

Medina Park Commission Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2019
Medina City Hall
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The Park Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in regular session on October 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Medina City Hall. Park Commission Chair Steve Lee presided.

1) Call to Order

Commissioners Present: Steve Lee, Ann Thies, John Jacob, Terry Sharp, Mary Morrison, Elizabeth Weir, Jeff Rumsey
Commissioners Absent: None
Also Present: Public Works Director Steve Scherer, Assistant City Administrator Jodi Gallup, City Council member John Anderson

2) Additions to the Agenda: None

3) Approval of the Minutes from:

September 18, 2019 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Jacob and seconded by Morrison to approve the minutes from September 18, 2019 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

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

5) City Council Update

Anderson provided an update to the Park Commission on recent City Council actions.

6) Mark of Excellence Homes – Weston Woods – East of Mohawk Drive and North of Hwy 55 – Comprehensive Plan Amendment and PUD Concept Plan – Park Dedication Review

Gallup provided an overview presentation of the applicant's request for a comprehensive plan amendment to change land use from business to residential and move up the staging from 2025 to 2020. The PUD Concept Plan shows 76 twinhomes on the north property (Roy Property) and 41 single-family, 33 townhomes, and 5.5 acres of park/open space/land preservation on the south property (Cavanaugh Property).

Gallup stated that the park dedication ordinance allows 10% of buildable land, which would total 7.5 acres, or 8% of cash-in-lieu, which would be approximately \$600,000 to \$800,000, or a combination of land and cash. These amounts are the standard required park dedication amounts for any development. The applicant has suggested protection of 5.5 acres of wooded area with a small active park, construction of parking/trailhead, and a trail connection from the north lot to the south lot. If preservation and amenities only meet standard park dedication ordinance requirement, it may not support the applicant's requested flexibility.

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Gallup stated that if the applicant's comprehensive plan amendment is approved, it will add approximately 74 additional homes to the area that were originally slated to be business land in the comprehensive plan. This development also proposes 76 twinhomes five years sooner than originally planned. The Park Commission may want to take this into consideration when determining the amount, size, and locations of future parks in the area. It was noted that this area of the city has other land to the west of Mohawk and north of Chippewa that is zoned to add 65-80 homes in five years, and there could be potential long-term (20+ years) future residential development to the north.

Gallup stated that staff's recommendation would be to recommend construction of an east-west trail and construction of a north-south trail. Staff requests Park Commission discussion and direction on an active park. Staff suggests acquiring the preservation area as justification for the comprehensive plan amendment/PUD instead of taking it as park dedication.

Morrison noted that the amount of park/open space land dedication being proposed is only 5.5 acres, but the park dedication ordinance could allow up to 7.5 acres. Discussion took place noting that trails and cash-in-lieu could be combined to reach the full park dedication requirements.

Bill Griffith, Attorney representing applicant Mark Smith, stated that they are not proposing less than the minimum. He also noted that while this commission is only looking at park and trail dedication, the City Council is considering other public infrastructure to meet the public benefits test as justification for the comprehensive plan amendment/PUD. He stated that the non-park benefit is the extension of Chippewa Road.

Griffith noted that the primary opportunity to the city is that the applicant would develop the north and south parcels together. This would produce 3.0 units per acre for the overall land, which is the minimum the Metropolitan Council will consider for development. He noted that this community has priority to develop slowly and this density is important in achieving that goal.

Griffith discussed the applicant's plan design showing an upland buffer area in the north east section of this development to help screen this development from the Bridgewater neighborhood. He stated that the proposed park would allow for the preservation of woodland, which would be plowed down if this parcel stayed zoned as business. He pointed out the trailhead and 20 parking spaces the applicant proposes to develop.

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Weir stated that the trailhead as proposed is too intrusive located in the center of the wooded area. She noted that forest trees need trees to protect them from blowing over. The other Park Commissioners concurred with this statement.

Weir questioned if the upland area is not developed, who would maintain it?

Mark Smith, applicant, stated that the upland area may be converted to a wetland. He stated the area would be owned by the homeowner's association.

Sharp stated that he liked the opportunity for a neighborhood park, but also liked the idea of preserving the trees.

Jacob stated that he loved the concept of tree preservation, but then questioned what the city does to find an active park. He stated that it is important to have trail connections. He suggested looking at the larger area to have a concept plan on where a future park could be built.

Thies stated that she would like to see the wooded area containing the knoll preserved. She also stated that an active park is needed to serve these residents.

Morrison stated that she would also like to see this knoll preserved, but not to build a parking lot into or next to the woods. She noted that this whole area will need a park where the community can gather, not just a woodland. She also noted the importance of trail connections.

Rumsey agreed that the woods should not be carved out for parking. He stated that it was important to have trail connections to Chippewa Road.

Weir agreed with what everyone had said thus far. She noted that the city has wanted a slow growth approach for at least the last three election cycles, but this plan feels like it is hurrying growth. With that said, she noted that this is a tremendous opportunity to get the road and utilities built. She noted that having a trail up Mohawk to Corcoran was important to the City of Corcoran. She questioned how successful a business would be in this location because of access if land use designation stayed as business. She noted that business uses are easier for the city because they need less city services but liked that the residential development would not require as many trees to be torn down.

Lee stated that the city would want trails both east-west and north-south. He asked the applicant if sidewalks were being proposed in the neighborhoods? Smith stated that there were no sidewalks in the plans.

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Smith stated that the north side twinhomes have a private street and the south side would have single family homes on a public street.

Weir suggested taking three acres for future park land on the northwest boarder, so it can be combined with an additional three acres when property to the north develops. She questioned if the applicant could build twinhomes on the western edge of the currently preserved upland and still incorporate heavy tree screening on the east side to screen from the Bridgewater neighborhood. This could make up for the lost density in acquiring the three acres of future active park land.

Lee recapped everyone's comments by noting that they would like to see the woods preserved in the south, but not count it against their park dedication requirement, removal of the parking next to the woods, create trail connections east-west and north-south, and consideration of Weir's idea noted above.

Smith noted that the 17.6 acre Scherber property to the west of Wealshire is in the Rockford School District. He suggested that if the Park Commission was looking for one large active park to serve this area of town that the city might want to consider purchasing this whole lot to be used as an active park. The Park Commission questioned the topography but was intrigued by the idea if the land was flat enough and the price was right.

7) Staff Report

- General Items – Gallup stated that she had not heard back from the sign vendor for the Walnut Park Sign proposal, so that item will be coming back to a future meeting. Scherer stated that the Field House had been winterized.

8) Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m. Minutes prepared by Jodi Gallup