

EDINA PARK BOARD  
7:30 p.m.  
APRIL 14, 1998

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Andy Herring, David Crowther, Tom White, Andrew Montgomery, Phyllis Kohler, Bill Jenkins, John Dovolis, Jean Rydell, Beth Hall, David Fredlund

MEMBERS ABSENT: Becky Bennett

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

OTHERS PRESENT: Marjorie Ruedy, Alyce Lees, David Lees, Ron Sharpe, Mike Damman, Mike Hall, Tom Mahler, Barb Mahler, David O'Halloran, Fred Nelson, Pat Nelson, Kathryn Peterson, Anne Hall, Robb Leer, Gerry Gordon, Doug Nessian, Don Blue, Scott Dunlop, Jay Gould, Pete Kenefick, Dale Nelson, John Clifford, Marvin Goldstein, Bob Donahue, Charles Feige, Josh Arnold, Scott Canakes

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**I. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 10, 1998 PARK BOARD MINUTES**

Jean Rydell MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 10, 1998 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Beth Hall SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

**II. WOODDALE PARK COMFORT STATION**

Mr. Keprios explained that on March 22, he received a petition requesting that we look at some of the issues regarding the comfort station at Wooddale Park. Therefore, he felt he should hold a neighborhood meeting so he could receive input and see how the neighborhood felt as a whole and attempt to resolve any concerns or clear up any misunderstandings. He indicated that 573 notices were sent to the Wooddale Park neighborhood inviting them to attend a meeting. There were 17 people from the neighborhood who attended the meeting in addition to the architect, Jerry Drevlow from the Edina Police Department and Dave Crowther. Mr. Keprios indicated that there was some good discussion and there were some strong opinions on both sides of the issue. He pointed out that the number one issue was whether or not we even need a restroom. Some felt strongly the park needed them and others felt the park did not need them. Some of the people also indicated that they felt the park needed a restroom, however, they would like to see it placed in a different location.

Mr. Keprios showed everyone what the comfort station would look like and explained the design. He noted that the function of the building is to provide a restroom for men/boys and women/girls as well as have a storage area with a floor mop sink to maintain the facility. He indicated that he was asked the question is there a formula used to determine which parks should get a restroom. He pointed out that there is no formula but rather the need is determined by the fact that we have scheduled youth games at the park.

Mr. Keprios explained that he was asked who came up with the current location and he stated that it was the architect and himself. He indicated he felt he had learned a lot from previous meetings with the neighborhood regarding the basketball court issue for this same area. He noted that it was very clear to him that the open grassy area is very precious space that the residents wanted to see that left open. Therefore, this seemed to be the most logical place because it didn't take away any open play space and would be close to both the ball field and playground area. In addition, this location keeps the children away from the traffic on 50<sup>th</sup> Street as well as the parking lot.

Mr. Keprios commented that he felt there was a strong contingency that the neighbors are okay with having a restroom, however some would like to see it relocated to a different location in the park. Mr. Keprios explained that there are a few drawbacks to relocating the comfort station. It will cost an additional \$16,000 to \$20,000 to run new utility lines to the new location and it also takes a away from the open play space and becomes too much the focal point of the park.

David Lee, resident, indicated that he has lived three-quarters of a block from Wooddale Park for the last 30 years and his kids grew up using the park. He stated that it appears to him that for the small amount of time that baseball is played at the park, it's a big expense for a building as well as maintenance. He noted that he sees no reason to have any facilities there at all. They haven't needed one in the last 30 years and doesn't know what the difference is now. Mr. Lee also pointed out there is a restroom right across the street at Utley Park and therefore feels it's an unnecessary expenditure.

