

EDINA PARK BOARD
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2006
7:00 P.M.
EDINA COMMUNITY ROOM
EDINA CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andy Finsness, Gordon Roland, Todd Fronек, Mike Damman,
Karla Sitek, Ray O’Connell

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeff Johnson, Linda Presthus, Jeff Sorem George Klus, Mike Weiss

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

OTHERS PRESENT: Germane Paterlini

I. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 14, 2006 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Todd Fronек MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 14, 2006 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Mike Damman SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY – REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Mr. Finsness asked for the Park Board’s input on the proposed assessment survey. Mr. Damman commented that it covers everything and looks good. Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that Mr. MacHolda is to be credited for putting the proposal together. He noted that if the proposal is approved he will mail it out to the five firms listed in his staff report.

Mr. Finsness asked Mr. Keprios if he thinks the consulting firms will stick to what is suggested to them or will they expand on it. Mr. Keprios replied that depending on the type of process they end up using they will likely expand upon it. Mr. Finsness clarified that once a consulting firm is picked the Park Board will have the opportunity to go through and develop it with them. Mr. Keprios stated that a big part of this is going to be deciding on what type of survey they are going to conduct. He noted that they also need to discuss how they are going to go about engaging the community to be a part of this process.

Mr. Fronек commented that the proposal is well written but that he would like to see an amendment made regarding buckthorn abatement and urban forest management. He noted that he agrees that buckthorn is a bad thing, however, the general topic should be addressed as “environmental management” because then it can include things like water

quality, etc. He noted that he doesn't want to end up having a huge buckthorn proposal come back that doesn't address some of the other environmental needs.

Mr. O'Connell stated that the whole buckthorn thing is so multi-faceted and so much broader than anything the Park Board can do. He noted that in order to satisfy the requirements of any buckthorn abatement program they are going to need a broad volunteer group that will just be dedicated to taking care of buckthorn. He commented even with that they will still be fighting a tough battle because it just keeps spreading, especially on the private properties.

Mr. O'Connell pointed out they should not tailor a question just to facilities per se, but rather take a harder look at what is needed in our parks to facilitate the uses so they can satisfy the requirements of all of the generations and interests across the board. He noted that he is posing a very broad question but he thinks they have an obligation to try to develop in the broadest possible way without being specific but yet try to get to specifics. It will be a very tough thing to do. Mr. Finsness asked Mr. O'Connell if he had any suggestions to which he replied he does not.

Mr. O'Connell stated that it has been pointed out that Edina is a very landlocked city with very limited land that's available, but could we go outside the parameters of the city limits because then we could ask all kinds of other questions relating to that. Mr. Finsness indicated that he thinks it's going to get much more complicated as they go down the road because he's sure they will get into some of those types of discussions.

Mr. Finsness recommended that they eliminate C and add the word "added" to D so it would read "What facilities should be added, replaced or eliminated?"

Mr. Keprios explained that he envisions the process to start with general topics and through the process learn not only are they going to try to identify what some of the needs and desires are, but also test the waters on ideas that come out of the process. Mr. Keprios stated that if the Park Board is serious about considering some of the ideas that have been discussed then we need to measure the level of community support for each idea. Without community support, it should be obvious that those things should not be pursued.

Mr. O'Connell asked how broad are they going to have the survey to which Mr. Keprios replied that they can make it as broad and/or as specific as they want. Mr. Keprios noted that he envisions it to have some very specific proposals. Mr. O'Connell asked if they were to give the consulting firm some specific points will they be able to tailor it for us to which Mr. Keprios responded yes. The consulting firm's job is to word it properly and to try to get the question that identifies what it is we want to know. For example, how would the community feel if a specific development were proposed for a specific park? He stated that they are going to need to ask some very tough questions.

Todd Fronek MOVED THAT SECTION 2A, QUESTION ONE, REMOVE THE WORDS BUCKTHORN ABATEMENT AND URBAN FORESTS AND INSERT THE

WORD ENVIRONMENTAL SO IT WOULD READ WOULD RESIDENTS SUPPORT A MORE COSTLY AND MORE AGGRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

Karla Sitek SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. UPDATES

A. Edina Youth Sports Taskforce – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the Edina Youth Sports Task Force has created two documents. The first document is a resolution of core values to which they will be asking the Park Board to recommend to the City Council for their adoption as a resolution. He explained that it identifies the kind of culture and expectations there are going to be. Mr. Keprios stated the Taskforce has also created what they call a Relationship Document which is a potpourri of all of the issues they felt were important that need to be addressed to identify the roles, relationships and responsibilities of the city, staff, Park Board and City Council as it relates to Edina's youth athletic associations. In addition, it will also better identify what they feel are hot zones whether it be grievances, etc. At this time they are not addressing or recommending an oversight committee. However, there is a level of grievance that staff is recommending to the Taskforce Committee. The Taskforce hopes to have its final recommendations presented to the Park Board at either the May or June Park Board meeting.

