

**MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EDINA PARK BOARD
HELD AT CITY HALL
May 12, 2015
7 p.m.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gieseke called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Answer roll call were Members Jacobson, Good, Jones, McCormick, Gieseke, Cella, Segreto, Strother

Absent: Members Steel and Greene

Absent: Student Members Chowdhury and Colwell

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Member Segreto made a motion, seconded by Member Cella, approving the meeting agenda.

Ayes: Jacobson, Good, Jones, McCormick, Gieseke, Cella, Segreto, Strother

Motion carried.

IV. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Member Cella made a motion, seconded by Member Good, approving the consent agenda as follows:

IV.A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Park Board Meeting of Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Ayes: Jacobson, Good, Jones, McCormick, Gieseke, Cella, Segreto, Strother

Motion carried.

V. COMMUNITY COMMENT

None

VI. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

VI.A. Staff Introduction – Amanda Holle, Recreation Supervisor

Ms. Kattreh introduced Amanda Holle.

Amanda Holle gave her background to the Park Board.

VI.B. Braemar City of Lakes Figure Skating Club and Edina Hockey Association

Susie Miller, Braemar Arena and Braemar Field General Manager, gave a presentation to the Park Board on the Memorandum of Understanding.

Member Jones stated there is no mention of a per player fee. Ms. Miller indicated that is included in the contract on an annual basis, and it has been in the works for the past two years and will continue to be in the works for both groups. They charge the \$20 user fee and is not a part of the understanding.

Member Jones thought that was something that they, as a board, were going to discuss a little further, considering that the player fee was instigated when the Hornet's Nest was built. She asked that be put on a future agenda for discussion, whether it is appropriate to be charging the skating organization for that. Ms. Miller stated the skating club is supportive of that and one of the reasons being is they have

other use in the facilities so both groups have different facility uses. At this point, everyone feels like they are getting a benefit.

Member Jones asked with the new ice, does the skating association get any of the ice time. Ms. Miller noted if the figure skating association wanted it, they could request it but have not had a desire for it.

Member Jones asked if the ice is all going toward the Hockey Association. Ms. Miller stated the Hockey Association committed to 40 hours a week in order for it to be approved but last year they bought 44 to 46 hours a week.

Member Jones asked as far as reporting, is the new ice rink going to be considered a part of Braemar Ice Arena Enterprise or is that going to be a different enterprise for financial bookkeeping. Ms. Miller stated the backyard rink is a part of the Braemar Arena Enterprise and Braemar Field and Dome are a separate enterprise.

Member Jones stated it doesn't look like the High School is part of this type of agreement and she wondered how the city handles scheduled ice for the High School. Ms. Miller stated the High School has always been scheduled after school and was not part of the initial discussion.

VI.C. Braemar Golf Course Master Plan

Joe Abood, Braemar Golf Course General Manager, gave a presentation to the Park Board.

Member Good asked if Mr. Abood could explain why the 27-hole course option drives no increase in operating revenue. Mr. Abood stated it will increase eventually, but it is a three-stage process.

Member Good stated he meant relative to the 18-hole course option why would it drive no increase in operating revenue. Mr. Abood stated what they have to look at is they did 55,000 rounds in 2014 which can be accommodated on an 18-hole golf course and they did not project out a huge increase in people coming back to the facility because there are other options out there. There are not a lot of new golfers out there so any round they would have to get would have to be stolen from different facilities around the area and other facilities are also updating their assets as well. It is a very tough market and only based on the fact that the amount of rounds they have now is similar to what would be on a 27-hole course.

Member Jacobson stated they were under the assumption that if they were going to close Fred Richards they would move the usage over to the nine-hole extra. Mr. Abood noted they will still have the nine-hole executive par three golf course and did increase the rounds over there. Between the Fred Richards and the existing nine executive holes, they did 30,000 rounds. They projected to bring half of those rounds over to Braemar.

Chair Gieseke stated that when they decided as a city to close down Fred Richards Golf Course, there was concern about having full access for everyone in trying to serve the full community. What issues would be foreseen if they decided to go with 18 holes? Will that limit them somehow in trying to serve youth, senior groups and everyone else? Mr. Abood thought they will be able to accommodate all of the golfers on an 18-hole property. They are improving the city's golf asset and making it better and more sustainable, going into the future.

