

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009  
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  
Dean Heng, City Council Liaison  
John Holm, Planning Commission Liaison  
Andrew Reinhardt, At-Large  
Brian Rogers, At-Large  
Jeanne Qualley, At-Large  
Seyon Nyanwleh, At-Large  
Kimberley Sundy, At-Large

Commission Members absent:

James Driste, At-Large  
Deborah Everson, At-Large  
Paul Hartzell, At-Large  
Rob Jacobs, At-Large

Others present:

Brian Carling, Resident  
Tyree Lawrence, LVY Investments  
Michael Davis, Brooklyn Park Police Chief

Staff Members present:

Jon Oyanagi, Recreation & Parks Director  
Mary Pat Black, Parks & Facilities Manager  
Jan Ficken, Recreation & Services Manager  
Barb Stewart, Secretary

2. **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2009 RPAC AGENDA**

**Motion, Matthew Cooklock; Second, James Brekke, to approve the September 16, 2009 RPAC agenda. Motion unanimously approved.**

3. **APPROVAL OF JULY 15, 2009 RPAC MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion, Reubenna Cooley; Second, Matthew Cooklock, to approve the July 15, 2009 RPAC minutes. Motion unanimously approved.**

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

 **TRAIL NAMING – ENVIRONMENTAL NATURE AREA**

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated Brooklyn Park resident, Brian Carling has proposed naming a trail section located in the Environmental Nature Area after Edward Shimek. Mr. Shimek was involved in the City of Brooklyn Park and its development in the 1950's and 1960's. Brian is here tonight to present his proposal and receive feedback from Commissioners and staff. Included in the Commissioner packets is the City's policy statement regarding naming of parks

and facilities. Other options such as a name plaque in honor of Mr. Shimek could be considered.

Brian stated he is a long time friend of the Shimek family in addition to working for Mr. Ed Shimek on his potato farm in the 1970's. Mr. Shimek has made many contributions to the City of Brooklyn Park including serving two terms as Mayor, appointment to the Planning Commission, the City's first Village Manager, and the City's first City Manager. Brian stated he has known Mr. Shimek as an 'old school farmer' who has always been very aware of the environment, farming's impact on the land, and has practiced land stewardship. Mr. Shimek's land was part of what turned into the Environmental Nature Area and he was instrumental in getting the developer to contribute additional land to that area. Brian stated a part of Mr. Shimek's motivation in preserving the Environmental Nature Area was to save a particular type of birch tree that is rare. This points to Mr. Shimek's awareness of the environment and its impact to the community. Mr. Shimek has worked hard for, and has made many contributions to, the City of Brooklyn Park over the years. Naming a trail section of the Environmental Nature Area after him would be a nice gesture on the City's part. Brian stated if there is an objection in naming a trail after someone, then a dedication plaque would be appropriate.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh asked what segment of the trail is being considered; what the concern is in naming the trail after Mr. Shimek; and what would happen if the RPAC does not propose to honor Mr. Shimek. Jon indicated the area on the map for him and stated the City policy does not favor naming park assets after people. If it is not possible to name the trail after Mr. Shimek then an option may be to place a dedication name plaque on the trail which does not counter the City policy. Brian stated if the RPAC does not propose to honor Mr. Shimek, nothing would happen. Mr. Shimek is turning 88 years of age in October and his memory is becoming precarious. If he is to receive this honor it will have to happen in the near future.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt stated he is in favor of honoring past individuals who have contributed so much to the community. Naming a trail after a former mayor who has put so much into the City would be appropriate.

Commissioner, Kimberley Sundy expressed her concern that City guidelines do not encourage naming of individuals. The heritage of the potato farmers is very important and at the very least the City should acknowledge Mr. Shimek by a name plaque dedicated to him and placed on the trail.

City Council Liaison, Dean Heng suggested that being Mr. Shimek is a concerned environmentalist, it may not be appropriate to name a hard surface trail after him. As an alternative Dean suggested planting a tree and placing a name plaque in his honor.

