

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE PARK, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF
NORTH BRANCH IN THE COUNTY OF CHISAGO
AND IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

REGULAR SESSION

October 6, 2014

CALL TO ORDER:

The North Branch Park, Trails and Open Space Commission met in regular session and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Charles Heinzl.

ROLL CALL:

Commissioners present were Michael Novlan, Mic Dahlberg, Charles Heinzl, John Pantelis and Bob Bernier. Commissioners absent None. Also present was Council Liaison Jensen and GIS Planning Specialist Nathan Sondrol.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Pantelis, seconded by Dahlberg to approve the August 4, 2014 Regular Session Minutes with the spelling correction on the word approving in item 7.2
All voted AYE. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Sondrol noted that he provided a handout on the upcoming Safe Route to School grant solicitation.

STAFF REPORTS:

6.1 Park Dedication Fund

Sondrol reported the current fund balances.

6.2 Project Updates

Sondrol provided the latest project updates for the Commission.

Dahlberg noted that he had been contacted by a resident about whether the City had identified Chain Lake Park as one of the sites the City may be interested in selling or getting rid of.

Sondrol noted that Chain Lake park was on the list of properties to further review and that the City may want to keep a portion of the parcel for right-of-way purposes.

NEW BUSINESS:

7.1 Wildridge Park Improvements

Sondrol provided an overview of the request from the Wildridge Homeowners Association to install lighting at the outdoor skating rink at Wildridge Park. He noted that based on the limited use of the rink the past few years, it was previously discussed that public works staff would not be maintaining a rink at the park until a warming house and lighting were installed.

Sondrol also noted that the association was inquiring about the possibility of installing irrigation to help establish the turf and making it a more usable area.

Steve Vanden Huevel, Wildridge Homeowners Association Board Member, stated that the residents love having the skating rink, but are only able to use it during the day. He noted with the majority of students and parents not getting home until it is dark they are unable to use the rink. He noted that the association would be willing to contribute to the cost of the lighting the park.

He also noted that the request for irrigation would be a secondary concern that could be addressed at a later time.

Sondrol noted that he is waiting to hear back from lighting vendors on the cost of the lights. He noted that he spoken with North Branch Water and Light and that they may be able to assist with the installation of the wire and poles. He estimated the cost to install the lighting to be around \$4,000.

He also recommended that a warming house be placed in the park and that he was in the process of obtaining cost estimates for a portable construction office trailer to be used as one.

Bernier noted that the association has a history of contributing to help out with the park system citing examples of the playground installation and placing portable restrooms in the park for the rink.

Pantelis liked the idea of a skating rink in Wildridge Park as it would remove some of the pressure of the existing rink. He felt that without a warming house and lighting it is hard to support the additional rink.

He suggested the city could cover the cost of the installation of the lights and that the association could possibly cover the cost of the warming house.

Novlan noted there may liability issues with the warming house.

Vanden Huevel noted that the association had only discussed lighting at their meeting, but would be open to discussions on a warming house.

Novlan felt that wooden poles and cheaper lights could be installed this year and they could both be upgraded in the future.

Vanden Huevel felt the association may be able to cover the cost of the warming house if the city installed the lights.

Dahlberg inquired as to what type of usage the rink gets, as the time he was there, he was the only person.

Vanden Huevel stated the city has an asset in the skating rink and the residents have not been able to get maximum use of it. He noted they would like to be able to use the rink more by installing lighting rather than seeing the rink go away.

Pantelis noted the rink had been open for 3 years. He stated that he had seen 5-6 people a day the first year at the rink, a large increase in the second year, and the third year the numbers were down due to the large snowfall totals which reduced public works time and ability to maintain the rink. He felt the lights would bring more attendance to the Wildridge rink and would reduce crowding at the existing rink.

Dahlberg expressed concern with the need to find a donator to provide lights for the parking lot at Harder Park for a large number of users.

Pantelis noted that he had suggested placing the donated lighting in Wildridge Park, but the donator of the lights had requested that the lights be place in Harder Park

Dahlberg wished that this had been brought forward at an earlier meeting so it wasn't a rushed decision. He noted that he in support of the project, but there are other constituents that the commission needs to keep in mind as well.

Bernier noted that the association felt if there were contributions needed from the association, they would be willing to help.

Novlan inquired if the electric service and the lighting were part of the long range plan at the park.

Sondrol noted that the long range plan for the park included electric service for the shelter and lighting for the future parking lot and therefore would serve other future needs.

He also noted the lighting at Harder Park was installed there because of the donator's request and the fact that the majority of park vandalism takes place in that park.

Pantelis inquired if the association had a dollar amount that they were willing to contribute.

Bernier noted that association has approximately \$8,000 in the bank and it would be considerably less than that. He noted that he would abstain from voting because he is a member of the association.

Jensen suggested authorizing a dollar amount to the Council and the balance could be placed on the association. The council could then make a recommendation placing it in the association's hands at that point.

Motion by Dahlberg, seconded by Pantelis, to authorize up to \$2,000 for the Wildridge Park skating rink improvements. AYE (4) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (1) Bernier. Motion carried.

7.2 RJMP – 410th Street Speed Study

Sondrol presented Commissioner Novlan's request to limit the speed on 410th Street adjacent to RJMP. He noted that there would be an 8' wide paved shoulder adjacent to the park and a 4' wide paved shoulder from the park east to the Walker Hill development.

Novlan felt that it would be a good idea to look at a way to reduce the speed of vehicles with the addition of on-street parking and unloading of vehicles on 410th Street.

Sondrol noted that 410th Street is a state aid street and that a speed study would need to be conducted to change the speed limit.

The commission discussed options such as signage to help reduce the speeds.

Motion by Dahlberg, seconded by Novlan, to request a speed study of 410th Street adjacent to Roger Johnson Memorial Park. AYE (4) NAY (1) Bernier. Motion carried.

Motion by Pantelis, seconded by Novlan, to look into what type and the cost of signage that could be installed on 410th Street to help reduce the speeds. AYE (4) NAY (1) Bernier. Motion carried.

7.3 2015 Fee Schedule

Sondrol informed the commission that the Council had preliminarily discussions of placing a 55% reduction on the 2015 park dedication fee and that they were looking for input from the commission. He noted the reduced rate would be \$810.

Motion by Dahlberg, to recommend to the City Council to return the fee back to the original \$1,800. Motion died for a lack of a second.

Jensen felt the idea Council had with the 55% reduction was to continue working toward eliminating the reduced fees. He noted they were looking to keep the reduction of development fees at the same rate.

Dahlberg noted that the \$1,800 fee is in line with what the surrounding communities charge based on past info received.

He inquired if the impact of the reduction in the park dedication fee can be quantified. He felt the entire community is being affected by the reduced fees as this reduces the revenue stream for park improvements.

Heinzel noted that these funds can only be used for park improvements.

Pantelis noted that he would like the fee to continue to work back towards the original fee.

Novlan felt that if the rates are too high or too low the City should modify the fee and adjust accordingly each year.

Motion by Bernier, seconded by Novlan, to recommend a 55% reduction of the park dedication fee. AYE (4) NAY (1) Dahlberg. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

NONE

Motion by Pantelis , seconded by Novlan, to adjourn. All voted
AYE. Motion carried.

ADJOURNED at 8:09 p.m. by Charles Heinzl.

APPROVED Charles Heinzl ATTEST Nathan Sondrol

Respectfully submitted,
Nathan Sondrol, GIS Specialist
NMS