

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA PARK BOARD
HELD AT CITY HALL
May 14, 2013
7:00 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Steel called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Answering roll call were Members Deeds, Gieseke, Hulbert, Jacobson, Jones, Dan Peterson, Steel, O'Leary.

Member Almog arrived at 7:13 p.m.

Member Cella arrived at 7:42 p.m.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Member Hulbert made a motion, seconded by Member Gieseke, approving the meeting agenda.

Ayes: Members Deeds, Gieseke, Hulbert, Jacobson, Jones, Dan Peterson, Steel

Motion Carried.

IV. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Member Deeds made a motion, seconded by Member Hulbert, approving the consent agenda as follows:

IV.A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Park Board Meeting of Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Ayes: Members Deeds, Gieseke, Hulbert, Jacobson, Jones, Dan Peterson, Steel

Motion Carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

None.

VI. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

VI.A. Off-Leash Area Pilot Hockey Rink Recommendation and Public Hearing

Ms. Faus reviewed that at the February 12, 2013 Park Board meeting residents requested adding an off-leash area at one of the hockey rinks. The Park Board requested that staff determine two locations that would be ideal for this pilot. At the March 12, 2013 Park Board meeting staff recommended two possible locations, Highlands Park and Pamela Park. After further research, it was determined neither of the suggested locations would work well with the city's current recreational programming. It was especially important to serve the residents on the east side of Edina. Ms. Faus stated at the April 9, 2013 Park Board meeting staff recommended Strachauer Park as the location of the pilot off-leash seasonal dog area. After further review, it was determined that the location is good based on several factors: it is easily accessible and conveniently located on the east side of Edina; the hockey rink is full sized with a grass/sand surface, as opposed to an asphalt surface, the Parks & Recreation Department does not have any Playground Programs that utilize this location during the spring or summer, and there is adequate parking and neighborhood access. Adequate parking and safety were also an important criterion.

Ms. Faus reported that Highlands rink is used for a lot of summertime activities, and kids and dog owners would be in a direct path with each other, based upon the location of the warming house. Also, at Pamela Park there is a lot of activity on the fields, and parking is limited. At Cornelia School

Park, the rinks are used for summer Playground Programs, and the parking lot will be renovated this summer. She noted that the Arden Park rink is utilized for Playground Programs, and parking is limited.

Ms. Faus continued that Normandale Park is utilized for summer programs, parking is limited, and there is close proximity of the warming house. All of these issues are present with Walnut Ridge Park, which also has no parking. At Weber Park, Playground Programs use the rink, and it is a heavily used park. Lewis Park was also considered, but the hockey rink is asphalt-based. Strachauer Park was ultimately chosen because it is easily accessible and located on the east side of Edina. There is no recreational programming during spring and summer, and it has an adequate-sized rink to accommodate owners and dogs. Also, there is adequate parking and easy neighborhood access.

Ms. Faus stated that logistics-wise, dogs must be licensed and owners will be required to purchase an off-leash area permit. Additionally, all dogs must wear the collars while in the dog park. Signage will clearly state rules and regulations and will also state etiquette. The city will install a gate to enclose the hockey rink. One option is a wooden gate; another option is black vinyl fencing, both of which are easily removed at the end of the season. The city will provide dog waste bags as a courtesy to owners.

Ms. Faus then presented an overhead of Strachauer Park, demonstrating where the dogs and dog owners will enter and exit the off-leash area. She noted that park users can walk through to the dog park without walking by the playground area. She then displayed a photo of the signs in use at Van Valkenburg as comparison of the signage provided at the other off-leash area in the city. Ms. Faus noted that she spoke with Tim Hunter, who recommended the same rules be followed with the new off-leash park. She then displayed the user etiquette signage.

Member Deeds commented that 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. seemed to be too early and too late, given the park's close proximity to residents. Ms. Faus responded that adjusting the hours would be something to consider, perhaps opening later in the morning and closing earlier in the evening.

Chair Steel noted that 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. are the same hours in the other off-leash area, and she does not see anyone in the park very early in the morning or that late in the evening.

Member Gieseke suggested that 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. would be more suitable hours. He asked whether park users would pay one permit fee for both parks. Ms. Faus responded yes, both places would be covered by the permit.

