

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2010
RECREATION & PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION

1. The Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Person, Brian Rogers.

Commission Members present:

Matthew Cooklock, At-Large
Reubenna Cooley, At-Large
Deborah Everson, At-Large
Mark Hanna, At-Large
Snoti Jappah, Student Representative
Steve Lampi, City Council Liaison
Wanda Muhammad, At-Large
Seyon Nyanwleh, At-Large
Terry Parks, At-Large
Jeanne Qualley, At-Large
Brian Rogers, At-Large
Steve Schmidt, Planning Commission Liaison

Commission Members absent:

James Driste, At-Large
Andrew Reinhardt, At-Large
Kimberley Sundy, At-Large

Staff Members present:

Jon Oyanagi, Recreation & Parks Director
Jan Ficken, Recreation & Services Manager
Barb Stewart, Secretary

2. **APPROVAL OF RPAC APRIL 21, 2010 AGENDA**

Motion, Mark Hanna; Second, Terry Parks, to approve the April 21, 2010 RPAC agenda. Motion unanimously approved.

3. **APPROVAL OF RPAC MARCH 17, 2010 MEETING MINUTES**

Motion, Jeanne Qualley; Second, Reubenna Cooley, to approve the March 17, 2010 RPAC minutes. Motion unanimously approved.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated new Commissioners terms officially began April 1. Reubenna Cooley has been reappointed; Mark Hanna was appointed following a one-year hiatus; Terry Parks has been appointed for his first term along with Wanda Muhammad. Jon asked that Commissioners and staff introduce themselves and welcomed new Commissioners.

4. OLD BUSINESS

OFF-LEASH DOG EXERCISE AREA UPDATE

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated at their April 5 meeting the City Council approved creating a permanent Off-Leash Dog Exercise Area at Brookdale Park. At the April 19 City Council meeting staff presented for approval the ordinance changes allowing dogs to be off leashed. In addition staff presented the first reading for an ordinance change to the annual license fees from \$5 to \$15 for sterilized dogs; from \$15 to \$25 for unsterilized dogs; and a \$3 daily fee. The City Council adjusted those fees consecutively from \$5 to \$10; \$15 to \$20 and a \$3 daily fee. The additional revenue generated will go towards maintenance of the dog park area. Staff will present the second reading of the ordinance change for approval at the April 26 City Council meeting. The ordinance will be entered into the City Code and become official thirty days following City Council final approval.

Mayor, Steve Lampi stated there was a fair amount of debate with an interesting mix of opinions on the fees resulting in the resolution passing 4 to 3.

PARK REVIEW – HARTKOPF PARK

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated Commissioners were asked to visit Hartkopf Park and provide input on their review of the park at tonights meeting.

This 25.5 acre park includes three ballfields, playground, tennis courts, parking lot, picnic shelter, trails and a wooded area in the middle of the park.

Chairperson, Brian Rogers stated he recently visited the park at 5 p.m. and found approximately 100 people utilizing a variety of areas within the park including soccer fields, volleyball and tennis courts being heavily used. The tennis courts and play equipment is in good repair although the containers are in need of additional mulch chips. The paths are in good repair and although there is some graffiti within the park, it is minimal. The school district property across the street at Parkbrook Elementary School was being heavily used, especially the soccer field. There are several day care businesses in the area that use the park during the week.

Jon stated in the future, Clear Wireless will be proposing installation of a tower in the park.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh stated he is very familiar with Hartkopf Park and because it is easily accessible for youth to walk to, it is one of the most highly used parks he knows of. Seyon stated the soccer fields are heavily used for youth programs and are in bad shape. Seyon asked who the soccer fields belong to. Brian stated they are owned and maintained by the school district. Seyon asked how installation of a tower will affect people utilizing the park. Brian stated installation of a tower would require an approximately 20' X 20' in size and would not affect people utilizing the park. If approved the tower would be installed away from any active areas in the park.

