

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 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  
Rob Jacobs, At-Large  
Nicole Jechorek, Planning Commission Liaison  
Andrew Reinhardt, At-Large  
Brian Rogers, At-Large

Commission Members absent:

Jim Hubert, At-Large  
Jeanne Qualley, At-Large

Staff Members present:

Jon Oyanagi, Recreation & Parks Director  
Mary Pat Black, Parks & Facilities Manager  
Steve Gulenchyn, Program Supervisor  
Don Berry, PGA Golf Professional  
Tom Fischer, Golf Course Superintendent  
Barb Stewart, Secretary

Others:

Evelyn Staus, Human Rights Commissioner  
Pastor Mikhail Bodnar, Bethany Russian Baptist Church  
Natalya Kormina, Bethany Church Member  
Slavik Lafey, Bethany Church Member  
Vitaliy Tkach, Bethany Church Member  
Dennis Batty, Dennis Batty & Associates Group Developer

**2. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 17, 2008 PRAC AGENDA**

**Motion, Mark Hanna; Second, Reubenna Cooley, to approve the December 17, 2008 PRAC agenda. Motion unanimously approved.**

**3. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 19, 2008 PRAC MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion, James Driste; Second, Matthew Cooklock, to approve the November 19, 2008 PRAC minutes. Motion unanimously approved.**

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION REPORT

Human Rights Commissioner, Evelyn Staus provided a Human Rights Commission update to staff and Commissioners highlighting:

October – Commissioners and strategic planner met twice to design a 3-5 year strategic plan for the Human Rights Commission. The plan includes seeking demographics in the community for hiring purposes and ascertaining which residents are being served by the Recreation & Parks Department.

Upcoming Projects –

1 - Revision of the current Human Rights Commission brochure to reflect their function.

2 – Work with the Police Department to develop a Human Rights support team for victims of hate and violent crimes.

January 24 – Coordinate the Many Faces of Brooklyn Park event in conjunction with the City's Health Fair.

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated the Recreation & Parks Department staff works in cooperation with the Human Rights Commission in organizing and hosting the Many Faces of Brooklyn Park event. This annual citywide event is well attended by the public and a variety of vendors are on hand with educational materials, displays and general information. In addition, the Recreation & Parks Department coordinates and hosts the annual Cinco de Mayo event at the Zanewood Recreation Center.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt expressed the importance of the Human Rights Commission and their work in the community. Andrew thanked Evelyn for attending the meeting and bringing Commissioners up to date on what the Human Rights Commission is working on.

## 2009 BUDGET UPDATE

Director, Jon Oyanagi announced that the 2009 city budget was approved by the City Council at their December 15, 2008 meeting. Commissioners were provided both the proposed 2009 Recreation and Parks budget and proposed fees and charges document in their information packets. The Recreation & Parks Department budget will increase slightly in 2009 from \$2,798,365 to \$2,849,883. This increase includes hiring a Recreation Supervisor for the Zanewood Recreation Center. This position fulfills a portion of the city's youth initiative plan and assists in making the Zanewood Recreation Center a central location within the community. Over the winter months staff will advertise, interview and hire the successful candidate to begin April 1.

Several reductions have been implemented and included in the Recreation & Parks Department budget:

Reduced \$55,710 in personnel costs (two experienced seasonal part time employees).

Reduced number of warming house attendants over the winter outdoor skating season. The Central Park site will be staffed the entire season while other

outdoor warming house sites will be staffed during the winter break and then maintained, but not staffed for the remainder of the skating season.

Reduced \$28,717 in the Eidem Homestead budget. Although originally slated to be removed completely, the Eidem Homestead will retain \$20,000 to organize and host events and programs at the Farm.

Reduced \$20,000 in the department's supply budget.

Several projects will be postponed including:

- Trail and pedestrian bridge in Brookdale Park.
- Parking lot replacement in Willowstone Park.
- Historical Farm improvements.
- Sidewalk fill in.

City Council Liaison, Rich Gates stated a large portion of these reductions were made due to the probable decrease in Local Government Aid (LGA) funding to the city in the amount of \$489,000. Although the city's 2009 budget does include the LGA funding, staff and City Council Members had to find ways to 'unbudget' it in the event that funding is not approved. If the city does receive the LGA funding, plans will be made to move forward with these projects.

