

**City of Cottage Grove
Parks, Recreation & Natural Resources Commission
April 9, 2007**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Commission was duly held at Cottage Grove City Hall, 7516 – 80th Street South, Cottage Grove, Minnesota, on the 9th day of April 2007.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Davy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Davy, Bill Haluzak, Keith Kleinsasser, Paul Poncin,
Bill Schumal, Ryan Simmers, Sheri Yaritz

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Zac Dockter, Ice Arena/Parks & Recreation Manager
Myron Bailey, City Councilmember

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2007, meeting. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

No comments.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Arbor Day Promotion

Dockter presented the commission with additional Arbor Day Information. He explained that the event will run rain or shine on April 28 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Highlands Park. There will be nursery and landscaping companies answering questions and selling miscellaneous items. The city will give away 100 three-foot Red Maple trees to the first 100 residents. The Parks Commission will have a booth to promote buckthorn removal and upcoming park improvements. The Commission booth will be combined with and run by the Recreation Department.

B. Ice Arena Expansion

Dockter presented an update on the ice arena expansion project. He stated that in February the city hired Kraus Anderson Corporation for construction manager services. Kraus Anderson has given a more accurate estimate of \$5.7 to \$5.8 million to complete the project, which allows the city to finalize financing and lease agreements. He explained that the project team consists of the City Administrator, Chief Building Official, Public Works Director, City Engineer, Councilmembers Myron Bailey and Pat Rice, Hockey Association representative Gary Sova and Darrin Reiter, and Zac Dockter. The project team is responsible for working with the school district to create a lease agreement for the term of our bond payments are. There is a verbal agreement between the city and the school district, but no official lease agreements have been signed. On April 2, the Hockey Association approved the parameters of the lease. Dockter explained that during soil testing it was discovered out that the soil is incompatible with an ice arena expansion so there will be an additional \$140,000.00 in soil corrective work. The engineers have recommended swapping soil from the excavation at Pine Tree Valley Park with soil from the Ice Arena. Dockter stated that the project timeline is currently what was proposed, and the project will commence when school is out of session. A question was asked if the soil from the ice arena would contaminate drainage at the park. Dockter responded that the soil at Pine Tree Valley is sandy soil, which is compatible with building. The arena soil is heavier and more compatible with the proposed parking lot and berm at the park.

C. Bylaw Approval

The Bylaws were approved. Dockter pointed out that bylaws are approved annually. He highlighted the attendance requirements, which state that if you have three unexcused absences from three consecutive regular meetings from the commission or four total meetings in any one year shall be deemed a resignation of a member. He reminded the Commission to call him if you cannot be present.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Archery Range Grant

Dockter presented the plans for the Archery Range Grant and informed the commission that he and Levitt have applied for a \$10,000 shooting range grant. He presented a current picture of the archery range, which is located off 80th Street at Pine Tree Valley Pond Park. Dockter explained that he is hoping to update the facility and offer archery programming. He stated that currently there is not have good access to this area, and the grant would improve the road be adding curbs, gutters, and parking stalls. Currently there are two 20-yard, one 30-yard, and one 40-yard stations for shooting, and the proposal would add two new stations by utilizing the existing slopes, for a total of six shooting stations. One of the new stations would be handicapped accessible, and one would have a six-foot high shooting stand on top of a six-foot high berm, which is representative of a typical deer stand. Both new stands are located in the woods with a clear shooting channel. The total cost of the project is approximately \$108,000, and 95 percent of the cost will be street reconstruction. The city is asking for the maximum grant amount of \$10,000.

Council has approved the grant application process. Davy asked if it is possible to add another channel through the woods to shoot three dimensional objects. Dockter responded that the city wants to keep shooting ranges clear because this is an 18-acre active park and even though there are many signs posted, there is a chance that people could be walking around. Dockter added this will hopefully increase the use of the archery range.

B. Adopt-A-Park Program

Dockter reported that out of 38 parks that can be adopted, 30 have been, which is a record for the city. The parks yet to be adopted are Hazen P. Moor, South Ideal Park, Foothill Park, Hidden Valley Pond, East Central Ravine, West Central Ravine, and the Cottage Grove Trailway Corridor. Mark Schneider, Recreational Program Assistant, coordinates this program, which requires each group to do a spring and fall clean-up. Groups are also encouraged to make suggestions on improving the parks. Dockter stated this is a great program that helps the city clean up the parks and offers community involvement. Davy suggested asking some of the athletic groups to help. Simmers asked if the Commission could sponsor Hazen P Moor Park. Dockter will try to coordinate this.

