



Public Services – Parks & Recreation

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
ANOKA PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015
COUNCIL WORK SESSION ROOM OF ANOKA CITY HALL
2015 FIRST AVENUE, ANOKA MN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Steve Nelson, Joseph Anderla, Judy Botts, Dave Throne, Dave Steinbring, Ellen Ward, and Pat Walker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Blankenship, Erik Skogquist

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

GUESTS: None.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Chairperson, Nelson conducted the oaths of office for appointed Park Board member Pat Walker.

APPROVE MINUTES

Dave Throne pointed out a correction for the March minutes. Under OPEN FORUM, in the last paragraph Mr. Evans name is spelled incorrectly.

Motion was made by Ward, seconded by Throne, to APPROVE THE MARCH 17, 2015, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE ANOKA PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD WITH THE ABOVE CORRECTION.

7 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

None

NEW BUSINESS

RFP for Anoka Nature Preserve Play Equipment - LaCasse led discussion on RFP for Anoka Nature Preserve Play Equipment. We received eleven proposals from seven companies. Members discussed eliminating plans that did not fit their vision.

Firefly's plans 1, 2, & 3 were eliminated. Flagship's plan was questioned as not following the nature theme and not a lot of components for the price. Miracle's plan seemed to only be for ages eight and under. LaCasse suggested that the large climbing rock and rope structure is intended for older children. Nelson stated he is not a fan of rope structures where kids might get injured.

Throne asked what the durability of these rope structures is. LaCasse responded probably ten years. Nelson then asked the cost of replacement. LaCasse estimated \$2,000 per section. Nelson again stated that a rope structure in an unsupervised area concerns him.

Ward stated that she favors St. Croix and Webber. Botts stated that her favorite is Creative Play. LaCasse passed around samples from St. Croix of a salamander and tree bark made from glass fiber reinforced concrete.



Members discussed the options of swings in some of the plans. Ward commented that she was recently at John Ward Park and no one was playing on the swings. Discussion about a swing built with a belt swing and tot swing together, so the parent faces the toddler. Note that Game Time and St Croix included some swings in their plan.

Anderla asked if Game Time's plan included a rubber play surface. LaCasse replied that this was not included in the budget. A wood chip surface will cost about \$7,000 while a poured in place rubber surface could cost \$25,000. We could request this but it would significantly increase the budget. LaCasse noted that none of the plans had components with excessive height. Anderla also expressed concern with drainage and LaCasse said they can address this with the contractor at installation.

Members eliminated plans down to three; Create Play, St Croix and Webber. Anderla noted that the Webber plan is all inclusive and that Create Play divides the age appropriate equipment which is a nice concept. With the projector, LaCasse pointed out these areas in the plans. Botts asked if we could take out the spring seats in Webber and LaCasse said we could ask for these types of changes.

Throne asked if the lifespan was about the same on all the equipment. LaCasse confirmed. Steinbring likes the treehouse feature in St Croix's plan.

Botts asked if these would be installed this fall and LaCasse confirmed. Botts asked how long it takes to install. LaCasse said once the footers are in place it will not take long, possibly within a week. Nelson wanted to bring the issue to vote and Botts asked if we need to decide tonight. LaCasse said yes, if we want this installed this summer.

Throne questioned if there was enough parking. He said if we build this great park, is it going to attract more people than we can accommodate in the parking lot. Throne asked if LaCasse knows anyone who has worked with these companies. LaCasse stated that the City has other St. Croix equipment and she is also familiar with their equipment at Teddy Bear Park in Stillwater. These are all very reputable companies and they use local Minnesota manufacturers.

Motion was made by Anderla, seconded by Botts to SELECT CREATE PLAY FOR THE PLAY EQUIPMENT AT THE ANOKA NATURE PRESERVE.

Throne initiated further discussion in that he likes Create Play but he really likes the natural look of St Croix and the tree house feature. Steinbring likes both but also likes the natural look of St Croix. Botts asked if we could request the swings be replaced for something else within the price range. Steinbring like the tree-like support for the swings. LaCasse pointed out that she did request swings in the plan. Throne votes for swings saying they are even good for adults to sit on and watch the kids play.

4 ayes –3 nays. Motion carried.

Ward asked if those opposed with the motion were okay with this decision. Those that opposed said they were fine. They liked both plans and the majority rules.

