

**MEDINA CITY COUNCIL AND PARK COMMISSION CONCURRENT WORK
SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2021**

The City Council and Park Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in work session on March 2, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Chambers. Mayor Martin presided.

Martin read a statement explaining that this meeting is being held in a virtual format because of the ongoing pandemic and reviewed an overview for the intent of tonight's meeting.

I. ROLL CALL

Council Members present: Albers, Cavanaugh, DesLauriers, Martin, and Reid.

Council Members absent: None.

Park Commission Members present: Bernhardt, Jacob, Lee, Morrison, Norman, and Sharp.

Park Commission Members absent: Hutchinson.

Also present: City Administrator Scott Johnson, Assistant City Administrator Jodi Gallup, Finance Director Erin Barnhart, City Planning Director Dusty Finke, Public Works Director Steve Scherer, and Chief of Police Jason Nelson.

II. DIAMOND LAKE REGIONAL TRAIL

Martin commented that the City has received a great deal of public input on the potential Three Rivers Park trail routes through Medina for the Diamond Lake Regional Trail. She noted that the Park District identified a preferred route and additional input was received via input and the two previous work session meetings. She stated that she, Cavanaugh, and staff have had continued discussions with Three Rivers Park District about a potential trail route and the general concept of a trail.

Cavanaugh thanked Martin for her leadership throughout this process. He commented that throughout this process staff has been in communication with the Park District and stated that it has become clear throughout the process that residents in the south see this trail as a violation of their privacy and the reason they moved to Medina. He commented that there is more population to the north that see trails as an amenity and with that in mind, they attempted to develop alternative options. He stated that there is a portion of the trail that would be easy to get done, a portion that has potential and a portion that would be unlikely. He believed that focus should be given to the portion that could be done from the northern border of the city to Hamel Road. We could then look at where it could potentially go from there; possibly to Baker via Hamel Road or eastward to Uptown Hamel. He stated that perhaps some connections could be made south of Uptown Hamel but acknowledged that would be trickier.

Martin advised that Cavanaugh is the liaison to the Park Commission and thus has taken an active role in these discussions. She welcomed Three Rivers Park District to make a brief presentation.

Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District, thanked the Mayor, Council and Park Commission for their time and input throughout this process. She reviewed the goal of the project and highlighted the evaluation considerations. She recognized the concern for potential private impacts and the level of support the potential project would have or not have. She reviewed the different options that have been developed to stay the course to select a preferred route, explore an alternative route south of Hamel Road, or utilize an alternative route and removing the study area south of Hamel Road.

Martin referenced option two noting that there has been concern with specifying a regional trail study and appreciated that a particular trail is not shown in this area and it would only be initiated by the City. She asked if having this undefined trail study area in the City plans would permit the City to pursue opportunities to pursue dedication of trails through the use of park dedication funds as development opportunities may arise.

Finke commented that he believed that it is true that if the study area is identified it would provide justification to look for opportunities that may make sense if development comes forward in the future. He noted that there are trail corridors that have been identified by the City for the future as well.

Morrison commented that she is opposed to any plan that would take private property and undercut the rural nature of Medina. She stated that Three Rivers Park has mentioned only working with willing sellers but noted that some access points were taken by eminent domain in the past by the Park District. She was not sure of the benefits that would be created by designating a study area and was concerned that it could create uncertainty with property values and for property owners. She stated that Medina can pursue its own trail system outside of the Park District. She stated that she would prefer option three, eliminating the area of interest. She stated that she would support a safe crossing over Highway 55 for those residents in the northwest area.

Martin asked the benefits that would be provided by designating a regional trail study area.

Grissman replied that designating a future regional trail study area would not have an impact on property values as there are similar corridors throughout the county. She explained that designating the study area would allow the City to be in a position to work with the Park District at a future date, should the City request to do so, to construct trails or grade separated corridors at that time.

Martin asked if the City would have that option regardless of whether the study area is designated.

