

Minutes of the
Edina Park Board
Tuesday, September 11, 2007
Edina City Hall, Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ray O'Connell, Randy Meyer, Todd Fronek, Linda Presthus, Jeff Sorem, Mike Damman, George Klus, Carolyn Nelson, Howard Merriam, Andy Finsness, Karla Sitek

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

I. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 14, 2007 PARK BOARD MINUTES

George Klus MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 14, 2007 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Karla Sitek SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Morningside Neighborhood Association Fee Waiver Request – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that they do value and support the neighborhood associations. However, from staff's standpoint this is not a financial issue but if they open the flood gates it could become a financial issue.

Ms. Finsness clarified that the current policy states that formally organized Edina neighborhood associations are offered park shelter buildings free of charge to host their formal board meetings.

Jennifer Janovy, Edina Resident and on the Steering Committee for the Morningside Neighborhood Association, informed the Park Board that they are again requesting that the fee be waived for their annual meeting as well as up to two special events per year. Ms. Janovy explained that one of the things that prompted them to come back with their request again this year is because of some of the information that has come out of the Comprehensive Plan process. She noted that it states residents want to have more neighborhood connections and social activities as well as developing a stronger sense of community. She pointed out that the Park and Recreation Department's new Vision Statement in the Comprehensive Plan states "Creating Community through People, Parks and Programs". Therefore, with that in mind, they have decided to re-approach and ask that the fee be waived again for their annual meeting and up to two special events per year.

Mr. Fronek asked how much revenue is generated from the shelters per year to which Mr. Keprios replied that for the last three years they have had 165 rentals which has generated \$10,725.00. Mr. Fronek stated that because it is a smaller amount of revenue that if they were to decide to open it up to more than one meeting per year he would be in favor of waiving the fees altogether for the park shelters. He noted that otherwise, he would be in favor of just one meeting per

year for the neighborhood associations because there would be too many gray areas to try to figure out. Mr. Fronck pointed out that they could also defer these situations to Mr. Keprios to handle as he sees fit.

Mr. Klus stated that he thinks they need to stay consistent with their current policy.

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that there is a general park user fee which is a fee for general park areas and that fee is \$45.00 an hour or \$130.00 for the day. He noted that he has never charged neighborhood groups that fee as long as they continue to keep their special events open and available to the general public. Mr. Keprios explained when they have a private rental where no else can use it then he is forced to charge that fee. He also pointed out the \$65.00 for a half day at the shelter buildings is already at a subsidized rate.

Mr. Meyer asked how the rental expenses are calculated to which Mr. Keprios replied that the amount came from the Superintendent of Park Maintenance Vince Cockriel and those expenses are based un weekend rentals. He explained that staff do need to come in and clean, set-up, etc. and added that even if they are only there for ten minutes they still get paid time and a half for a minimum number of hours in accordance with the Union contract. Mr. Keprios stated that in addition there also has to be a follow-up clean up. Mr. Keprios pointed out that the rental rates are an approximate amount and that someone could probably argue it's substantially less for events that fall on weekdays.

Mr. Meyer stated that he lives in Morningside and does have a conflict because he is married to Jennifer Janovy. He noted that as far as he is aware a person checks out a key card from City Hall, sets it up themselves and cleans up afterwards. There is no City staff involved. Mr. Keprios replied that for their board meetings that is pretty much correct, however, staff will make sure it's clean for the next event. However, for the larger special events it does require staff to come in and clean before and after the event which incurs additional expenses.

Mr. Merriam asked if they charge a damage deposit to which Mr. Keprios replied no. Mr. Merriam noted that that his experience is they are on a very slippery slope because of the precedent they are setting. He stated it's a tough issue because they want to encourage the community to have their meetings and activities but then the other question is does it cost more money to administer the fees than it is to just waive them. Mr. Keprios replied that for the larger events the answer is clearly no. However, when it gets to really small things and if they start to collect damage deposits there is another administrative cost involved. He noted that in his 30 years there have been very few cases where they've had to address a rental where they caused damage and they've always made good on it.

