



Public Services – Parks & Recreation

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
ANOKA PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL WORK SESSION ROOM OF ANOKA CITY HALL
2015 FIRST AVENUE, ANOKA MN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Steve Nelson, Joseph Anderla, Mary Blankenship (left at 7:15 p.m.), Margret Kallstrom, Jennifer Shoemaker, Erik Skogquist, Dave Steinbring, Dave Throne, and Ellen Ward

STAFF PRESENT: Greg Lee, City Manager/Public Services Director and Lisa LaCasse, Recreation Supervisor

GUESTS: None.

OATH OF OFFICE

Chair Nelson conducted the oath of office for reappointed Park Board members Mary Blankenship and Erik Skogquist and newly appointed member Jennifer Shoemaker.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Steinbring nominated Steve Nelson to be the Chairperson for 2016. There being no additional nominations, upon voice vote it was unanimously carried that Steve Nelson will represent the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as its Chairperson for 2016.

Blankenship nominated Erik Skogquist as the Vice-Chairperson for 2016. There being no additional nominations, upon voice vote it was unanimously carried that Erik Skogquist will represent the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as its Vice-Chairperson for 2016.

REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The board reviewed the subcommittee assignments. The few changes from the 2015 list of assignments included:

Community Education Committee: Add Jennifer Shoemaker

Recreation Areas and Facilities: Add Jennifer Shoemaker and remove Judy Botts (no longer a board member)

Tree Management Committee: Add Margret Kallstrom and remove Judy Botts

Performing Arts Committee: Add Margret Kallstrom

(M. Blankenship left at 7:15 p.m.)

APPROVE MINUTES

There being no changes or corrections to the December regular meeting minutes, a **motion was made by Anderla, seconded by Throne, to APPROVE THE DECEMBER 15, 2015, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AS PRINTED.**

6 ayes – 0 nays – 3 abstentions (Ward, Skogquist and Shoemaker)

OPEN FORUM

None



NEW BUSINESS

2015 Accomplishments/2016 Goals

The Park Board and staff reviewed the list of 2016 goals and 2015 Accomplishments as provided in the agenda packet. Nelson asked if any of these are part of the city's/Park Board's Comprehensive Plan. LaCasse confirmed that at least the Castle Field and Anoka Station Park are part of the plan. Nelson explained he wants to make sure we are coordinating with the Comprehensive Plan as we proceed.

Through discussion, board members indicated their wish to add:

2016 Goals: Park Security Enhancement and Art/Beautification of Pedestrian Bridge/Tunnel

2015 Accomplishments: Park Restroom Renovations, Park Security, Art/Lighting in Pedestrian Tunnel, and Environmental Issues (Erosion Control along the Rum River and Eradication of Invasive Vegetation).

Upon discussion of park security, Lee indicated the city has hired an additional sworn Police officer and two security officers with the focus on the downtown area. These individuals will be made mobile with the purchase of a side-by-side utility vehicle to travel from the downtown area to within the parks. With this added personnel, park security should have nearly around-the-clock coverage.

Shoemaker, leader of the Young Artists group who created the murals in the Main Street pedestrian tunnel in 2015, discussed that she is continuing discussions with city staff about extending similar art projects in others areas of the city, such as the Aquatic Center. It was noted that the tunnel art work is not only bringing people together in a positive way, but there has been no vandalism/graffiti in the tunnel since this project's inception.

Anderla asked when the electronic reader board is scheduled to be put up between the Anoka Ice Arena and Castle Field. Lee stated this is a separate project from the Castle Field Plaza design. Anderla stated the Ice Arena is anxious to get a sign up, but has not been contacted by anyone from the city; there has been no movement toward completion. Lee confirmed that the city is counting on the \$15,000 donation from the ice arena toward that project, noting the city will be investing \$50,000 toward this project.

There being no further discussion, it was **moved by Skogquist, seconded by Steinbring, to MOVE THESE 2016 GOALS AND 2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS DISCUSSED FORWARD TO CITY COUNCIL.**

8 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Cross Country Skiing Options for 2017 – Parks and Trails Subcommittee

LaCasse indicated she is merely asking if the full Park Board wishes to discuss cross country skiing options for 2017 or if they wish the Parks and Trails Subcommittee to discuss it first and then bring it forward to the Park Board.

LaCasse explained staff has given some thought to possibly expanding the city's cross country skiing options to include paved trails. Currently, we do not plow all trail in all parks. Although we have not had any requests for this, staff is being pro-active in this approach and is asking how the Park Board feels about this suggestion.

Nelson felt cross country skiers want a long distance area in which to ski. He feels there are more people out there who want to just walk on our paved trails. He felt we should plan on the side of caution and safety as we provide these trails.

Throne stated even bikes with fat tires can travel on what we have just fine. When asked if the city provides Nordic skiing tracks, LaCasse stated we have not set tracks; we just provide for multi-use skiing.