Chair Gieseke asked if they were going too far with not enough capacity for the course. Mr. Abood did not think so, to get to capacity on an 18 and a nine-hole course they will need to get to 80,000 rounds so it is a long way away.

Member Good asked on the six options that were shown, was there a meaning behind the “best” word in the presentation. Mr. Abood stated when they say the best 18, they are going to take the entire property and hole 16 may not be the same hole 16 that it was before because they are going to use the entire golf course to make the best 18 holes that they can.

Member Cella stated they have a lot of golfers that like to play nine holes and they are going to an 18-hole course, will that still accommodate people who only want to play nine holes? Mr. Abood stated what they are seeing right now is those nine-hole rounds are on the 18-hole golf course.

Member Cella asked if they are going to be upgrading and making the 18-hole course better will they still be able to accommodate people who only want to play nine holes. Mr. Abood noted it’s a matter of programming.

Member Strother stated when looking at the 27-hole versus the 18-hole option, it does state that an 18-hole option would force staff to financially favor 18 holes over nine and they would likely lose most of the golfers. Mr. Abood indicated that’s one of the task force observations and he did not necessarily agree with that. He did not think they would lose those golfers. He thought it was just a matter of managing.

Member Jacobson asked who would use the four-hole practice course. Mr. Abood stated it would be used heavily by the High School and people who want a quick outing of golf. He could see that being used heavily but did not see a return on the investment as much and is more of an amenity for the constituents.

Member Jones stated she wanted to speak a little bit about the 18-hole course and make sure that it does not go into the Oak Savannah. She wondered if the rest of the Park Board has gone out to see exactly what it looks like. She indicated it is a gorgeous area that is natural and if they were to do option 4, they would be cutting a swath 60 feet wide and at least 500 yards, maybe more through it, which she was against. Mr. Abood stated it is going up into the hill and is a fantastically designed golf hole and would be a great golf hole but it is up to the Park Board and City Council whether to go up into that area.

Member Jones indicated she has walked up there and there is quite a bit of elevation change and felt this might be a challenge for elderly players and should be considered as not necessarily an improvement. She did not understand why that would make sense to add onto the golf course. Mr. Abood stated it’s a very good golf hole that would be designed, whether it is the best use of the property is another decision to make. He thought the golf hole itself would be very nice. Member Segreto noted from an environmental standpoint it would be a disaster.

Member Jones stated there are trails there and they need to look at this property, not just the golfers that could use the entire Braemar so this is changing the use of the park that will affect the neighborhood that is currently using it as a trail. On the needs assessment, the number one item residents want is additional trails. She was not sure where the course came into play on the needs assessment but it was not anywhere near as high. She would listen to what the residents would want and recommend that they do not increase the footprint of the golf course into that area.

Member Jacobson asked if there were plans to improve the trails in any of the options. Mr. Abood stated that's where the next step would be going to the Braemar Master Plan entire park area. Some trails were put into the plan but they are not that far designed out. That would need to be something that would be done in the future.

Member Segreto stated the staff recommendation is option 5 and she wondered if they were looking for the Park Board to make a motion supporting one of the options. Chair Gieseke thought what the City Council was looking for was to have the Park Board take a roll call vote stating opinions so the City Council can weigh those.

Member McCormick updated the Park Board on the financials on this project.

Member Segreto stated on the irrigation system, she noticed on the chart there was a long distance, up to 30 years, for useful life of the irrigation system. She wondered why an irrigation useful life would vary so much. Mr. Tom Swenson, Braemar Golf Course Maintenance Superintendent, stated that is just a matter of how long they want to try to stretch it out. If they shorten the amount of time, they will use less labor and if stretched towards 30 years they will continually be replacing irrigation parts.

