

EDINA PARK BOARD
7:30 P.M.
JUNE 10, 1997

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beth Hall, Andy Herring, John Dovolis, Bill Jenkins, Phyllis Kohler, Andrew Montgomery, Jean Rydell, Becky Bennett, Jim Fee

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave Crowther, Michael Burley

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton, Susan Weigle, Ken Rosland

OTHERS PRESENT: Miriam, Hartung, Catherine Mulhalland, Wendy Groth Meifert, Ray Meifert, Jane Michael, Harold and Lila Larson, Kay Bach, Carol Kaiser-Milan, Pam Cabalka, Mary Jackson, Fritz Corrigan, Joyce Hirabayashi, Kate Schneider, Terry Schneider, Martin Hirabayashi

I. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 13, 1997 PARK BOARD MINUTES

John Dovolis MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 13, 1997 PARK BOARD MINUTES.
Jean Rydell SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. SENIOR CITIZEN PROPOSAL

Mr. Keprios indicated that his staff report answers a lot of the questions raised at last month's Park Board meeting. He stated that Mr. Rosland will present a broader perspective on the proposal.

Mr. Fee asked Mr. Keprios if he is of the opinion that in the foreseeable future this is the best alternative for the seniors from both a location standpoint and a cost standpoint. Mr. Keprios replied this is the best deal with the dollars available that staff could come up without having to go through another referendum.

Mr. Rosland explained that a year ago the City Council made a conscious decision to not include the senior center in the bond referendum but asked staff to look at some alternatives of what might be available. He indicated that staff looked at having a free standing building as well as the YMCA proposal. Mr. Rosland pointed out the reason they feel the YMCA proposal is the best alternative at this time is because first of all they are looking strictly at a capital improvement there. The cost would be approximately

\$1,500,000, which obviously is not cheap but will cost us approximately \$135,000 a year. Mr. Rosland indicated that capital is one thing and operating costs are another. He pointed out that the state has put levy limits on the city for this year and next year and we do not know if they will continue this because who knows what the state legislature will do. This is why we are looking for opportunities to take away the operating costs. If we try to build a free standing building obviously the capital costs would be about the same, however, to operate it, we would be looking at a lot of operating costs.

Mr. Jenkins asked about funding the operating side. Mr. Rosland indicated that is the problem, assuming we build a 1.5 million dollar Senior Center and we have to operate it, we could put it in the enterprise system, however, that system is finally tuned. He stated that he could not find another \$100,000 to operate it, heat it, light it maintain it, and clean it because he doesn't know where he would get that money. He has to stretch the system right now to get the \$135,000. Mr. Rosland indicated that the city will still be budgeting and running the programming that we presently do.

Mr. Rosland indicated that he has heard concerns that what will happen if this joint effort doesn't work out. He noted that he personally thinks that the seniors can win through this combination. He noted that if this is approved by the Park Board and the City Council then the city attorneys will be given the okay to start working out the legal ramifications. Mr. Rosland pointed out that people have asked is there a panic to do this and he has answered no, however, the seniors want to see us move forward, because they struggle with the current facility being located on the third floor as well as the shortage of parking spaces.

Mr. Rosland informed the Park Board that last week the school district contacted him about the possibility of having a combination with the school and the senior center. Mr. Rosland stated that he wouldn't have a problem working with either the school district or the YMCA. However, the YMCA maybe has a little more cross opportunities for our seniors than the school district does.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he would like to hear more about the school district's idea. Mr. Rosland explained the school district called him last week and asked if it's too late to look a possible joint venture. He stated that he told the school district that if it's for the good of the city and for the good of the seniors, then nothing is too late. However, it does throw a curve at the whole works but if it's wise and prudent then we certainly should explore it. Mr. Rosland pointed out, however, that he doesn't think it would be right and fair to hold up the process for a long period of time.