Trailhead Construction Update

LaCasse presented photos of the progress on the trailhead construction. Staking will be done tomorrow or Thursday. Anderla asked if it would be possible to consider a heated restroom that could be used year round and reduce the use of portables. We will have hunting and cross country skiing at this location and a year round restroom would be welcome. Lee stated that this is a possibility although we are couple of years away from building a restroom. Lee agreed that with a lot of winter activity it would make sense to heat it and keep it open. Anderla asked if we need to insulate. Walker said it would be good if we could find another source for power other than electricity. He suggested gas or solar would be better. Lee said this will be in the CIP in 2017 or 2018.

Walker asked about getting rid of the old Main Street Bridge buried at Sunny Acres. Lee said if we do something it would be recycled. You can either bring it to a plant or they can bring portable crushers out to the sight to take care of it.

HPC Park Plaques

LaCasse presented different styles and options for pedestals. LaCasse suggested we move forward with a decision for these plaques. Nelson said the Stout Pond Trail Plaque with a granite top looked damaged. LaCasse said it did not look damaged when she took a photo but she will check on that. Throne suggested we do not consider the single post pedestal. He noted that his daughter worked on a project in college using these and at the dedication, the plaque had already been ripped from the ground and tossed aside. LaCasse said we can do double posts and an invisible mounting system recommended by vendors.

LaCasse had a sample from Castle Field that was bronze. Steinbring said you can also use zinc which gives the look of bronze but is more affordable and very resilient for outdoors. LaCasse stated that it will be more cost effective if the board agrees to a design style so that all plaques can be ordered at once.

LaCasse asked if members had a preference for brick pedestals or granite. Anderla asked which is the most vandal proof. LaCasse said that a smooth granite finish might be easiest to clean. Walker asked if the St Croix Company could design a creative pedestal with their glass fiber reinforced concrete. The sign could be reset into a tree or boulder structure. Walker asked if staff could price out an option like that. Nelson agreed. Steinbring likes the simplicity of a brick pedestal and it is probably cost effective. LaCasse will get some prices on these two options.

Board members were asked if they all approved of the zinc option and no one opposed. Ward commented that the photo of Rudy Johnson has an electrical outlet that should be edited out. Steinbring is concerned that the photo with Dr. Bill Andberg running might be a challenge to do. Lee was concerned about cropping the photo and suggested we check with the family before changing or altering the photo. Walker likes the running photo. Steinbring stated again that it would be a challenge to reproduce.

HPC discussed individual dedications for these plaques. LaCasse suggested revealing all of them at a single dedication and then separately installing them. Throne was concerned it might take a long time to do all six at once time. He can take a short amount of time from work but doing all together might be too long a program for members to attend on a weekday. Nelson suggested doing this at an event. LaCasse said we could do this at 7 pm in the Community Room. Nelson asked when and LaCasse said late summer or early fall. Nelson said it would be nice to do this at the Mayor's Ice Cream Social or a Halloween event. Walker asked if Park Board members are required to attend. LaCasse said that park board members are welcome. We requested assistance from the HPC but this is really a parks project. LaCasse said if the board prefers individual dedications we can do that also. Walker thinks doing them all at once in the community room is a good idea. Nelson suggested Vicki Wendell from the Historical Society could do the dedications. Botts asked how long it would take to put them in place once they are here and dedicated. LaCasse said probably one day. Botts asked about Riverfest but LaCasse said that is mid-July. Botts suggested the Orange Tie ball although Steinbring said the temperatures in October might prohibit installing. Botts suggested by the fountain during Riverfest. Anderla suggested the new park north of City Hall. LaCasse said she has a concert scheduled on August 2 at 7:00 PM and we could do the dedications at 6:00 PM. Members liked this idea. Steinbring said he likes the idea of recessing them in logs or boulders with the St. Croix companies.

RIVER BOAT, PENINSULA POINT PARK

Lee reviewed background on the idea of a river boat in Anoka. In 2009 the City worked with a river boat operator that would have been based out of Peninsula Point Park. That project went away for several reasons. One was the uncertainty of the Coon Rapids Dam work and the other was that the economy was not great. The river boat operator pulled out.

Two months ago the EDC revived that idea and sought input from river boat operators. Erik Thorvig with the EDC sent out requests to nine or ten operators. He has heard back from two so far. Yesterday Lee and Thorvig met with Justin Steinbach with Vista Cruises out of Duluth. Mr. Steinbach did not have a formal proposal as this was more of a meet and greet. He is on the chamber and tourism boards in Duluth and his focus in Anoka was not just river boat operations but branching out into the community. He talked about partnering with Lancer at Green Haven, the Mad Hatter, and Lyric Arts as possibilities.

