

EDINA PARK BOARD  
7:00 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
DECEMBER 9, 2003

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Damman, David Fredlund, Andy Finsness, Ardis Wexler, George Klus, Floyd Grabiell, Linda Presthus, Mike Weiss, Karla Sitek, Allyson Grande

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeff Johnson

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Janet Canton, Tom Shirley

OTHERS PRESENT: Idelle Sue Longman

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**I. APPROVAL OF THE WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2003 PARK BOARD MINUTES**

Andy Finsness MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 12, 2003 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Linda Presthus SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

**II. 2004 PARK BOARD MEETING CALENDAR**

Mr. Keprios indicated that he included in the Park Board packet the 2004 Park Board meeting calendar. He pointed out that it seems to work best if all of the Park Board meetings are held at the same place. He noted that he has scheduled all meetings at City Hall with the exception of the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, which will take place at Centennial Lakes. He stated that the Board and Commission meeting is also scheduled at Centennial Lakes on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. and thought it would be easier to have the Park Board meeting there as well. Mr. Keprios commented that he would like to have this approved now so that it can be posted on the website.

Linda Presthus MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2004 PARK BOARD MEETING CALENDAR. Andy Finsness SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**III. 2004 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN – ENTERPRISE FACILITIES**

Mr. Keprios indicated that today he met with Gordon Hughes, John Valliere, Todd Anderson, Eric Anderson and John Wallin. He noted that because they have to cut back on the 2004 Capital Improvement Plan they have decided to delay the 12<sup>th</sup> tee renovation until 2005. Also, they have decided to put off for a while the Braemar Range automation system. Mr. Keprios stated that they would still be putting in the permanent building

reinforcement at the dome. Mr. Klus asked if this is happening because the golf course doesn't have the money right now to which Mr. Keprios replied that's correct. He noted that the golf course has done a great job on the revenue side of the ledger, however, what has happened is they have spent a significant amount of capital improvement money in the last eight to ten years and as a result, Braemar Golf Course has large principal and interest payments due for the next several years. They've had to mortgage the renovation of the clubhouse as well as the new maintenance building at the Richards Golf Course. Mr. Keprios noted that when they bought Richards Golf Course they knew the debt wouldn't be paid off until 2010. He commented that next year alone the principal and interest payment would be \$643,000. He explained that the golf course is operating on a negative cash flow basis mainly due to the debt service payments and therefore they have to scale back on some of the capital items for the next few years.

Mr. Keprios explained that what he is looking for tonight is a recommendation to approve the 2004 Capital Improvement Plan for the enterprise facilities.

Mr. Keprios indicated that they have also decided to take the flow-rider off of the Aquatic Center Capital Plan for 2006 for now.

Mike Damman MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2004 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR THE ENTERPRISE FACILITIES. Linda Presthus SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### **IV. UPDATES**

A. Adventure Peak – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that Warren Djerf submitted another letter to the editor at the Sun Newspaper, which did get published. Mr. Keprios also noted that he received a wonderful voice mail from an anonymous Edina resident to which he read out loud to the Park Board. The voice mail was supportive of the Park Board's recommendations. Mr. Keprios stated that he really thinks the Park Board made the right decision.

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the City Council did debate the issue and in the end the City Council approved Tom Shirley and Ann Kattreh's recommendation, which was to charge \$100.00 for the first person and \$80.00 for each subsequent family member for non-residents.

Mr. Grabiell indicated that he was bothered by the discussion at the last Park Board meeting regarding Adventure Peak. He noted that he was really bothered by Warren Djerf's letter in the paper because that same day there was another article in the paper regarding Truth and Taxation and how taxes are going to go up 3.9% on an average home. He noted that it's going to cost him another \$200.00 to \$400.00 next year to live in the City of Edina and when taxes are being raised they need to look at stuff like that. Mr. Grabiell noted that his second point is they have a staff that puts in a lot of work and considers these things and for the Park Board to second guess the staff on some kind of a feel good basis he thinks is out of line. He noted that Mr. Shirley did a great job of

putting the proposal together and thinks the Park Board needs to show the staff more respect for what they do when the Park Board is not the one figuring out what the numbers are. Mr. Grabiell pointed out that Edinborough operates at a loss, it's a first class facility, its fees and charges are at a market rate lower than what the competition is. He commented that they should be charging more rather than looking at how to charge less.

