



Public Services – Parks & Recreation

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
ANOKA PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Tuesday, August 16, 2016
COUNCIL WORK SESSION ROOM OF ANOKA CITY HALL
2015 FIRST AVENUE, ANOKA MN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Steve Nelson, Joseph Anderla, Mary Blankenship, Margret Kallstrom, Jennifer Shoemaker, Erik Skogquist, Dave Steinbring, and Dave Throne.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ellen Ward

STAFF PRESENT: Lisa LaCasse, Public Services Administrator and Jon Holmes, Public Services Supervisor

GUESTS: Sandra Bengtson and Al Ickler from Anoka Hennepin Community Education

APPROVE MINUTES

There being no changes or correction to the June meeting minutes, a **motion was made by Blankenship, seconded by Throne, to APPROVE THE JUNE 21, 2016, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AS PRINTED.**

8 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

None

NEW BUSINESS

Community Education Budget Request: Al Ickler and Sandra Bengtson with Anoka Hennepin Community Education were here to present their budget request and report on current programs. Introductions were made around the table. Ickler began by stating that they appreciate the partnership with the City which enables them to deliver programs to young people.

Bengtson presented a report on programs. She outlined some of their programs, including the Anoka Children's Theatre which has been offering programs since 1990. Funds for the summer programming was cut in 2014 and was not requested for 2016. They would be happy to restore the summer program if funding became available.

They are seeing trends in Community Education including the need for after school programs, non-school day programs and evening classes. They are offering less classes at each facility but more are filling up. The numbers are pretty consistent with past year. Drops in participation can sometimes be linked to a single event such as a family picnic that got rained out. That left 400 people not participating. They are doing more family events, like concerts at Lincoln as programs for entire families have been successful.

Bengtson pointed out some of the fun events include competition district wide for programs such as their middle school dance squad, floor hockey and robotics. New programs involving youth service are going to be pursued as they engage children over a longer period of time rather than just a single class. They also serve to build relationships with adults and kids. One example is Franklin Elementary's K-Kids Service Club. They packed food for families in need and put in over 600 hours of service. Bengtson is hoping to



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expand this type of programming to other elementary schools. Community Education has a half time staff person at the high school and they hope to expand service projects here and at the middle schools.

Nelson – How is the budget with the school district? Budgets have been steady but that can be or not so good. Ickler responded there has been no increase in the state levy for 20 years. It is remaining the same.

Blankenship – How much of a problem is it with no funding for your summer programs. Bengtson replied that they offered something on their own but are looking for a new model because it was not feasible without additional funding. They had programs at Jackson Middle School and Ramsey Elementary and the participation was not great using the model they have now.

Blankenship asked if location was one reason for low participation. Ickler replied that yes, getting there was a barrier and they are trying to develop a new model for their summer programs. Blankenship asked if they received feedback from parents and the reply was no. LaCasse asked about participation in past summer programs and Bengtson replied that when they had a program in Anoka two years ago they had 300 to 400 kids participating.

Shoemaker asked if Community Education sponsored the after school programs. Her daughter attended summer school and immediately after was able to participate in a program. Bengtson said they had not offered that program. Ickler added that they are looking at developing programs that could piggy-back on transportation with summer school. Transportation is a barrier for many families. Camps or half-day programs work better for working families.

Bengtson said that Children's Theater would like to do a summer production and this has worked well in other communities, although funding is challenging. Shoemaker wondered if her Young Artists of Anoka might be able to work with Community Education to develop a program. Bengtson agreed that they should talk about this possibility.

Skogquist asked if programs are mirroring the shifting demographics in the district. Bengtson said that overall enrollment is not changing a lot. More and more working families are stretched with money. Community Education is looking at ways to reduce fee costs or find ways to partner to lower the cost for families to participate. Bengtson pointed out the percentage of families on the free or reduced lunch program at each school. She said they are underserving this population and would like to do more to bring them on board.

Nelson stated that Anoka has had a much higher contribution in the past while other cities are cutting back. He said the city has had a great return in investment and he is not happy that Community Education's budget had to be reduced. If we recommend an increase to the council, they might come up with a new number which is not always what we want. Nelson would like to see the summer programs again. He stated that the budget request is very reasonable and he would not want it cut by even one dollar.

Ickler said he appreciated that. Nelson said he did not see this as Community Education here with their hand out. They offer a great benefit to the residents and the city does not spend a lot on recreation outside of our parks. This is a great add on.

Shoemaker agreed this serves the community well.