Mr. Keprios indicated that the Taskforce is going to meet again to finish the two documents that will then be presented to the community and athletic associations to which they will have 30 days to respond. If there are no changes the Taskforce will meet again on May 11th. Mr. Finsness asked how they are going to get that information out to the community to which Mr. Keprios replied it will be put on their website as well as they will announce it in the paper.

B. Courtney Fields Shelter Building – Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board that the City Council was a little shocked at the price tag he was proposing for the new Courtney Fields Shelter building. Therefore, he hired Anderson Johnson & Associates who teamed up with ATS & R Architects to do a feasibility study of the shelter building. He stated that the study did indicate that there are a couple of walls that can be reused which would save over \$100,000 rather than tearing it down and starting over. However, the cost is still approximately \$450,000 to \$500,000 when everything is all said and done. Mr. Keprios pointed out that they are now going to start drawing documents and finalize the plan. He added that the City Council has asked them to come up with some deduct alternates to try and take out some of those things they can live without in order to keep the price tag down. He noted that July 24th is when they hope to get things started.

- C. Off-Leash Dog Area - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the City Council did approve the language to change the ordinance which essentially gives the Park Director the authority to use any portion of any park as an off-leash dog area. He stated that they are moving forward with the Van Valkenburg concept to which he just signed the purchase order to have the fencing installed. The off-leash dog area at Van Valkenburg Park should be operational by the middle of May. Mr. Keprios commented that instead of tags they are going to be selling colored collars so that it will be easier for the animal control officer to identify.

Mr. Keprios indicated that the City Council has asked that at next month's Park Board meeting they discuss the concept of using some of the hockey rinks as off-leash dog areas. He noted that Eden Prairie currently has four hockey rinks which they are now using as off-leash dog parks and so far it has been very successful.

IV. ORIENTATION – POWER POINT PRESENTATION

Mr. Keprios showed the Park Board a 110 slide Power Point Presentation he put together as an overview of the Park and Recreation Department, including facilities, staff, budget, programs, services, and areas of responsibility. The presentation also served as an orientation for new Park Board members, including a list of issues, challenges, procedures, and a Code of Ethics as suggested by the National Recreation and Park Association.

The Park Board thanked Mr. Keprios for the wonderful presentation he put together.

V. OTHER

- A. Minneapolis Off-Leash Dog Park - Mr. Keprios handed out a letter to the Park Board that he received from the new City Coordinator from the City of Minneapolis. The letter was in response to a letter co-signed by our City Manager, Gordon Hughes, and the City Manager of St. Louis Park, regarding the property at 40th and France Avenue for a possible off-leash dog park. The Minneapolis City Coordinator informed us that the City of Minneapolis currently cannot enter into a lease for a dog park on the City of Minneapolis property at 40th and France. At this time the City of Minneapolis engineers are conducting a strategic analysis to find out what the long-term plans are going to be for the piece of property. Once the analysis is completed they will let the City of Edina know of the results.
- B. Forestry Report – Mr. Keprios handed out a copy of the Forestry Report to the Park Board members. He indicated that it's obvious to him that they need to do a better job of planting trees. This past year they lost 402 trees and only planted 14. Unfortunately, too much of their resources are consumed by chasing trees with Dutch Elm Disease because there is so much of it out there. He noted all of the maintenance staff could work eight hours a day on this and they still would not be able to get on top of it. Mr. Keprios explained that they address it where it's critical to avoid the

spread to other neighboring shade trees but they clearly have to do a better job of planting new trees.

Mr. O'Connell asked about the Oak Wilt problem to which Mr. Keprios replied that for several years he has hired a company called Kunde, and they do a wonderful job of helping to identify Oak Wilt. He noted that they haven't lost anywhere near the number of Oaks in comparison to the Elms. However, there is now another new disease coming their way that is going to affect our ash trees.

- C. Goose Management Program - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that Dr. Cooper, the person they hired to do their goose management program, has sent him a letter putting him on alert that they are going to have to start meeting to come up with a homeland security type program to deal with the Avian Bird Flu if the disease becomes transferable from geese to humans. He noted that they are going to have to come up with a very quick and aggressive plan so that they are prepared to deal with this should it ever happen.
- D. Cypress Development Project – Mr. Damman asked Mr. Keprios if the Park Board is going to be involved with Cypress Development Project at Centennial Lakes. Mr. Keprios replied that for right now there is not a need for the Park Board to be involved in that process. However, if it starts to significantly affect the park the Park Board may become involved, however, he has been told that, with the exception of replacing some trees and shrubs, it is not significantly affecting the park at this time.
- E. Bike Paths - Mr. Fronек asked what the status is with the bike paths. Mr. Keprios replied that City Engineer, Wayne Houle, has secured a million dollar grant for the Interlachen Trail if the City decides to move forward with the project. At this point, it is primarily an engineering project. However, for the past four years the Park Board has been part of the First Tier Regional Trail project. Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that he will be meeting with Richfield and Bloomington and some of the engineers to discuss what are the right connections for the Cities when these trails come on-line and how are they going to make that happen. Mr. Keprios stated that he will keep the Park Board updated as they move along. Mr. Finsness asked that bike paths be put as an agenda item for next month's meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Ray O'Connell MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:00 PM. Todd Fronек SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.