Mr. Jenkins asked why is the school district interested in doing this. Mr. Rosland responded because all of a sudden they see there is 1 ½ million dollars out there. Ms. Kohler noted that she thinks this would be good for the seniors and it would be good for the taxpayers. Ms. Kohler pointed out that putting the Edina Senior Center in the Richfield School District may be hard for programming.

Mr. Herring indicated that from his days on the Community Education Board space is a real issue. Mr. Jenkins asked what time would the school be able to use the senior center and it was noted they probably would use it at night if it wasn't being used by the seniors. Mr. Herring noted he would think there would be a cooperative effort on programming similar to what we are doing with ballfields. Mr. Rosland stated that he thinks the situation would have to be similar to that of the YMCA in that it is a separate building operating from approximately 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. dedicated to seniors with dedicated parking of a reasonable amount. Mr. Rosland commented that if the current senior center had more parking and was located on the first floor it would be a fine center. Mr. Jenkins pointed out that he feels the YMCA is a better location geographically. Mr. Jenkins commented that the enterprise angle is the way to go. Mr. Rosland responded that it's the only alternative they have to make this work.

Mr. Dovolis indicated that we need to do the best possible thing and therefore this should be tabled until we find out more on what's going on with the school district. Mr. Fee asked if a motion needs to be made in order to recommend to proceed to look at both options. Mr. Rosland replied that he will take it to the City Council on Monday because he wants them to start thinking about it. He will bring to the City Council the fact that the school district has approached us. He will ask the City Council for approval to move ahead with the school district for a couple of weeks to explore further the options of the school district and see if it can be a reality. However, if the school district falls away for whatever reason he would then go back to the City Council and ask for some action one way or another. He would then ask Mr. Keprios to bring it back to the Park Board for some action one way or the other. He indicated that he doesn't want this to drag on and would like to see a plan by late summer or early fall.

Mr. Dovolis stated that he feels we owe it to the seniors as well as ourselves to look at any options that become available.

Mr. Herring stated that he has some issues about spending 1.5 million dollars to build a senior center, particularly now in the wake of the bond referendum. He indicated that we currently run a program that basically has no costs at the existing facility versus spending \$135,000 annually. He noted he is getting mixed reports as to the use of the existing facility and the need for additional parking, and doesn't know what the situation is there. However, he does recognize that it's not the ideal situation because they are on the third floor and they are in an old converted school building, but we save \$135,000 a year. Mr. Herring indicated that the issue for him is that he's not sure he wants to go ahead and spend that money. He doesn't see that action has to be taken in the next three weeks. He noted that he doesn't know why we can't continue to pursue other alternatives because we have a lot on our plate right now with the referendum work we are doing. Mr. Rosland indicated that is a fair comment and noted that the City Council instructed him to get going on this issue. He pointed out that the City Council may say sit on this for six months, he doesn't know what they will say but he has to bring to them the best alternative. Mr. Herring stated that his point is he wants the City Council to know there is at least one person on the Park Board who does not see any immediate urgency to get

this done in the next few months. He noted he can see spending six months trying to determine what is the best solution.

Mr. Herring also noted that he is still uncomfortable with doing a joint venture with the YMCA because we have never worked with them. However, we have a very good track record in working with the school district. Therefore, if the school district is interested then that is something that we really should pursue. He also stated that he is uncomfortable with the legal issues with respect to the real property. Mr. Rosland replied they will not incur any legal fees until they are given the okay by the City Council. Mr. Rosland stated that the hopeful result is we will serve our seniors and whether it's two weeks, three months, or six months it is our goal to find a better way to serve our seniors.

Mr. Montgomery asked Mr. Rosland if there is any type of vehicle he can see where two or three Park Board members could have a more active role in understanding the senior center issue so we are not just discussing this at the Park Board meeting. Mr. Rosland replied that he doesn't know what the City Council will instruct him to do but that certainly may be a possibility to get a small group together of Park Board members and seniors. He indicated that the Park Board could certainly make that recommendation to the City Council.