Jon stated in addition to the probable decrease in LGA funding, the city's property values has dropped 2.7% which necessitated making budget cuts. In addition, the city's Assessing Department anticipations property values will continue to drop over the next year.

Enterprise Fund –

Jon stated the Finance Department and City Council Members agreed to drop the interest on the city's Edinburgh USA Golf Course Triangle property which will help the bottom line and cash balance in this Enterprise Fund. In addition, this fund received a one time cash infusion from the General Fund bringing the budget close to a zero cash balance.

Revenue from fees and charges includes a significant change in adding taxes to the fees rather than including them in the fees. A non-resident round of golf will be \$50 plus tax and should generate approximately \$84,000 in 2009.

Reduced two personnel positions (Greenskeeper Mechanic and Recreation & Programs Specialist). The Recreation & Programs Specialist position will be reduced to a seasonal part time position.

Delayed some capital purchases and reduced mowing costs which calculates into savings in time, equipment and fuel.

Fees and Charges –

- Increased picnic facilities fees
- Increased athletic fields fees
- Removed tennis, volleyball and basketball court fees
- Increased ice arena rental fees
- Increased Gazebo rental fees

Removed Historical Farm fees  
Initiated the new Community Garden fees  
Reduced SAC seasonal pass from \$1,800 to \$1,700

Council Member Gates described a bleak future for the city stating 2010 is going to be an even more difficult budget year and staff should begin to prepare for more cuts. Council Members anticipate the economy worsening with more staff, program and service reductions being made in 2010.

Commissioner, Matt Cooklock asked what kind of investments the city has in place to prevent it from falling even further in debt and what steps can be taken to stop the city from making cuts to staff, programs and services. Matt asked if staff has looked into the use of wind energy as is being done in Maple Grove. Rich stated the wind energy project in Maple Grove is not owned and operated by the city of Maple Grove but rather by a private entity, Great River Energy. When the City of Brooklyn Park staff looks at alternative energy they look at generators and the costs versus the returns would take 30+ years to equal out. In addition, in order to pay for it the city would have to sell bonds and in today's market that would add even more money to the city's budget which it does not have.

Rich stated all cities subsidize their parks and programs offered to the public and is typically the only fund where money is not recouped. In order to make the Recreation & Parks Department budget balance it would have to double the fees they charge which doesn't make sense. Rich stated the City Council will continue to discuss the city budget at their January retreat.

Jon stated Matt's question is a good one and staff is always looking at where the city can diversify and where our revenue can come from. Matt asked if he could get the rules and state statues on what city dollars can be invested in. Jon responded that he would get that information for Matt from the Finance Department.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt stated the philosophy of sustaining parks and programs has been discussed in the past and continues to be an ongoing discussion. Because cities do not charge the public the actual costs for parks and programs, it is hard if not impossible to sustain parks on their own. Andrew suggested Commissioners could arrange to meet with the Recreation & Parks staff to get background information on the cuts made in the 2009 budget.

Jon stated although it would have been ideal to bring the proposed cuts and reductions to the RPAC beforehand, it was difficult to do so because the ideas and suggestions for reductions and cuts came up at the end of the budget process. Next year a preliminary budget will be prepared and ready for discussion in June which will help staff to inform the RPAC of any potential changes.

Commissioner, Rob Jacobs asked if the RPAC will have time next year to consider what cuts should be made and what plans 'B' and 'C' are. Rich stated this year the preliminary budget was not ready until August making it difficult to prepare and discuss it with the city commissions. City Manager, Jamie Verbrugge would like a two year budget projection to be up, going and planned for in June, 2009. Rich stated although the budget process will go smoother next year, the budget cuts will be deeper, harder and may need to receive citizen input.

### 2009 WORK PLAN

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated Commissioners received a draft of the 2009 work plan at the November 19, 2008 RPAC meeting. Following input and discussion from Commissioners and staff, some revisions were made and Commissioners will receive the final work plan in January. Jon reminded Commissioners that the plan can be revised throughout the year per Commissioners request and does not prevent Commissioners or staff from adding items as necessary. Commissioner, Jim Driste asked that an addition be made for staff to report back to Commissioners in June on the 2010 budget proposal.

