

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2008
RECREATION & PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1. The Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission was called to order by Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt.

Commission Members present:

James Brekke, At-Large
Matthew Cooklock, At-Large
Reubenna Cooley, At-Large
James Driste, At-Large
Deborah Everson, At-Large
Rich Gates, City Council Liaison
Mark Hanna, At-Large
Paul Hartzell, At-Large
Jim Hubert, At-Large
Rob Jacobs, At-Large
Nicole Jechorek, Planning Commission Liaison
Jeanne Qualley, At-Large
Andrew Reinhardt, At-Large
Brian Rogers, At-Large

Staff Members present:

Jon Oyanagi, Recreation & Parks Director
Mary Pat Black, Parks & Facilities Manager
Jon Thiel, Operations & Maintenance Director
Dale Reed, Parks Superintendent
Barb Stewart, Secretary

Others:

Drew Heimark, Brooklyn Park Jr. High student

2. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 19, 2008 PRAC AGENDA

Motion, Jeanne Qualley; Second, Mark Hanna, to approve the November 19, 2008 PRAC agenda. Motion unanimously approved.

3. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 15, 2008 PRAC MEETING MINUTES

Motion, James Driste; Second, Reubenna Cooley, to approve the October 15, 2008 PRAC minutes. Motion unanimously approved.

4. OLD BUSINESS

 **COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated Commissioners discussed in length the concept for a community garden at their September 17, 2008 meeting. Following that discussion a motion to present the plans to the City Council was entertained and approved by Commissioners. On Monday, October 20, staff presented the concept for a community garden to the City Council which was favorably received and approved by Council Members. Jon stated the Operations & Maintenance Department crews have plowed up two areas to make room for 80 plots for planting; one located within a previously unmaintained area and the other located within the

pasture area. In addition, a water line has been run from the street to both areas, and spigots will be installed so that people will be able to water their plots. Staff is working on designing a map and number layout for the 20' X 20' lots which can be rented for the season at a cost of \$50. Final preparations of the garden plots will be completed in spring, 2009 and open to the public beginning in May. The public has expressed a lot of interest in the new community garden concept following an article published in the local SunPost newspaper and informational write up in the new winter Recreation & Parks activities brochure.

Staff anticipates receiving a large interest in the community garden from the city's apartment complexes and Jon will be speaking with, and providing plot rental information to, the residents of Park Haven Apartments tomorrow evening.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley asked if a system has been created for how people will register for a plot and will they be able to register online. Jon responded that this year residents will get first choice for renting a plot beginning February 3, 2009 and non-residents can register beginning March 3. Those participants will be required to sign a rules contract, and attend a preseason meeting in April where the concept, rules and regulations will be explained in detail. The information and registration form will be available online beginning in December, 2008 but participants will have to wait until the appropriate date to register.

5. NEW BUSINESS

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

N/A

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE REPORT

Director, Jon Thiel and Parks Superintendent, Dale Reed handed out the fall 2008 Park Maintenance Division Projects and Work Plan Update and Dale provided Commissioners and staff with an overview of the city's park system.

Central Park –

- Construction of a small bathroom facility is near completion
- Two basketball courts have been constructed
- Work remaining: installation of plumbing fixtures, bathroom partitions, electrical work and tile coving, metal roof, stone veneer, glazing of windows and door installation.

Park Trail Improvements –

- A feasibility report on the replacement of four bridges located within Brookdale Park has been completed by Wenck and Associates. These bridges will be completed in 2010, budget permitting.
- Various trail segments have been replaced

Sunkist and Maitland Parks –

- Playground equipment has been replaced at both parks, concrete borders constructed, and wood fiber placed
- Rubber surfacing was placed on transfer points and under the swings

Willowstone Park –

- Rehabilitation of the building is completed including replacement of doors and windows, installation of central air conditioning, building sidewalk was placed and

preparation for expanding the parking lot was completed. Crews are in the process of connecting city sewer and water.

Zane Sports Park –

- Replaced irrigation mainlines

Brooklyn Blvd/Zane Ave Corridor and Street Medians –

- All dead plant material has been replaced

Commissioner, James Brekke asked what the culverts located to the right of trail located in Brookdale Park are for. Jon Thiel stated this is a multi-million dollar bypass piping rehab project and the line they are working on is coming from Maple Grove. This line goes across Hwy. 252 and moves around to Anoka.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers asked what the timeline for this project is. Jon Thiel responded it should be completed by next spring.

