

Medina Park Commission Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2010

Medina City Hall

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The Park Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in regular session on February 17, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Medina City Hall. Park Commission Chair Ben Benson presided.

1) **Call to Order**

Commissioners present: Ben Benson, Janet White, Bill Waytas, Chris Hilberg, Ann Thies, and Paul Jaeb

Commissioners absent: Madeleine Linck

Also present: Assistant to City Administrator Jodi Gallup, Public Works Superintendent Steve Scherer, and City Council member Carolyn Smith

2) **Additions to the Agenda:** None.

3) **Approval of the Minutes**

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- Section 8: The money should be ~~passed onto the kids that use~~ for the benefit of the users of the ball fields.

A motion was made by Thies and seconded by Hilberg to approve the minutes, with the noted correction. Motion passed unanimously.

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

5) **City Council Update:**

Carolyn Smith updated the Park Commission that since the last time the Park Commission met, the City Council:

- Approved the Rural Commercial Holding ordinance.
- Approved the construction of a new office building at Baker Park Near Wilderness Center.
- Reviewed the Lennar Concept Plan that is being proposed on the Holasek farm.
- Held a workshop with staff to create goals for the 2010 work plan.
- Approved a memorandum of understanding with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.
- Discussed the Public Works Facility project updates at various meetings.
- Received an update from the Hamel and Loretto Volunteer Fire Departments to discuss merging the two departments.

Carolyn Smith attended the West Metro Drug Task Force meeting and shared some positive statistics on what the task force has accomplished.

6) Open Systems International Land-Use Application; Park Dedication Discussion

Gallup gave a presentation to the Park Commission explaining the applicant's request to subdivide a 57 acre parcel into one 20 acre lot and three outlots.

Gallup reported that the Park Commission's Trail Plan shows a proposed trail along Arrowhead Drive, which is the eastern edge of the 20 acre lot. The Open Space Plan also designates the western 5.4 acres of this lot to be a "priority area".

Staff recommended only applying park dedication to Lot 1, Block 1 at this time; park dedication would apply to the outlots when those lots develop.

Gallup stated that the options for park dedication would be taking 10% of the buildable land which is 1.687 acres, taking cash-in-lieu of 8% of the average market value which would be \$102,400, or take a combination of land and cash.

Gallup reminded the Park Commission of the recent changes to the Park Dedication Ordinance. The commercial cash-in-lieu fee was reduced from 10% to 8% and new language was added to create a potential exclusion to the definition of "buildable land".

Staff recommended that the western 5.4 acres of Lot 1, Block 1 be subtracted from the park dedication calculation with the condition that the property owner protects it as open space.

Thies asked the applicant what would be their intended use of the western 5.4 acres and if they had a management plan on how they would protect the land to be kept as open space.

Ed Fitzpatrick with Open Systems International (OSI) stated that the company would like to utilize the area for trails and a possible picnic shelter. It would be an area for employees to get outside and walk around. The picnic shelter could be used for employee picnics, but OSI would want to create a class 5 road to access the area by vehicle to bring food and supplies. Fitzpatrick stated that OSI has no intentions of putting a building on the property today, but has a vision of the land being utilized as a retreat area and/or training and education area with a possible model home.

Fitzpatrick acknowledged that OSI does not have a management plan for the 5.4 acres.

Tim Cavanaugh, representing the current property owner, described the land and stated that the land has been untouched for years.

The Park Commissioners discussed what level of impact they were comfortable with on the 5.4 acres that are being proposed as open space. There was a general consensus that a wood chip trail and 20 x 20 foot picnic shelter would be acceptable. There was some concern with the impact created from building an access road.

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The Park Commissioners discussed what types of controls would be needed to preserve the 5.4 acres as open space and how to define open space.

Thies asked OSI what controls they would be comfortable following.

Fitzpatrick stated that OSI will consistently follow any controls that are in place, but would want an option to build on the land in the future so it does not become foul land.

Discussion took place on how important it was to the Park Commission on preserving this land. It was determined that some of the land would already be protected by the wetland ordinance and tree preservation ordinance. The Park Commission acknowledged that it would not make sense for the City to purchase the land because access to the property would not be allowed from Highway 55. The Park Commission is more interested in acquiring the trail easement on this property and acquiring property some where to the north of this property in the future for an active park.