Ron Sharp, resident, lives approximately two blocks from the park and really has no special interest. However, he was struck about the amount of money the city is willing to spend on this particular facility for such a small park without what he views as a real rationale. He indicated that one rationale he heard was that the baseball players and small children have been going to the bathroom behind the trees. He stated that he feels the baseball players could walk across the street and use Utley Park if necessary. However, he does feel it would be difficult to let small children cross the street and use Utley Park. Mr. Sharp stated that for the short amount of time this facility is going to be used and given the very small nature of the park he asked staff if they have adequately considered an alternative. He indicated that he heard portable toilets mentioned once and it was said that they would be pushed over and be a constant eyesore. Mr. Sharp explained that you can build barriers so they cannot be pushed over as well as landscape them. Again, if it's

only for 8 to 10 weeks out of the year this would be a great solution because he feels there really doesn't need to be a permanent facility for that much money.

Barb Mahler, resident, indicated that she lives across from Wooddale Park and takes her grandchildren there all the time. She stated that she also was astounded that the City of Edina would think about spending that kind of money on such a small park for such a short period of time. She noted that kids are usually there for a short period of time and maybe for the baseball players a portable toilet could be used for the 8 weeks of scheduled games. In addition, there are a lot of homes that back right up to the park and commented that if she lived there she wouldn't want a huge toilet sitting outside of her back window.

David O'Halloran, resident, indicated that he lives in one of the houses that backs right up to the park and he will see it from his back window if it is located where it has been proposed. He noted that he respects his neighbors concerns about whether the city should spend any money at all on having a facility there. Also, he respects other neighbors concerns that it would be nice to have the convenience of a facility for small children. However, he noted that his principle concern has to do with the location of the facility because of it's proximity to his immediate neighbors and himself. In addition, he noted that the design of the facility in terms of size would tend to make it the dominate feature of the park and feels that could be corrected with architectural changes. He stated that he disagrees with Mr. Keprios for he doesn't feel it would be the focal point of the park if it was relocated closer to the street, but rather feels it would be moving it away as a focal point.

Mr. O'Halloran brought up the point of safety and commented that the officer who spoke at the meeting stated that if the comfort station were located closer to the parking lot it would be easier to patrol. It would also be easier to get into the facility immediately if someone were to lock themselves in. Therefore, he thinks there are many rationales for relocating the facility and not the least of which are the immediate neighbors who back up against the park.

Kathryn Peterson, resident, indicated that she lives in one of the houses that backs up to the park. She stated that the design of the structure is overwhelming for the size of the park, which really addresses the whole question about need. Do we need a permanent structure and if so do we need it to be of this magnitude, because it doesn't matter where you put it in the park it's going to be the dominate feature. There is also the question of cost. Ms. Peterson pointed out that she has a daughter in traveling soccer and they play at a number of similar parks throughout the west metro area and there are very few of them with restroom facilities. Meanwhile, the ones in Edina are usually locked in the summer and that does not seem to deter the use or success of these parks. She noted that she asks the question do we need a permanent structure, because the whole question is convenience and when it comes to small children there will never be enough restroom facilities.

Mike Hall, resident, indicated that he also backs up against the park. He explained that he and his wife Ann are the ones who started the petition. He stated that as they have talked to more people they have found out there are a lot of people who have used the park and ball fields who would have used the restroom at Utley Park instead of going home had they known there were was a restroom there.

Mr. Hall explained that when they first looked at it they thought possibly of a relocation. However, they were surprised at the number of people who have come forward since the first petition saying it doesn't make any sense and even though a portable toilet is not aesthetically pleasing it was deemed by many that it might be a better option than a permanent facility. Especially considering the brief amount of time it would be there. Mr. Hall pointed out that the pagoda is the center piece and the proximity of the comfort station to the pagoda would compete with it as well as it would be another aesthetic issue. Mr. Hall also questioned whether there really is a need for both a mens and womens restroom or could it be one unisex restroom. He noted that all of the ideas are leading to a smaller, less dominate structure in what is already a small park.