Upon discussion, it was agreed that the city's policy should be if a trail is paved, it should be cleared off; not groomed for cross country skiing.

Nelson asked if any consideration has been given to grooming a trail on the frozen river. Lee stated a definite no. For safety reasons we do not want city equipment out on the river ice.

LaCasse stated she would bring this topic back to the Park Board for further discussion at its February 17, 2016, regular meeting. We are never going to be the cross country ski facility that Elm Creek is, but asked if the board is interested in providing a general recreational skiing loop(s) opportunity for people. She did not see us being able to create a ten-mile track. Nelson stated just link the paved trails over a period; but for winter use the golf course creates a great opportunity for cross country skiing. He asked if the Green Haven restaurant is open on weekends. Staff was aware they do a breakfast buffet on Sunday, but did not know its winter operating hours.

Anderla asked how much cross country skiing opportunities we need to provide. With our proximity in the Twin Cities area, there are other opportunities nearby. He felt perhaps the golf course and Anoka Nature Preserve (ANP) locations are enough for the city to offer. LaCasse stated that people can blaze their trails almost anywhere without needing a designated location.

Shoemaker commented that she felt it better to do something smaller than to try to do too much and be inconsistent. In comparison, Elm Creek's larger facility can make their own snow.

Nelson directed that we table this discussion to a future meeting.

Staff then confirmed that the January 29-31, 2016, Winterfest event needs volunteers for the Friday night wine tasting activities. The city is also looking for people who cross country ski who can assist Pinewski's staff with demonstrations and tutorials. There are also numerous kids' activities where help is also needed.

Shoemaker indicated she will send out an e-mail to her Young Artists asking for volunteers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Biomass Removal

LaCasse reported that staff is pursuing a biomass removal project along the Rum River Trail north of the railroad tracks and south of the state hospital. This will cross county property. An overhead map of the area was shown of this thirteen acre site. LaCasse indicated she sent an authorization to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requesting that we be allowed to go in and conduct a biomass removal of that area, along the easement portion, which is part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers. This project would be similar to what we did in the Anoka Nature Preserve. We would be attempting to remove buckthorn, prickly ash, dead falls, anything under four inches in diameter, including anything that is considered a noxious weed.

LaCasse reported we would be contracting out the majority of the cutting and removal, but city personnel would come in and remove debris and/or dead fall. The city's level of participation would depend on how the bids come back.

Nelson asked if a biomass removal will be done at Kings Island. LaCasse indicated that would not be planned for 2016. For the Rum River Trail biomass removal, the city will be working with the Anoka Conservation District and will hopefully try to get some grants for the project. The contractor will be responsible for shredding and moving the material off-site. As for a timeline, we want to be able to get this done before the spring of 2016 and before the wetlands thaw.

Anderla asked if the Anoka Nature Preserve clean-up is complete or if there is anything we have to do to follow-up with that process. LaCasse indicated the Anoka Conservation District should be applying herbicides this spring and early summer after vegetation leafs out. They plan to do that for several years following the burn. Some 500-600 seedlings were planted up there, which will be watched.

LaCasse also reported that Jon Holmes and she are starting to cut in the secondary trails in the ANP and take advantage of these conditions since we are not moving snow. Relative to the ANP, LaCasse stated she found the survey of the Andover properties that are encroaching into the ANP and will look into that further.

Lee reported he has received a request from Andover resident(s) asking to be allowed trail access to the ANP. One Andover citizen who used to allow them access through their property has stopped doing so.

Now, residents have to go out onto Seventh Avenue to access the ANP. Lee went on to state that before addressing any such access request, he first wants the City of Andover to keep its residents from encroaching on our park property. Boats are being stored back there, there is a fire pit site, etc. Lee has already met with the Andover City Administrator to discuss issues with an adjacent property owner regarding a retaining wall.

MISCELLANEOUS

Prior to this meeting being called to order, a group Parks and Recreation Advisory Board photo was taken for the city's website.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

- LaCasse will come back with information on winter trail planning
- Skating rink operations

LaCasse reported that skating rink ice is beautiful right now. We were able to open three rinks by December 30, 2015. The other two were opened January 4, 2016. Sorenson seems to be the popular rink this year. She will have some overall discussion items on skating rinks on the February agenda.

Other:

Lee reported that City Council will hold a work session February 16, at which time the matter of swapping properties with the Riverplace Counseling Center will be considered. If we proceed it will have a big effect on our trails along the Rum River and will complete that Rum River loop. This gateway to Anoka will have views along Ferry Street that will change dramatically.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, a **motion was made by Shoemaker, seconded by Kallstrom, to ADJOURN THIS MEETING.**

8 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Time of adjournment: 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Lee
City Manager/Public Services Director

Mava Mikkonen
Public Services Secretary/Recording Secretary