Commissioner, Deborah Everson asked if the RPAC has a policy in place regarding installation of cell towers within the parks. Deborah is not in favor of installing towers due to their lengthy contracts of 20 years and suggested a contract limit of five years with an option to renew. Mayor Steve Lampi stated the cell tower companies make a substantial investment thus justifying a 20 year contract. The City Council's adopted policy is to try to have cell towers installed on public property disguised whenever possible. Seyon asked if the city should give priority to a corporation to install a cell tower

or to the residents and should installation of cell towers be made in less heavily used parks in the city. Jon stated after researching where they need cell coverage, the cell tower company makes a choice of location and presents their proposal to the City. That is why the RPAC hears the proposal and is given the opportunity to respond to it. Commissioners can always say they don't want a cell tower installed in a location chosen by the cell tower company. Jon stated further discussion involving staff, RPAC Commissioners, and Clearwire representatives will be held when Clearwire presents their proposal. In the meantime, Commissioners should be thinking of how they will respond when those proposals come forward.

Brian suggested redesigning the hill into some kind of useable feature; installing additional picnic tables to accommodate the people who visit the park; put sand in the hockey rink to set up for volleyball; and install some new turf on the west side.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley asked if information could be provided as to when the softball or baseball fields are scheduled for use and the amount of usage at those fields. Jon responded that staff will gather that information and provide it at the May RPAC meeting.

Commissioner, Mark Hanna stated Hartkopf Park is always full of people and suggested setting up a disc golf course in the park.

Planning Commission Liaison, Steve Schmidt stated he used to live two blocks away from the park for several years and his son's family lives near the park now. Steve agrees that the park is heavily used. Steve suggested constructing an additional pavilion on the east side of the park to accommodate the large number of family gatherings held in the park.

Deborah suggested adding some soft lighting in the wooded area to provide some additional safety in that area.

MYSTERY SHOPPER PROGRAM

Recreation & Services Manager, Jan Ficken stated the Mystery Shopper Program was discussed at last month's RPAC meeting and information was provided in Commissioner packets. Commissioners are encouraged to select a program to register for or a facility to rent. Commissioners will go through the process of registering and participating in a program or facility rental. Upon completion of the program or rental, they are asked to complete an evaluation form and return it to Jan or Mary Pat. That form will be used to make any necessary changes in procedures. Jan asked that Commissioners register in the same manner as they typically would and upon completion of the evaluation form, they would be reimbursed for any costs in registering for the selected program or facility rental. Jan stated another part of the Mystery Shopper program is serving as 'park monitor' via adopting a park close to their home. Director, Jon Oyanagi passed out a map noting proximity of the parks to each Commissioner's residence.

Tonight staff is requesting feedback from Commissioners on their ideas and suggestions for the program.

Commissioner, Wanda Muhammad stated it is her experience that a Mystery Shopper program works best when the shopper is allowed to spend whatever they would typically spend on a program and they are later reimbursed for their costs. They are asked to provide a receipt along with the evaluation

form within two days of completing the program at which time they are reimbursed for their costs. The evaluations are gathered and at the end of the month staff reviews the evaluations.

Commissioner, Matthew Cooklock expressed his interest in adopting a park and providing feedback to the staff on his experience.

Chairperson, Brian Rogers stated in the past he has recruited people to 'secretly shop' the City's facilities, departments and programs. Brian has received positive results back from participants including comments such as "he gave me so much help on my golf swing, I'd like to give him a tip", "flexibility on tee time".

City Council Liaison, Steve Lampi suggested staff send out evaluations to those persons who have already completed a program or have rented a facility. Jon responded it is staff's intent to use the Commissioners as a test group to work out any potential problems before approaching the public for their involvement in a Mystery Shopper program. Jan stated the purpose of the program is to engage the Commissioners at a level they may not have reached on their own.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley asked if there is a monetary cap for reimbursement of a program/facility and what staff expects to get back from the evaluation forms. Jon responded the department would reimburse Commissioners for one class, registration, or reservation. Jan expressed the importance in gathering feedback on a wide variety of programs rather than just one activity such as golf.

Jan encouraged those persons interested in becoming a Mystery Shopper to contact either herself or Mary Pat for details.