Member Dan Peterson inquired about the dog waste bags at Van Valkenburg. Ms. Faus reported that dog owners oftentimes bring additional bags, which are then hung on the fence. She said the city has containers that can be used. She noted it is a good idea to encourage users to bring additional bags, and it would look neater to have a storage container. Member Gieseke suggested the policy should be the same at both parks.

Member Dan Peterson asked about enforcement of dog waste clean-up. Ms. Faus stated it is the responsibility of dog owners to clean up after their pets. She hopes to find community members to work together to enforce those rules.

Chair Steel asked about the best practices for dog owners and whether they are enforceable. She stated one situation would be a person with a dog-walking business who might bring several dogs to the park at one time. Ms. Faus noted that all enforcement falls under the Animal Control Department (Tim Hunter). Rules of etiquette are challenging to enforce, but the city should be hearing and addressing those concerns. Chair Steel stated there should be a way to register those complaints.

Member Jacobson stated it should say that people should pay attention to their dog the whole time, and inquired about cell phone usage rules. Ms. Faus stated the signage can be created to reflect any Park Board suggestions. It was noted that Van Valkenburg Park was the first dog park, and the city is hoping to improve the system with the addition of the new dog park.

Member Deeds inquired how many residents received the letter notifying them of the proposed dog park. Ms. Faus responded the letter was sent to 472 homes, which was a 1,000-foot radius of the park.

Member Jones stated there are certain city ordinances about dogs, one of which is they are required to carry two bags with them. She suggested the signage should also educate owners about that rule. The city should not need to provide bags at the park; a trash receptacle, however, should be provided. Ms. Faus stated several trash cans would be provided.

Member Jones stated that dogs jump and some can jump pretty high. She asked about the height of the proposed fence. Member Hulbert noted that it is 3 ½ feet high.

Member Jones asked about dogs that might get excited and easily jump over the edge and into the playground area. Ms. Faus stated that dog owners really need to stay close to their dogs, and that can be added to the signage as well. She noted that this will be a pilot, so issues will be addressed as they arise. If that is an ongoing issue, appropriate action will be taken to deal with it.

Member Jones asked how to assess whether this park is successful. Ms. Faus stated success is gauged by usage of the park, finding out whether neighbors are walking their dogs to the park and using it. City staff will have to be mindful whether owners are picking up after their animals. If not many people are utilizing the off-leash dog area, perhaps it is not needed or should be located somewhere else.

Member Jones asked staff to develop some type of objective measurement to determine how it is affecting parking, how much feces are being left, how many holes are dug into the hockey ground, how many complaints are being registered. At the end of the season, staff can then report back to the board. Ms. Faus responded that is a great suggestion. Park maintenance staff is there and often receive information from users. Neighborhood meetings might also be helpful.

Member Jones asked what staff member is responsible for overseeing this pilot. Ms. Faus stated she is responsible, though in the past it has been Animal Control.

Member Jones asked whether the park area is mowed in the summer. Ms. Faus stated the area is sand-based and does not need regular mowing; if it needs to be mowed, it will be. Ms. Kattreh stated she does not believe there is a need.

Member Peterson asked where the support is coming from for the off-leash dog park. Ms. Faus responded that Ms. Kattreh received several emails expressing support for additional off-leash areas.

Member Jones also noted that when she visited Strachauer Park, two residents stated their support for an off-leash park.

Member Peterson stated there was some thought for a separate area for smaller dogs. Ms. Faus stated this would be all dogs together. It is challenging to enforce a way to separate dogs, but staff trusts that dog owners will be mindful.

Member Deeds asked whether the Parks and Recreation staff is alerted about complaints to the Police Department and encouraged coordination between the two. Ms. Faus stated right now the communication is not coordinated, but staff will work on that.

Member Jones asked which department receives funding generated by the off-leash area permits. Ms. Faus stated the funds go to the Police Department.

Member Jones asked for a report on the cost of the project, specifically staff time and maintenance, so the Park Board can review it at the end of the year. She also suggested determining whether a percentage of the off-leash permit fee can be allocated to the Parks and Recreation budget.