Mr. O'Connell stated that his own conclusion is that in a special situation, such as a one-time event he supports it. However, he doesn't support an on-going establishment of further meetings put in place and setting a new precedent. He supports staff's recommendation.

Ms. Nelson stated that they need to look at the bigger goal and decide is it to gain revenue or is it to just get use out of the parks. She commented that she feels that if by people using the parks is going to draw communities together then maybe it's more important to let them use the shelter buildings for their social activities.

For purpose of discussion Ms. Presthus "MOVED THAT THE PARK BOARD ALLOW A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION THAT IS INCORPORATED AND HAS AN ACTUAL STRUCTURE THE USE FOR THEIR BOARD MEETING AND UP TO TWO SOCIAL EVENTS A YEAR".

Randy Meyer SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Klus stated that because Jennifer Janovy is Mr. Meyer's wife he does not think he should vote on this issue and is not so sure that he should have even seconded the motion. Therefore, he thinks Mr. Meyer should abstain from the vote.

Mr. Klus indicated that he doesn't see this as a revenue issue but rather as setting a precedent in this community that they really don't need. He stated that the fee is such a nominal amount that it really shouldn't stop anyone from being able to use the parks.

Mr. Meyer pointed out that the motion is very specific in that the neighborhood associations need to be incorporated. Secondly, he asked is the Park Board trying to approve a policy or are they voting to approve a recommendation to be brought forward to the City Council. Mr. Meyer asked isn't that the purpose of the Park Board to recommend things to the City Council to which Mr. Keprios replied that is correct. Ms. Presthus clarified that even if the Park Board did approve this it could be struck down at the City Council.

Mr. Sorem stated that he would support not changing anything and stay with the current policy.

All those in Favor: Linda Presthus

Opposed: Karla Sitek, Howard Merriam, George Klus, Andy Finsness, Mike Damman, Carolyn Nelson, Jeff Sorem, Todd Fronek, Ray O'Connell

Abstained: Randy Meyer

MOTION FAILED.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Bike Edina Task Force Update – Todd Fronek – Mr. Fronek handed out a draft of the bike route system. He indicated that their portion of the Bike Plan is moving along and they are on schedule.

Mr. Merriam asked if the Bike Edina Task Force has had any discussions with the CP Rail Line. Mr. Fronек replied his understanding is there are a lot of legal matters and issues that will need to be resolved before it will ever become a reality. At this time it is just a plan at where they eventually would like to have a bike route.

Mr. Damman asked Mr. Fronек if he knows anything about Three Rivers District wanting to put a bridge across Highway 62 (Crosstown). Mr. Fronек replied that he has heard some rumblings but he has not seen any hard plans. Mr. Keprios noted that the request is coming from the City to Three Rivers District as part of the East/West corridor. He pointed out that they really want to separate the pedestrians from the traffic and they feel this would be a much safer and more heavily used alignment than forcing pedestrians and bicycles onto the Gleason Road bridge.

Mr. O'Connell stated that one of the interesting things you are seeing now is more and more people are riding bicycles and they are people of all ages. He commented that one complaint that he has heard is where are the bicycle racks? He indicated that this is something that will have to be dealt with. Mr. Fronек replied that's a good point and he has heard that from different people saying that there are not enough places to lock up your bike.

- B. City Council Joint Park Board Meeting – Mr. Finsness reminded the Park Board about a joint meeting with the City Council on Tuesday, October 2nd at 5:00 pm in the Community Room.

IV. UPDATES FROM STAFF

- A. Braemar Park Picnic Shelter - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the new Braemar Park picnic shelter is coming along beautifully.
- B. Chowen Park - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that they just opened bids for the Chowen Park picnic shelter. He noted that they had four good bids to which the lowest one came in at \$35,600. He indicated that they had budgeted \$50,000 in the capital improvement plan for the project.

V. PARK BOARD COMMENT

- A. Lewis and Van Valkenburg Parks - Mr. Sorem noted that he would like to state that he has watched a few football games this year and indicated that the fields are in phenomenal shape, so kudos to the staff for both Lewis and Van Valkenburg Parks.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:45 pm