B. 2004 Fees and Charges – Mr. Keprios indicated that the City Council did accept and support all of the Park Board's recommendations for the 2004 Fees and Charges.

C. 1<sup>st</sup> Tier Regional Trail – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the 1<sup>st</sup> Tier Regional Trail open house was well attended and that the majority of the people who attended were very positive. He noted that he also gave the City Council a power point presentation and update after which they unanimously approved the resolution. He indicated that it would now go on to the Three Rivers Park District. Mr. Klus asked when the project will get started to which Mr. Keprios replied that if the funding comes through this year they could possibly see the process start in 2004. Mr. Keprios added that it would take years to complete the whole project.

D. Hilary Lane Dedication – Mr. Keprios indicated that they just sent out formal invitations to the Hilary Lane Dedication, which will take place on December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. He noted that the Park Board, City Council and select guests are invited.

E. Athletic Association Presidents Meeting – Mr. Keprios indicated that the Athletic Association Presidents meeting is tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. He noted that one of the agenda items is to talk about bringing Bob Bigelow back to give a speech since it was well received the last time he was in town. Mr. Klus asked Mr. Keprios to explain who Bob Bigelow is. Mr. Keprios explained that Bob Bigelow is a former professional NBA player who has written a book on how kids really shouldn't be into traveling at such young ages and they need to be careful of burnout, overscheduled activities, over zealous parents, improperly trained coaches, etc. He noted that he really does present healthy and meaningful messages. Mr. Keprios stated that he also placed on the agenda a common on-line registration system, as well as, some capital improvements that affect their programs.

F. Lewis Park West Multi-Purpose Athletic Field Renovation Project – Mr. Keprios indicated that they would open bids for this project the end of January. He noted that it is already in the Capital Improvement Plan that the Park Board has approved and hopefully the City Council will adopt and support the Park Board's recommendation. He stated that if there were enough dollars they would have lights installed at the fields as well.

G. Edina Basketball Association – Ms. Presthus asked what the status is with the Edina Basketball Association regarding Neil Weikart's letter. Mr. Keprios responded that it hasn't gone any further. He noted that in the Minneapolis paper Mr. Krieger wrote a short note and that is all he has heard.

H. Buckthorn - Mr. Klus noted that Tom Horwath, City Forester, has written his annual report that was enclosed in the Park Board packet. He stated that one of the things he has worked very hard on this year has been buckthorn and asked that everyone be sure to read his report.

V. **PARK ASSIGNMENTS PRESENTATION – DAVE FREDLUND**

Mr. Fredlund indicated that his park assignments were Frank Tupa Park, Utley Park, Wooddale Park and Williams Park.

Mr. Fredlund stated that Wooddale Park was the site of the old Wooddale Elementary School and noted at the park there is a memorial next to the flagpole for the old school. Mr. Fredlund commented that Wooddale Park is actually full of all sorts of memorials. He indicated that the new playground there turned out very well. Also, there is a wonderful softball field as well as a nice area for walking. Mr. Fredlund noted that Wooddale Park does have a utility room with restroom facilities. He stated that Wooddale Park is a heavily used park and functions beautifully.

Mr. Fredlund explained that Williams Park is located on the west end of Wooddale Park. It's at the corner where Browndale comes into 50<sup>th</sup> and it's actually the site of the Old Edina Mill. He noted that it's his understanding that the Old Edina Mill was built in the 1870s and it used Minnehaha Creek as its power source. Mr. Fredlund commented that there is a kiosk at the park with some pictures and historical background regarding the mill.

