

**City of Cottage Grove  
Parks, Recreation & Natural Resources Commission  
October 9, 2006**

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 October, 2006.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Zac Dockter, Ice Arena/Parks & Recreation Manager  
John Burbank, Senior Planner  
Karla Bigham, City Councilmember

**Notice of Vacancy:**

Davy reported that there is one vacant seat on the Commission and two vacant youth seats that can be filled by high school age students; applications for these positions can be found on-line or at City Hall.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Motion to approve the agenda by Poncin, seconded by Kleinsasser. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Motion to approve the minutes by Simmers, seconded by Poncin. Motion carried.

**OPEN FORUM**

None.

**PRESENTATIONS**

- A. **Ballot Questions to Preserve Water Quality, Woodlands and Natural Areas**  
Mark Huganen made a presentation on the Washington County bond referendum, which asks voters for \$20 million dollars to be used to acquire and develop future park land and natural resource areas. Huganen discussed how Washington County residents have long appreciated and been attracted by a wealth of park lands, wet lands, wood lands, lakes,

rivers, streams and other natural areas. He also discussed how the everyday efforts to conserve these areas are becoming more difficult and more expensive. He asked that the Parks Commission and Cottage Grove residents support the referendum on November 7 for additional property taxes to fund a program to protect drinking water sources; improve the water quality of the lakes, rivers, and streams; and preserve natural areas throughout the community. Councilmember Bigham expressed her support of this bond referendum, stating that it is a small price to pay for these important lands and natural resources.

**B. Ice Arena Presentation**

Dockter made a brief presentation on the potential expansion of the Cottage Grove Ice Arena. He updated the Commission on the planning process to date, reviewed some conceptual designs of the expanded ice facility, and discussed the necessary future steps to make this building a reality.

**OLD BUSINESS/PRESENTATIONS**

**A. Park Systems Strategic Planning Meeting Agenda**

Dockter reviewed an outline of a meeting that will be held at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park. Key staff members will review the Parks system as a whole and create a vision for our Parks System as we step into the East Ravine planning process. This strategic planning meeting is an opportunity for staff to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current park system and how those desires or visions for an improved park system will be transformed now and in the future. The discussions will range from broad goals, visions, and missions to detailed goals such as minimum maintenance standards for our active parks, trails, and open space.

**B. Adopt A Park Update**

Dockter reported that the Adopt a Park program continues to be a great success. The City increased its number of volunteers this year and most parks have an adoptive group associated with it. He explained how important these groups are to the community by assuring that each park gets a spring and fall cleanup, which saves the city time and money.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Public Landscapes initiative**

Dockter reviewed the Public Landscapes Initiative document, which was originally titled the Tree Mitigation Program. He explained that the Public Landscapes Initiative Program is an effort to restore, beautify, and expand the urban forests of Cottage Grove. The program will see approximately 100 to 250 trees planted per year in highly visible corridors (streets, business, etc.), community parks, trails, and open spaces. The funds for this program are derived from development funds that are dedicated when construction processes result in the removal of trees over six inches in diameter. All business or housing development projects are required to provide a tree inventory of the land and must preserve, replant, or dedicate funds to the City for replanting of those trees lost. The City has also recently approved \$60,000 per year to be dedicated from the general fund to assure this program continues to sustain the financial support necessary if/when the development funds run dry.

**B. 2007-2011 CIP**

Dockter and Burbank reviewed the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), highlighting some of the projects that would be taking place in the next five to seven years. They explained to the commission that although some of the items discussed at Commission meetings don't necessarily make it into the budget every year, projects do typically get slated somewhere in the CIP. Dockter explained that the CIP is the foundation for each year's budget. Poncin asked if projects could be moved up if another project could not be completed in the year it is scheduled. Dockter replied that particularly with park trust funds it is possible. There is no established budget for the park trust fund dollars, so the CIP is used as an operating tool to manage those funds. General fund money is not as flexible in those situations.

**PLANS AND AMENDMENTS**

**A. Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Plan Amendment**

Burbank reported that Washington County is reviewing the Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park to create a master plan for that park. The County is asking for local input towards that planning process. Currently, Burbank and Dockter are serving on the planning task force and would also like to see a Parks Commissioner serve as well.

**REPORTS**

None.

**PARK PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION MATERIALS**

None.

**COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Yaritz mentioned that the Cottage Grove Athletic Association Baseball Division is interested in purchasing and installing lights at Woodridge and Hamlet baseball fields and would like to discuss this proposal with the City. Dockter replied that he will contact the association. The process will be to first discuss the financial implications of the project, and then hold a neighborhood meeting to receive input from the residents in those areas on the proposal.

Poncin also mentioned that he's getting many positive comments about the park development at Highlands Park and people seem to appreciate the picnic tables, benches, and trails being put in that area.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Bigham updated the Commission on the current levy situation and how it affects the current 2007 budget, and briefly reviewed some of the parks projects proposed in 2007. She also mentioned that there is a request for volunteers for the Cottage Grove Regional Park Master Plan Task Force.

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

Burbank reported that the City Council recently approved staff to enter into a purchase agreement for land acquisition by Hazen P. Mooer Park, which is currently the City's smallest park. He also mentioned that the photo contest is in full swing.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Poncin to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Haluzak. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.