Member McCormick stated the other thing she was going to mention was the increases they were assuming in the models. It is a one percent increase on the pricing side, which is pretty conservative but it does line up with what the National Golf Foundation suggested and the cost is actually increasing by two percent. In that model they should probably have them going up the same rate but at least it is consistent in both of the different models so the two can be compared pretty easily. Another thing she wanted to mention is they have not maintained this course and that is why they are at this stage. She looked at it as the 18-hole is allowing them to have some cash flow that they can put back into the course so they are not in the same situation 30 years from now.

Mr. Paul Presthus, member of the Braemar Task Force, gave his comments to the Park Board. He stated out of the six options he would suggest either number 1 or 4. Number 1 is the best 27-hole option and number 4 is the best 18-hole option. Either of these options would add tremendously to the golfing experience at Braemar and position them competitively to compete with anybody in the Metro and Regional areas. He noted he favored the 18-hole option over the 27-hole option because there is less risk. He felt there is more uncertainty with the 27-hole option and with proper management they can come close to satisfying the accessibility needs. He stated he would endorse the 18-hole option because of the financial concerns but they have two wonderful options to consider based on the work done by Richard Mandell.

Chair Gieseke asked what Mr. Presthus' opinions are on the four-hole practice loop. Mr. Presthus believed that the best plan is for the city to make a selection on which option they want, 18 or 27-hole first. Mr. Mandell has done some other options and discussed golfing and non-golfing options for that area. If they did not have the par three, he would say it is a great idea. They will not be able to get any revenue out of it and he thought it sounded quirky to him. It is worth considering but as an alternative to the four-hole, they have the opportunity to do some short game practice type things that can be welcomed to go with what is going to be a state of the art driving range and other things there and they have the ability on some of the other golf options such as a three-hole green configuration. They need to do some creative thinking while looking at the options. They can generate some revenue out of the non-golf course type amenities they will put on the course and everyone will benefit. He noted the four-hole is not a favorite of his but he is not dead set against it.

Member Good asked if Mr. Presthus would use the four-hole practice round. Mr. Presthus indicated he would probably not at this stage.

Member Good stated the flip side to that is if they put the four-hole loop in, the 18-hole course would be shorter, would that impact Mr. Presthus' view if it were a little shorter. Mr. Presthus stated that's a very good question, what every option they go with they will have a new set of tees on each hole, widened fairways, fewer if any, forced carries so they have to provide a challenging opportunity for golfers of all abilities and if they do the 18 as proposed, they can have a seven thousand yard from the tips and that is going to appeal to the younger, better golfers. It is nice to have the distance option and there are certain events that could be brought to the course with the longer distance.

Chair Gieseke wondered what the corporate activity and revenue generation would be from that. Mr. Abood indicated there is a lot of potential and it goes back to how they manage the rounds they presently have. They do not have a lot of opportunity there right now based on the way they have it programmed out and that would need to change. There is a lot of potential for corporate outings that do generate a lot more revenue than the daily fee golfers, which helps keep the greens fees down for the daily golfers.

Chair Gieseke asked if they were potentially losing out on that by choosing 18 over 27 holes. Mr. Abood did not think so. He thought they will still have to limit it to a certain number of days based on the league schedules they have so they do not really have an opportunity to do it if they keep the programming they have in place. They can change the programming in any scenario.

Member Jacobson asked what the pros and cons were to adding a four-hole loop in regards to corporate outings. Mr. Abood thought it helps with junior golf to have the different options. He did not think it would give them a better market advantage on any of the corporate outings. It is always good for junior golf to have more practice areas without a high cost to it.

Chair Gieseke stated it was his understanding with the economic downturn and the addition of so many alternative things for the youth to do in the last 10 years, would it be beneficial to have the four-hole loop to bring in non 18-hole youth to get an introduction into golf? Mr. Abood stated it will definitely draw people in. It will not be huge and Edina has a great junior golf program already; it is one of the largest in the state.

Ms. Pacy Erck, member of Braemar Task Force, gave her comments to the Park Board.

Chair Gieseke asked what option Ms. Erck would choose. Ms. Erck stated number 1 or number 4 would be her options. She stated the Oak Savannahs have not been taken care of and would be even more beautiful if they were taken care of better.