EDINBURGH USA POND – 17TH HOLE

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated that staff is recommending that the Edinburgh USA Pond be lined and will present this agenda item to the City Council at their April 26, 2010 meeting. Councilmember's had some questions on the life expectancy of the lining. Jon stated the lining comes with a 20 year warranty with a 40-50 year life expectancy. The Operations & Maintenance Department will prepare a study to address a resident's concern regarding the groundwater levels around the city. Project costs to line the pond are estimated at \$500,000. If approved at their May 10 meeting, the EDA will invest \$300,000 into the clubhouse (which they own) improvements which will free up \$300,000 from the Recreation Fund to go towards the pond lining. The remaining \$200,000 will be funded from the Recreation Fund paying off a loan from either another fund or from revenue bonds.

5. NEW BUSINESS

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT – E-BIKES

Director, Jon Oyanagi presented videos on electronic assisted bikes known as E-Bikes. The bikes come in all shapes and sizes including a three-wheel bike. People have their choice of manually pedaling the bike or having an electric motor assist them. The Three Rivers Park District is proposing to allow the use of these bikes on their trails, two of which run through the City of Brooklyn Park. Currently the Brooklyn Park Ordinance states that no motorized vehicles are allowed on trails and technically the majority of city ordinances state that no motorized vehicles are allowed on their trails. If Three Rivers Park District approves use of the E-Bikes on their trails, the City of Brooklyn Park would still need to

approve use of the E-Bikes on its trails. Three Rivers Park District requires that the bikes can be pedaled and cannot exceed a speed of 20 mph. Staff is asking for feedback from Commissioners on whether or not the city should, or should not, allow E-Bikes on city trails.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley stated she has seen people riding E-Bikes on Brookdale Drive and they resemble a gas moped. The bikes go quite fast and are not quiet. Jon responded that what she saw was probably a bike with a gas motor. The E-Bikes in consideration tonight is an electronic, not gas powered, bike.

City Council Liaison, Steve Lampi asked if motorized wheelchairs are prohibited on our trails. Jon responded that they are allowed if the person has a physical impairment. Steve asked who rides an E-Bike. Jon responded an E-Bike rider is generally a commuter who has a distance to go and will use the motor when they are going up hills. In addition, people who have always ridden bikes but no longer can and still want to enjoy biking. Steve asked what is driving Three Rivers Park District on this issue. Jon responded that Three Rivers is a regional park system and sees a lot of commuters using their trails.

Chairperson, Brian Rogers stated the E-Bikes cost from \$900-\$3,000 and interest the more sophisticated biker. There are approximately 600 of the bikes in use in the metro area and are sold through four local dealers. Brian stated he is in support of allowing E-Bikes on city trails because it gets more people out using the trails.

Commissioner, Wanda Muhammed asked how Three Rivers Park District enforces the E-Bike rules. Jon stated Three Rivers has Park Police out on its trails monitoring the trails.

Jeanne stated she sees allowing E-bikes becoming a snowball effect and takes the position to not allow them. Although Three Rivers may be a commuter trail, Brooklyn Park trails sees more walkers and joggers rather than bikers on its trails. Jeanne stated serious bikers are going to go elsewhere to use trails rather than the city parks. Mark Hanna expressed his agreement.

Commissioner, Deborah Everson stated she sees people riding on the River Park trails and going much faster than 20 mph. That makes it scary and dangerous for the walkers when bikers are going so fast.

Commissioner, Matthew Cooklock stated he thinks the E-Bikes would be used by people who want to bike but are physically unable to and does not see them being a speed issue.









Wanda stated there is a problem with assuming people will follow the rules and use of E-Bikes needs an education process that goes along with using them.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh asked how it would affect the city's relationship with Three Rivers Park District if the city does not pass an ordinance allowing E-Bikes. Jon stated Three Rivers Park District will be lobbying cities to be in line with what they allow on their trails. Not allowing E-Bikes on the City of Brooklyn Park trails would affect the E-Bike riders when they go from a trail they can ride on to a trail they cannot ride on. They would be in compliance on the Three Rivers Park District trails and out of compliance when they enter the City of Brooklyn Park.

Steve asked if there is a timeline on making this decision. Jon stated Three Rivers board will review and act on this issue in May. Steve stated it would be helpful if people took the time to look at this new concept and check it out. Brian suggested inviting an expert to come and put on an E-Bike demonstration at a future meeting. Jon stated he would arrange for that.

