

**City of Cottage Grove
Parks, Recreation & Natural Resources Commission
March 12, 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 12th day of March 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
John M. Burbank, Senior Planner

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion was made by poncin and seconded by Haluzak to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2007, meeting. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

None.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Pine Tree Valley Park Trailhead Design

Burbank presented the final design for Pine Tree Valley installation. He stated that the information from the neighborhood meetings have gone to City Council for review. Burbank explained the revisions to the plan. One revision is the proposed parking lot along 80th Street. He noted that the park will have a scenic overlook with an information kiosk containing surface water protection information and educational materials. Burbank then stated that the project funding would come from the storm water fund, park trust fund, grants from the water shed district, and the public landscape initiative fund. Burbank

discussed the trailway that is currently designed as a loop system. A question was asked if there would be any benches along the pond. Burbank responded yes. Dockter commented the trail will be going downward so users will be able to see everything clearly from the overlook. A question was asked about the number of parking spots. Dockter replied there would be 12 spaces with a handicap space. Mike Wise, 8542 – 75th Street South, stated he was at the meeting about a year ago and asked if this is the final phase on the park between 80th Street and Indian Boulevard. He also wanted to comment that the trail is really great. He uses the trail regularly and sees many people from the community using it. Davy agreed. Dale Brown, 7789 Irish Avenue, expressed his concern regarding storm sewer water in his back yard. Davy stated they will only be inspecting the sewer in Brown's backyard at this point. Brown asked if they should continue to mow along the path. Davy pointed out this violates the cities public encroachment policy. Dockter explained that these areas will be treated differently in terms of how vegetation is managed. Brown responded that a separate area by his house is only being mowed twice a year. Dockter stated that this is typical because the area is considered an open space and not an active park. Brown explained the need to keep these areas mowed for bug control. Dockter replied that there are pros and cons to both sides. Brown asked what are the open space signs. Dockter responded that they are used to identify property lines. Sharon Jacobson, 7797 Irish Avenue South, asked if there will be landscaping at Pine Tree Valley Park and if the city plans to remove more trees. Dockter replied there are funds allocated for landscaping and to replace trees. Jacobson then asked if there are any plans for landscaping on the upper part of figure eight, as currently it is prairie grass and weeds. Dockter pointed out that it was too tight for a loop trail so the current plan is to plant trees along this trail. Jacobson asked if a drainage pipe will remain. Dockter replied yes. A question was asked if the parking lot location was chosen to benefit the city's access to the sewer. Dockter responded no, the city chose the area to connect the trail system together. He added that the city will try to maintain a 3-½ to 4-foot level of water in the pond. Jacobson asked about the sewer that runs under the suggested area and the concern regarding planting trees. Dockter stated he was not informed about the sewer but noted that he would be working with the engineer. Davy requested that the residents confirm any changes they would like to see brought to the City Council and he would forward them.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Park Dedication Fees

Burbank reported the need for money to do current projects, noting that the city collects park dedication fees in lieu of land dedication from developers of new subdivisions. He explained that the state's statutes require that park dedication cannot be arbitrary; they must be linked to land development costs. Annually, the city compares the fees of other communities as well as the cost of land sales. By state statute the city can require up to 10 percent of a particular subdivision as park dedication through the public process. Cottage Grove is currently at \$4,000 per unit. Burbank recommended increasing the park dedication fees to \$4,200 per unit for 2007.

Yaritz made a motion to increase the park dedication fee to \$4,200 per unit. Davy seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Public Open Space Encroachments – Phase II

Dockter reported that a letter to residents regarding open space and encroachment issues has been sent. The Pine Tree Valley area was targeted last year because the city needed to survey the property for the trail. He explained that the city is installing property identification posts, which will be a helpful tool in managing encroachment issues. Davy pointed out new developments are required to install the boundary markers. Wise asked if he should mow his grass to the post and expressed concerned about the city cleaning out a piece of open space near his property. Dockter replied the informal policy by the City regarding park access states residents can maintain this area if they want to. Wise says he would clean it out if the city wants. Dockter states he is familiar with the area and will take a look at things this summer.

C. Arbor Day Promotion

Dockter reported on the second annual Arbor Day event, which will take place at the newly renovated Highlands Park. This will allow the city to showcase the restoration work that was done. There will be several nurseries and landscaping companies available to answer questions related to lawn care, flower maintenance, mosquito control, and tree care. There will be informational booths on buckthorn, upcoming park improvements, and other topics. This is a rain or shine event. The first 100 Cottage Grove residents receive a three-foot tall maple tree.

D. Annual Meeting

The Commission reviewed the bylaws. There will be a second review next month, after which they will be adopted. Davy was elected Chair. Poncin was elected Vice Chair.

PRESENTATIONS

A. Park and Open Space Presentation – 2007

Dockter gave an overview of the Cottage Grove park system. He stated that the planning vision of the system is to be accessible, aesthetical, historically sensitive, diversified, have uniformity of facilities, and a design that promotes property value enhancements. He explained what constitutes a park, recreation, and natural resource. He went into detail regarding the extensive trail system that connects our community. Dockter presented examples by year of improvements and renovations at local city parks, open spaces, trail systems, public facilities, and water features. He gave an update on the funding sources, which include park trust funds, general funding, donations, and grants. He also discussed the public landscapes initiative and future plans for the program. A question was asked why Camel's Hump is not on the schedule for 2007. Burbank responded that the project has been postponed due to the decline in the housing market. A question was asked if landscaping on the roundabout would continue along 70th Street. Dockter responded that the current planting projects are along Hillside Trail and on the roundabout. A resident asked if the new trail system would be patrolled. Davy responded that the trail system is patrolled by ATV as well as squad cars.

PLANS AND AMENDMENTS

A. Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee – Park and Open Space Land Use

Burbank reported that a steering committee to update the city's comprehensive plan was established that consists of volunteers from the City's commissions. He stated that the steering committee will be responsible for making recommendations regarding future use of land to the City Council. One component of these recommendations will be parks and open space. He pointed out that currently the only designated park and open space land is located in the East Ravine plans. The steering committee will identify new areas and designate park, open space, and trail systems making them components of the land use plan.

REPORTS

No comments.

PARK PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION MATERIALS

None

COMMISSION COMMENTS

The City Council approved the preliminary plat for the Ryland development off of Jamaica Avenue, which will consist of 39 lots with railway connections as well parkland dedication.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

None.

STAFF COMMENTS

A. Park High School Track and Field Improvements

There is a detailed memo on the Park High track improvements included. On March 29, there will be an open house for the Ravine Parkway master planning process at City Hall, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Yaritz and seconded by Poncin to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.