Pat Nelson, resident, indicated that she would like to know why a portable toilet can't be put in by the three big evergreens. She stated that Mr. Keprios replied at the recent meeting that he receives numerous complaints when he puts in a portable toilet, however, this way it would be hidden. She also pointed out that with the current structure plan half of it is for storage and she doesn't agree that is necessary to have. Mrs. Nelson suggested that people should use the restroom at Utley Park and the city could put in a big pedestrian crosswalk with a blinking light as well as have the police tag cars. She noted that we should make do with what we have especially if it's only for 8 weeks out of the year. Mrs. Nelson pointed out, however, that if it absolutely must go in she feels it should be closer to the parking lot and should have a different roof than the one that is shown. She also stated that if one crime takes place in that restroom and ruins one life, it is not worth it in her opinion.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he has received more phone calls on portable toilets than any other issue. If there is anything people really object to it's portable toilets even to the point where they have taken the time to call their city council members. Past experience tells him that people do not want to live next to a portable toilet. Mr. Keprios commented that he is actually quite surprised to hear that the neighborhood supports the idea of portable toilets. He explained that we are, however, limited to where they can put these facilities because they have to be able to access them, however, they can still enclose them.

Mr. Fredlund indicated that there are 44 signatures listed on the petition with different points brought up. He asked that the Park Board go through each point. Point number one is the close proximity to the park and Mr. Fredlund asked if that is bad. Mr. Keprios replied that, in his professional opinion, having a permanent restroom facility next to the tot lot and picnic area is not an issue for him. It is a plus in his opinion.

The second point brought up is the aesthetics and he asked if the comfort station could be redesigned at this time. Mr. Keprios replied that it can all be done again, however, it would cost a lot more money and if the idea is to save money, that would not be a good move.

The third point brought up was maintenance. Mr. Keprios replied that maintenance becomes our job and we will have to continue to do our very best to keep it as clean as it needs to be. Mr. Herring asked how maintenance is handled now in which Mr. Keprios responded that we do it internally and visit the sites once a day.

Mr. Montgomery asked where else are we building comfort stations in which Mr. Keprios replied they are being built at Lake Cornelia Park and Garden Park. Mr. Keprios commented that all of the new buildings will have a keyless entry system installed so that we can lock and unlock the doors from a remote location via computer.

Mr. Crowther indicated that after hearing both sides speak at the meeting last week he went over to look at Wooddale Park so he could see exactly where everything is located. He noted that he heard more from the group that it would be acceptable to have a facility if it were relocated. It seemed that location was probably a bigger issue, however, some people were obviously opposed to the idea altogether. Mr. Crowther pointed out that he walked the park to get a sense of where it might be able to be relocated and none of the places seemed to make sense to him. He also noted that it certainly doesn't make any sense to locate it where we would have to spend an additional \$20,000 to get utilities put in. However, now he is hearing everyone saying they are okay with portable toilets and if the new comfort station is going to cost \$60,000 and we have people who are not happy with that then maybe we should put in portable toilets for now and see what happens.

Mr. Fredlund asked what is invested to date with the Wooddale comfort station. Mr. Keprios replied there is close to \$20,000 in utilities and a minimal amount of money invested in the foundation. He also noted that if the neighborhood is okay with portable toilets then try it for a year and see how they like it because there might be a different representation here after a year of portable toilets. Mr. Crowther asked if the utilities will be capped so we can always go back and Mr. Keprios replied that they can stay capped indefinitely.

Mr. Crowther pointed out that the reason Utley Park is not viewed as a good option is because of the safety issue of crossing the street. The concern is not so much crossing at the light but crossing to the west by the baseball fields.

Mr. Herring asked where the portable toilets would be put. Mr. Keprios replied he would ask the residents where they would prefer it before he put one in. Mr. Herring asked if some kind of fencing could be put around it to shield it and Mr. Keprios replied they could do something along those lines, however, it needs to be accessible to the vendor for routine maintenance.

Mr. Fredlund asked what do portable toilets cost for rental in which Mr. Keprios replied approximately \$250.00 a month.