Steinbach said he would utilize three different operations: 1. Events – tie in with City events already taking place, 2. Charters – special activities, weddings, etc. 3. Cruises – recreational cruises could be made memorable by including Anoka history.

Lee said it was just an exchange of information at this point. Throne asked if they took a tour of the area and Lee said he did show Mr. Steinbach around Peninsula Point Park and the buildings available there. No specifics were discussed but he liked Peninsula Point Park for operating a river boat.

Anderla said at one point the EDC talked about putting a boat above the Rum River dam as a river boat restaurant. Lee said one of the possibilities is that a Mississippi river boat could be anchored behind City Hall during the winter months and used for special events. This would probably not be a full service restaurant but a place to hold special events and bring in a caterer. The location would give views of both the bridge and the dam with their new lights. Nelson said this is similar to what they do at the University of Minnesota and they also have plays in their river boat.

Lee said Steinbach talked about using actors from Lyric Arts to dress in character and provide an experience for people on a river boat cruise. Parking was not discussed but it will be an issue as parking has to be available for citizens to use the park. Any revenue generated would go back into the parks.

Anderla stated that this was discussed a few years ago and he doesn't know if there is any interest besides the commissioners. A river boat needs electricity, parking, sewage and all of this costs money. Is the river boat operator going to just bring in a boat and we pay for the rest of it? Lee said we don't know what these details are and we are not at that point yet. This was a big picture discussion and we would need to get details if it goes further.

Anderla expressed concern about the park board's input. Lee said he would like the park board members to have lots of input and that is why he is bringing this information so early in the process. Lee stated it may be a little premature to discuss but he wants the board members to be aware of what is being discussed. Anderla asked if we should wait to see what the river boat operator's needs are. When do we get into this and discuss what his needs are to run his business. Do we wait until he comes back with those requests? Lee stated that as soon as there is a proposal, we would discuss these issues.

Anderla is concerned that if we wait for a proposal, people will look at it in a different light. He is concerned that is too late to bring the park board's thought on this. Lee stated that park board will know before anyone else and he is working to keep them informed. Botts asked if we will discuss before it goes to council. Anderla said staff and city manager will have it as a done deal before it goes to council and if the Park Board says something, it will be too late. Anderla stated that he has been on river boat cruises in Duluth and Stillwater and it is not a draw for him. He does not see this as great demand from the citizens of Anoka. Anderla said it is important that the Park Board gets to state its opinion about having a river boat at this sight. How can it be different than the situation in 2009? If we wait too long in the process it will be snowballed and the Park Board input will be useless. Botts suggested we invite this person to speak to the Park Board directly.

Walker asked if city staff was familiar with Champlin's development plans. We should not do all the work to get a river boat operator at Peninsula Point Park if Champlin is putting in a marina. Lee said there was a discussion that having stops in other cities along the Mississippi would be good for the river boat operations. Walker said we do not want to duplicate what Champlin is planning. Lee said Thorvig is very familiar with Champlin's plans. Walker said it is good that he is on top of it.

Nelson said that on the first go around with a river boat operation, the Park Board was very clear to council what we think of the idea. Council has not forgotten what our opinion was. Anderla said they might not have forgotten but they must not have listened because they are talking about it again. Lee said he hears that Anderla wants to be sure the park is available for citizens. Nelson said it is a problem to be discussed. We do not want to lose control of the outcomes of bringing in a river boat. Throne said this guy is a very smart business man. He came in with great ideas and is looking to run more than just weekends. Running every day means he will take up park usage more and more.

A side note: in discussing the river boat operations at Peninsula Point Park, Anderla asked if we could have benches installed along the trail. LaCasse responded that she did have three benches that were removed when the new playground was installed and she will arrange to have those re-installed at the park. Anderla also asked when the restrooms would be updated. LaCasse responded that the contractors are in place and waiting for the weather to warm up. Improvements include:

- Replacing floors in all rooms
- Painting interiors
- Painting doorframes interior and exterior
- Painting exterior window frames
- Adding partitions in restrooms
- Upgrading fixtures in bathrooms (hand dryers, dispensers)
- Signage for rooms will be replaced
- Wooden overlook will be redone by city crew
- Ceiling exterior brick will have an agent applied that helps clean graffiti
- Flashing at top will keep water from leaking in
- Historic signs may be replaced using materials like at Riverfront Park.

Staff is looking into how to clean the plexi-glass windows. A dozen green garbage cans will be powder coated black and replace those at Peninsula Point Park. Anderla noticed that it looks like someone dumped hot ashes in a garbage and left a mess.

