



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota

Blaine City Hall
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City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota Joint Workshop Meeting

Natural Resources Conservation Board And Park Advisory Board Tuesday, March 13, 2012

6:30 PM
City Manager's Conference Room
10801 Town Square Drive

1. Call to Order - The joint workshop meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call / Introductions - Staff called the roll call. Those present include: NRCB Boardmembers Ochocki, Schrunk, Chair McKinley; Park Commissioners Bird, Das, Markle, and Park Commission Chair Walthour.

Staff Present: Jim Kappelhoff, Park and Recreation Director; Jim Hafner, Stormwater Manager; and Recording Secretary, Beth Bostrom.

Absent: NRCB Boardmembers Garner, Truchon, Castillo, Kustermann; Park Commissioners Langenfeld, Leathers, and Newland.

Others Present: NRCB Boardmembers elect Gene Rafferty and Kim Gunter.

2. Discussion Items:

- a. Signage at Park and Open Spaces
 - Improved Sign on Lexington Avenue for Lochness Park

Chairman McKinley thanked the Park Board for joining the NRCB in this meeting and asked for their involvement with some ideas. She reviewed that agenda items are both fun and serious. She commented that the new trail signs

are impressive.

Boardmember Schrunk stated that the Lochness Park signage is not very visible. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that the Lochness Disc Golf Course sign is also there. He stated that Lexington Avenue is a county road which has restrictions on what signage can be displayed. He confirmed that the sign is only visible when heading north. He offered to see what can be done about this signage.

- Interpretive Sign for Laddie Lake Improvements

Chairman McKinley stated that Laddie Lake would be one of a choice of places where an interpretive sign would be nice. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that for the Wetland Project and open space improvements he would speak on the interpretive signs here.

Park Chair Walthour asked about the cost of signage. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that trail signage cost \$100 each and was purchased with a grant. He commented about an interpretive sign for Laddie Lake. He stated that the city has a sign shop, ABC Signs, that they can get a quote from.

Boardmember Ochocki suggested looking at Wild River State Park for examples of their Oaks Savannah interpretive signs.

b. Kiosks

Chairman McKinley stated that there previously was a kiosk at Pioneer Park. She suggested putting some kiosks in open spaces. She stated that they have budgeted for three kiosks; for Kane Meadows open space, the wetland area off East Lake Park and Pioneer Park. She stated that Hidden Ponds would be another location to consider if costs allow. Commissioner Markle asked if there is an intent to have brochures to take or what the plan is.

Chairman McKinley stated that they would have signage behind the kiosk Plexiglas for looking at and possibly brochures.

Commissioner Markle asked if solar lighting would be put in on trails at Hidden Ponds. Chairman McKinley stated that this is a good idea.

c. Adopt-a-Park, Trail, Open Space

Chairman McKinley stated that the NRCB is considering having an Adopt- a- Trail program similar to the Parks Adopt-A-Park program. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that the parks and trails have been grouped together for policies for adoption.

Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that this includes storm water ponds as well. The adoptions are for one year. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that typically a scout group will call and offer to do a clean-up project which is then offered as an adoption. He stated that the volunteer work is recognized by the city.

Chairman McKinley asked how the Adopt-a-Park program is promoted. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that it is on the website, the newsletter and summer brochure.

d. Special Events in Parks / Open Spaces

- Kite Flying on Ice, Festival at Lakeside Commons Park, etc.

Chairman McKinley suggested having events on the ice. Boardmember Schrunk asked if people can be out on the ice as she never sees anyone out on it.

Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that they would not hold an ice event because of the liability of someone falling through. He stated that it is known that ice is never safe.

Chairman McKinley suggested considering geocaching. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that geocaching is already available. There are items to rent and it is an established program which has a policy. It is advertised in the summer brochure.

Boardmember Ochocki asked if GPS units can be rented from the city. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that the city has six to rent. A deposit is paid and refunded when the GPS unit is returned.

Chairman McKinley asked about a kite flying event location. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff suggested the ice skating rinks or the soccer fields as locations.

Chairman McKinley stated that they would consider the month of March as it is windy.

e. Earth Day Event at Hidden Ponds

Chairman McKinley stated that she is working with Tom on this event. She stated that buckthorn will be a focus. She stated that it has been cleaned up along the trail but there are other areas that need clean-up in Hidden Ponds. The Earth Day event will be held on April 21st. She invited everyone to attend.

f. Trail Maintenance

Chairman McKinley explained that she appoints members to visit a special use park or open space and bring a report back to share. She stated that as a result, there was feedback about Pioneer Park where the vegetation was overgrown and the trails were not being maintained. She explained that her Boardmembers will continue these assignments this year. She mentioned that Kane Meadows has a nice viewing dock that was built by the builder. Boardmember Ochocki stated that the box elder trees are so tall they block the view of the lake. He stated that the remainder of the area is well maintained and mowed.

Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that if the box elder trees are not of value and are blocking the view of the pond he will let the forester know. He reported that there has been a lot of cleanup at Pioneer Park recently of deadwood and fallen branches.

g. Shoreline Maintenance

Chairman McKinley stated that this topic comes up frequently in their meetings. She asked how to help the landowners be responsible property owners when they own shoreline property. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that the Lakes of Radisson neighborhood is not city property. He stated that each homeowner is supposed to be given a brochure on how to maintain the property. He stated that a few years ago the shoreline was walked and violations were noted such as the bumper zones. He stated that the city and the Master Watershed Association offered to do a better job of enforcement. He stated that an application form was created for people to use if they want to alter the lakeshore.

Commissioner Bird stated that he was at the Parade of Homes in the Lakes area and was told by the realtors about a permit application for lakeshore property. He stated that they explained only 30 percent of the area could be made into beach shoreline. He stated that he was impressed that they were offering this education.

Commissioner Das asked if there is anything the city can do to keep up the beautification of the area. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that the management plan for the Lakes has a protocol to follow to keep the shoreline healthy which in turn keeps the lake healthy. He explained that if a new application is received they cannot have approval until their property is brought into compliance.

Boardmember Schrunk asked about the noise on the beach. Commissioner Markle stated that a noise study was conducted and found to be within appropriate limits. He reported that this has not been an ongoing issue.

h. Encroachment onto Public Lands

- Illegal Dumping/Yard Waste Dumping

Chairman McKinley stated that for yard waste dumping they are aware of dumping on public land, in the open

spaces and in Pioneer Park. She suggested that the public be educated on why this is not recommended. Boardmember Ochocki asked how the Parks handles this.

Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that they have issues with this as well as burning park bathrooms down and other buildings. He stated that illegal dumping is not a major problem. He stated that trail access creates more of an invitation to walk back in and dump.

Boardmember Schrunk stated that there was a large tire laying by the rain gardens. She stated that this was around six weeks ago. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that he will pass this on to public works to pick it up.

Commissioner Das asked if a sign could be put up about illegal dumping. Commissioner Markle stated that signs would be followed by people who are not causing the problem.

Boardmember Ochocki suggested putting a sign up in the kiosk. Commissioner Markle suggested using the sign in the kiosk to educate why dumping is harmful and that it hurts the environment.

Commissioner Bird suggested putting a sign up on the electronic billboard about illegal dumping. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that most cities offer recycling days for those who are willing to do it. He stated that there will always be people who do not participate.

i & j. Transplant Trillium Plants at Laddie Lake/Lexington Avenue Open Space

Stormwater Manager Hafner offered to put up a photo to talk about this item along with the Lexington Avenue Open Space improvements. He reviewed that the wetland banking project that Blaine is participating in is north of 109th by Lexington Avenue. It is a 500 acre open space owned by the city. He stated that on the east side of this is Ditch 53-62. He stated that a weir was built in this area. This is basically a fixed land to keep water back in the wetland area and restore the hydrology. He stated that the wetland is being restored to a higher type of wetland which can be banked and used against future city projects. He stated that the Board of Water, Soil and Resources went through a process with them. He stated there will be around 50 acres of new wetland credit on their books. He stated that a consultant, Jason Husveth, has worked to clean out the area of buckthorn and has worked on a seed bank. He stated that in year one the native seed bank has grown in very well. He reviewed images of the projects. He reviewed that a controlled burn was done last fall in November.

Boardmember Ochocki asked if Jason removed any other thatch beyond the two test areas. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that nothing further was done. He explained the process of removing the thatch which controls the invasive species and allows the native plants to grow and flourish.

Stormwater Manager Hafner reviewed the Open Space Improvement from the management plan. He reviewed that they have worked on buckthorn removal at Hidden Ponds, Oak Savannah, 13st Street, Laddie Lake, and Kane Meadows. He stated that initially for three years the buckthorn was removed and then there were two years of maintenance. He stated that restoration planting will be done which will reestablish native plants. This will prohibit the invasive species from regrowing. He stated that this work is being done by Critical Connections. He reviewed what restoration work is being done at each location. He explained that at Pioneer Park there are ongoing wetland improvements which have been a focus for years. He reviewed that a controlled burn is being considered at Kane Meadows. He reviewed that a ditch improvement with bank stabilization was done at Oak Creek Park. He reviewed that this is an update of work being done by Open Space over the last few years. He reviewed the areas on a map of the city.

Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that staff found that there was a lot of trillium by the power lines at Laddie Lake. He stated that the power company comes by and sprays the area. He stated that Jason Husveth and staff have suggested transplanting the trillium further into the park. He suggested hosting a volunteer project to do this.

Park Chair Walthour asked what trillium is. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that they are a flowering plant that is protected.

Commissioner Bird asked where the new proposed athletic complex is. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff reviewed where it is on the map and that it is directly across from the Open Space area.

Commissioner Bird stated that the trail that goes into there will be connected into the Lakes and on to Pioneer Park.

Stormwater Manager Hafner reviewed future plans for the trails. He explained that the county plans to extend the trail along Lexington Avenue into Ham Lake. He reviewed that it already extends into Shoreview.

Boardmember Ochocki mentioned that some trails are woodchip.

Commissioner Bird asked about the trailhead. He asked about having a tunnel go under Lexington Avenue. He asked that if an answer can be proposed they collectively go to the Council to request a solution. He recommended looking at this now while the money is available. He added that he wants to be sure people can connect into and use the open space property. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that additional trails will be considered. He stated that any trail that goes through the wetland would be deducted from the wetland credit. He reviewed that a footbridge will be needed to go across the ditch.

Commissioner Das asked about the controlled burns and their frequency. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that they are done every few years.

Commissioner Das asked about replanting native flowers or plants. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that burning encourages the growth of native plants without the invasive species crowding them out. He stated that this was nature's way for years.

Boardmember Schrunk asked about whether woodchip trails are favored by residents. She reported that she does not like walking on them. Stormwater Manager Hafner stated that would be something to consider.

Chairman McKinley stated that some parks, like Pioneer Park, have both. She explained that in a sensitive area the woodchip trails make sense. She explained that it depends on the soil condition as wetlands cannot support pavement. She added that eventually they would like an interpretive center at the Wetland. She asked about the dog park at the Athletic Complex plans. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that at the Athletic Complex, which is a conceptual plan, they decided on what would fit. He stated that they would like to fit a dog park in if there is space for the other activities. He stated that they are considering it but the main focus is to increase athletic fields because of the need.

Chairman McKinley asked if the Park Board would be interested in joining them in proposing a project to move the trillium plants. Boardmember Ochocki offered to check and see what type of trillium are growing in the area. He will report back to staff on this.

k. Develop Environmental Policy for Blaine

- Existing Parks and Trails

Chairman McKinley stated that Boardmember Truchon is interested in developing an environmental policy for Blaine. She stated that she is not sure what this will encompass. She asked if Park Board members would want to form a committee to work together on this. Commissioner Markle asked what the focus would be for this. He asked what the problem would be to fix.

Chairman McKinley explained that she would get more information from Boardmember Truchon to relay at a later time.

- Future Parks

Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff reviewed what is new for Parks in 2012. He reviewed the tobacco use policy, the triathlon on May 19, 2012, proposed Lexington Athletic Complex, removing and relocating Aquatore Field #1, and Legacy Creek Park. He presented images of each project.

Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that he has another SHIP grant for \$18,000. He stated that a boy scout has presented an eagle project to put up bat houses. He mentioned that Jim Sotanski has open space off 113th for a half acre piece of property. He stated that he has been offered a price to discuss. Stormwater Manager Hafner reviewed where the property is on a map. He explained that there is continuous road easement.

Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that staff has looked at this and the area would not be recommended

for purchase. He stated that it does not connect to the Park at Hidden Ponds. He stated that on May 5 they are having a Miracle League Field dedication for Harmon Killebrew. He stated that there will be a band and media. He invited the NRCB to attend.

- Future Open Space
- Management of Parks and Open Space

Chairman McKinley stated that an Open Space Management Plan was devised jointly by the NRCB and Park Board. She asked if funds to manage the plan for open space and Pioneer Park, Lochness and Laddie Lake Park were to come from both funds. She asked who was to pay. Commissioner Bird stated that he does not recall an agreement for the Park Board to contribute to the implementation costs. He suggested that the NRCB put a booth up at Worldfest as they will get a lot of exposure there. Park and Recreation Director Kappelhoff stated that this is in mid-September.

Commissioner Das asked if Jason or someone who is a gardener could be consulted before transplanting the trillium to be sure it will be successful. Boardmember Ochocki stated that he has experience with this and has successfully transplanted some from up north.

3. Other Items

None.

4. Adjournment

Chairman McKinley adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.