Mr. Fredlund indicated that Utley Park is right across the street from Wooddale Park on the south side. He noted that the picnic shelter that used to be at Wooddale Park is now at Utley Park. Also, Utley Park has a wonderful basketball court, which gets a tremendous amount of use, as well as the two tennis courts. Mr. Fredlund stated that at the back of Utley Park is Minnehaha Creek along with a wonderful picnic area, grills and a large fire pit with seating all around.

Mr. Fredlund pointed out that Frank Tupa Park is a special purpose park where two significant historical buildings are located, the Old Cahill School and the Grange Hall. He noted that the Edina Historical Society programs the two buildings and they contract with schools from all over the state to go on field trips to Frank Tupa Park throughout the school year. Mr. Fredlund noted that the City is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the buildings. He indicated that he believes the school was built in 1854 so it's coming up on its 150<sup>th</sup> year anniversary.

Mr. Keprios handed out an interesting fact sheet that he found in his files regarding Wooddale Park. He noted that St. Stephens Church paid \$100,000 for the parking lots at Wooddale Park and Utley Park with the agreement that they have the right to park there on Sundays and that the City would maintain it.

Mr. Keprios indicated that the City of Edina also has an agreement with the Edina School District that if they ever need to use the Wooddale Park property again for a school that they can purchase that property back.

Ms. Presthus asked Mr. Fredlund if he found any problems at the parks to which he replied not really. The only thing he can think of is the tennis court surface at Utley Park needs a little work.

## **VI. TOBACCO-FREE POLICY**

Mr. Keprios indicated that at this time all he is looking for is to have some discussion regarding a tobacco free policy. He noted that a lot of communities are reacting to the initiative that's out there. He stated that more and more cities are establishing a more restrictive smoke free policy. Mr. Keprios commented that in his view he thinks it's wonderful that we try to send the right message to children not to smoke. However, he is a little sensitive to people's rights; however, believes that it is our duty to encourage healthy role model messages to kids regarding tobacco use. Mr. Keprios pointed out that he is not proposing or advocating a new enforceable law. He commented that the City of Bloomington has an ordinance on the books that there is no smoking allowed both indoor and outdoor in their parks and doesn't think Edina should go that route. Mr. Keprios indicated that he likes what the City of Plymouth has done which is they have a voluntary compliance where signs are set up saying "no smoking" and it is self-policing. He noted that each community has a little different view on this subject.

Mr. Grabiel asked if this has become an issue because of this organization or have people been complaining about there being a problem. He asked is this a solution looking for a problem. Mr. Keprios replied that one problem area he has had is with people smoking right outside the doors at Braemar Arena. He noted that primarily this organization keeps sending him literature and they would like to attend a Park Board meeting. Therefore, he is looking to see what the general feeling is of the Park Board on the issue.

Ms. Wexler asked if it would make sense to put up a sign at the arena, where there are complaints, that says please no smoking during athletic events. Mr. Keprios indicated that the City of Plymouth does allow smoking in the parking lots as long as people are in their cars and commented that possibly they could put a sign up stating that. Mr. Keprios explained that technically our City Code and policies right now allow adult coaches to stand right on the third base line during a youth baseball game while smoking a cigarette, cigar, or pipe, or even chew tobacco. Mr. Keprios asked the Park Board what their feelings are regarding this issue.

Ms. Presthus indicated that her first question is who is bringing this up and second do we have a major problem with this issue. She noted that with this particular group, if you read their literature and see how they promote themselves, she sees a little bit of a problem. She stated that she thinks they sort of have a one step of wanting to change the whole adult society and how everyone is treated. Ms. Presthus commented that she thinks it would be difficult to say no smoking to someone who is walking their dog and

smoking around a child's soccer game. Where do we draw the line? She indicated that she is very concerned with where this may be going. Ms. Presthus stated that she doesn't have a problem with no smoking around children; however, she does have a concern about adult legal rights.

Mr. Weiss commented that he doesn't think this is that big of an issue and doesn't really have an opinion one way or another. Ms. Presthus commented that it's not really that big of an issue unless you think about what the next step might be, which is her main concern.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that he is not advocating more government intervention into people's lives.

