

EDINA PARK BOARD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2005
7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
EDINA CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andy Finsness, Jeff Johnson, Linda Presthus, Todd Fronek, Jeff Sorem, Karla Sitek, Ray O'Connell, Mike Damman, Mike Weiss

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Klus, Gordon Roland

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton, Tom Shirley, Ann Kattreh, Susan Weigle, Todd Anderson, Larry Thayer

OTHERS PRESENT: Jack Keegan, Dianne Plunkett Latham, Dan Latham, Jim Villas, Arden Aanestad, Lynn Cardwell, Jean Stuart, Marty Rice, Heidi Dorfmeister, Idelle Longman, Tim Meehan, Helen Woelfel, Janet Larson

I. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2005 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Linda Presthus MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2005 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Jeff Johnson SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. BUCKTHORN MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION – JANET LARSON

Mr. Finsness introduced Janet Larson and indicated that the Park Board asked her to give a presentation on buckthorn because of the Park Board's and City Council's interest. He noted that Ms. Larson was highly recommended by Tom Horwath, City Forester, because of her background and wonderful insight into this process.

Ms. Larson indicated that she has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Minnesota in Urban and Community Forestry with a minor in Horticulture. She added that she has been a master gardener for 13 years. Ms. Larson informed the Park Board that she serves on the Bloomington Parks Arts and Recreation Commission and therefore deals with this issue on multiple levels. She's a volunteer within her own city as well as a paid contractor with various cities that need help. Ms. Larson stated that for more than the last ten years she has been a volunteer working on buckthorn busting in her own community on a very small scale.

Ms. Larson explained that during the buckthorn removal process when people are using the brushing method some of the common mistakes that are made is all species end up

being taken out of the area as well as there is very little follow-up which can result in erosion and invasion of weeds. Ms. Larson pointed out that “invasive” species that are non-native to Minnesota or the USA start to displace and take over native species. Therefore, people need to keep the aggressive natives that occupy the space especially if higher value species are not in the area. Ms. Larson pointed out that another common error is that natives are not flagged or marked and therefore they are not protected during the removal operations. Also, cut stumps that are not flagged tend to get lost in the leaves and approximately 50% of those will re-sprout. Ms. Larson indicated that there are priorities that should be done for an overwhelming site which include flagging and removing the females first in order to reduce spreading.

Ms. Larson suggested the following priorities for a limited budget:

1. Prioritize work to protect/restore most valuable plant operations.
2. Removal of females first to reduce the spread (control vs. eradication).
3. Partner with conservation groups, volunteers, garden clubs, etc.
4. Write grant proposals
5. Work in high-profile areas (community building, education opportunity; publicize in community newspaper).

Ms. Larson commented that the keys to success are:

1. Prioritized Work
2. Sustainable Methods
3. Partnerships
4. Trained Crew Leaders
5. Positive Attitude
6. Long-Term Commitment

Ms. Larson stated that there is no such thing as after buckthorn because invasive species are always going to be a threat because there are multiple invasive species. Everyone is now living in a global melting pot of people, plants and organisms as well as all kinds of things with international commerce and trade. Therefore, they will always be dealing with invasive species. She explained that if they are going to put together a program to manage buckthorn in their woodlands they really do need to pay attention to some of the other really bad invasive species that are out there. However, if they try to keep things in perspective and not feel like it is all gloom and doom and do a little bit every year in a prioritized fashion with some persistence and a good attitude they can make a great difference.

Attached is Ms. Larson’s power point presentation “Managing Woodlands with Buckthorn”. The Park Board thanked Ms. Larson for her presentation.

III. 2006 FEES AND CHARGES

Mr. Keprios pointed out to the Park Board that since the October Park Board, which was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum, he has added some fees and charges. He indicated that on page seven where the Park Department Rentals are listed there is now a rental fee for the picnic shelters at Chowen Park, Sherwood Park and Wooddale Park. Mr. Keprios explained that they are beginning to experience quite a few requests for these shelters. In addition, they have had quite a few groups requesting the fire ring at Utley Park which does require some staff time to clean up the ashes and what not. Mr. Keprios stated that those who use the fire ring do bring their own wood. He noted that they do provide a permit to reserve these facilities, however, traditionally there really hasn't been a fee for them. Mr. Keprios stated that for Wooddale, Chowen and Sherwood he is proposing a fee of \$25.00 for a half-day/\$40.00 for a full day and the fire ring at Utley Park would be \$25.00 for the day for privatized and reserved use.

Ms. Presthus asked if the neighborhood wanted to have a party at Sherwood Park would they be charged a fee for that use. Mr. Keprios replied if the neighborhood wanted to show up and use the shelter area without the guarantee that no other group is going to have it then there would be no charge. However, if they want to reserve it for their privatized use just like any group who reserves the Rosland Park shelter there would be a charge. He explained that a lot of times there are additional costs involved because groups ask for additional picnic tables to be delivered or there's more trash to be picked up, etc. People don't have to reserve a park to use it; however, if they want to be guaranteed the shelter area for their exclusive use, there is a fee to do that. Ms. Presthus asked if someone just wanted to play in the park, is that okay; to which Mr. Keprios replied that's correct because it is a public park.