John Dovolis MOVED THAT PER THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S SUGGESTION WE TRY PORTABLE TOILETS THIS SUMMER AND SEE HOW IT WORKS AND WE WILL REVIEW IT A YEAR FROM NOW AND STOP CONSTRUCTION OF THE PERMANENT FACILITY AT WOODDALE PARK.

Bill Jenkins SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. White commented that he would like to see it read "REVIEW IT AT THE END OF THE SUMMER" because people are going to know how they feel at the end of the summer as opposed to waiting until next April.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he will send out notices to the same group of residents to see how everyone feels at the end of the summer.

ALL IN FAVOR - MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Keprios asked the audience if anyone strongly disagrees with the approach that is being taken. One resident stated that he would just caution execution of it. He noted that this group of people will be very acceptable to the time limits of the baseball teams. It's all a question of how we do it which makes the neighborhood accept that solution, which will save the city a lot of money if it is done the right way.

### **III. BASEBALL SCOREBOARDS FOR COURTNEY BALLFIELDS**

Mr. Keprios explained that the Baseball Association has done an excellent job in finding a way to raise funds for new scoreboards at the Courtney Ballfields and stated they are to be complimented for that. Mr. Keprios pointed out that they are now looking for their last step of approval. The current city ordinance does not allow for any commercial outdoor advertising in Edina. There are no billboards allowed anywhere in the city and therefore, it will need to go through an ordinance change. Mr. Keprios indicated that he has been asked to bring this issue before the Park Board. He noted that the Park Board has already given their stamp of approval with regards to scoreboard advertising in general, however, Mr. Keprios pointed out that what they are looking for is the size of scoreboard, particularly the scoreboard on Field #1 and the accompanying sponsor panels. He indicated that this type of scoreboard is being used in many communities throughout Minnesota.

Mr. Herring asked Mr. Keprios to refresh his memory on how the advertising issue came about because his recollection is that the City Council had a prohibition on advertising. Mr. Keprios explained that the City Council use to have a policy prohibiting advertising. However, based on Park Board's recommendation they are now going forward on a two year trial basis regarding advertising issues on an individual basis. Mr. Keprios indicated

that there is a difference between ordinance and policy. The ordinance that's in place currently does not allow for this to happen, therefore, in order for advertising to go on these scoreboards we have to change the City Ordinance, which does not concern the Park Board. What the Park Board needs to discuss is the size and look of the scoreboard.

Dave Swendson, Edina Baseball Association board member, stated that the Baseball Association has researched scoreboards and has looked at a lot of options. He indicated that Braemar is a premier park and the aesthetics are important to everyone. He noted that Courtney Ballfields is strictly a baseball park and feels there is probably not another field in the state that is as nice or nicer than Braemar. Now that it has been redone it's absolutely gorgeous. However, they need to bring it up to the level it deserves from a scoreboard standpoint. Mr. Swendson indicated that there are cities in the area who have recently put in the same scoreboard they are talking about. He stated that they are asking the Park Board to consider a scoreboard that is very popular. Mr. Swendson went on to explain that this scoreboard really tells the story of a baseball game. It tells the story inning by inning, who is at bat, what the count is, etc. He added that each one of these scoreboards will be run from inside the dugout.

Mr. Swendson explained that the three smaller fields will have a 6' x 16' scoreboard which will have the score and who is at bat, and is a very adequate scoreboard for the smaller fields. However, the big field is where the High School and American Legion teams play their games. It's a place where they hope to have High School tournaments if they qualify at the High School level. He indicated that one of the things to consider is they were told by Gerry Gordan of Daktronics that one of the reasons so many cities put in this particular scoreboard is because they cannot hold amateur tournaments if they don't have a regulation baseball scoreboard. Therefore, most cities put this in because they want to be able to host a sectional or regional tournament.