**Motion, Andrew Reinhardt; Second, Kimberley Sundy to suggest to the City Council that a trail section of the Environmental Nature Area be named after Mr. Ed Shimek based upon his years of service to the City of Brooklyn Park including serving two terms as the Mayor of Brooklyn Park, the historical significance of being the first city manager, acknowledgement of the City's potato heritage, and the many contributions to the City made by Mr. Shimek and his family including his instrumental role in establishing the Environmental Nature Area. Motion passed with two opposed.**

Jon stated staff will bring this motion to the City Council on Monday, September 28.

Director, Jon Oyanagi introduced special guests, Prince Oyebo Aladetan and his wife who is visiting neighbors of Commissioner, Brian Rogers. Prince Aladeta is from Ondo State in Nigeria and a member of the education committee. The RPAC presented the visitors several souvenirs from the City. Prince Aladetan thanked the Commissioners and staff for their generosity. He expressed his support of the City of Brooklyn Park; recognized the RPAC Commissioners role in improving the quality of life for the residents of the City; and appreciates that the City allows residents to have a say in the community. Prince Aladetan will be attending the Monday, September 21 City Council meeting.

### LVY DOME

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black introduced Tyree Lawrence with LVY Investments. Tyree has approached the City to discuss a possible partnership with his group to construct a dome housing two full size artificial turf soccer fields. Tyree is asking that the City provide the land to construct the dome on. Tonight IVY is requesting support from the RPAC to allow staff resources to move forward on the proposal and to receive feedback and questions from RPAC Commissioners.

Tyre thanked Commissioners and staff for addressing this item at tonight's meeting and introduced LVY Investments partners, Mr. Som Vang and Mr. Ger Yang. The project summary was provided to Commissioners in their packets.

Tyre presented background information and stated that LVY is a non-profit organization that is interested in dialoguing with the City to learn what the community needs are for the diverse population residing in Brooklyn Park and how to take the dome proposal to the next level. Any proceeds gained through the dome will be put directly back into the community.

Although Brooklyn Park is a vibrant and lively place in the summer, the City slows down considerably during the winter season leaving enormous blocks of 'down time' for both youth and teens. Construction of a dome addresses that need and provides a place where a variety of cultures can go to attend events, programs, participate in sports and other recreational activities, and host events. In addition to working in partnership with the City, LVY would be working closely with a variety of organizations such as AAAC, Tree House, YOC, etc.

LVY would like to have the dome constructed in 2010 but realistically know there are many things that have to be completed first. The original plan costs were \$3.2 million. Readjusting those plans reduced the costs to \$1.4 million. Tyre stated a stipulation could be included in the proposal that if the dome does not work out and the land has to be returned to its original state, LVY is willing to contribute \$122,000 to cover the costs to remove the dome.

Commissioner, Matthew Cooklock asked if LVY has done any analysis to see if the community supports construction of a dome. Tyre stated although LVY has not done an analysis yet, the Brooklyn Park community and socializing between its diverse populations revolves around sports such as soccer and there is a huge need for sport fields of all kinds within the City. The diversity, need and space to construct a dome exist here in Brooklyn Park.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh agreed there is a need for additional soccer fields along with an interest in an indoor soccer facility. Construction of a dome would address that need. Seyon asked what LVY would require of the City to enter into a partnership; and if construction of a dome would be in direct competition with the City's sport programs. Tyre stated LVY would ask the City to help offset costs to construct the dome by donating the land to construct it on; the dome and programs held there would not be in competition with the City, rather it

would offset a need in the City. In addition, the dome provides the community a place to hold large events where the entire community could attend.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers asked how much land is needed; and stated possible grants were addressed when soccer fields were last discussed. Would those grants be in jeopardy if we work with a non-profit organization. Tyre stated the minimum size for a dome would be 3-4 acres; Jon stated any possible grants would not be in jeopardy if we work with a non-profit. On the contrary it would help.

Commissioner, Kimberley Sundy asked if LVY has funding available now to move forward with the project; and stated it would be helpful if potential construction sites could be presented for consideration. Tyre stated LVY currently has \$109,000 to fund the project. In addition, LVY is leveraging outside resources that would be willing to donate funds upon LVY entering into a partnership with the City; Tyre agreed it would be helpful to have a list of potential construction sites but in order to do that, a number of questions and red tape need to be addressed first.