C. 2007 Trail Maintenance

Dockter informed the Commission of the 2007 Capital Improvements Program trail maintenance schedule. The trails along 80th Street from Jamaica Avenue to County Road 19 will be reconstructed. The trails within Kingston Park and access points to both Joliet Avenue and Jeffery Avenue will also be reconstructed after the Strawberry Fest in June. Dockter added that the city will also do some micro-surfacing, which was done last year along 80th Street between Jamaica and Hardwood Avenues and on Jamaica Avenue between 90th and 100th Streets. This year's micro-surfacing will be done from 70th Street and Meadow Grass Avenue to 80th Street and Joliet Avenue. Dockter explained that the city maintains the trail system at least every five years. Kleinsasser asked how far the new Pine Tree Valley trail will be from the lot. Dockter responded that it will be 10 to 12 feet from the lot. He then stated that the city will add heavy landscaping to create a buffer for the property owners that the trail will affect.

D. Municipal Pool Operation

Dockter explained that the Cottage Grove Municipal Pool will be open this summer beginning on June 8. The management agreement with the Southeast Area YMCA will automatically renew unless the contract is voided. The pool had a successful season last year with less of a financial loss. The Council is happy with the YMCA. Dockter agreed to bring pool usage numbers to the next Commission meeting.

E. Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Master Plan

Dockter presented the final design for the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. He stated that there was an open house for Cottage Grove residents to view the design, noting that there was a great turn out and most of the feedback from residents was positive. The residents expressed approval for a dog park. Dockter pointed out some of the

proposed additions to the park, including additional paved trails that would eventually connect to Kimbro Avenue, a lodging and day camp overlooking the lake, reconstruction of the current parking system, transforming the current shelter into an enclosed building, adding additional fishing opportunities, and a canoe launch. Dockter explained the north area will remain very passive in nature. He reinforced that the County is trying to create more passive opportunities as opposed to active opportunities. Poncin added that the resource center is on a 20-year plan. Dockter asked if the primary entrance will continue to be on the south end of the park. Poncin responded that the main entrance will be off County Road 19. Schumal stated that the residents on the south side expressed concern about being forced off their property. Poncin added that the county is interested in possibly purchasing their land but it would be at their will.

F. Hamlet Park Pond and Trail Reconstruction

Dockter gave an update on the progress of the Hamlet Park reconstruction project. He explained that this project was related to stormwater improvements, noting that flooding issues on Highway 61 was the impetus for the construction process and pond reconstruction. The project, as in Pine Tree Valley Park, will necessitate removal of park trees. Dockter explained that the city does attempt to save as many preferable trees as possible, removing mostly buckthorn, cottonwood, and sumac. Many residents have been upset with the amount of tree removal. The plan is to replant new trees to create a buffer. Dockter added that the outcome of the project will provide a big, beautiful pond the views from the neighboring lots will be improved. The main concern of residents has been the trails being torn up. The trails were closed on March 15 and the city plans to have them open June 1. The construction company's main focus is getting the pond completed. Dockter informed the commission that the existing north trail will remain as is and the rest of the trail will continue along the pond. The path will not be able to continue around the pond due to storm water restrictions and water flowage issues. To remedy this problem there is a plan to build a boardwalk this winter to cross the pond. The city is trying to maintain the two loop system, as that was a major concern expressed by residents in the area. Davy asked when the city may start the expanded ballfield project. Dockter stated that the City Administrator could better answer that question. Davy had suggestions for the expansion of the ballfields and the parking area. Dockter assured Davy that the city has some ideas for adding parking during the expansion.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

PLANS AND AMENDMENTS

None.

REPORTS

No comments.

PARK PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION MATERIALS

No comments.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Bailey reported that the city has sent out for bid the round-about project on Jamaica. The city will fund revitalization of the Atkinson Cemetery by adding parking, a wrought iron fence and an arch. Bailey stated that the Council approved a 39-lot development called The Preserve at Cottage Grove, which will be located in the East Ravine. The Council also approved S&C Bank, which will be located in Almar Village. Bailey stated that the Strawberry Fest has had great support from businesses and volunteers, noting that if anyone is interested in helping out, they can check the city's website. He then added that the City Council put together an official process to select members for the different commissions.

STAFF COMMENTS

Dockter shared a book he is reading called The Last Child in the Woods, which talks about the divide between youth and the outdoors. It expresses concern that children today have obesity, attention disorders, and depression issues and how some of that can be attributed to the lack of outdoor activities. Dockter is recommending this book to the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.