Commissioner, Matthew Cooklock asked what the status is on the construction of a new water treatment plant. Jon Thiel stated at their last meeting, the City Council approved moving forward to add on and renovate a water treatment plant.

Commissioner, Paul Hartzell ask what causes a rehab of this magnitude to occur. Dale Reed stated the system is 20 years old and parts and pipes wear out causing several breaks which necessitated a rehab to be completed.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley asked if the categories in Jon's report are tied to labor rates. Jon Thiel stated the categories are not set up like that but he could do that.

Jon reviewed the residential surveys taken since 1985, the majority of which were external surveys. He found the approval ratings have consistently been increasing and are currently in the 80-85% approval rating range.

Commissioner, Rob Jacobs asked if there is a contingency plan in place for Operations & Maintenance in these uncertain economic times. City Council Liaison, Rich Gates stated he has asked this same question and where cuts could be made in the parks maintenance division. Rich has not received complaints about the park system and the residents seem happy with the maintenance of the city's parks and facilities. Rich's question is what parks do we really need and are there specific areas of the parks that are able to forego maintenance.

Commissioner, James Driste stated staff needs to take into consideration that as the economy shrinks more people will be using the parks.

Jon stated the dilemma is that once the city has spent money to landscape and enhance the parks and medians, they require upkeep and will deteriorate without ongoing maintenance. Either you keep it up or you let it go. There are approximately 3,500 people residing on the border of the city's parks and those are the people who will complain when parks begin to deteriorate due to maintenance cuts. Jon stated several years ago when cuts were made the O&M crews did stop mowing approximately 40 acres and the department received a lot of complaints.

Commissioner, Mark Hanna stated several people have asked him why the city maintenance trucks are running while no one is in the truck and why it takes seven people to paint fire hydrants. Mark recommended these are areas that could be watched closer. Jon stated that there is an 'Idling Policy" for employees to follow.

Following further discussion and input from Commissioners and staff, Andrew thanked Jon and Dale for attending this evenings meeting and updating the Commissioners on the city's parks and facilities.

PROPERTY REVIEW

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black presented information on several City owned parcels of land designated as parkland which are currently under-utilized and could be considered being sold to generate revenue or repurposed. Mary Pat provided Commissioners with background information on each of the properties.

Fair Oaks – located at 6600 & Zane Avenue, just south of Hwy. 694. The RPAC agreed to sell this property approximately two years ago and the City is still negotiating the sale of the parcel for approximately \$1 million.

Westwood Park – located at 8416 Westwood Road. This open space lot was sold to the City by a developer and purchased by the City with DNR funding making it difficult, if not impossible, to sell. It is a single parcel approximately one residential lot in size. Director, Jon Oyanagi stated it could possibly be developed as a pocket park. Others raised ideas such as a community garden or a dog park.

US Bank Property – located at 76th Avenue North. This is an open empty lot that the City acquired, maintains and mows. This lot could be sold.

8030 Mississippi Lane. This space is a long strip of land that the City purchased. The space houses a lift station next to the road. At one time the City thought it may purchase the property to the north to expand River Park. A resident to the north has expressed interest in either purchasing or leasing part of the land for parking and currently has an agreement with their neighbor to use their driveway for parking.

Director Oyanagi stated the Mississippi River is a great amenity located in Brooklyn Park which has not been taken advantage of. Jon has met with the Friends of the Mississippi to discuss designing a greenway Master Plan on the river and develop access points to the river.

Brooklyn Blvd Park – located on Georgia Avenue, west of Zane Avenue and Brooklyn Blvd. This vacant lot is located on a major throughway to the city and is not utilized. Jon suggested this may be a perfect area for a public art sculpture.

Meadowlake – located between 62nd and 63rd on Boone Avenue. This parcel is open space with a school located just to the south of it.

Zane Court Park – located directly across the street from the Zanewood Recreation Center. This park area could be sold as there is another park located across the street.