Commissioner, Rebenna Cooley asked at what point the City would be asked to donate the land. Jon stated the City would not move forward with the land donation unless, and until, the funding was guaranteed and in place.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley asked if the City has ever entered into a partnership such as this before. Jon stated this partnership would be similar to the partnership discussions held with YMCA wherein the City would donate the land for an aquatics facility. Recreation & Services Manager, Jan Ficken stated Edinburgh USA golf course also began as a public/private partnership. Jeanne suggested entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with no commitments from either party.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhart stated the LVY proposal addresses several points that the RPAC and City Council has been exploring over the past several years. Andrew expressed his support in recommending a public/private partnership with LVY and that it is worthy of dedicating staff time to move this forward.

Andrew thanked LVY for presenting their proposal tonight. Jon stated staff will begin working on a Memorandum of Understanding and bring that back to the RPAC at next month's meeting.

#### DECLARING AND CREATING A FUTURE STATE OF LIVABILITY

Director, Jon Oyanagi introduced Police Chief, Michael Davis. Jon stated that in the process of the City Council reviewing the budget, an organizational structural review is taking place. The City Council set six goals to strive towards including **Creating a Positive Image, Developing a Structurally Balanced Budget, Develop a Shared Services Plan, Build Stable Neighborhoods, Livable and Sustainable Development Plans and Develop a Mission-Oriented Culture.**

Chief Davis is heading up the Build Stable Neighborhoods group and is here tonight to report on that group.

Chief Davis stated the current economic crisis has brought with it a dynamic and exciting opportunity for the City. The City is now poised to go on to the next level in meeting the defined goals.

The Build Stable Neighborhoods team has been working together and thinks it prudent to move forward with the following:

Set up a Core Planning Team comprised of 30 people (15 from City staff/15 from the community). The makeup of this group is critical and will include racial diversity, economic diversity, location diversity, and diversity of opinion. It is important that the team members have credibility and are respected by their peers. This team will meet January 28 – 30, 2010 and work on the formation of the strategic plan itself. In addition two teams, Action Team and Measurement Team, will be set up based upon the strategic plan itself. The Action Team defines the next action steps; the Measurement Team develops and puts in place specific measurement tools.

Chief Davis stated this is an exciting proposition he will be talking about a lot in the near future to get the message out there to those people interested in becoming a part of the team. In addition an application process will be set up on the website within the next 30 days. After gathering names of those people who have expressed an interest, a Core Planning Team will be formulated and announced in mid-December.

Chief Davis stated he will be talking to all of the City commissioners to gather good people who can commit to the three day Core Planning Team meetings and discussions.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh asked if RPAC Commissioners can be a part of the group; and what Chief Davis expects will result from the meetings. Chief Davis stated Commissioners can be a part of the group; and that these meetings are just one milestone of several in defining and creating a stable neighborhood. The meeting will address the strategic plan and how we are going to move forward. The first 30 people selected are the start of a process that will grow and change.

### WINTER PLANNING

Recreation & Services Manager, Jan Ficken handed out the new fall recreation brochure and stated staff is beginning to work on formulating their winter recreation programs. Jan asked Commissioners for any ideas they would like considered or discussed.

Planning Commission Liaison, John Holm stated he would like to see increased promotion of College Park. John stated he drives by the park every day and sees no one out there using it. Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black stated a list of the City parks with outdoor ice rinks will be provided at next month's RPAC meeting and removal of those ice rinks considered low usage will be discussed.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers asked if the City could try offering a 'winter hunt' event in the parks along the lines of what is done during the annual Winter Carnival. Mary Pat stated St. Paul incurs a great amount of damage and expense to the parks each winter when they hold their 'hunt'.

John suggested holding a hot chocolate social at different parks throughout the winter. Once people go to a park and experience a fun activity or event there, they may come back again. Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt suggested holding a winter 'movie and skate' at the parks, serving hot chocolate, and providing hand warmers to encourage people to come out in the winter.