Rum River – River Bank Erosion

Lee said staff has been following conditions along the Rum River for a few years. Areas are sloughing away. Lee showed photos taken of the river bank south of the high school. Low water shows a lot of erosion as well as a collection of bricks and other debris. Photos were sent to the Anoka Soil & Water Conservation District for their opinion and guidelines. Chris Lord suggests we look at hardscape build up and the project might be a contender for grant funding. Chris may be available to help with planning and grant research.

There is also an area by Mississippi River Community Park where the bank is sloughing away. LaCasse will would like to put this repair in the 2016 CIP but if we cannot, we will try to get some grant money for this. Nelson said might you do what you did up near the Anoka Nature Preserve. LaCasse said that is a possibility.

Nelson asked who was cutting down trees on the island. LaCasse asked if they were downed trees but Nelson said they were smaller seedlings cut down. Botts suggested it might be beaver damage. Lee said they have seen beaver damage at Peninsula Point Park.

Emerald Ash Borer

Lee shared a newspaper article stating Emerald Ash borer has migrated to Ham Lake and is now in Anoka County. Nelson asked if there was a restriction on cutting and Lee said restriction is on transporting, not cutting. The City's strategy is "wait and see". Other cities are cutting down ash trees even before the ash borer is a problem. Lee stated we will not take out healthy trees. Nelson asked if it was necessary to de-bark trees and Lee said no. Anderla asked if there was an herbicide to fight this. Lee said there is one but it is very expensive. The City's forester, Jerry Tri, said this doesn't seem to be as severe as the Dutch Elm disease was. Botts asked about trees planted during street renewal projects and Lee responded that the City is not replacing any with ash trees.

Climbing Wall Update – LaCasse reported that the new climbing wall has been installed at the Anoka Aquatic Center and shared photos. Board members stated it was impressive. LaCasse informed them that the backside will be wrapped in plexi-glass to keep kids from climbing up the outside. Walker asked if it was necessary to remove the high diving board for this and was disappointed. LaCasse said the high board needed over \$18,000 in structural repairs and it caused more problems than it was worth. Steinbring agreed and said there have been too many injuries and problems with the high board. LaCasse said the new climbing wall is the tallest outdoor climbing wall in Minnesota. It stands 16 feet tall with 14 feet out of the water. Pool staff will have an in-service to prepare for potential problems and review guidelines from the manufacturer.

MISCELLANEOUS

Staffing

Anderla asked if the City hired any new permanent park staff maintenance in the last year or two. He is concerned with the added needs at the Anoka Nature Preserve, Riverfront Park and additional trails. Lee stated one position has been added for 2015 but has not been filled yet. Anderla asked if we can cover these additional needs with summer help. Lee responded that it is getting more difficult to hire summer seasonal help and we will have to raise wages to be competitive. Lee said one solution has been to integrate street crew and park crew which helps to cover this staff shortage. The street crew was helping install docks and the park crew helps with streets, making this truly a Public Services Department.

Anderla was concerned that some park areas needed more attention. Lee said we are missing the Sentenced To Serve (STS) crew that helped with spring preparations. Anderla asked how we had the manpower to replace 8 to 10 STS guys. LaCasse said we have had a couple of community groups step up to adopt parks as a community service project. The Kiwanis, Girl Scouts and another group have adopted parks to clean and a local church has adopted the cemetery as their community service. LaCasse reminded board members that any seasonal help does not start until May and additional help starts when the high school is out. It is early in the season yet and there is a lot of spring preparation to be done.

Football Day

Football day is scheduled for May 16th. The primary project will be planting 500 seedlings on Kings Island. Tom Hammer is helping with plantings to restore the river bank. Lee said the trail way will be done this summer and the cities of Anoka and Ramsey will hold a ribbon cutting for the bridge. Nelson asked about the condition of the bridge and comments received from Doc Evans. Lee explained that they are in the middle of this project and that is why it doesn't look finished yet.

The issue of buck thorn was brought up by Doc Evans and he suggested a small buck thorn plan. Lee recommends that we continue to work with the Anoka County Conservation District and follow their recommendations.

Skate Park

Throne asked about the email received inquiring about upgrading the skate park at John Ward Park. Lee said he has not responded as this email was just received today through the City's web site. There are currently no plans to upgrade that skate park and it would require a large capital investment.

ADJOURNMENT

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

7 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Time of adjournment: 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Greg Lee
Public Services Director

Jenny Spooner
Recording/Public Services Secretary