CITY COUNCIL REPORT SUMMARY

Chairperson, Brian Rogers attended the annual Commission/City Council meeting on Monday, April 19. The meeting went well except for a technical glitch. Brian provided a review of the RPAC past year accomplishments including:

-  Community Garden at Eidem Homestead
-  Pilot program for a dog park at Brookdale Park
-  Dedicated a trail in the Environmental Area to Ed Schimek
-  Was awarded Twins grant funding for two soccer fields
-  Added fulltime staff at Zanewood Recreation Center
-  Redesign of several parks
-  Identifying funding sources for future redesign of parks
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Brian suggested Commissioners work on this annual report on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

6. **CITY COUNCIL UPDATE**

City Council Liaison, Steve Lampi updated Commissioners:

Edinburgh USA – Lining of the 17th hole

Dog Park – Brookdale Park – Approve Dog Park and amend fees

Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission Annual Verbal Report

Board of Appeal – There was 15 people in attendance and one person complained that his valuation was too low.

The annual All Commission meeting was held on Tuesday, April 20 with 60 people in attendance. Everyone felt the meeting was well worth their time. The City Council and City staff is always trying to find ways to help City Commissions be more effective. Last night was a first step in achieving that goal and the evening's discussion was worthwhile.

Steve was notified that the City has formally acquired the property (formerly the Marquette Bank building site) in Village Creek Development for a new Police Station. That location will also provide a community aspect and a positive force in that area.

7. **DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW**

N/A

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE

Planning Commission Liaison, Steve Schmidt updated Commissioners:

Steve will serve as Planning Commission Liaison to the Parks Advisory Commission through September, 2010

Approved Menards to construct a nursery building in their parking lot

There is not a lot of activity occurring right now in Brooklyn Park
The cell phone towers will come before the planning commission also in the near future. It may prove beneficial to have more discussion between the Planning and RPAC commissions to ensure that both commissions are on board.

8. **UPCOMING EVENTS**

 **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Director, Jon Oyanagi provided Commissioners with a calendar of upcoming events for May and June, 2010.

- Clean up the Park will begin on Saturday, April 24. There are 30-40 groups already signed up.
- Cinco De Mayo will be held at the Zanewood Recreation Center on Saturday, May 1 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

9. **OTHER ITEMS BY COMMISSION**

 **Willowstone Park**

There has been some vandalism occurring within the wooded area on the east side of Willowstone Park with trees being cut down and trenches dug out. It appears that the damaged area is being used for paintball war games. Staff sent out a letter to residents surrounding the park encouraging them to call the Police right away to report any signs of vandalism in the park.

Commissioner, Mark Hanna recommended that Commissioners visit the parks in close proximity to them and talk to the people utilizing the parks. Encourage them to call 911. It is Mark's experience that people are reluctant to do that at first but after talking with them, they begin to understand and are more willing to make the call if needed. Vandalism and graffiti painting at Sunnyside Park has decreased since more people have called to report the vandalism they see.

 **A-Mon-Nue (ASSA) Motivational Spelling Bee**

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh stated the ASSA Motivational Spelling Bee will be held on Thursday, May 13, from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Zanewood Recreation Center. Seyon thanked Mayor Lampi for his support to the kids who work so hard at competing in the Spelling Bee.

 **Youth Transportation**

Chairperson, Brian Rogers reported that the YOC is in the process of acquiring a van to service the Zanewood Corridor. On Tuesday, April 20, Jan Ficken, Matt Norris and Brian Rogers drove the proposed routes and identified where the stops would be located. In the past 12 months Brian has met with a variety of groups throughout the city and has received a lot of input from others regarding a variety of issues. Brian encouraged Commissioners to remain open and attend as many functions and meetings as possible. Brian has enjoyed every minute of it along with tackling the issues that have come up. Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh requested that a discussion on youth transportation be added to a future RPAC agenda.

Community Gardens

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley requested an update on the Community Garden plots. Director, Jon Oyanagi responded that all of the plots at Eidem Homestead and Fair Oaks have been sold. Chairperson, Brian Rogers stated he has been up to the Eidem Homestead a couple of times and have met some of the gardeners. They all have given positive and good feedback on the gardens. Jon stated that the City will be selling Fair Oaks and staff will be looking for another community garden location within the city.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion, Mark Hanna; Second, Seyon Nyanwleh, to adjourn. Motion unanimously approved.