Mr. Hulbert, member of Braemar Task Force, gave his comments to the Park Board. He thought it was automatic they would be looking at a 27-hole rerouting coming into the review of this course but when the designs came back for the 18-hole course he thought it was really cool. He stated some of the things in the park should have been repaired years ago and now is the time to correct the issues. They should be striving to fill the tee sheet and should be hard to get on this course. If they do this, they need to go back to the way it was 20 years ago and have a resident patron card. He noted he was excited about option 5. He supported the closing of the Fred because he felt there was a give and take and this is the opportunity to get back. He thought the four-hole practice loop was a waste of parkland and money. He thought there were other things they could do with the land.

Member Jacobson wondered why Mr. Hulbert chose option 5 and not option 4. Mr. Hulbert stated it is a change of use in that hill and he did not think they needed to go into that hill to create a spectacular 18-hole routing. He did not believe the will from the public is there to do that either and he thought there were other uses that could be done in that area such as biking and walking and should not be left the way it is. Chair Gieseke agreed and thought the area is an underused gem in the city.

Mr. Bob Kojetin, resident, 5016 William Avenue, stated he did a lot of research by visiting a lot of courses in the city. He gave a history of how the Braemar Golf Course came about.

Chair Gieseke stated with Mr. Kojetin's special history with the city what option would he choose and why. Mr. Kojetin stated he would go with the 18-hole. Either option 4 or 5 are good ones. He thought if they built the 27-hole there is not that much difference in price and the city is not going to make the money to pay for it so the residents will need to pay for it. The driving range has always been the key to making money for the golf course and the regular golf course has never made that amount of money. If the driving range is improved, people from all over the Minneapolis area will come to it. They have to look at that as a revenue maker.

Member Good wondered if there was any directive they can take from the work that has been done on the Strategic Plan that would help them with this decision.

Member McCormick thought there was one clear direction, which was the enterprise facilities were supposed to pay for themselves, which was one of their key financial objectives.

Member Jacobson thought they need to invest in that site in general and she thought they needed to improve the walking trails.

Member McCormick stated other things she has been considering are they need a separate initiative on controlling the buckthorn and other invasive species with the city parks. They should have a maintenance plan.

Member Jones stated with respect to the strategic plan, one of the pieces of that would be that all of their parks would have a Master Plan. She thought this goes hand-in-hand with how they would use the entire park.

Member Good liked the framework that Mr. Presthus offered up for the Task Force which was golf, environmental, financial but as he thought about their Strategic Plan he would flip those around because he felt their charge was to think financial, environmental and golf and yet still have a golf course they are proud of as a community and better than what they have today. They have to answer to those first two items because that is where their strategy is driving them and yet still have the best golf course they can have for Braemar.

Chair Gieseke stated he would echo that and hoped as part of the discussion and design with all of the groups that they can strike a pretty neat balance between those three items and they are all important and he would hate to sacrifice a spectacular golf course if they do not have to. He did lean against going into the woods or harming any trees but if there is a real reason for it and they can replace them somewhere he might be open to that as well but he thought those three elements were the key.

Member Jacobson indicated she liked option 5 as part of the Strategic Plan would like to consider the woods land as one of many lands they are going to talk about across the city and address that separately and try to optimize the golf course to be as great as it can be on the land it currently is on.

Member Good preferred 18 over 27 holes and felt the financial aspect of it drives the city in that direction. He preferred option 5 over option 4 because he thought it was the most environmentally friendly.

Member Jones echoed everything just said and preferred option 5. She agreed with the ability to be financially prudent so they will have money to reinvest in their golf and to reinvest in the rest of the parkland so she would stick with an 18-hole golf course and would keep within the footprint of the current golf course. She would like to consider the year-round usage of that park so making sure they have the ability to have winter activity there that would fit other people is preferred. She would also recommend that once this piece gets settled, they do a Master Plan once the golf course is even designed because it is a puzzle and they need to figure out where all of the pieces need to go and what they may be.

Member McCormick stated one thing she would mention is the passion and the amount of work the Task Force has put in has been really outstanding and have really put all of their best work into this. She stated she would prefer option 5, 18-hole, because she felt it was the best decision financially and she also felt like they should be managing the woodlands area from an environmental perspective and not a golf perspective. She felt option 5 really improves the course.