There was a general consensus that if in the future the land owner wishes to build on the buildable acres of the preserved open space, the land owner would need to pay the park dedication dollars that were subtracted from the original calculation.

Discussion took place on how large the trail easement should be. It was noted that staff's recommendation was 15 feet, but 10 more feet would allow the trail to meander away from the road and give the trail more character. OSI was opposed to a larger trail because it would impact the entrance to the property and possibly building setbacks.

Scherer stated that staff crunched the numbers earlier today in the event this would be brought up. The City would receive approximately \$3,500 less from the park dedication dollars if the City wanted the additional 10 feet of trail easement.

A motion was made by Thies and seconded by Jaeb to recommend to the City Council to remove the western 5.4 acres from the park dedication calculation to preserve the area as open space; allow passive recreational trails and a picnic shelter structure not to exceed 20 x 20 feet in the open space; have the open space be recorded in appropriate manner as staff sees fit; require a 15 foot trail easement adjacent to Arrowhead Drive; and require cash-in-lieu of remaining dedication of approximately \$69,000, which will be paid over a three year period. Motion Passed Unanimously.

7) Plan for Future Park Study Areas

Gallup reported that one of the Park Commission's 2010 goals was to create a more detailed future park study areas plan that will help staff communicate with the land owners and future developers as to what will be the future plan/need for parks on their property.

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The Park Commission received a map to help guide them while creating the plan that showed the future active and passive park study areas, proposed and existing trails, wetlands, and an aerial.

The first area the Park Commission reviewed was the active park study area circle over the Cavanaugh property where OSI is proposing to build. There was a general consensus that an active park would not be appropriate on the subdivided 20 acre parcel, so the Park Commission looked at Outlot A which is just to the north of the proposed OSI building. It was determined that the Park Commission could only receive about 1.6 acres in dedicated land when Outlot A develops, which the Park Commission would want at least .25 acres for a 15 foot trail easement along Arrowhead Drive. The remainder of the dedicated acres would be too small for an active Park.

There was a general consensus that the active park should be located north or to the west of Outlot A near a future residential subdivision. This area is the number one priority for an active park because it will likely become a high density development.

At the May 20, 2009 Park Commission meeting it was discussed that the active park circle north of Highway 55 should have a park that is between Hunter Lions Park and Hamel Legion Park in size and amenities.

Gallup noted that Hamel Legion Park is approximately 40 acres and Hunter Lions Park has about 4.5 acres of active park amenities. This leaves a lot of room for interpretation in determining the size of a future active park.

Gallup recommended that the Park Commission evaluate the City's future needs for specific park amenities such as soccer fields and hockey rinks. Staff could figure out how many acres were needed for each amenity; an example would be that two tennis courts would be .25 acres and a baseball field would be 2 acres. After compiling a list of the future needed park amenities, the Park Commission could determine the appropriate amount of acres needed for each future park.

The Park Commission recognized that the City of Medina would not be able to get another park the size of Hamel Legion Park through park dedication during subdivisions; a property owner would need to give the entire property to the City in order to have another 40 acre park.

There was a general consensus that a future active park should be approximately five to ten acres.

The Park Commission wanted to make sure it was clear that the park study area circles on the map are just general areas to study the need for a future park. Currently there is a strong need for a future active park within proximity to the circle north of Highway 55.

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It was noted that the active park study area circle south of the Hennepin County Public Works Facility was placed there for when the property develops, which probably will not happen until the next cycle of planning in ten years.

The active park study area to the east is located in the rural residential zoning district, but it is more densely populated than other rural residential areas.

The Park Commission felt it was important that the park study area plan should define an active park and a passive park.

Staff plans to begin formatting a plan based on the discussion from this meeting and bring it to the next meeting for further analysis.

8) Tomann Parcel Management Plan & Transfer to City

David Thill with Hennepin County Environmental Services prepared a management plan for the Tomann Property that was given to the Park Commissioners prior to the meeting for their review.

The Park Commissioners agreed the management plan was acceptable.