Throne agrees 100% but has questions about attendance. His kids attended Lincoln and it looks like participation is down. Bengtson provided updated figures which shows the following:

School	Number of Programs	Number of Participants
Lincoln	78	570
Franklin	138	2450
Wilson	84	719
Anoka Middle	68	1113

Bengtson added that when they surveyed both parents and kids with a scale of 0 to 10, programs consistently received 8 to 10 on survey forms.

LaCasse commented that with the closing of Washington there has been a redistribution of students. Budget doesn't reflect number of kids from Anoka. Should we spend more money at schools that have a greater percentage of students from Anoka?

Bengtson said in the past they might have budgeted by percentage of Anoka students participating or the size of the school. Nelson said to him it doesn't matter if the kids are from Anoka. These are our neighbors and possibly future Anoka residents. LaCasse responded that this has been a concern of the council in the past. Nelson said he understands that but if these kids are interacting in our schools, they are good citizens and having them participate in these programs it important to us. It makes them good citizens.

Blankenship agreed saying the students are being educated and given enrichment classes in our city. It doesn't matter where they are from. Shoemaker added that as they continue their education there are more opportunities for them to interact with Anoka and options to stay in Anoka.

Bengtson added that the Anoka Children's Theater is using the Anoka name and 2000 people come to performances. Throne said it is important to keep the budget flexible to provide opportunities where needed. Skogquist said he would be in favor of increasing budget to where we were but that might get overwritten. To add a summer program next year would you need funding from Anoka? If so, we need a brochure or plan in front of us. Nelson added if funding is needed in another area that is fine too. Bengtson said we are committed to helping kids who can't afford to get into the program whether this is additional funding or using current funds in different ways.

Ickler said he will continue these conversation with LaCasse and come to you. LaCasse regularly attends the Community Education meetings and invited other Park Board member to attend.

There being no additional changes or corrections, a **motion was made by Skogquist, seconded by Throne, to APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED \$65,999 FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION TO ANOKA CITY COUNCIL.**

8 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Joint Meeting with Heritage preservation Commission and Economic Development Commission:
LaCasse is proposing a joint meeting to discuss the Rum River West Trail plans and to review the concept by Kimley-Horn. LaCasse is suggesting October 18 as a separate meeting before our regular Park Board meeting. There will be a 25 minute presentation and then discussion as we move forward with this project. Nelson suggested 5:30 to allow enough time. Anderla asked if they have a budget or just suggestions on what they want to see. LaCasse responded that at this time it is just planning. Grant funding may be the only source for this plan. LaCasse wants to use our existing plan at River Front Park and incorporate some of those designs. Blankenship agreed that the uniformity ties it to the park system. Since we have a good and tasteful design, don't reinvent the wheel.

Nelson asked if everyone could make the October 18 meeting. The only comment was from Throne who will be out of town that date. Throne can send his input prior as LaCasse will send out information prior to the meeting. LaCasse said she might be able to record the presentation and have it available – maybe even on our web site.

Joint meeting set for October 18 at 5:30 pm – LaCasse will provide food and beverage.

Park Land Proposed Developments:

Highland Park – LaCasse and Holmes were at the work session meeting where park land development was discussed. Planning has proposals for sites around Green Haven. Lennar Homes is proposing to do townhomes but has cancelled their plans for single family homes because they were determined to be too close to the golf course. Townhomes will be priced between \$250,000 and \$350,000 - 46 unites will be

available. The City is looking at redevelopment of the entire Highland Park area. Current market value is 11 million dollars.

LaCasse will keep park board up to date on plans as it is a pretty fluid situation for the next several months.

Nelson asked if these would be association style townhomes. LaCasse responded yes. Nelson asked if the road was closed off at the other end and LaCasse responded that the road is open. Holmes said that road will continue through to Thurston. Throne asked if people can still enter the cemetery. LaCasse responded yes, there will a road change but they will have access.

Skogquist asked if we are sure there is enough park space for the neighborhood. LaCasse said it may result in a re-located park. Right now the park is about 1.6 acres. LaCasse was glad to see they left half the park in this plan but the final plans could include a park relocation.

Steinbring commented that the people in townhomes will appreciate the 18 hole park nearby. LaCasse said Lennar is interested in enhancing the park.

LaCasse said there is a commercial property on North Street and 11th Avenue and a wellness company is looking to purchase.

11th and Grant: There is a proposed development for detached one level townhomes in this area. LaCasse shared a concept plan. Skogquist asked how this will work with our dog park and our bone yard. Holmes stated that there is an area that currently storing dirt impacted by this development proposal, but the "bone yard" is located further north and would not be impacted, neither would the "dog park" location. Staff reinforced with Council that the city needs a bone yard for storage. Nelson agreed and said you can't just put dirt anywhere. Holmes responded that is correct; as a result the of the dirt hauled in from Bonnell, the contractor was required to put a silt fence around the dirt pile.