Chair Gieseke stated his opinions were pretty well known and he preferred option 5 for all of the reasons previously stated. He would like to have a little more discussion on a pitch and putt.

Member Cella thought the financial favor is for option 5. She thought it was difficult to promote 27 holes. She thought they needed to have a Master Plan for Braemar from a park perspective.

Member Segreto stated an 18-hole option is the most financially responsible option to take. She was in favor of option 5 because she was really concerned about going into the hillside and would like the City Council to be very careful in looking at the options with the labels the golf consultant has been putting on the options. She would like the City Council to step up its role as being a steward of the land for future generations. Member Strother agreed that option 5 would be the best option for the park.

Ms. Kattreh thanked the Task Force for the hard work they have put into this the past year. She thanked all of the members that were not at the meeting as well.

VI.D. Park, Recreation and Trails Strategic Plan

Terry Minarik from Confluence, Jeff Bransford from Pros Consulting and Brad Aldrich

Mr. Minarik provided a presentation on the Strategic Plan.

Member Jacobson stated as reading through the entire report, she realized that they have a very narrow view as a park being only a park but then they start talking about the woods above Braemar and looking at the creek and they have a lot of land and it almost feels like they are getting so narrow that they are only looking at the parks but they have so much land in the city. Mr. Minarik noted in part of the document they have tried to identify some of those areas, the leftover woodland areas and the edges of the creek. They are not necessarily considered Edina parks but they are part of that overall system and how they can tie them together. He thought that could be looked at to determine how they can bring more of a focus to those types of things.

Member McCormick indicated there is a lot of activity in the topic of natural resource and sustainable parks and the resource really does not come on until 2017. She wondered if they have staff that can handle all of the prework up to that point or is there still a piece of this that still needs to determine how they resource. Ms. Kattreh agreed and stated they still have a little bit of work they need to do on the implementation years in the plan.

Member McCormick noted the other thing was on the priority projects in the strategic plan but it would be nice to somehow match it to the implementation plan and how the board can help support it. Chair Gieseke agreed with that.

Member Good stated he wanted to add to that and recommend this replace the key recommendations from the assessments.

Mr. Minarik reviewed the Goals and Strategies for Parks and Open Space and Trails with the board.

Member McCormick noted in regards to adding 15 miles of trails, they need to match into their funding piece and how that will get funded.

Member Jones felt this is a wonderful goal of the city but did not know how the Parks Department will be able to manage a goal that touches on transportation and public works to the extent it does and was a little uncomfortable with it being in the Park Strategic Plan when it maybe should be in a different plan because she was not sure it should be the parks money going towards creating this because if it is streets, it should not be a part of their budget. Ms. Kattreh did not know if it would come out of the Park Department's budget and she noted they have a great relationship with the both the Public Works and Engineering departments and anytime they are looking at reconstruction projects they are now looking at how they can connect and improve park trail systems throughout.

Mr. Minarik stated he could see priorities being to places like Braemar, if they created a trail system through there and the wooded areas, which would take priority status in the Park Strategic Master Plan.

Member Jones asked if the goal was in the plan that they would be putting paths within the parks. Mr. Minarik indicated they could clarify that if it was not.

Member McCormick noted there is an area on safety and she wondered where the data or general feedback comes from. Mr. Minarik thought it was more of a polling and getting feedback from the residents to find out where they felt safety issues were located at and if more lighting were needed, more policing and more open spaces were needed to maintain safety of the residents.

Member Jones stated she looked into the Edina Level of Service Standards chart and thought there was room for discussion and possible revision on that. Mr. Minarik stated the section on purpose, goals and strategies for recreational facilities deals specifically with recreational facilities and some of the enterprise facilities Edina has as well. He wondered if there were any questions on that item.

Member Jacobson noted it made her think about how they have gotten the different tiers of parks and she was not clear on what they should provide in the different levels of parks in the city. Mr. Minarik stated they could make a more clear definition of what defines the different types of parks in the city.