Grissman confirmed that the City would always have the option to reach out to the Park District related to park and/or trail opportunities. She stated that if the regional trail is removed from the applicable plans there would simply be a more extensive process to add that back in with backing from the Metropolitan Council. She confirmed that could be done at any time, it would simply be an additional step.

Martin commented that the City has its own trail corridor goals in its Comprehensive Plan.

Finke confirmed that the City does have future trails in its Comprehensive Plan. He noted that if there was a subdivision or land use change within the search area it would call that out from a different perspective and would make it more likely for the City to review trail opportunities in the planning process.

Sharp stated that it would behoove the City to look at option two as it would not commit the City to anything but would provide an easier partnership if the opportunity presents itself 20 years down the road.

Martin commented that she believes a partnership would be available whether or not the area is designated on the map.

Bernhardt commented that residents stated that if their land is part of the regional trail study area, they would be concerned that could impact future property values and asked if that would have to be disclosed at the time of sale.

Martin commented that would be a legal opinion and dependent upon the disclosures that are necessary.

Bernhardt stated that she would prefer option three, recognizing that it may add an additional step if a regional trail is desired in the future.

Lee thanked the Council and staff noting that this process has been wonderful to receive public input. He stated that if Hamel Road would be a new preferred path, he would want the City to seek comments on that before making it the preferred route.

Martin commented the question is whether the Park District should explore that potential route which would begin a new process to solicit public input on that route.

Lee stated that he would be in support of exploring additional options. He stated that he would favor removing the future regional trail study area as it creates an unnecessary flag for residents that do not want that amenity. He stated that he would select option three.

Martin asked for input from Three Rivers Park District as to whether additional public input would be solicited should the group select option two or three.

Grissman commented that they would most likely focus on the Hamel Road corridor in the next year or so as that has been identified in the Lake Sara Regional Trail system. She stated that the Park District would focus on the area north that connects to Corcoran in the immediate future, should that be the direction.

Jacob asked if there would be financial implications between options two and three and what those would be. He asked why the crossing of Highway 55 would go away if the City selects option three.

Grissman clarified that option three would still work on everything north of Hamel Road, therefore the Park District would still be the lead agency in determining where to cross Highway 55 and gathering funding for that. She stated that option three would simply remove the Park District from being a partner on trails south of Highway 55.

Reid commented that she likes option two or three, using the roadways as trail opportunities to connect more people. She referenced the County Public Works property and noted that could be kept in the plans as the property adjacent has come forward in the past for development which could create an opportunity for an off-road trail section from Arrowhead Road through the County and Delcroft properties to Hamel Road. She believed that segment could be left on the map as there may be an opportunity in the near future. She stated that the trail segment could be used in negotiations for that development when it eventually comes back.

Finke agreed that would be a fair idea. He noted that any large property that would be subdividable would provide opportunity for an off-road trail and get closer to the Park District's vision.

Cavanaugh commented that it may be a good time to display an alternative that he worked with Finke to develop.

Reid asked where Diamond Lake is located.

Grissman commented that Diamond Lake is north between the borders of Rogers and Dayton.

Cavanaugh commented that providing a safe crossing across Highway 55 would be helpful for the residents in that area as it is difficult and dangerous to cross with children. He displayed a proposed trail alignment that would run from the Corcoran connection, through Weston Woods, cross Highway 55 with an overpass to the Hennepin County site, and then connecting with Hamel Road. He noted that would provide a lot of access north and south for all residents. He commented that this would be a huge benefit to Medina and its residents as it would not be a cost to residents. He commented that option two leaves possibilities to do more, noting that it would be nice to provide access to Enclave residents. He stated that perhaps there are also opportunities to connect to other existing trails or use Medina Road to connect to CR 101. He commented that he does not necessarily support those but would like to leave it open to study. He stated that he respects privacy rights and the reasons people moved to Medina, which is why he believes additional study should be done.

Albers asked if there would be another option to just say no to the trail all together. He stated that Orono made the decision to not provide the connection for the regional trail, but that option was not included tonight. He stated that of the three options presented tonight, the only reason he would choose option two would be from a planning perspective. He noted that if the MUSA line changed and properties became developable, the regional trail would then be part of the planning process but if the study area is not there it would not necessarily be part of the planning process.