Andrew asked how many people used the outdoor ice rink at Eidem Homestead last year. Mary Pat stated although the Farm is a nice location the numbers were low due to the installation of an ice rink being more of an afterthought with no time for advertising it. The rink will be up again this year. Recreation & Services Manager, Jan Ficken stated the new Site Coordinator, Rich Williams has suggested the Eidem Homestead be open during the winter and offer the public different events.

## 5. OLD BUSINESS

### 🌲 TENNIS COURT MASTER PLAN

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated this agenda item has been brought before the RPAC Commission in the past when staff worked on the CIP. Following that discussion staff held a neighborhood meeting at Norwood Park and a decision was made to remove the tennis courts located there and replace them at a future date. In addition, the tennis courts will remain at Lakeland Park for the time being.

Included in Commissioner packets are Trends and Standards indicating that many of the past projections have become the current reality.

Jon suggested that staff use the tennis master plan as a test project and then use that same process to prepare a complete park system master plan.

In developing a tennis court master plan, the following City goals should be considered:

- ▶ Ensure consistent and compatible land use and physical design goals structured to meet current and future community demands for parkland and public facilities
- ▶ Ensure variety and diversity in design of public facilities, parkland and open spaces
- ▶ Promote and encourage citizen interest in current recreational programs and services and strive to develop future recreational programs and services that seek to accommodate a changing population and cater to emerging recreational trends
- ▶ Continue to cooperate, collaborate and provide appropriate levels of assistance in the development of joint public facilities in association with the Community School Program
- ▶ Ensure a coordinated, convenient and safe pedestrian facilities network citywide that emphasizes connectivity between residential neighborhoods, public schools, parkland and areas of open space

Jon stated there are 41 tennis courts located throughout the City and he encouraged Commissioners to continue checking out the tennis courts and see how much each is being used.

Following lengthy discussion and input from staff and Commissioners the following was ascertained:

- ▶ There is not a need to increase the number of tennis courts
- ▶ The existing tennis courts are geographically accommodating the City
- ▶ Decrease the number of tennis courts located in the southwest portion of the City if

- ▶ that opportunity arises
- ▶ Replace the tennis courts in Norwood Park

Jon handed out copies of a recent Star & Tribune news article marketing Pickleball, a combination of tennis and badminton that can be played on tennis courts. The game has been around since 1965 and can be played by people of all ages.

#### 🌲 PROPOSED BUDGET REVIEW

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated the City Council discussed the preliminary levy at their September 8 meeting and approved setting it at the maximum amount allowed. Although once set the City can always reduce the levy amount, they cannot increase it. City Manager, Jamie Verbrugge presented the City Council with a preliminary budget proposed on a zero percent increase to the median value home. Jon stated that overall taxable value on homes dropped 10% this year and that a zero percent increase leaves the city with a \$775,000 shortfall.

The Recreation & Parks Department submitted a budget request similar to 2009. The only changes reflected are an increase of \$70,000 in revenue due to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant; an increase of \$70,000 in expenses; an increase of \$28,000 in custodial and maintenance costs for the Zanewood Recreation Center (shifted from the Operations & Maintenance budget to the Recreation & Parks Department budget); and a significant increase in City charge backs to be discussed further by City staff. The City Council will continue to hear budget reports from all departments with a finalized budget formulated by December 1, 2009.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers asked if City Council members have received complaints from residents regarding the decrease in the mowing schedule. City Council Liaison, Dean Heng stated any complaints received have come from residents abutting the Edinburgh Golf Course.

#### 🌲 COMMUNITY GARDEN – ADDITIONAL SITE

Parks & Facilities Manager, Mary Pat Black reported that the first year in offering community garden plots to the public have been very successful. All of the garden plots located at the Eidem Homestead were sold with 12 people on the wait list. A variety of people from diverse cultures rented the plots including Hmong, Somalians, and Liberians. The community garden exhorts what a community is all about and has been a good experience for all.

The gardeners who currently have garden plots have the first right to keep or give up their plot for next year and are required to notify staff of their intent by October 1. Staff has received several telephone calls asking to be put on next year's wait list.

