

Medina Park Commission Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2012

Medina City Hall

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The Park Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in special session on May 2, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Medina City Hall. Park Commission Chair Paul Jaeb presided.

1) Call to Order

Commissioners Present: Paul Jaeb, Madeleine Linck, Ben Benson, Jean Beaupre, Bill Waytas and Ann Thies

Commissioners Absent: None

Also Present: City Council Liaison Melissa Martinson, City Council member Liz Weir, Public Works Superintendent Steve Scherer and Assistant to City Administrator Jodi Gallup

2) Independence Beach Boat Launch

Jaeb summarized the discussions that have taken place at the last few meetings related to AIS and the boat launch at Lakeshore Park. He discussed the memo he had written for the Park Commission outlining the issue and possible solutions. He stated that this issue needed to be approached with the end in mind.

Linck stated that she felt option one, which included locking the gate made more sense. She stated that we needed to try something in order to be affective.

Thies questioned what would happen if a person lost the key while they were on the water and can't get their boat out of the water because the gate is locked.

Benson stated that we needed reasonable policies and procedures in place before locking a gate. He questioned who in city hall would take on that responsibility.

Waytas questioned if the lock on the gate would really make a difference in keeping AIS, especially since only a few people use that landing compared to the hundreds that use the landing in Baker Park.

Beaupre stated that she had the same concerns as the other Park Commissioners and she agreed with Steve Scherer that a trial period should occur before installing a lock on the gate.

Jaeb stated that it still was not clear what Baker Park was doing. He noted that if Baker Park was air tight on securing the gate, Medina should be too, but Medina does not need to exceed what Baker Park is doing. He was also concerned with running the program,

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since the heaviest use would be on the weekends when no staff would be working. He felt that the Lake Independence Citizen Association (LICA) would have to be on-call.

Mike McLaughlin, LICA President, stated that LICA could help control the keys. He felt that the number of people who would want keys would be low; he stated that he would be very surprised if 200 people wanted keys/access.

McLaughlin was concerned with the idea of not locking the gate and did not feel like it would be effective without a lock; he used an example of a guy on a bass boat that tried to get in at Baker Park, but did not want to wait in line, so he launched his boat at Lakeshore ignoring the signage because the gate was not locked.

McLaughlin recommended posting a temporary sign for one month before implementing the lock to inform people that they need to get a new permit and key. He also suggested that the permits and keys do not expire after two years and it would only be a one-time thing.

McLaughlin stated that he would like the \$20 permit fee reduced and that LICA would be willing to help by contributing enough funds up front to get things going, but LICA did not want an ongoing cost.

McLaughlin suggested that the city consider a two year locked gate trial period and after two years, the city does not feel like they need the gate locked, they could remove it.

Scherer suggested that signage by the launch should be consolidated and put right on the gate. The sign should state that it is required to obtain a permit to park and launch a boat.

Beaupre questioned how the gate was going to stop Zebra Mussels.

McLaughlin stated that LICA is trying to separate the people who care about the lake from the people that do not care.

Thies stated that the city still needed to try to mitigate the problem through a gate and the permitting process needed to be updated anyway.

Thies motioned to recommend to the City Council to put a gate up immediately and keep it unlocked at first; and move to update the permitting process and re-evaluate the program in a year. Benson seconded the motion and then it was open for discussion.

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Jaeb expressed concern locking the gate with a key and recommended that the permits be re-issued every two years.

Brian Etzel, 2942 Lakeshore Avenue, questioned if the city could put up a lock box instead of issuing keys.

Linck stated that Three Rivers Park District using combination locks on certain accesses so that the combination can be changed every six months.

There was a general consensus of the Park Commission and members of the audience that a combination lock would work much better than issuing keys.

Dick Larson, 3167 Lakeshore Avenue, stated that the solutions we offer are weak, but it is the best we have. He stated that AIS are hitch hikers and the best solution is a gate in Minnesota. He quoted Professor Peter Sorenson from the University of Minnesota stating that we need to declare war on AIS because they are affecting our prosperity, freedom and happiness.

Liz Weir, Medina City Council member, stated that she spoke with Rick Brash at Three Rivers Park District and he said their chief efforts by installing the gate is education and she agrees that the chief efforts needs to be education. She stated the importance of educating the public and believed that a gate/barrier was a good tool.

Steve Pennaz, 2976 Lindgren Lane, City of Independence, first thanked the Park Commission for taking the issue of AIS seriously. He stated that he has worked in wild life all his life. He addressed the Park Commissions question regarding if a gate will help; he stated that if it buys one, two, or three years it would be worth it. He said there may even be a solution on how to control AIS by that time.

Pennaz also recommended only locking the gate during open water months and opening during the winter months.

A new motion was made by Thies and seconded by Benson to recommend installing a gate with contribution of approximately \$1,000 from LICA and temporary signage by May 25th; create permitting process and update ordinance before locking the gate; look into the least invasive locking mechanism such as a combination lock for the gate; and order custom signage once new procedures are in place. Motion passed unanimously.

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3) Ball Field Dugout Covers

The cost for the ball field dugout fencing improvements that was approved at the April 18th Park Commission meeting was incorrect. Staff had originally believed the fencing project would cost \$2,740, but that amount was an add-on option. The actual cost for the fencing upgrades is \$5,250. The Hamel Athletic Club had originally requested that the City pay for the fencing upgrades in the amount of \$5,250 and they would pay for the fabric covers which would cost approximately \$2,500 for eight covers.

Jaeb presented three options:

1. The city pays \$5,250 for the fencing improvements and HAC pays \$2,500 for fabric covers as requested by HAC.
2. The city pays nothing and requires ball players to wear their helmets when they are in the dugouts.
3. The city agrees to pay no more than 25% of the total project cost for the fencing improvements and fabric covers; similar to the way the irrigation and ball field lighting funding policy is set up.

Discussion took place regarding the fact that the park dedication funds were limited and this would be a large expense for something only HAC would benefit from. There was a general consensus that 25% of the total project cost (approximately \$2,000) was a fair amount for the city to contribute.

A motion was made by Benson, and seconded by Thies, to recommend that the city pays no more than 25% of the total project cost for the fencing improvements and fabric covers. Motion passed unanimously.

4) Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jodi Gallup.