Amphitheater parcel – located between Winnetka and Highway 169. This is a 30 acre parcel of land owned by the City. There is no need for park development as there are an ample

number of parks in the area. This is a possible location for a future YMCA location. In addition, the Operations & Maintenance Department is considering buying this land for a future water treatment plant.

Commissioner, Deborah Everson asked if the City would reap benefits if it chose to donate any of these parcels of land to Habitat for Humanity. Mary Pat stated she would research the question and report back to the Commission.

Jon stated staff will summarize tonight's discussion and bring it forward to the City Council as a future discussion item.

2009 WORK PLAN

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated this is the time of year Commissioners and staff typically looks at topics for discussion in the upcoming year. Jon asked that Commissioners think about what topics they would like to discuss, bring their ideas to the December meeting, and finalize the work plan in January.

Commissioners and staff provided input on the 2009 work plan including:

Continue to meet at a variety of locations throughout the year

Hold meetings at both Edinburgh USA and Eidem Homestead

Coordinate RPAC meetings with activities or events held throughout the community

Schedule a RPAC meeting in August

Schedule the June meeting to be held on the same night as the Village Creek Grand Opening

Jon thanked Commissioners for their input and asked that they return in December with additional suggestions and ideas.

WEBSITE ADVERTISING

Director, Jon Oyanagi reported the Youth Action Crew has created our youth website that is now up and running and receiving hits from all over the world. While the Youth Action Crew was designing this website, they hit on the idea to fund the website through advertising. Currently the site is hosted off site at a cost of \$30 per month. Selling advertisement could possibly generate some revenue to cover those costs and fund youth activities.

Jon put together a proposed Policy and Standards for advertising on brooklynparkyouth.com which provides guidelines in selling advertisement. Included in his packet is a survey of eight surrounding cities, none of which currently have a youth website or sell advertisement. Jon asked that Commissioners review the policy and provide feedback to staff. If the RPAC approves of adopting a Policy and Standards for advertising, staff will then present it to the City Council for their approval.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers stated the youth did a very nice job in designing the brooklynparkyouth.com website and encouraged those who have not visited the site to do so.

Following discussion and input from Commissioners, the following motion was entertained:

**Motion, Brian Rogers; Second, James Driste to recommend the City Council adopt the Policies and Standards for website advertising on brooklynparkyouth.com.
Motion unanimously approved.**

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW

DITTER PROPERTY

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black stated this parcel is located at 7340 Xerxes Avenue North and abuts up to the Palmer Lake Environmental Area. The owners have proposed to divide the current lot into Parcel A and Parcel B. Parcel B would be donated to the city. The parcel is basically wetland and would make a nice addition to the Palmer Lake Environmental Area. A section of trail runs across this parcel. Following discussion from Commissioners and staff, a motion was brought forward:

Motion, Jim Hubert; Second, James Brekke to accept parkland in lieu of cash for the Ditter Property. Motion unanimously approved.

BETHANY RUSSIAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black stated this church is currently located in the City of Crystal and proposes to build a new church on the old Lazaroff Gardens property located on 2601 – 2609 Brookdale Drive. The parkland dedication is valued at \$85,000 and is 11.3 acres in size.

Motion, Jeanne Qualley; Second, Matthew Cooklock to accept cash in lieu of parkland for the Bethany Russian Baptist Church development. Motion unanimously approved.

7. OTHER ITEMS BY COMMISSION

◆ December, 2008 RPAC Meeting

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhart reminded Commissioners that the December 17, 2008 RPAC will be held in conjunction with the traditional holiday social. Those who would like may bring a treat or appetizer to share.

◆ New Brochures

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black handed out the new Parks Facilities brochure and Adopt a Park brochure. Both brochures are produced using the Recreation & Parks Department branding design. These brochures can also be downloaded from the Recreation & Parks Department website.

◆ Thanksgiving Skate and Jazzercise

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black stated the annual Thanksgiving Skate and Jazzercise event will be held at the Ice Arena on Thursday, November 27 beginning at 8:30 a.m.

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black stated the new Winter Recreation Brochure should be hitting residential homes on Friday, November 21 and is already available to the public via the City's website.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion, Paul Hartzell; Second, Matthew Cooklock, to adjourn. Motion unanimously approved.