Mr. Keprios commented that any changes in fees and charges are in bold type. He noted that he thinks the fees and charges are fairly modest. He explained to the Park Board that their mission is not to make money. He indicated that over the years the philosophy of the Park Board and City Council has been that users pay their fair share of the cost associated with the program or service provided. In most cases they try to provide services on a break even basis where they can keep their programs and activities affordable to the maximum number of residents. Mr. Keprios pointed out that they are also very thankful to have the Edina Community Foundation assist those Edina families who are financially challenged in the community by annually giving approximately \$5,000 a year for those that can't afford the programs and/or access to recreational facilities.

Mr. Fronck asked how the basketball courts are managed to which Mr. Keprios replied that the school district has the authority to charge whatever they feel fit for the gyms. He pointed out the way it works is the school district gives the City the opportunity to schedule what the City views to be a priority user group and are charged a certain hourly rate. Currently the School District charges a higher hourly rate for those groups who are not considered a priority user group scheduled by the City.

Ms. Presthus indicated that there is no increase on the fees for the Adventure Peak Playground at Edinborough Park and asked how that policy has been working and whether or not they have received any community feedback from last year's fees. Mr. Shirley responded that they really haven't had any complaints on the fees. He noted that in 2004 they generated \$417,000 and this year they are on track for approximately \$425,000 so it seems to be going pretty good and therefore they really don't want to raise them at this point. Mr. Shirley explained that next summer they are anticipating putting some improvements into the structure and therefore will probably be looking at a light raise in fees for 2007.

Ray O'Connell MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2006 FEES AND CHARGES AS PROPOSED. Jeff Sorem SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. 2006-2010 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr. Keprios indicated that he really needs to compliment the Park Board and City Council because, over the 28 years that he has worked for the City, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) has usually ranged anywhere from \$75,000 to \$150,000 a year up until the not so distant past. He pointed out that today it costs over \$100,000 just to replace one set of playground equipment and therefore really applauds the Park Board and City Council for supporting a much stronger and comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan. For many years we have needed a stronger CIP and more financial support in order to simply maintain the existing infrastructure. Mr. Keprios commented that he is very pleased to say that they now average over ½ million dollars a year depending on the needs and what the Park Board recommends from year to year. He added that it keeps them from having to borrow money via a referendum to keep up with their infrastructure. Mr. Keprios stressed that the CIP probably won't ever be large enough to fund all of the new and larger park development projects, which will probably require donations or referendums, grants, or another form of taxation. We currently have a very strong CIP that he is very pleased with because it gives us the ability to maintain existing infrastructure.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that total 2006 CIP is \$988,000 of which \$92,000 is carried over from the 2005 CIP for the new maintenance garage at the Courtney Ball Fields. He explained that was intentionally done because they feel there is going to be a cost benefit to doing it all at the same time as the new concession stand and renovation of field #4. Mr. Keprios commented that this is definitely the largest CIP they've ever requested since he has been with the City. Mr. Keprios stated that he is asking for the Park Board to recommend the 2006 CIP as proposed. He explained that the Capital Improvement Plan which outlines what the priorities are for the next five years. Mr. Keprios stated that for this year the biggest project is the replacement of the concessions building at Courtney ball fields because the needed improvements are now beyond repair to correct what are serious safety issues. The steep stairway to the scoring booth/storage area is inherently dangerous; the spectators are exposed to errant baseballs, and the concessions

stand needs significant upgrade remodeling. Mr. Keprios pointed out that they ran short of dollars in the 1996 referendum and therefore never were able to finish field #4, the smallest field, and would now like to be able to do that. In addition they would replace the maintenance garage because it is way undersized for the equipment that they now need as well as it's currently in a bad location which exposes the building and equipment to significant flooding during a heavy rains.

Mr. Keprios indicated that pathway repair at Bredesen Park is something that they really wanted to get done in 2005 but it ended up being too costly and was not in the operating budget or the 2005 CIP. He noted that there is quite a bit of pathway out there that was done in 1996, however, it wears quickly. Ms. Presthus asked if it's normal to wear out that fast or was there something about the way it was done that it only lasted so long. Mr. Keprios explained that on a pathway like the one at Bredesen what they run into a lot of times are tree roots that grow under the pathway.

Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board that because technology grows and changes so fast the keyless entry system at the new warming houses is almost an obsolete system and we soon will no longer be able to get parts for it. He noted that they have been warned that if the system crashes we may be out of luck and it may become unusable. Therefore, we are considering an upgrade to the same system currently used at City Hall and the South Metro Training Facility. He stated that he believes for \$20,000 they could upgrade to a similar system that would require a new computer, new software and a cable system so it's always on line. Mr. Keprios stressed that he thinks they are going to run out of time if they don't take care of this in the next year because his fear is they may get into trouble where the system won't work at all.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that they've had the same key core security system for well over 35 years which also affects some of the enterprise facilities. He noted that there have been enough master keys, warming house master keys as well as other keys lost, stolen, etc., that the system is not as secure as it should be. Therefore, they feel it's time to re-core the whole system. He commented that they are going to try to move their keyless entry system into as many sites as possible.