Mr. Swendson indicated that the Baseball Association has raised \$34,000 through sponsor panels to pay for all of the scoreboards. The contracts for the advertising will be for five years and if at the end of five years the city wants to renew the Edina Baseball Association will resell the advertising and that money will again go back to the City of Edina to be put back into the Braemar baseball fields. He also noted that they have commitments for all of the advertising to pay for the boards and have committed to the advertisers that they are collecting no more money than what the boards cost. Mr. Swendson pointed out that approximately 20% of the entire scoreboard will be advertising. He explained that they are proposing to do 1/3 of the scoreboard on each side which will be sold to advertisers and the middle panel the Edina Baseball Association will buy where they will put "Home of the Hornets" or something to that effect.

Mr. Edwards pointed out that the Braemar baseball fields really are designed to play baseball so it really cannot be compared to another park in our system. This is a field where you need to have a permit from the Edina Park and Recreation Department in order to be able to use the fields. He also noted that field #1 is by far the most competitive

field. Mr. Edwards also stated that he has talked to other communities and they have had absolutely no problems with it.

Mr. Swendson indicated that the only thing that may ever need to be replaced is the driver which costs approximately \$150.00, in other words if it were to get struck by lightning that is all that is needed. The old scoreboard everything was all integrated and connected and if one thing went everything went. It was noted that the new scoreboards have an estimated life of 20 years.

Mr. Fredlund asked about visibility of the scoreboard during the daytime because of the sun shining on the scoreboard. Mr. Gordan explained there are protective sunscreens on every digit so it not only protects it from vandalism but it's really designed to take out the direct sunlight. Of course, you cannot see it as well as you can during the evening hours.

Mr. Montgomery asked if he understands correctly that the Baseball Association is financing this 100%. Mr. Swendson explained that the agreement they have with the city is the Baseball Board will act as the agent for the sale of the advertising, the purchase of the scoreboards as well as oversee the installation. At that time they will become the property of the city. At the end of the five years they will go out and sell advertising again on behalf of the city in which the city will put these funds back into improvements at Braemar Park.

Mr. Fredlund asked if there is any control over who is advertising on the scoreboards. Mr. Keprios explained that the City Council will have to approve the final look of the advertising.

Mr. Jenkins asked if the advertisers will be the same on all of the scoreboards or will it be separate. Mr. Swendson indicated that one advertiser wants half of three scoreboards and another advertiser wants half of two. He explained that rather than buying one whole board they wanted to split it up and have their name in more places. Mr. Swendson also pointed out that all of the advertisers are people who have supported Edina baseball in the past.

Mr. Dovolis stated that he has always been a big proponent of this and feels that when it comes to advertising and using the facilities that we have at these fields he thinks it's a no-brainer. He indicated that he has been pushing for this for a long time and feels that the Baseball Association should be commended for going out and doing a selling job and getting it in place. He noted that he obviously thinks the bigger sign is the way to do it because it makes it more attractive to the advertiser as well as it makes it easier to see. Mr. Jenkins indicated that he agrees with Mr. Dovolis.

Andy Herring MOVED THAT WE ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL OF THE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION TO USE SPONSOR PANEL ADVERTISING AS A MEANS OF FUNDING TO REPLACE THE FOUR SCOREBOARDS AT COURTNEY

BALLFIELDS IN BRAEMAR PARK, WHICH INCLUDES THE LARGE SCOREBOARD ON FIELD NUMBER ONE.

Bill Jenkins SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**IV. OTHER**

A. Edina Tennis Ladder - Mr. Montgomery indicated that would like to see in the future some form of a tennis ladder or neighborhood competition because he would like to see the tennis courts used more.

B. Bredesen Park - Mr. Montgomery indicated that he would like to see new exercise stations put in at Bredesen Park. He suggested that possibly this could be an Eagle Scout or Lions project. He noted that he would also like to see a fence put around it so people can do their exercises and not be watched by everyone.

C. Andrew Montgomery - John Dovolis pointed out that Mr. Montgomery was not able to attend last months Park Board meeting and therefore wanted to take the time now to commend him for the fine job he has done as Chair. We appreciate all of his hard work and commitment to the Park Board.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

John Dovolis MOVED TO AJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:00 P.M. Bill Jenkins SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.