A senior resident asked if the YMCA has a time frame in their minds as to when they expect to receive an answer from the city. Mr. Rosland replied no and commented that if anyone is pushing this through it would be the city. As a matter of fact, the YMCA would rather see us slow down a little bit because they are looking at construction of a second pool, etc. Mr. Rosland stated that it is important to keep this issue going so that eventually we will get some action.

John Dovolis MOVED THAT THE PARK BOARD TABLE THE ACTION OF THE SENIOR CITIZEN PROPOSAL AT THE YMCA IN ORDER TO TAKE SOME TIME TO STUDY THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS PROPOSAL. Bill Jenkins SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. WALNUT RIDGE MASTER PLAN

Mr. Keprios indicated that staff was asked to put the Walnut Ridge Park master plan back on the agenda for the June meeting. He noted there were some very viable and realistic concerns brought up at the May Park Board meeting. He stated he has conveyed in his staff report everything from the size of the park shelter building to the possible relocation of the hockey rink, to the potential future of a basketball court as well as a hard surface court within the hockey rink. Mr. Keprios pointed out that several residents of the Walnut Ridge neighborhood recently met and they wish to share their concerns with the Park Board.

Fritz Corrigan, resident, indicated that he backs up to Walnut Ridge Park and he along with five other families who live in the houses along Biscayne Blvd. did meet this past

Saturday. He noted they came up with three key important points. First, if the flooding of the hockey rink continues on the same schedule as per the correspondence with the Arnolds, then the neighborhood would like to see the hockey rink stay where it's at. He indicated that the neighborhood feels it's not good use of taxpayer funds, it's expensive to move the rink and it doesn't serve much purpose. Secondly, the neighborhood feels that the size of the shelter is too big. The neighborhood feels that the shelter building should stay where it is but could be made a little bit bigger than it currently is and should contain restrooms and a public phone. Thirdly, because of the flooding the pathway tends to get slick in certain areas. Therefore, possibly the path could be redesigned to keep it a safe place to walk in the winter time for people who are not skating. The neighborhood felt that these items could be engineered and managed and done at quite a bit less cost.

A resident clarified that Mr. Keprios mentioned the neighborhood met on Saturday and she noted that she thinks they need to clarify what is being called a neighborhood. She stated that a group of four or five households met to discuss Walnut Ridge Park.

A resident asked what is the status of putting asphalt on the hockey rink so the neighborhood can roller blade on it. Ray Meifert, resident, stated that his concern on park surfacing is that path was resurfaced two to three years ago and it is already back in a state of disrepair. He pointed out that his concern is if you put a hard surface out there how often are we going to be resurfacing it. That is the taxpayers money. Mr. Keprios explained that Mr. Meifert is correct in that Walnut Ridge, by far, has the worst soils. He indicated that they have been tested and they would have to remove 18 ft. of fill to have a solid foundation which would cost a lot of money. Therefore, it is very difficult to maintain asphalt surfaces in Walnut Ridge Park.

A resident noted that she and her husband both concur with what Mr. Corrigan stated as far as the location of the hockey rink, they agree that it's a waste of the taxpayers money to move it at this point. Secondly, they also agree that the building doesn't have to be that large but definitely does need to have restrooms and a public phone. This resident also pointed out that the park needs to keep it's open green space. The last thing the resident commented on was resurfacing the walk because there is hardly a day that she doesn't walk down there with her child and her child trips and falls over the holes.

Terry Schneider, resident, commented that he also concurs with the points made, the hockey rink needs to stay where it's at and also there needs to be other ice rinks for figure skaters. Also, the area needs to be lit. The shelter does not have to be that large but does need a restroom and a public phone.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there is anything different anyone would like to say because they have heard the same story from each of the five families.

Richard Student, resident, indicated that he just moved into the neighborhood in April. He noted that he is bringing a little different perspective to the discussion and commented

that last week was the first he had heard of this issue at Walnut Ridge Park. He explained that one of the reasons they bought their house is because of the park, they used Walnut Ridge the past two years when they were renting a house on Bonnie Brae and there were always a whole bunch of kids using the park. Mr. Student indicated that a park should be a park, he doesn't think the park should be a piece of ground for a handful of neighbors to not be bothered by the activities on the park. However, by the same token their concerns need to be addressed in terms of how the park is utilized and what kind of activities go on at the park. He pointed out that he thinks that park should be for kids. He also commented that the warming house is clearly too small as it is and it definitely needs a restroom and a public phone.