The enormous interest in garden plots has displayed a need to offer additional plots. Although there is room at the Eidem Homestead to add additional plots, it makes sense to offer additional plots in the southern part of the City. Mary Pat stated a pot luck was held on Saturday, September 12 for the gardeners to make and bring a dish which included something grown from their garden. Many of the gardeners who attended the pot luck reside south of 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Two possible locations for additional plots are at Brookdale and Fair Oaks parks. Mary Pat provided a list of pros and cons at each location.

City Council Liaison, Dean Heng asked if the additional plots will need to be fenced in. Mary Pat stated fencing is not necessary although it does help to keep animals out of the gardens.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers stated he visited the community garden on Monday and it is fantastic. Brian asked who put up the fencing; who purchased it; and how much it will cost to add additional garden plots. Director, Jon Oyanagi stated the Tree Trust employees installed the fencing; the majority of the fencing was provided by Lazaroff Gardens; costs to run water and staff time are \$500-\$1,000. Jon stated to run water, some posts and wire costs, and preparation of land at the Eidem Homestead cost \$4,000 and revenue from the plot rentals was \$4,000.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh asked if there is a cost to be placed on the wait list. Mary Pat stated there is not a cost to be on the wait list but there is a cost of \$50 to rent a garden plot for the season.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley asked how many additional garden plots will be offered. Mary Pat stated 30 – 40 and the number will depend upon the responses received back by this year's gardeners.

Several possible locations to add additional garden plots were suggested and discussed by staff and commissioners. Following that discussion, Fair Oaks was selected as a location to expand the community garden plots.

#### **DOG PARK OPEN HOUSE**

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated the Dog Park Open House to be held at Brookdale Park on Thursday, August 20 was canceled due to inclement weather and rescheduled for Saturday, August 29. It was a beautiful day with approximately 75 dogs and their handlers in attendance including RPAC Commissioner, Brian Rogers and City Council Member, Rich Gates. Hartz Mountain Corporation, PETCO and Windstar Pet Grooming were present and/or donated prizes. Commissioner, Brian Rogers stated the Sun Post wrote a great article on the Dog Park.

Surveys were available for people to fill out and 31 were completed. The survey results depicted the desire for additional fencing and a willingness of dog owners to pay something to use the dog park. Staff will do additional surveys, report the results back to the RPAC, and formulate a recommendation whether to keep the Dog Park or not. Following that process, the recommendation will be formally presented to the City Council.

## **6. UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **Apple Cider Day**

Director, Jon Oyanagi invited Commissioners to attend the Apple Cider Day and 1800's Baseball at the Eidem Homestead on Sunday, September 20, 1-4 p.m. The new Site Coordinator, Rich Williams brings with him a fresh and different experience at the farm along with many additional volunteers.

## **7. OTHER ITEMS**

#### **Parklawn Park**

Director, Jon Oyanagi Jon stated a neighborhood meeting was held on Thursday, September 10. Fifty-four people attended including Mayor, Steve Lampi and RPAC Commissioner Brian Rogers. Jon stated the majority of feedback heard was positive and reasonable. Complaints were heard from the residents living right on the park in regards to the half court basketball court. Some maintenance issues were expressed and passed along to the Operations &

Maintenance Department. Following input and discussion from residents and staff, it was decided that the basketball court will remain and the residents should call the Police as problems occur. If that doesn't solve the problem, the issue will be revisited.

 **Soccer Tournament**

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh stated he is working with a local group to hold the first ever African American soccer and basketball tournament. The tournament will be held in partnership with Brooklyn Center in August, 2010 (TBD). Seyon expressed his appreciation for any support the RPAC and City of Brooklyn Park can provide and invited all to attend.

 **Soccer Tournament**

Director, Jon Oyangi handed out a recent Star and Tribune article on 'Fake Grass, Real Gain'.

 **Edgewood Park**

City Council, Liaison, Dean Heng stated he has received complaints about kids playing basketball and football in the streets near Edgewood Park. Residents called the Police after which the parents of the kids approached them stating they 'should mind your own business'. Residents asked what the City can do to help in this situation. Dean spoke with Police Chief Mike Davis who stated he will put a communication out and include information to call the Parks Department with any further complaints.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion, Seyon Nyanwleh; Second, Matthew Cooklock, to adjourn. Motion unanimously approved.**