Member Jones stated she was interested in pursuing the fact that the document does not address fitness, health and wellness to the extent that Edina is lax. She would like to see some more tactics that discuss this because it is something that comes up in all of the surveys that they have ever done. She

would also like to see information on indoor pools and was also what residents had inquired about. Chair Gieseke stated he would like to see a little something on an Art Center as well.

Member Jones asked if people break out what a recreational community center is. Mr. Minarik did not think it gives a definition and encompasses a ton of different things so art can be part of that.

Mr. Minarik continued with his presentation on the Strategic Plan for the city.

The managers discussed the pros and cons of having a Natural Resource Manager in the city and the 12 priorities listed in the Strategic Master Plan.

Member Jones stated in regards to the loop trail, she would like to increase the trails in the city and make sure they have a sustainable way for maintaining the trails they have and have a plan for that. She would like to also have a plan for increasing the trails within the parks. Mr. Minarik stated the trail plan listed in the Master Plan is trying to figure out how they can connect the trail system in the city to make it more accessible. He thought that was part of the initiative to create a trail master plan and begin to really identify that.

Member Good stated for him the purpose of a strategy is to allow an organization to make choices and a good test of that is how it allows them to say no to something and yes to something else. How does it allow them to prioritize?

Ms. Kattreh felt like there is a significant amount of direction in the document. There are going to be a lot of areas open for conversation and areas that will need long term planning and support from the board and City Council for funding. In terms of actually going through, the document and prioritizing what they are going to do first, second or third, she has not had the chance to do that yet. That is where she looks at how they are going to prioritize the implementation plan and look at some of those years.

Member Good stated as Ms. Kattreh looks through this plan in the next couple of weeks to ask herself if the rest of the document gives her enough of a framework to defend a priority.

Ms. Kattreh thought one other thing is as she looks at the document, there is a lot of work that will need to be accomplished with other departments, not just in the enterprise facility but in the Engineering, Communications, Public Works, and Park Maintenance departments as well. It will take a lot of coordination and work on their part to make sure they are coordinating work plans and budgets and will be a significant project moving forward.

Member Jones stated one of the things she was hoping to achieve with the strategic plan was that they would get more of a schedule or sustainable refunding of their parks programs. She was concerned about the financial sustainability and wanted to make sure they are working within their budget. Mr. Minarik stated they actually recommend business plans for ones that have not had business plans done.

Member Good indicated, on page 15 that he liked the fact that they have now embedded a vision and would like to offer that rather than being the vision of the strategic plan that it is the vision of the Edina Park & Recreation Department. The strategic plan does not need to have a vision but the department should have a vision. He also suggested striking the words "one of" and state that their vision is to be recognized as Minnesota's Premier Parks and Recreation and Trail System.

Chair Gieseke also wanted to add on page two when it lists the people listed to list Member Good also. Mr. Minarik indicated he will clarify those names with staff. The next steps will be to make revisions

suggested and bring back to the board on June 9 and make the presentation to move forward to the City Council.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS

VII.A. Council Updates

None

VIII. CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Gieseke stated they have determined as a leadership group that the August meeting might be best for the retreat they have planned. Member McCormick stated they are working on the agenda for that meeting and if the board has any ideas for it, please forward them.

Member Jones understood that they are working with a parallel process with Grandview and they were just at a meeting discussing the potential uses of Grandview. So many of their strategic initiatives could be met in that site or should be discussed with respect to that. She was hearing that there are proposals out there to move different facilities and they are still, as a board, not talking about that but it looks as if the City Council will be deciding this in a month or so. She was wondering if it was possible that they, as a group, ask City Council to include Parks Director Kattreh in the process of designing the public features of that space. Ms. Kattreh thought that the Park Board is going to be included in this process very soon. She noted she has been included in the Grandview discussions and it is her understanding that the project will be turned over to her department and the Park Board to help with that process.

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Kattreh gave her staff updates to the Park Board.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gieseke made a motion, seconded by Member Good, to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

Ayes: Jacobson, Good, Jones, McCormick, Gieseke, Cella, Segreto, Strother

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 p.m.