A motion was made by Thies and seconded by Hilberg to approve the management plan. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Thies and seconded by Hilberg to recommend to the City Council to move forward with the transfer of the Tomann property to the City. Motion passed unanimously.

The Park Commission was asked to discuss possible maintenance options and make a recommendation on how to implement the management plan.

It was noted that the current property owner, Terry Tomann, appears to still be interested in being involved with future property development.

Jaeb questioned what experience the City has with keeping the old owner on as a curator?

Scherer stated that the City has no experience, but did not see a problem with Mr. Tomann continuing to take care of the land because of the guidelines set forth in the management plan. Scherer also noted that Mr. Tomann was looking for direction on how to care for the land so he should want to follow the new plan.

A motion was made by Thies and seconded by Hilberg to recommend that Terry Tomann be appointed as a volunteer curator of the land under the guidance of the Public Works Superintendent. Motion passed unanimously.

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The Park Commission noted that the Tomann property has been called Tomann Park and Tomann Natural Area, but has never been given an official name. There was a general consensus that the area should not be called a park because it implies active park amenities. It was noted that Madeleine Linck has defined the difference between a Nature Area, Natural Area, and Preserve in the past, but no one knew which one would best describe the Tomann property.

A motion was made by Hilberg and seconded by White to recommend the name of the Tomann property be called Tomann _____, depending on what would best describe the area per Madeleine Linck's advice. Motion passed unanimously.

The Park Commission began planning an event to recognize Mr. Tomann's donation to the City. The tentative event date is Saturday, May 22nd at 10:00 a.m. This date is tentative based on Mr. Tomann's availability and if the property transfer can take place prior to the proposed date.

Ideas that were generated for the event include a proclamation from the Mayor, inviting the press and public, serving coffee and cookies, playing a game on guessing tree species by tying ribbons around the tree, and ending the event with a nature walk.

9) Hockey Rinks at Hamel Legion Park

Waytas stated that people have approached him over the last few years stating that they would like a hockey rink at Hamel Legion Park. He noted that people are currently playing hockey there without the goals or boards.

Waytas stated that he researched different ways to set up a hockey rink such as a metal dome cover or hockey boards that stay up all year round. Both these options are very expensive. Another option would be to just put up nets with no boards and possibly add a berm next season to separate the hockey area from the open skate area.

There was some discussion on safety with possible flying pucks if there were no boards. It was noted that people that play recreational hockey games typically do not wear pads and would make rules to not lift the puck. They also do not want to have to chase a puck or dig in a snow bank so they are more careful about controlling the puck.

The idea of putting boards up was briefly discussed, but it would not be possible at any of the current parks at this time because of the expense and added expense of Public Works time to clean the ice around hockey boards.

Waytas stated that he talked it over with his wife and they were willing to donate two hockey goals to the City to be used at Hamel Legion Park.

There was a general consensus to allow the hockey goals at Hamel Legion Park, which will also allow the Park Commission to observe the future demand for hockey in Medina.

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A motion was made by Thies and seconded by Hilberg to recommend to the City Council to accept the donation from Bill Waytas for two hockey goals at Hamel Legion Park. Motion passed unanimously.

10) Staff Report

- a) Fence Signage at Hamel Legion Park: Staff has been in contact with the Hamel Athletic Association to determine their level of interest in this program, but has not received a response yet. This item will be tabled until next month.
- b) Field House Project Update: Scherer gave a quick update on the project and noted that the Park Commission would need to start thinking about planning a grand opening event at their next meeting.
- c) Hunter Lions Park Sign: Gallup reported that an excerpt from the July 18, 2008 minutes was included in the park packet to update the Park Commission on previous discussions had with the Hamel Lions regarding signage at Hunter Lions Park. There was a general consensus from the Park Commission that both signs should not be placed on the road and that the old sign could be relocated somewhere within the park.
- d) General Items:
 - Gallup stated that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is looking for volunteers to conduct precipitation monitoring.
 - White reported that she has been researching the “Friends of the Park” and will collect her information and give an update to the Park Commission at the March meeting.

12) Adjourn

A motion was made by Thies, seconded by Jaeb and passed unanimously, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jodi Gallup.