Mr. Student commented that he is not completely up to speed on the ice controversy but noted he has three young men who love to get up early in the morning and skate between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.. He stated you can't do that if you are flooding the rink at 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. Also, if you flood the rink at 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. by the time the kids are out of school at 2:00 p.m. or 2:30 p.m. many times the ice isn't set yet. By the same token, he doesn't think you can be waking up everyone and that's what happens at 3:00 a.m. The key is getting the base going early in the season and a lot of times there will be hot and cold spells during the season. Therefore, you need to periodically go out and flood at 3:00 a.m. Mr. Student commented that as far as asphalt goes he wasn't aware of the soil problems and doesn't know what the costs involved are but noted that it would be great for the kids.

A resident pointed out that the personality of the park will be changed dramatically by putting in basketball courts among these other things. There is going to be a lot more traffic coming out of there and that should be taken into consideration because the people who are going to be playing basketball aren't all just going to be walking they are going to be driving.

A resident noted that she would like to see the rink maintained better so that she doesn't have to drive her kids to a different park. Mr. Montgomery replied that Mr. Keprios and Mr. Student have made a good point of what needs to be done to make better ice and that is to be out there early to establish that first sheet of ice.

A resident noted that he thinks the rink should be moved down further so the neighbors will not hear the noise. Also, he thinks a big structure does need to be built. This is not a park for a select few but it is for a whole neighborhood that encompasses a lot of kids and we need to maintain it properly to so they can enjoy it.

Chairman Montgomery asked Mr. Keprios to give the Park Board some direction. Mr. Keprios commented that the Park Board is in a no win situation in a way. He stated that we have money in both the capital plan and the developer's fund that we can earmark for this park. It is not something where we have to make a snap decision tonight. He noted that he thinks it's clear that we don't have and probably never will have a consensus amongst what he considers the whole neighborhood. Mr. Keprios pointed out that

Walnut Ridge gets the number one most preferential treatment on maintenance that we can possibly give it. Mr. Keprios explained that they can build a good base early in the season and once they get that and if it snows after the fact, like in mid-January, it takes a longer period of time to do the whole process. Therefore, with Walnut Ridge being the last rink done it's not always going to be the best rink, you can't expect it to have the best ice and the best service as far as starting the absolute latest. He stated that they will continue to do their part and make good on their commitment to get in there no earlier than 7:00 a.m. once the base has been established.

Mr. Keprios indicated that his recommendation at this point is to not build a large shelter building but to look at some other options. Also, a larger segment of the community needs to be involved. We need to start all over and we need to sit down with a segment of the population that includes not just those who live next to the park but those who live two, three and four blocks away. We need to come up with a design that we think is the best compromise. In the meantime, he would agree to not relocate the hockey rink. Also, they will live with the commitment as far as the maintenance schedule. Mr. Keprios pointed out that if we don't get these things built during the referendum period then we will keep whatever funds are available in the Developer's Fund to finance a smaller shelter building with restrooms in the near future.

John Dovolis MOVED TO REMOVE WALNUT RIDGE SHELTER BUILDING FROM THE BID PROCESS AND START OVER AGAIN WITH REGARDS TO THE SHELTER BUILDING.

Mr. Montgomery asked if the tot lot is still going in and Mr. Keprios noted that the tot lot has already been awarded by contract and will hopefully be in the ground and completed by July 31st. Also, they will re-pave the path as soon as they can.

