

Medina Park Commission Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2011

Medina City Hall

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The Park Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in regular session on August 17, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Medina City Hall. Park Commission Chair Janet White presided.

1) Call to Order

Commissioners Present: Janet White, Ben Benson, Madeleine Linck, Ann Thies, Jean Beaupre and Paul Jaeb

Commissioners Absent: Bill Waytas

Also Present: City Council Member Melissa Martinson, City Planner Dusty Finke, Public Works Superintendent Steve Scherer and Assistant to City Administrator Jodi Gallup

2) Additions to the Agenda: Park Master Plan

A motion was made by Thies and seconded by Jaeb to add Park Master Plan to the agenda after Walnut Park Improvements. Motion passed unanimously.

3) Approval of Minutes:

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A motion was made by Linck and seconded by Beaupre to approve the minutes with no changes. Motion passed unanimously.

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

5) City Council Update:

Council Member Martinson updated the Park Commission that the Pentom preliminary plat was approved, a new City Administrator was hired, the Finance Director resigned and her position has been posted, passed an ordinance increasing impervious surface coverage to 70% in the industrial park district, accepted \$550 donation from HAC to plant trees at batter's eye, and approved phase one of ball field lighting project.

6) Hamel Athletic Club (HAC) Request for Field Improvements

Scherer introduced Jason McAthie, President of HAC, and Dino Deslauriers, Treasurer of HAC, and their request to do some field improvements at Hamel Legion Park.

McAthie gave the Park Commission some background information about HAC's baseball program and how it has doubled in the last three years. He stated that HAC joined the

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Little League Association, which requires their membership be from their area, which includes largely Wayzata School District.

McAthie explained that the fields need drainage improvements because fields are unplayable on the days after rain due to poor drainage. He noted that many of the fields have developed lips in the infield to grass areas and that the fields need to be crowned to allow water drainage. He also noted that there is only one to two inches of ag-lime on top of the dirt and large rocks have been found under the quad fields.

McAthie stated that in addition to the \$62,500 that HAC has committed this year for ball field lights, HAC is willing to donate up to \$35,000 to improve the Hawks field and lighted field. The Hawks field improvements will include reconstructing the entire infield area to allow for better drainage and to eliminate the lip between grass and dirt areas. By adding a grass area behind home plate and moving home plate out, it will lower maintenance costs, improve drainage and eliminate lip. The lighted field improvements will also help the drainage issues and will turn the field into a regulation size little league field by moving home plate out and adding grass to the infield. By creating a regulation little league field, HAC will have more opportunities to host little league tournaments in Hamel Legion Park, which would bring in more concession stand revenue.

Scherer stated that he did not see any issues with allowing the field improvements because it will help with the drainage problem and it does not turn anyone away from using the fields.

HAC also requested the city purchase covers over the dug outs so the kids will be protected from fly balls from other fields and it will provide some shade from the sun. The Park Commission stated that they would consider at a later date adding this to a future CIP.

A motion was made by Paul Jaeb, seconded by Ben Benson, to recommend accepting the donation from the Hamel Athletic Club to cover the costs for the field improvements at the Hawk's field and lighted field. Motion passed unanimously.

7) Marx CD PUD Concept Plan

Finke presented to the Park Commission the applicant's request for a Conservation Design Subdivision PUD Concept Plan at 2500-2900 Parkview Drive. The proposal is for 10 single family lots in 110 gross acres (52 acres being wetland or under water). He explained that this was the first step in a three step process. He stated that he was

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ultimately requesting from the Park Commission their feedback on the value of open space protected and trails in this potential development.

Finke explained that the conservation design ordinance is a development option to allow flexibility to certain regulations based on quality and quantity of what is being protected. He noted that the property was listed as moderate to good quality on the Natural Resource Inventory. The process for designing the site should be to identify the conservation areas first, then locate housing sites, align streets and trails, and lastly draw lot lines.

The Park Commission inquired if the formula for park dedication would be taken the same on this type of development. Finke explained that the formula would be the same, but the fee schedule has a maximum amount of \$8,000 per additional lot, which would most likely be the case for this site.

Applicant Wallace Marx of 2700 Parkview Drive presented his plan. Marx gave a history of his property. Marx noted the improvements made on the northern parcel, notably removing the large amount of animal remains and trash left by the previous owner. Marx also stated that he restored prairie on the parcel. Marx stated that his improvements helped improve the water quality of the lake.

Marx showed aerial images of what he is hoping to preserve, and described the property. Marx went on to describe the high quality wetlands and conservation areas on the property and played a slide show of images of the property. Marx spoke about how things may change in the future and that what is protected now may not be protected in the future.

Marx noted that the conservation ordinance, unlike other ordinances, motivates people to do something good for the city and for posterity.

Michael Pressman, with Conservation Solutions, introduced himself and stated that he was first introduced to Marx property more than seven years ago when he worked for the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. He stated the property quickly stood out as one of the jewels in the watershed. He noted that his first impression was confirmed by the Medina Open Space Plan which calls out the property as a priority area.