LaCasse said when they hauled dirt from Bonnell Field for two weeks they had complaints from neighbors. Anderla asked if it was because of dust. Holmes said they sprayed but it still was a problem. They tried to keep the dust down but hot dry conditions made it difficult.

Bob Ehlen Property: There was discussion regarding the Bob Ehlen Park property and whether or not it was able to be developed. 1972 council minutes show that this was a gift to the city. The City Attorney is researching the legalities of developing this land or if the gift specifies it is to be used as public property. Nelson asked if the curbs were built with skirts for driveways. Holmes said there is at least one but it might have been intended for access to get a mower on the property.

Enloe Tennis Courts Update: Holmes reported that the courts have been repaved, the fence is back up and Pro Service is going to repaint and line in mid-September. There will be four pickle ball courts and one tennis court. City will put up netting, posts, etc. Nelson asked if the sub-surface was correct. Holmes responded yes and we will have to wait six weeks before using. LaCasse has selected blue and green which are the US Open professional tennis colors.

Capital Improvement Budget Update: LaCasse reported that the City Council is working on keeping levy at 3%. Everyone was asked to look at 2017 budget items to see if any could be cut. It was decided that the irrigation at Brisbin was probably not a necessity so Public Services offered to eliminate \$60,000 budgeted for that project. In addition, at the Aquatic Center it was decided to do spot repairs on the tile which saved an additional \$20,000. Parks offered up to \$80,000 in cuts for the capital budget which we can re-budget for in 2018.

Nelson asked if the budget included bathroom improvements. LaCasse responded that the John Ward bathrooms are currently in the budget for 2018. We will continue to use portables and look at what improvements we can do and where they should be located.

Nelson asked how many portable toilets were lost this season. LaCasse responded that this year the issue has been with the sanitizers within the units and not with fire. People are breaking them off the walls

and throwing them in the toilets. Nelson asked about the pump house at John Ward Park. Holmes said this is part of irrigation system and not part of the cuts. The goal is to get all irrigation systems off wells as they have seen the damage it can do to park property due to the high iron in the water. In 2017 there is \$50,000 in budget to connect the irrigation system at John Ward Park to city water system.

Nelson asked about the 38th Ave lift station. Holmes responded that Pete Klingenberg, Water Supervisor, is looking re-routing to a gravity system instead of a lift station which could include boring under the Rum River.

Nelson asked about the poles on 7th Avenue and whether they were ever going to be taken down. Holmes stated that cable TV was still located on the poles but the City was told they should be removed by September 30th.

Miscellaneous

Sidewalk - Skogquist noticed the traffic lights on Grant are now in and the curb cuts look like sidewalks could go in. LaCasse said we have discussed this. Holmes said there is an issue with the County right of way. Skogquist suggested we get permission for the sidewalks as he did a survey of neighbors and they were in favor of or indifferent. Holmes said it needs to be surveyed but would probably look like east side. Steinbring commented that people still walk in the road instead of on the lawn and he hopes a sidewalk would prevent that. Skogquist said let's keep this on our radar.

Highway 10 Pedestrian Project - LaCasse reported that they are going to start the Highway 10 pedestrian project with a sidewalk along highway 10, actually along the cemetery fence from Fair Oak to Main. They will be adding a jersey barrier to the center medium to discourage crossing. This is a County project of 1.3 million dollars. If the Anoka Solution gets approved in 2021 it would tear all this out.

Bonnell Field - Steinbring commented that they were laying low on this project for a while but now they are back at it. Holmes replied that the contractor has been very busy and the rains slowed it down. All the black dirt is back on. LaCasse said it will start to look like a ballfield by the end of this week.

Castle Field - Steinbring asked if there was a water issue in the mechanical room. Holmes was not aware of any but will check into it.

Rudy Johnson Site - Steinbring asked if there is still a plan to develop the Rudy Johnson site. He remembers a discussion about a medical building wanting to take that site. LaCasse said it is not on the table any more.

Anoka Aquatic Center - Skogquist asked how the pool was doing this summer. LaCasse responded that it is really hard to say at this time. Swimming lessons went very, very well. The pool will close August 28 because not enough staff is available. LaCasse will be able to provide a pool report after the season ends. Short discussion on hiring senior citizens to fill pool positions.

ADJOURNMENT

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

8 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Time of adjournment: 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa LaCasse
Public Services Administrator

Jenny Spooner
Public Services Secretary/Recording Secretary