag Preserve until 2016. He stated that this third application is the best yet and noted that the burden on the land is not much with the addition of only three lots.

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Williams explained that the property was a pig farm before the Marx bought it. He stated that the Marx cleaned up the property, planted prairie grasses and restored it, which caused an explosion of wildlife on the site. He noted that there is also a tamarack swamp and two old growth forests on the site.

Williams explained the conservation areas of the site and noted that the applicant is proposing to keep the private trail along School Lake that has existed since 1945. He explained that the trail is only quasi-public in the sense that you need a special private invitation to use the trail.

Possible easement holders for the conservation areas were discussed. The applicant is currently negotiating with Minnehaha Creek, but nothing has been finalized at this time.

Lee suggested that the city take the trail easement now to plan for a future possible trail if the adjoining properties were to develop 20, 30, 40 or 50+ years down the road. He noted that the trail would stay private and only be open to the public when a future trail connection could be made.

Williams questioned if any Park Dedication should even be taken on the site because of the amount of land being given for the conservation easements.

Scherer noted that the tradeoff for the conservation easements was the extra lots being allowed.

Williams reiterated that only three additional lots were being requested, which puts less burden on the land.

Lee stated that he would like to make the conservation areas accessible to the public in the future and would like to preserve the rights for the future of the city to develop the trail.

Williams explained that the CD-PUD ordinance does not weigh public vs. private trails any differently and made the following points as to why a public trail should not be allowed:

1. Increases the burden on the land that we are trying to preserve through conservation easements.
2. May trigger others to shut off access to the existing private horse trail.
3. Site lines along Parkview are challenging and may be dangerous for people to walk.
4. The pure fact that the City has an easement will affect the property values.

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Williams asked the Park Commission to consider waiving the Park Dedication all together because of the conservation aspects of the site.

Weir questioned if the applicant's proposed private trail would be under the conservation easement to ensure the future property owners on those sites would not close it.

Williams stated that the proposed private trail would be under the conservation easement.

The Park Commissioners reviewed the map and possible scenarios for future trails connecting from Willow Drive to Parkview Trail. It was noted that they were only one land owner away from making a trail connection.

There was a general consensus of the Park Commission that the horse trail should remain private at this time and under an easement on the conserved property. The Park Commissioners would like to preserve some as yet unspecified trail access from east on Willow Drive, west to Parkview Trail by working with staff and the applicant. The Park Commission would also like to consider a trail along Parkview Drive.

9) Ellis and Nancy Olkon – Preliminary Plat – 2362 Willow Drive – Park Dedication Review

Gallup presented the staff report noting that Ellis and Nancy Olkon have an application before the City for Preliminary Plat at 2362 Willow Drive for a 2-lot subdivision. She noted that the property and surrounding land is guided and zoned Rural Residential.

Gallup stated that Park Dedication would only be triggered if the subdivision was approved, but it may not occur in this case because the proposed lots in the plat do not meet minimum standards. She also noted that the City Council reviewed the application the previous evening and recommended denial.

Gallup reported that the Park Plan shows no active parks planned in the area and the Trail Plan identifies a potential widened shoulder that would be located within the right-of-way.

Gallup explained that the City could take land, cash or a combination of the two for park dedication purposes. If the City took 10% of the land for park dedication it would be approximately 1.02 acres. If the City took the 8% cash-in-lieu it would be estimated as \$8,000.

Gallup stated that staff would recommend cash-in-lieu of land dedication if the subdivision were to move forward. She also noted that the applicant has requested credit for a portion of the right-of-way if used for “trail” purposes. She stated that the City Council could discuss this if the subdivision moves forward.

A motion was made by Weir, seconded by Meehan to recommend cash-in-lieu for Park Dedication if the application were to move forward. Motion passed unanimously.

Ellis Olkon, 2362 Willow Drive, stated that he was very unhappy with the city and has no choice but to litigate.

10) 2040 Comprehensive Plan – Park and Trail Section

Lee briefly updated the Park Commission on the changes that had been made to Chapter 6 of the draft 2040 Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the map added potential park expansion circles near the Park at Fields of Medina and Medina Lake Preserve.

A motion was made by Weir, seconded by Beddor to restore on the map the potential trail along Parkview Drive between County Road 24 and Hamel Road.

Discussion occurred:

Meehan questioned why the trail had been removed from the map?

Lee stated that staff had tried to scale back the trail map because there were too many trails on the map that would likely never be built with the limited resources that need to last into the future for park and trail development.

Motion passed unanimously.

Beddor noted a correction on page 7 of Chapter 6 under “Future Parks” that the text still indicated that there were four planned future parks on the map, but it had been scaled back to three.

11) 2017 Goal Setting Session

There was a general consensus to table this discussion until February when more Park Commissioners would be in attendance.

12) Park Tree Protection Policy

Weir showed pictures to the Park Commissioners of the damage done to young trees within our parks by contracted weed whippers. She noted that the contractors are in a

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hurry and not careful around the trees. She stated all the possible ways to protect these trees could include policies to:

- Apply wood chips around the trees annually
- Wrap plastic sleeves around the young tree trunks
- Leave a natural look by allowing the grass and weeds to grow around the trees
- Spray roundup around the trees

Scherer stated that he did not feel that a written policy was necessary, but will implement a little more care in how they protect trees from weed whipping going forward. He will report back next year on how the season went.

Weir volunteered to write an article about the damage of weed whipping around trees in a future *Medina Message* newsletter.

13) Staff Report

Gallup reported:

- The 2017 roster for Park Commission representation at Council meetings was included in the packets. Lee noted that Park Commissioners should swap days if they cannot attend a meeting.
- The City Council adopted an amendment to the Park Commission Ordinance to allow up to two non-voting youth members to serve one year terms with possible renewals for one year.
- The City Council approved the 2017 contract with the Hamel Athletic Club.
- Orono Baseball has approached the city and is interested in using Medina Morningside for four nights a week this summer.

14) Adjourn

A motion was made by Weir, seconded by Meehan and passed unanimously, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jodi Gallup.