### MONROE PARK PUBLIC MEETING

Program Supervisor, Steve Gulynchn stated Commissioners and staff discussed adding a soccer field to Monroe Park at their September 17, 2008 meeting. Following lengthy and in-depth discussion, the Commissioners advised staff to bring the concept to the City Council for their review and discussion. Staff brought it before the City Council on October 27, 2008 and received positive input and a request that staff hold a neighborhood meeting to discuss the concept. That meeting was scheduled and held on December 6, 2008. Prior to the meeting staff met with the Organization of Liberians in Minnesota (OLM) to discuss the project, work on an agreement and receive a verbal commitment to move forward with the project. In addition the Recreation & Parks and Anoka School District 11 staff met to discuss the concept. Following that discussion, Anoka School District 11 proposed to expand the parking lot which was a project they had to put on hold due to lack of funding.

Steve stated approximately 25 neighborhood residents attended the December 6 meeting where staff presented the concept, discussed the issues and received input and feedback from the residents. Steve stated the prominent feedback heard from the group was their concern about increased parking, traffic and safety issues which were problems encountered in the past. The residents concern is the potential for these issues to return if a soccer field is added. In addition, residents expressed their concern that changing the venue from a softball field to a soccer field may bring in a different element, usage and negative activity. They also requested that the outdoor ice rink be put back in.

Staff felt the meeting went well, and received good feedback and heartfelt comments from the residents. Parks Superintendent, Dale Reed attended the meeting and addressed some of the current maintenance concerns.

Following the meeting, Steve and Director Oyanagi have discussed and continue researching other possible sites for a soccer field. Options include:

- Using School District 279 fields at Northview Jr. High, Fair Oaks and Zanewood Elementary schools.

- North Hennepin Community College is reseeding their soccer field and are willing to sit down and discuss some potential field rental.

- Work with school districts, groups, and organizations on developing possible partnerships for developing a soccer field.

Steve stated tonight staff is returning to the Commissioners for their thoughts, input and feedback.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers stated the meeting was a great opportunity to meet with the neighborhood residents and that the residents concern of increased traffic at Monroe Parks will need to be addressed regardless if a soccer field is added or not. Brian spoke with Crime Prevention Specialist, Jerry Gibbs following the meeting and ascertained that the school seems to be the source of the traffic problem. The solution is to have a road and parking lot constructed.

Following further in-depth and lengthy discussion, Steve stated staff has followed up on a soccer field concept at Monroe Park by presenting it to the RPAC, City Council and neighborhood residents. The key is that staff knows there is an issue with usage that needs to continue to be addressed and staff will need partners and grants to address it.

The following motion was entertained:

**Motion, Paul Hartzell; Second, Mark Hanna to combine action options #2 and #4 as written (#2-Adjust the plan to incorporate the school property and an overall concept for both properties; #4-Recommend looking for another location). Motion unanimously approved.**

 VICKY'S CATERING  


In effort to have a new contract in place by May 1, 2009 and to offer the customers at the CAC a choice of caterers, a Request for Services Proposal was sent out in May, 2008. With the original eight proposals received in May, none of these were ethnic caterers. The agreement allowed for the addition of a fourth caterer if their food was of complimentary style such as a firm that specializes in ethnic foods. Two ethnic caterer's proposals were received in October and a taste testing by the original selection committee made up of the Mayor, four city staff, a Recreation and Parks Advisory Commissioner Jim Driste, and a senior club representative took place in November. From the two interviewed the committee selected Vicky's Place & Catering and recommended to the City Council on December 1, 2008 for their approval. Vicky's Place & Catering is located in Brooklyn Park and specializes in the preparation of ethnic food.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

 GOLF COURSE REPORT

PGA Golf Professional, Don Berry and Grounds Superintendent, Tom Fischer presented staff and Commissioners with a Power Point presentation and annual report (see attached).

 BLUE JEAN BALL

Director, Jon Oyanagi encouraged Commissioners to mark their calendars to attend the Blue Jean Ball Celebration and fund raiser on January 9, 2009 at Edinburgh USA from 6:00 – 10:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for teens prior to December 22. In addition, there will be a celebration of the signing of the Brooklyn Bridge Alliance for Youth as well as a fund-raiser for youth activities at Zanewood Recreation Center.

## 6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW

### **BETHANY RUSSIAN BAPTIST CHURCH**

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black stated the Bethany Russian Baptist Church proposal, located on 2601-2609 Brookdale Drive, was previously presented and discussed at the November 19, 2008 RPAC meeting. At that meeting a motion was unanimously approved to accept \$85,000 cash in lieu of parkland.