Mr. Keprios indicated that the City of Minneapolis recently informed him that they might be willing to offer the France Avenue Water Works site to Edina and St. Louis Park for use as an off-leash dog park. An employee with the Minneapolis Property Services Division suggested the possibility of leasing the property for \$6,000 a year (\$3,000 per city) basis for three to ten years. Mr. Keprios commented that if the Park Board wants to consider this as an off-leash dog park site and go forward there needs to be capital funding available to develop the site. He pointed out that even if the Park Board approves the funding request, that wouldn't necessarily mean that it's going to happen. Mr. Keprios noted that next week he is meeting with the St. Louis Park City Manager to at least enter into discussions on whether or not they really want to do this as well as could they agree to who would police it, who would respond to police calls, who would maintain it, etc. Therefore, there are a few things to iron out but if they are going to consider it they need to put it in the CIP.

Mr. Keprios went through some of the CIP items in 2007 through 2010 for the Park Board members to start to think about to discuss at a later date. Mr. Keprios commented that he's not necessarily asking the Park Board to endorse the next five years but he is looking for a formal Park Board recommendation for the 2006 CIP. Ms. Presthus asked if the items listed for 2006 are in the order of priority to which Mr. Keprios replied that by luck they actually are listed in the order of priority.

Mr. Johnson asked if the France Avenue off-leash dog park would negate the VanValkenburg off-leash dog park. Mr. Keprios replied no, they are still going to be able to cover the Van Valkenburg off-leash dog park under the operating budget regardless of what happens with the France Avenue site.

Mr. Finsness asked if there will be any problem presenting a million dollars to the City Council to which Mr. Keprios responded that the City Council has had this on their radar screen for several years now so it should not be a surprise to them. They know it is coming.

Mr. Fronck asked Mr. Keprios if there would be any advantage to repairing the Arneson Acres pathway over the Bredesen Park pathway since they will be renovating the lower level parking lot at Arneson Acres (the pathway repair for Arneson Acres is currently listed on the 2007 CIP). Mr. Keprios replied that he thinks a lot of the pathway work can be done internally; however, the Arneson Acres Park parking lot needs to be done with a contractor, therefore, there wouldn't be any savings to doing them both together. If both projects were contracted out then yes, there would be a savings advantage to doing them at the same time.

Linda Presthus MOVED THAT THEY RECOMMEND THE 2006 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AS OUTLINED BY THE STAFF REPORT. Karla Sitek SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. UPDATES

- A. Gymnasium Construction – Mr. MacHolda informed the Park Board that ground has been broken at the Edina Community Center. He noted that bids were very favorable for the concession stand which is part of the two gymnasium community center site. Mr. Johnson explained that regarding the concession stand they are still working on approximately \$50,000 of donations to help off-set the costs. He stated that this would be through the Edina Foundation or the user groups because the feeling is that those who will be benefiting from it should pay for it. However, that is still up in the air for debate and his feeling is they should spend the extra money and get it done with a nice concession stand. Mr. MacHolda indicated that they are looking at late summer for completion and the gyms should be playable by September 1, 2006.

- B. Edina Youth Sports Taskforce – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the Youth Sports Taskforce recently had its first meeting. He indicated that their meetings are going to be held on the second Thursday of the month and their hope is to have everything wrapped up by February 9th and come up with some recommendations for the Park Board to respond to at the March Park Board meeting. Mr. Keprios stated that at the December 8th meeting they are having a community public forum. On January 12th they are going to be hearing from all of the athletic associations and at the February 9th meeting he hopes they are able to wrap everything up.

Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board that the mission of this task force is to define the relationship and the role of staff, Park Board and City Council as it relates to the independently incorporated youth athletic associations. This group will look at whether or not they think there should be any changes, updates, new requirements or guidelines, etc. Mr. Keprios commented that he thinks what it comes down to is what intervention and control our government should have in running these youth programs that are currently run by parent volunteers. He added that there are people who do not have the same views who will be coming before this group which should make for a lively and interesting discussion. Mr. Keprios pointed out that to stay focused on the mission is going to be a bit of a challenge; however, it is not the task force mission to solve all of the problems of youth athletics. He stated that there is a lot of misinformation out there being submitted via emails and letters.

Mr. Finsness asked Mr. Keprios to e-mail a copy of the Youth Sports Taskforce meeting dates, times and locations to the Park Board.

VI. OTHER

- A. Todd Park - Mr. O'Connell informed the Park Board that there were a couple of very nice letters sent to the editor in the Sun Newspaper regarding Todd Park. He commented that since they spent a lot of time on Todd Park he would like to make those two pieces a matter of record for historical reference.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Todd Fronek MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:50 PM. Linda Presthus SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.