Martin agreed that an option four, to say no to the trail could be added.

Albers stated that from a planning perspective he would favor option three.

Martin commented that would give the City the option to gather input from residents on Hamel Road and property owners in the option for considerations areas north and south of Highway 55.

DesLauriers asked who would be responsible for trail maintenance once the trail is constructed.

Grissman commented that as a regional trail, Three Rivers Park District would hold the responsibility for acquisition, design, construction, operations, and maintenance. She stated that they do look for partners, but the Park District would be the lead agency for that work and investment.

DesLauriers commented that part of the vision of Medina is to preserve its rural character and was unsure that these options live up to that vision. He stated that he would favor opposing the trail all together as in option four. He stated that perhaps he could support option three but noted that simply moves the problem to Hamel Road which already has issues with vehicles and horses. He stated that the trail segment could come from Corcoran, down 50, to 19, to Baker Park.

Martin noted that would lack access to the neighborhoods to the north and the middle of Medina. She stated that she would not want to miss opportunities that could perhaps be palatable to residents. She recognized that the Park District stated that the initial focus would be for the trail segment north of Highway 55 and south of Highway 55 to get to Hamel Road, with the Hamel Road segment to be studied later. She stated that even though there may be opposition from those along Hamel Road, perhaps that portion is not built out, but they could still look at pursuing an opportunity to connect residents from the north to Baker Park to use those trails.

Johnson stated that staff was looking for direction from the Council and Park Commission. He stated that if the two groups are not ready to do so, they could allow additional time for the Park Commission to review the topic and bring forward a recommendation to the Council.

Martin commented that a fifth option could then be added which would provide more time to think about this.

Norman commented that she would select option four but would like to leave open the option to the north and therefore would select option three.

Morrison stated that she could support option three as that would leave the option to cross Highway 55 but recognized that her vote may change to option four.

Bernhardt stated that she also likes option three as it provides an option to cross Highway 55.

Jacob commented that he would support option three or option five as that would allow additional time for review.

Sharp commented that he would support option three or option five.

Martin commented that there seems to be consensus of option three from the Park Commission with the understanding that it is not a commitment to a trail but the option to evaluate a trail and crossing of Highway 55.

Reid commented that she would be comfortable with option two or three. She stated that the regional trail study area is vague and should not impact properties but acknowledged that it may not be needed. She stated that perhaps the topic should go back to the Park Commission for further discussion, which would be option five.

Cavanaugh stated that his first option would be for option two as he would be interested to connect the population centers near Hamel. He stated that he could also support option three. He stated that there is a window of opportunity with Weston Woods and therefore that should be considered.

Albers stated that he would select option five to continue the discussions. He believed that option three would commit the City to Hamel Road and believed additional discussions would be needed. He agreed that the residents along Hamel Road would not want more than exists today along their properties.

DesLauriers commented that he would select option five to further understand. He stated that his second preference would be option four. He stated that he would stay away from option three because if you put a map out that shows Hamel Road, residents will notice that first.

Martin commented that it appears the Council would support additional review by the Park Commission and therefore agreed that this should go back to the Park Commission for additional review and discussion. She stated that the Council will wait for that input before further evaluating the options.

Reid agreed that there would be opportunity within Weston Woods and believed the Park Commission should review that alternative.

III. ADJOURN

Moved by Martin, seconded by Albers, to adjourn the meeting on behalf of the City Council at 7:03 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

*DesLauriers aye
Albers aye
Cavanaugh aye
Reid aye
Martin aye*

Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Jacob, seconded by Sharp, to adjourn the meeting on behalf of the Park Commission at 7:04 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

*Norman aye
Morrison aye
Sharp aye*

Bernhardt *aye*
Lee *aye*
Jacob *aye*
Hutchinson *absent*

Motion passed unanimously.

Kathleen Martin, Mayor

Attest:

Jodi M. Gallup, City Clerk