Jean Rydell SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Keprios stated that it is important to remember that we have no capital plan and he doesn't see one coming for the 1998 season. However, one thing that does change is the developer's fund. We are borrowing over \$200,000 from it for the aquatic center which will hopefully be paid back when revenues are generated. Also, there's a good chunk of that which has been committed to build a media lab at the Art Center that will not be paid back to the developer's fund. We have to have the referendum money spent no later than August 1, 1998 and there is a possibility that we could still yet figure something out for Walnut Ridge before then.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. PARK REFERENDUM UPDATE

Mr. Keprios indicated that he has listed in the staff report where we are at with all of the projects. He stated that there have been some very minor adjustments. Mr. Keprios

noted that since the Walnut Ridge Shelter building was just cut out for \$200,000, we are probably at a break even point assuming we do everything and assuming all goes well.

Mr. Dovolis asked Mr. Keprios if he thinks we are making all of the shelter buildings too big. Mr. Keprios replied absolutely not, they did some site visits and the committee does not feel they are too large. They are going to be there to serve multiple needs of the community. Ms. Rydell commented that she thinks in the future we will find that these buildings are going to become community buildings and will not just be used in the winter but will be used all year round. Mr. Keprios noted that was the exact reason for building these buildings this way. He stated that we receive a tremendous amount of use at Arneson Acres and there is a lot of demand for this type of facility.

V. OTHER

A. Aquatic Center - Carol Kaiser-Milan, resident, asked if the Aquatennial Celebration is something that is required because it was instituted long, long, ago. She asked if there is any way that it can be removed from the calendar. She indicated that tons of people always show up on that weekend just to find out that it is closed for the entire weekend. She asked if more people benefit from the closure of this facility for an entire weekend in what is already a very abbreviated summer for people living in this climate. Ms. Kaiser-Milan also pointed out that all of the other cities have gotten rid of this event.

Mr. MacHolda stated that he is very happy that Ms. Kaiser-Milan has come forward to address this issue. He indicated that he has worked for the City of Edina for 12 years and this has always been an issue with the residents. Mr. MacHolda explained that he thinks since the pool has been renovated twice in the last seven years the facility has become very, very popular. It's a family recreation center and the numbers have doubled in attendance. Mr. MacHolda noted that the residents for a long time have been very disappointed that the pool has been shut down for three days for a swim meet. He stated that the Aquatennial Swim Meet has been going on as long as the pool has been open which was in 1958. However, right now Edina is one of two pools that still have this event. It was asked who uses the pool for this swim meet and Mr. MacHolda replied that it is a fundraiser for the Edina Swim Club. Mr. MacHolda explained that what he thinks really irritates the residents is that it occurs on a prime weekend in July, the one month where the weather is consistent. If it were the end of August or the first weekend in June he doesn't think it would be as big of a deal. Mr. MacHolda indicated that the money he gets in terms of rent, it would be cheaper for him to make a \$3,000 donation to the Swim Club and have them go somewhere else. On a nice weekend he can net between \$20,000 to \$30,000. Mr. MacHolda indicated that since we have revised the facility it is more for daily use and not for swim meets.

Mr. Keprios asked the Chairman if he would like for this issue to be put on the August agenda. He noted that he will ask the Swim Club to attend so the Park Board can receive more information about the event. Mr. MacHolda stated that this also needs to be communicated to the pool patrons so they have a chance to voice their opinions.

Mr. Montgomery indicated that it sounds like an alternative weekend might be the answer. Ms. Kaiser-Milan pointed out that the attendance at the pool really drops off the last couple of weeks in August and that would probably be much more realistic.

Mr. Dovolis asked if the pool issue could be on the September Park Board agenda because a lot of people are on vacation in August. Mr. MacHolda indicated that would be fine with him. He just wants to make sure that the general public gets a chance to come in and voice their opinion.

B. Lewis Park - Mr. Herring indicated that hard surface area in hockey rink tends to collect debris when the wind blows and worries about the liability with the kids who are skating there. Mr. Keprios stated that the maintenance staff should be sweeping that area but may be behind with all of the referendum work that has been going on. He noted that he will look into it.