Winnie Martin, 6012 Ewing Ave. So., expressed support for the dog park and also for the proposed park hours of 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. and added to keep in mind there are hockey players there during the winter until 10 or 11:00 p.m. and are sometimes louder. She noted there are two separate fees: a license fee for the pet and an off-leash fee. Ms. Martin continued that there are a number of residents using the park currently, and the park is heavily used by owners of non-licensed dogs who do not take care of the park. She believes this off-leash area will keep the park in better shape, as it will be populated by people following the regulations, and it will provide more of a neighborhood atmosphere. There are 10 to 12 residents there regularly who pick up dog feces and clean up the park. Ms. Martin stated there is a higher area of chain link that does go around the rink, to catch hockey pucks. She also noted that currently the city's license renewal information clearly states all dogs should clearly be under voice control and not jumping. Ms. Martin thanked the Board for considering the proposal.

Member Jones stated the resident raised a good point about Animal Control. She would like in the very beginning to have frequent visits by Animal Control to check for off-leash area tags and licenses. Just the presence of Animal Control would improve and help it get off to a good start.

Chair Steel commented she does not want the fees to go into the Parks budget. She expressed that 100 percent of the fees should be allocated towards the cost of items at the off-leash park or for enforcement. She is not sure they are getting their money's use in terms of enforcement.

Member Hulbert stated the park would be too close to homes. This came up two or three years ago at Creek Valley School Park. He expressed support for alternative uses for existing spaces, but those rinks get use in the summer. Member Hulbert stated that he coached youth soccer for years, and practices were held there. People also play cricket and football in there, and it is way too close to children and the jungle gym area. The field for soccer is used for young soccer players every weekend; the parking lot is small. He noted that he has been bitten twice by a dog, and that cannot be planned for.

Member Hulbert asked about a prior proposal in partnership with the City of Minneapolis. Ms. Kattreh stated another discussion was held with the cities of St. Louis Park and Minneapolis, and it sounded like Minneapolis was getting close to putting the property up for sale. She recently spoke with City Manager Scott Neal about this, and he is going to seek out information.

Member Hulbert stated the Golf Dome gets used five months out of the year and asked whether staff has considered clearing out under the woods. Ms. Kattreh confirmed that does not get used in the summer time. Member Hulbert encouraged staff to look at an alternative site at 40th and France.

Member Deeds stated this is a close-call decision, as Strachauer Park is a small space. However, he is willing to support a one-year experiment, on the condition that this is an experiment. If the data is gathered and it does not work, the off-leash area should go away.

Member Dan Peterson stated a better location would be a better idea. He would be happy to give it one-year trial basis, with data collected during the year.

Member Jones stated support for an objective method of tracking the success of the off-leash park, with particular focus on whether it works well in the neighborhood.

Member Jacobson stated she is pessimistic, and would prefer the idea of using the Golf Dome area in the summer, which would represent great dual usage.

Member Dan Peterson made a motion, seconded by Member Deeds, to approve the Strachauer Park hockey rink as the Off-Leash Area Pilot Recommendation for one year, for dogs of all sizes, with the understanding that data will be collected during the one year to determine the park's success.

Ayes: Members Deeds, Gieseke, Jacobson, Jones, Dan Peterson, Steel.

Nay: Hulbert.

Motion Carried.

VI.B. Parks and Recreation Department Mission Statement

Chair Steel made a motion, seconded by Member Dan Peterson, to remove the Mission Statement from the table, as it was tabled at the February Park Board meeting.

Ayes: Members Deeds, Gieseke, Hulbert, Jacobson, Jones, Dan Peterson, Steel

Motion Carried.

Member Jones thanked the working group for its efforts and asked that the members discuss some of the other recommendations for change.

Member Hulbert stated a preference for the phrase “parks, facilities and programs,” as it seems like a logical progression.

Member Jones expressed support for the phrase “creative leadership” rather than “creative management” because it is not the mission of the Board to manage and therefore prefers “leadership” as originally proposed because it fits a little bit more with what they do. She suggested if they are looking for a different word to consider maybe “strategic direction” or “creative direction” or “strategic leadership” instead of “creative management”. She added she is not really certain that they accomplish this through “creative leadership” she is just not sure that is part of their mission.