Developer, Dennis Batty, Pastor Mikhail Bodnar and members of the Bethany Russian Baptist Church has asked to address the RPAC tonight to discuss the possibility of reversing that motion and requesting that the city accept land in lieu of cash.

Developer, Dennis Batty stated he has been in the development field for 40 years with the majority of parkland dedications being made in cash versus land. In the Bethany Church development project it makes sense to donate land in lieu of cash because the tree filled lot is located right next to existing parkland.

Last week the developers presented to the Planning Commission two options on how the 25,000 square feet of donated land could be used:

Incorporate the trail running along Shingle Creek onto the northwest corner of the church property.

Donate a 1,000 feet in length by 10 feet in width strip of property so that the fence currently existing on the property could be easily removed as desired by the city.

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated although the trail is on private property, the city does have an easement for the trail. The city's master plan does not indicate future plans to incorporate this parcel into the park system.

Planning Commission Liaison, Nicole Jechorek stated the property is currently zoned for agricultural use. When the overall plan for Bethany Church was received by the Planning Commission it was recommended and unanimously approved to rezone it for church development. The site plan received was well designed to address neighborhood issues and was favorably received by the Commission. The Planning Commission asked that the plans come back to the RPAC for further review.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers asked if the building could be put on the southwest corner of the lot. Dennis stated Community Developer, Todd Larson of the Planning Department told him that area is a flood plain and could not be developed upon.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt stated as much as he would like to see the city accept this piece of land he does not believe it is possible to do so especially in these tough economic times. Andrew stated the RPAC originally made the decision to accept cash in lieu of land and does not see anything different in the plans presented tonight. Although the city hasn't always accepted cash in lieu of land, typically when parkland is accepted it is taken to develop a park. There is no park at this location and it will be

difficult to make the argument to accept land especially with Brookdale Park located in close proximity to the property.

Church member Slavik stated the church is struggling with the same negative economy that the city is and needs help from the city to save money on this project. Church member Slavik stated although it may not be a huge help to the city to accept land in lieu of cash, it will be a big help to the church. Slavik stated the church desires and is willing to work with the city and asked if the land cannot be donated could the city reduce the costs of the parkland dedication fees.

Commissioner, Rob Jacobs expressed his sensitivity to the church trying to save money and their proposal is not a bad idea although as they have heard earlier in the meeting, they will understand the Parks Department is currently going through a difficult time with layoffs and budget cuts.

Mr. Batty stated if further discussion of parkland dedication for the project is going to be tabled for a month, he would request a meeting to discuss with staff what the dedication possibilities could be. In addition he encouraged Commissioners and staff to physically take a look at the area in question prior to next month's meeting.

**Motion, Brian Rogers; Second, Mark Hanna, to table this discussion to January, 2009 to provide Commissioners time to research the site. Motion unanimously approved.**

## 7. OTHER ITEMS BY COMMISSION

### ◆ Snowmobile Safety Class

Commissioner, Mark Hanna stated the last Snowmobile Safety Class was held at the Zanewood Recreation Center on Saturday, December 13 with 54 students registered. The city has sponsored this class since 1973 and always receives positive comments from participants. Mark thanked the Zanewood staff for the great job they did in assisting instructors with class preparations.

### ◆ Next RPAC Meeting – January 21, 2009 – Girvan Grille/Edinburgh USA

Director, Jon Oyanagi reminded Commissioners that the next RPAC meeting will be held on January 21, 2009 at the Edinburgh USA Clubhouse. Those Commissioners and staff who wish to can meet for dinner in the Girvan Grille at 6:00 p.m. before the meeting. Please RSVP to Barb at 763-493-8367 if you will or will not be able to attend.

### ◆ RPAC Elections

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt reminded Commissioners that elections will be held on January 21, 2009 for both the RPAC Chairperson and Vice Chairperson positions for 2009. Andrew asked that all Commissioners consider accepting either position.

### ◆ RPAC Openings

Director, Jon Oyanagi introduced and welcomed Ashley Anderson, an Osseo Senior High student who is considering serving on the RPAC as a youth commissioner. Chairperson, Andrew Reinhart asked Commissioners to spread the word and

encourage those people they know who might be interested in joining the RPAC to contact Marlene in Administration for an application.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion, Mark Hanna; Second, Matthew Cooklock, to adjourn. Motion unanimously approved.**