C. Grand Openings - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board there a couple of grand openings currently being planned. The first one is for the pool which will take place right after the Fourth of July Parade that takes place in morning. Mr. MacHolda is scheduling a terrific grand opening for the pool to celebrate the bathhouse, wading pool, etc. The second grand opening will be for the Lake Cornelia Playground equipment. It will be held in conjunction with the annual playground family jamboree event which will be held on Thursday, July 24th. This will also give us a chance to recognize the Edina Federated Women's Club for all of their contributions to this park.

D. Gun Range - Mr. Keprios indicated that the gun range will be closed permanently as of Saturday, June 28th. He explained that they've had to create a storm water retention pond due to all of the construction of the third ice rink and in order to do that it wipes out the trap range and in order to do that we've got to mitigate all of the lead in the area. Therefore, once that is done we have to shut down the indoor range because we vent all of the lead dust to the outside, which also needs to be cleaned and no longer contaminated. Mr. Dovolis asked about the memorial to Dr. Wippermann's son whom it was named after. Mr. Keprios indicated that he has kept Dr. Wippermann up-to-date on what has been happening. He stated that if a multi-million dollar police and fire training facility is built there will be a Firearms Safety Training classroom named after Brian Wippermann where the firearm safety classes would be held.

E. Fox Meadow Park Area - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that some concerned neighbors from the Fox Meadow Park area have circulated a questionnaire and visited with him last week. He indicated that an overwhelming majority definitely want that park developed in some way, shape or form. He stated that he will have the results ready to present at the August Park Board meeting and noted that the biggest challenge is going to be the availability of dollars.

F. Van Valkenburg Park - Mr. Keprios pointed out that quite awhile ago a commitment was made to the Van Valkenburg Park neighborhood to get it developed and they have now come forward wanting their park to get developed. He stated that it's a very small park and will not cost a lot of money, they basically are looking at some playground equipment, a pathway and bench.

G. Braemar Baseball Facility - Mr. Montgomery asked if the Braemar Baseball facility is on schedule for July 22nd. Mr. Keprios replied that the bid opening will be this coming Thursday and the trucks are supposed to be out there on July 22.

H. Girls Softball Program - Mr. Keprios pointed out that staff is being accused of gender inequity by adults involved in the Edina girls softball program, which is very disappointing. He stated they are very angry because they feel they haven't been given the same attention that the Baseball Association is getting at Braemar. However, he noted that the three fields at Pamela Park are being redeveloped, which is part of the bid opening on Thursday. Mr. Keprios commented that once Pamela Park is all done he hopes they will feel differently. Also, he is going to invite them to come in and talk with him and see what they can work out.

I. Lake Cornelia Park Vandalism - Ms. Hall asked about the vandalism at Lake Cornelia Park. Mr. MacHolda explained that three windows and screens on the bathhouse were broken, a trailer window was broken and over the weekend there was profanity graffiti written on the bottom of the pool. Mr. MacHolda indicated that he just spent \$20,000 to paint the pool. He noted that they tried to get the graffiti off but were unable to do so and if they repaint it will push back the opening day seven more days because they need to apply epoxy. Therefore, they tried to put some paint on it but noted he has a feeling it will come right off because there was no epoxy applied. At the end of the season they will paint it. Also, some bikes and skate boarders have left some skid marks on the new floor which is very disappointing. Mr. Jenkins asked how the bikes got in there and Mr. MacHolda replied they didn't have a fence for a long time. Mr. MacHolda indicated that they have caught kids in the pool and called the police, the police come and it's a catch and release. They take their name and number and they let them go and they are right back the next day, it's a disappointing deal.

J. Mike Damman - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that Mike Damman, Recreation Intern, has graduated. He indicated that Mr. Damman has been very helpful to him and has been working on and is going to continue to follow-up on some projects. He noted that one includes a fishing dock at Lake Cornelia, he has been working with the DNR and they are hoping it will be completed next spring.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Jean Rydell MOVED TO ADJOURN THE PARK BOARD MEETING AT 9:20 P.M..
Beth Hall SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.