

**MEDINA CITY COUNCIL AND PARK COMMISSION CONCURRENT WORK
SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

The City Council and Park Commission of Medina, Minnesota met in work session on February 16, 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. She provided instructions for public participation.

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 Council will not express an opinion on a trail route but will hear the presentation and welcome input on the trail route and other elements. She recognized the need to balance the amenity of a trail with residential privacy and the protection of natural resources, such as wetlands.

Kelly Grissman, Three Rivers Park District, commented that the Medina staff and its appointed and elected officials have been great to work with throughout this process. She introduced the other members of the Three Rivers Park team available on the call tonight. She appreciated the openness of the Council to extend the meeting in the event additional time is needed to hear additional public comments and input. She stated that tonight they will present the current recommended route and receive public input, noting that an ultimate decision will come at a later date. She provided background information on the Diamond Lake Regional Trail project and its planning timeline. She provided photographic examples of what the trail and different trail segment amenities could look like throughout Medina. She stated that Three Rivers Park District developed a robust public engagement process and reviewed the different opportunities that have been provided thus far. She noted that more engagement opportunities were provided for Medina residents, compared to other surrounding areas, and noted that the participation levels were also higher for Medina residents. She summarized the input that has been received in support of different trail options. She stated that Medina residents have not expressed the same level of support of other communities as there is great concern over impacts to private property, privacy, and nature. She stated that realization for this project is most likely 20 to 30 years out, but this planning process is necessary to allow for future planning efforts to move forward as development and other opportunities come forward. She stated that they would most likely focus on trail segments in other communities where development opportunities are arising. She reviewed the master

plan process, noting that they want to provide opportunity for all interested members to hear details and provide input. She anticipated that they would ask for Park Commission and City Council approvals for the alignment in late March and possibly into April in order to hear the public input and make amendments if necessary.

Stewart Crosby, SRF, displayed the multiple route alternatives that have been reviewed throughout this process for the area within Medina. He stated that they have received public input throughout this process and one additional route was added as an option for the west side and was based on public input to connect the trail to City Hall on CR 24 and in order to align the corridor along the edges of parcels rather than cutting through parcels. He provided a brief overview of the analysis that was done for each potential trail segment along with comments that were received noting that the information is also available in more detail on both the City and Three Rivers Park District websites. He commented on the large number of wetlands throughout Medina that will be a challenge for any route. He displayed the recommended trail route along with alternate route options and identified elements that would be required in certain areas, such as grade separated crossings. He stated that they have continued to receive the question as to the benefit of the western route. He stated that all the different subsegment corridors have been reviewed and there are opportunities and challenges for each. He stated that one of the main goals is to create a linear park that is not along roadways. He noted that as the trail heads north, development is not as extreme and therefore there are more opportunities. He stated that the Medina trail will involve crossing busy roads and the western route provides the opportunity to connect or get close to local parks through local trail connections. He stated that they prefer an off-road trail that provides more of a park experience and the recommended route would provide for that experience whereas other routes would work much more within road right-of-way and the challenges that would bring.

Martin stated that she will now provide opportunities for members of the public to speak. She noted that the Council has received and read the written comments received thus far.

Hellen Heely referenced the trail segment above Wolsfeld Woods. She believed that there is currently a raspberry farm in that location. She stated that is a beautiful area but is concerned that the older couple that owns that property could perhaps not join the meeting to provide their input tonight. She asked if there has been contact with that landowner.

Stephen Shurson with Three Rivers Park District stated that he is unsure if there has been direct contact. He noted that the couple has been alerted to the public meetings.

Heely commented that the landowner is an older couple that have invested a lot of time and resources into their property and asked how that landowner would be engaged in terms of attempting to acquire land for the trail.

Shurson replied that the routes are flexible, even though a line is shown on the map. He explained that they work individually with property owners.

Grissman commented that they would work with each property owner to manage their concerns and input and locate the trail in a manner which would have the least impact on their property. She stated that buffers, berms, fencing or additional vegetation could

be added to provide additional separation. She stated that some agricultural properties welcome a trail as that would expose their business to additional customers.

Martin stated that perhaps Ms. Heely would suggest that it would be helpful for Three Rivers Park District to reach out directly to that property owner at this time in the process. She noted that perhaps a home visit would be appropriate as the resident may not be technologically advanced.