Mr. Finsness indicated that overall he likes the thought of no smoking in the parks. He noted that if signs are put up he thinks it will be self-policed and does like the idea.

Mr. Grabiell stated that he is not anxious to do this until they ban smoking in restaurants.

Mr. Klus asked Mr. Keprios if he received the feedback he is looking for to which he replied that what he is hearing is that it's not a major problem with the exception of Braemar Arena. Ms. Sitek commented that maybe if they moved the ashtrays away from the entrance at Braemar Arena it would be less of a problem.

Mr. Klus indicated that he thinks smokers do need to have someplace to smoke. Ms. Presthus indicated that if they were to put up "no smoking" signs she would like for the City to do it and not this organization. She noted that she doesn't think they need their help.

Mr. Keprios asked the Park Board members to give this some thought and noted that he will be talking about this issue at their next staff meeting to which he will send an e-mail with their thoughts. Mr. Klus commented that even with baseball in the summer he doesn't think this has ever been a problem.

Mr. Weiss asked if they decide to have "no smoking" in the parks what would happen at Braemar Golf Course to which Mr. Keprios replied they would still allow smoking at Braemar. He noted that there would be the potential for mixed messages and maybe we should just stay away from it. Ms. Presthus stated that unless there is a community outcry that we have a major problem we should leave it as it is. She indicated that she doesn't like the idea of this organization imposing themselves on us. Mr. Keprios noted that he would share his staff's opinions with the Park Board.

## **VII. GYMNASIUM AND DOME FACILITIES**

Mr. Keprios indicated that the Facilities Study Committee recommended that if the school referendum passes that the City would talk to the School District about gyms and a dome. Therefore, since the referendum did pass Mr. Hughes, Mr. Dragseth, Mr.

Willemsen and he recent met to discuss this. Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board that the School District is feeling some political sensitivity to moving forward with gyms at least at the staff level. He noted that it's their perception that gyms would be awfully tough at this point because the issues are still the same, how do you pay for the operational expenses and not have it affect education. Mr. Keprios explained that the dome is a little different because they are going to turf the field on one of the two multi-purpose athletic fields west of the high school. He noted that they are also going to put artificial turf on Kuhlman Field as well. Mr. Keprios commented that Mr. Dragseth's first reaction was let's give it a year and see what kind of play it gets. They plan to build the field in a manner that makes it possible to put a bubble over the field if they choose to do so in the future.

Mr. Klus indicated that he had lunch yesterday with Mayor Maetzold, Gordon Hughes and Mr. Keprios to talk about the resistance they received from the staff at the school regarding the addition of gymnasiums. Mr. Klus informed the Park Board that the YMCA has stepped forward and is interested in meeting with the City to discuss the possibility of adding three gymnasiums to the YMCA. Mr. Klus noted that he doesn't think that is the best option because he thinks adding gymnasiums to the schools is the best option. The YMCA, however, is an option that the Facilities Study Committee did not discuss. He stated that Mr. Hughes has suggested that we hold off and see where we are going to go from here. Mr. Klus commented that the YMCA is willing to continue to discuss this option.

Ms. Sitek asked Mr. Klus why he doesn't think the YMCA option would be as good an option as the schools. Mr. Keprios commented that one downside at the YMCA would be that the basketball association would prefer a place with multiple gymnasiums because it would be better for running tournaments. He noted that it would be a great facility, however, it's not ideal but it's a close second. Mr. Weiss asked didn't the Basketball Association ask for a four gymnasium complex to which Mr. Keprios replied yes, they would prefer four. Mr. Klus noted that the YMCA is looking at having a total of three gymnasiums. Mr. Keprios pointed out that the big draw for the YMCA is having an indoor elevated running track, which is of great interest to the YMCA.

Ms. Sitek commented that if they can't have gymnasiums at the schools then the YMCA seems like it would be a perfect place. She noted that it is ten-fold better than anything the committee looked at including building something separate. Ms. Presthus stated that the YMCA was an option with the Blue Ribbon Committee but there was opposition to it first because it wasn't a high priority at that time and second because it was not in a central location. It's located in an area that's not always easy to get to.