Member Deeds asked the board to consider what is being communicated to the staff. He expressed preference for the term “creative” because it says, to some degree, we should look beyond whatever the traditional is. “Innovative” is another option, but he prefers “creative”. Member Deeds added that, overall, he likes the language, with or without the changes, and stated it should help guide the board’s decision-making process and accomplish goals.

Chair Steel expressed support for the word “creative” because the board should be thinking “outside the box” for solutions.

Member Deeds stated this does require creative process because Edina is a fully built-out city. He encouraged keeping “creative” in the mission statement.

Member Jacobson agreed with using “leadership” rather than “management”.

Chair Steel clarified there seemed to be consensus on the change “parks, facilities and programs”.

Member Deeds made a motion, seconded by Member Jones, to approve the Parks and Recreation Department Mission Statement as follows: “We create parks, facilities and programs to foster a healthy, inclusive community. We accomplish this through creative leadership, collaborations, environmentally sustainable practices, and the responsible use of available resources”.

Member Gieseke noted that he likes the phrase either way, but there is a nice alliteration between “parks, programs” and “facilities and fostering”.

Chair Steel called for the vote on the motion as stated.

Ayes: Members Cella, Deeds, Gieseke, Hulbert, Jacobson, Jones, Dan Peterson, Steel
Motion Carried.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

VII.A. Council Updates

Ms. Kattreh asked for any questions on Council updates included in the packet. Member Deeds inquired about the Sports Dome, and Ms. Kattreh noted she will talk about that in staff comments.

VII.B. Veteran’s Memorial Committee, March 15, 2013 Minutes

No comments made.

VIII. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Steel stated the subcommittee on strategic planning will continue to meet. She and Member Cella did some brainstorming this past month, and they will continue to meet with Members Deeds and Hulbert and bring something forward soon.

Member Deeds noted this season points out the desperate need for playing fields around Edina for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and rugby. Because they are playing on weak grass fields, they will be lucky to get half a season in. The season opened on May 12th. He stated good quality turf fields are needed or the fields will just be torn up. He noted that in other cities with better fields, they are getting in longer seasons, so this could be a long-term problem for Edina.

Member Peterson stated water is becoming an increasingly interesting problem. He recalled a tour with the Freshwater Society at the end of Lake Minnetonka about two years ago. He pointed out an excellent report on Minnesota’s groundwater and whether current use is really sustainable is available at freshwater.org. Member Peterson noted that increasingly the City of Edina will have questions about water, and the Park Board will play a role in that.

Member Jones asked whether Chair Steel had been told a Park Board representative for Grandview Square is needed. Chair Steel noted that she received an email, and it stated those who served previously are encouraged to serve. Ms. Kattreh confirmed that a representative will be needed.

Member Jones reported that the Grandview Square plan includes a structure that is a city-community building, and other public space is also in the plan. She would like to ask the City Council what role they would like the Park Board to play in helping define what that space would look like or if they would like it to be put in the Park Board’s strategic plan process. Member Jones noted that the mission

of the next advisory group does not include defining the public piece, so that does become closer to the mission of the Park Board.

Ms. Kattreh stated she will get more feedback from the Council, though her current understanding is that a Park Board member will be on the advisory committee.

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Kattreh noted Donna Tilsner moved to the Senior Center on May 1, and a new Recreation Supervisor, Eric Boettcher, was hired from the City of Roseville. Mr. Boettcher will begin on May 20 and will specialize in athletics as well as some other programming. Ms. Kattreh noted that his background and experience will match well with Edina’s athletic needs.

Ms. Kattreh reported the Golf Dome construction officially started today, and the accessory building and old driving deck will soon be torn down. The community garden opening is next Monday, May 20, at 6:30 p.m. The Edina Aquatic Center is opening on June 8, and the golf courses and all athletic fields are finally open. Ms. Kattreh noted that the park maintenance team is working really hard, as the weather has put them about a month behind on everything. The Centennial Lakes farmers market will run June 13 through end of September, from 3 – 7 p.m. Finally, Ms. Kattreh noted that she will be making a report in June regarding the athletic field recommendation.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Steel made a motion, seconded by Member Deeds, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Ayes: Members Cella, Deeds, Gieseke, Hulbert, Jacobson, Jones, Dan Peterson, Steel

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.