Pressman noted that most of the property is identified as an Ecologically Significant Natural Area of the Medina Natural Resource Inventory and unique attributes of the site include: diverse forest community of Maple Basewood forest, Mesic oak forest, and locally rare silver maple floodplain forest.

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Pressman stated that only 17% of Medina's land cover is forested so preserving important remnants such as this one takes on added significance.

Pressman also noted that another unique attribute to the site was the diverse mosaic of wetland communities including tamarack swamp. He noted that there are only seven tamarack swamps in Medina.

Pressman noted that additional conservation values of the property include: deep swamp adjacent to School Lake, extensive and valuable lakeshore, eastern wetlands and adjoining oak woodland, and wet and mesic prairie along the lakeshore area.

Pressman stressed the opportunity the conservation design ordinance provides by permanently protecting these resources and ensuring a structure for their perpetual care.

Linck stated that it was a beautiful area, but did not want to see fragmentation with homes, driveways, etc. The rest of the Park Commission agreed.

Thies agreed with the comments made by Bonestroo's ecologist John Smyth regarding the wetland and upland buffers.

Thies suggested having combined lot access for the properties on the lake instead of everyone having their own long driveways to help with fragmentation.

Finke went through the staff's findings and recommendations.

The Park Commission also noted they were concerned with the proposed density of the site.

The Park Commission commended Marx for trying to do a conservation design application and easement to conserve the property, but noted that they were concerned with fragmentation and density of the proposed site.

White questioned if a trail should go through the development to allow a way for the public to see the natural beauty of the site.

Benson stated that he did not think the public needed access to this site and it should be kept private because a trail at this site would not link to the rest of the trail system.

Beaupre agreed with Benson that a trail should not run through the site because the focus of trails should be on making connections. She was also concerned with the impact a public trail would have on the natural resources of the site.

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There was a general consensus by the Park Commission that they agreed with staff and Planning Commission's recommendations and they were also concerned about fragmentation and density of the site.

8) New Park Development

Scherer mentioned that at the July Park Commission meeting, when the Park Commission recommended the changes to the 2012-2016 CIP, there was no money budgeted in 2012 for the new park in the (Pentom) Fields of Medina subdivision. Staff is recommending some money be added to the CIP in 2012 for small projects that may come up such as grading or drainage.

A motion was made by Ben Benson and seconded by Ann Thies to recommend adding \$5,000 for 2012 and \$10,000 in 2013 to the CIP for park development in the Fields of Medina subdivision. Motion passed unanimously.

9) Walnut Park Improvements

Gallup reported that she had not received a list of recommended improvements yet from the residents that had attended the July meeting.

White stated that she asked a few of her neighbors and they voiced their opinion that they would like to see the skating rink stay at Walnut Park. She also heard from neighbors that they felt like the parks in Independence beach had been ignored by the city. It was noted that most of the project done in Hamel Legion Park were because of the huge dollars of support/matches from the community to get the projects done.

Martinson mentioned that residents should talk to their city council members and voice their opinions if they want more services and amenities, because the City Council would be happy to give it to them by increasing the budget if that is what they want.

White requested that Independence Beach Parks be brought back as an agenda item at the next meeting.

10) Park Master Plan

Jaeb introduced the topic stating that he had met with Park Commission Chair White to discuss the formation of a Park Master Plan. With the development on Hunter Drive and the prospective Pentom development, they felt it was prudent to discuss having a comprehensive plan to guide future park upgrades and development. A number of plans

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for creating this document were reviewed and they thought the one from Fairfax County, Virginia Park Authority was a good starting point.

Jaeb stated that we should be looking at each park, what we have, what we need to do to them, and what conceptual development we want in future parks.

Thies questioned if the trails in the trail plan were all going to be built along roads as new developments come before the commission, because the last few have all been proposed along roads in the right-of-way. She stated that she would like to see some off road trails through developments in the future; even trails parallel to the road but just separated from the road and maybe a little curvy to give it some character would be better than on the road.

A motion was made by Jaeb and seconded by Benson to appoint Paul Jaeb and Jean Beaupre to a Park Commission Subcommittee to create and develop the basic parameters of the Park & Trail Master Plan to bring back to the Park Commission at a future meeting for their consideration. Motion passed unanimously.

11) Staff Report

- a) Ball Fields Lights Update – Gallup reported that the City had received bids for phase one of the ball field lighting project and the Council accepted the low bid. Phase one of the project will cost \$50,000 to do some of the base work and get the transformer installed with Xcel Energy. The first phase of the project is being funded by a \$25,000 Twins grant, \$12,500 donation from the Hamel Athletic Club and \$12,500 from Park Dedication. The project will be finished if the city receives the Hennepin Youth Sports Grant in the fall.
- b) General Items – Linck mentioned that the back trail in Rainwater Nature Area has not been mowed and questioned if it should be. It was determined that the City should not mow it to keep people away from the bridge until it gets fixed.

12) Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jodi Gallup.