Mr. Klus noted that at the meeting Mayor Maetzold asked him if he would meet with Colleen Feige and Jeff Johnson and see what the School Board's feeling is on the whole issue. They already know how the school's staff feels about it. Mr. Klus commented that hopefully they will meet sometime within the next month and after that he suggested that the Facilities Study Committee get together and talk about some more options to bring back to the Park Board.

Mr. Keprios noted that he thinks the most important thing is to have a meeting with Colleen Feige and Jeff Johnson to see where the political will is and that will give the Park Board some direction of what to do next. Mr. Klus noted that he wants to keep this item on the Park Board agenda each month because it's important to keep moving it along. He noted that the City is very willing to do something; we just need to find the right mechanism to put everything together.

Mr. Keprios commented that he thinks this issue has been studied to death and feels that the committee came up with the right recommendations. Mr. Klus noted that he told Mr. Hughes and Mayor Maetzold that there is no need to study this anymore. They already know that something has to be done; they just need to find the right way to do it.

Mr. Keprios commented that the City has the where-for-all to build these things, that's not the issue. The biggest issue is how are they going to pay for the operational expenses. Mr. Klus noted that the Mayor asked how much it would cost to run a building if the City built it to which Mr. Keprios responded up to approximately \$1,000 a day, which is what we know it costs to operate the Lindberg Center.

#### **VIII. ARDIS WEXLER**

Mr. Klus informed the Park Board that this is Ardis Wexler's last Park Board meeting. The Park Board thanked Ms. Wexler for all of her time that she has put in.

Ms. Wexler thanked the Park Board and the City for allowing her the privilege of being on the Park Board for three years. She noted that she has enjoyed it very much and has very mixed feelings about leaving. However, it is her opinion that three years is a good amount of time to spend on the Park Board and then it's time for other people to be given the opportunity. Ms. Wexler commented that she has also taken on some other volunteer activities.

#### **IX. OTHER**

A. Council Connection - Mr. Keprios gave the Park Board members a copy of the "Council Connection" which gives a quick summary of recent actions taken by the City Council. He noted that this edition reflects that the Council approved the Park Board's proposed 2004 fees and charges and also refers to the First Tier Regional Trail. He stated that staff receives this informative summary after each council meeting.

B. Countryside Park – Mr. Keprios indicated that he has asked Brauer and Associates what it would cost to hire them to work with staff, residents, Park Board and City Council to establish a new master plan for Countryside Park to which it was noted approximately \$7,000. He stated that the Edina Community Foundation has shown an interest in possibly funding half of the project. Mr. Keprios explained that if they develop a master plan, it doesn't mean that the plan has to be built right away. He added that if the neighborhood likes the master plan, they might want to get a fundraiser together like the

neighborhood did at Fox Meadow Park and develop the master plan as funds become available. Mr. Keprios commented that this will be on a future Park Board agenda but just wanted to be sure the Park Board had a heads up.

C. Buckthorn - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the Department of Natural Resources has offered to give the City a \$5,000 matching grant to inventory all of the buckthorn in Braemar Park and establish a management plan to eradicate all of it. Mr. Keprios indicated that his staff, however, has informed him that is not a very good idea because it would be unrealistic to get rid of all of the buckthorn at Braemar Park. He noted that his staff asked if it would be possible to take down the buckthorn they know is there in the highly visible areas and asked if the money could be spent for that. Mr. Keprios indicated that he asked the DNR if that would be possible to which they replied no. He stated that he now does not intend to spend the \$5,000 because he really does not consider grant money as free money because it's still the taxpayer's money. He noted that he's a believer if they are not going to put it to good use then he should not accept it. Mr. Keprios indicated that he thinks it would be better if his staff identifies the high visibility areas and comes up with a management plan for the whole city and not focus all of their resources on trying to manage all of the buckthorn infested areas in just one park.

Mr. Keprios noted that the topic of Buckthorn would be on the January Park Board meeting agenda.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

Mike Weiss MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:30 P.M. Karla Sitek SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.