Heely commented that she and her neighbors are concerned with routing the trail through the Tamarack Drive area. She stated that if the western route is chosen, she would be concerned that it would dump that responsibility to those property owners.

Shurson commented that he would be more than happy to meet with Ms. Heely individually and reach out to those property owners directly as well.

Heely confirmed that she would provide the necessary contact information.

Martin commented on the difficulty she had reviewing the maps and asked if perhaps the larger scale maps could be posted to the website.

Nick Schultz stated that he lives across from City Hall. He asked if Mohawk Drive would be used for the trail segment or where that segment would be located.

Shurson commented that is yet to be determined as they do not provide that level of specificity at this point in the planning process. He stated that they would want to have a safe interaction with City Hall and the crossing of CR 24. He commented that there would be another engagement process when the design is ultimately discussed.

Schultz stated that crossing of CR 24 is not safe, noting that he was hit on a bicycle in the past. He stated that there was a period of time when a trail was constructed along CR 19 and asked if there is a reason that trail is not being used as it connects to Baker Park.

Grissman commented that this would be an additional route with the Lake Independence Regional Trail running along the west and the other regional trail option to the east along CR 101. She stated that the intent is to provide access to all residents in Hennepin County and this would be a middle route that would not be road based and would instead provide a parklike atmosphere. She recognized that some sections along the 20-mile route would be adjacent to roads, but they will take as many opportunities as possible to take the trail off the road system, as that is preferred by most regional trail users.

Schultz asked how residents will be notified of future meetings.

Martin commented that she believes that residents can sign up for the email list to receive notifications.

Gallup confirmed that would be an option and noted that all upcoming meetings are also posted on the City website.

Angela Erickson stated that the proposed route currently does not utilize Hunter Drive but wants to be a voice for the residents on Hunter Drive. She stated that the residents on Hunter Drive developed a petition opposing the trail in that location because of concerns with crossing roadways, implications to large mature trees, and impacts to property values. She stated that there are also properties within the Minnesota Land Trust in that area. She noted that there is a strong coalition of property owners on Hunter Drive that oppose any route that would use Hunter Drive.

Jim Stetler, 1832 Medina Road, stated that he submitted written comments in opposition of the western most route option and would like additional time to discuss this with his neighbors. He stated that they are new to the area and just built a new home, attempting to be careful in the positioning of their home to respect the rural character of Medina and be respectful of their neighbors. He commented that they were drawn to Medina because of the rural and peaceful setting. He stated that most of what they face to the west is wetland and that provided security knowing that the area would be protected from development. He stated that he would be concerned that the trail would run the entire length of his property and his family would then be facing a 1,000-foot boardwalk. He commented on the impacts to wildlife that could also occur from that trail segment. He stated that as park like as the experience may be for users it is to the detriment of homeowners in that area.

Martin commented that some residents have stated that they did not feel they had adequate time to review the proposed route, which is why this opportunity will be extended for additional written and verbal comments to be received. She stated that this meeting will be continued to Tuesday, February 23rd, for those that do not have time to provide comments tonight and noted that written comments can be submitted within that next week as well.

Johnson stated that staff recommends that the February 23rd worksession begin at 6:00 p.m.

Emily Byfuglien, 1862 Morgan Road, commented that they are strongly opposed to this. She noted that when they purchased their 30-acre property it was with the intent that her husband could use the land for hunting. She was concerned that once the trails are built, her husband would no longer be able to use the land for hunting. She stated that they previously lived on Lake Minnetonka, but it was too busy and therefore relocated here to have more privacy. She stated the idea of trails with a high volume of pedestrian traffic is not something they prefer.

Martin was unsure if staff would be prepared to respond to the issue of hunting tonight but stated that staff will look into that and try to provide a response. She stated that she does have to close the public comment period at this time, but it will continue February 23rd at 6:00 p.m. She noted that residents can also submit written comments prior to that meeting date.

III. ADJOURN

Moved by Cavanaugh, seconded by Reid, to adjourn the meeting on behalf of the City Council at 6:56 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Lee, seconded by Sharp, to adjourn the meeting on behalf of the Park Commission at 6:56 p.m.

A roll call vote was performed:

*Norman aye
Morrison aye
Sharp aye
Bernhardt aye
Lee aye
Jacobs aye*

Motion passed unanimously.