

PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION MINUTES

June 27, 2016

The regular meeting of the Baxter Parks and Trails Commission was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jim Kalkofen, Commissioner Mari Holderness, Melissa Barrick, Gail Brecht and Council Liaison Quinn Nystrom

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ken Hasskamp

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development (CD) Director Josh Doty and Planner Matthew Gindele

OTHERS PRESENT: None

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION by Commissioner Brecht, seconded by Commissioner Holderness to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 23, 2016 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Potential City Park Property on Baxter Lake Across from City Hall

CD Director Doty indicated that he had received a call from a Baxter resident that would like to donate land to the City or see if the City was interested in making a small park for city staff use as a lunch break area. The owner doesn't appear to want to place any restrictions on the vacant land. CD Director Doty stated that he would like the Commissions input on if they would be interested in the land for a future park. Commissioner Barrick asked if the Council is still considering moving down towards the Public Works Facility. Council Liaison Nystrom and CD Director Doty indicated that the current Council is not talking about relocating at this time, rather they are fixing issues with the current location. CD Director Doty stated that with acquiring land there is cost, such as taxes and potential development costs. Chair Kalkofen asked about the slope of the land. CD Director Doty indicated there is a gradual slope towards the water. Commissioner Barrick asked how much cost there is in holding on to this property. CD Director Doty stated that any assessments would have to be paid, up-keep of the land-mowing and tree removal if needed and loss of taxes, he did not think there was a lot of cost but there would be some. Chair Kalkofen asked how big the lake is; CD Director Doty stated roughly 16 acres. Commissioner Holderness thought that it could be a nice little park. The Commission discussed several different options such as a dog park, passive park, launching of canoes etc.... The Commission discussed that this lake doesn't have public access anywhere that they were aware of; this could be a public access area.

Motion by Commissioner Barrick, seconded by Commissioner Brecht to request the City Council approve the proposed vacant land donation on Baxter Lake (PID #020114300F00009) for future City park land. Motion carried unanimously.

Requested Park Improvements

Planner Gindele provided a memo in the packet that listed seven different requests that are not currently in the Park Implementation Plan/Capital Improvement Plan. He went through each request with the Commission including all supporting documentation from residents that had submitted written requests. Planner Gindele stated that staff is looking for conversation regarding these items to see which items should be considered and researched.

Chair Kalkofen stated that they will review each item in order:

1. Dog Park-Commissioner Brecht stated that she had received requests for a dog park in Baxter. Preferably an urban park, the residents that need and would use this park are those with small yards or apartment renters. She thought that the land across from Southdale Park would be a nice place for a dog park, the former water treatment land. Chair Kalkofen asked how big that land is, CD Director Doty

stated roughly 4.5 acres with roughly 2 acres being highland/dry land. Commissioner Holderness agreed that a dog park would be a nice feature in Baxter. Commissioner Brecht stated that she wasn't sure what it would cost to start up a park, most likely fencing/gates, water and a baggy station. Council Liaison Nystrom stated that she remembered Brainerd receiving roughly \$30,000.00 for startup of the dog park. CD Director Doty stated that being it is on Rush Lake the land coverage would have to be taken into consideration to make sure the ground coverage is preserved. Commissioner Brecht noted that there was a good distance from the land to the next neighbor. Chair Kalkofen asked about parking, Commissioner Brecht indicated the parking at Southdale Park would be suitable.

Chair Kalkofen asked what staff is looking for. Planner Gindele indicated staff is looking to see if the Commission would like to add this to the implementation plan. Chair Kalkofen stated that he would like staff to research the cost associated with bringing a dog park forward. Planner Gindele stated that this would move staff onto the next item.

2. Off Leash Park-CD Director Doty stated that he would like to inform the Commission of a part of the regulations that allow for dogs to be off the leash if their owners have them trained by verbal commands, which is not mentioned in the letter requesting an area for training hunting dogs. He further stated that it would be up to the police officer to determine if the dog is trained properly or not should there be a complaint called in. Chair Kalkofen indicated that there are several areas around town where dogs can be trained without a leash. CD Director Doty stated that they will bring back additional information regarding a dog park.

Commissioner Brecht asked if there were any additional park fees coming in with some of the new developments. CD Director Doty stated that he thought that the new projects were bringing in roughly \$50,000.00.

3. Fitness Park Equipment-Planner Gindele stated that this is not a request for a new park, but the possibility of adding some equipment to an existing park. He stated that Northland Arboretum recently put some equipment in on a trail. Staff has not heard how much use the equipment gets at this point. CD Director Doty stated that he served on a board with the Arboretum and there was a lot that went into getting grants for the equipment and it was very time consuming. He further expanded on the additional equipment that is proposed and the fitness trainer that was used to help them place the equipment. Commissioner Brecht asked if Essentia Health paid for some of the equipment. CD Director Doty stated that he was not sure how the grants/funding went forward as he was not involved in that portion of the meetings.

CD Director Doty stated that previously this Commission had conversation about installing signs and a few pieces of equipment on the FitQuest woodchip trail; however, the portion that is not in Baxter would require additional work with other non-city entities. He also reminded the Commission of the previous meeting that there was a letter received requesting a single-multi-use piece of equipment at Riverwood Park. Commissioner Holderness stated that she has been in favor of this type of trail for some time. She expressed the need for the equipment without having to pay to use it, being the Arboretum does have a fee. The Commission asked that staff call the Arboretum to see what their use is of the equipment.

4. Splash Pad-CD Director Doty stated that this was requested a while ago by a resident. The cost of a splash pad can be large. Commissioner Holderness said that she would like to see it added to a wish list of future improvements beyond the scope of the five year CIP. Commissioner Barrick stated that other communities are doing fundraiser activities because they are very expensive.

5, 6, 7. Skate Park/Softball Park Complex/Nature Trail-The Commission agreed that these items should go on a

“wish list”. Commissioner Brecht recalled the Brainerd skate park was taken down. Council Liaison Nystrom stated that she has heard parents talk about the teenagers needing something to do in the parks, as the parks are geared more for younger children or athletics.

Commissioner Brecht stated that these items should be placed in the CIP plan with a new category called “when funds are available” or “as money allows”. CD Director Doty indicated that these items will be looked at when the next revision to the CIP plan would take place.

Rotary Centennial Project

CD Director Doty stated that in the packet there is a project information submission for a partnership with the Rotary Club. He further stated that the Rotary is going to present to the Council in July and being there were parks mentioned he wanted to make the Commission aware of the potential partnership. The Commission discussed different projects that the Rotary could assist with, the dog park, the pedestrian bridge over 371, basketball courts or hockey warming houses. CD Director Doty stated he will keep the Commission posted.

Draft 5 Year CIP

CD Director Doty stated that there wasn't much to change on the CIP unless there is something that the Commission would like to add, it could stay as is at this point. Commissioner Barrick stated that she would like to see something added to Whipple Beach to keep the sand from blowing up on the playground and grass area. CD Director Doty stated he witnessed the wind this weekend blowing the sand around and he would have to look into what type of plants would help keep the sand on the beach. He also stated that it would have to be added to the CIP as it was an additional cost. CD Director Doty stated there could be additional funding sources available, such as grants.

Commissioner Barrack stated that she has been researching Legacy and MN Greater Good grant funding. Chair Kalkofen asked if there were specific items these grants were looking for. Commissioner Barrack stated that the grants seemed open to different ideas, the request needed to be submitted by April 2016, therefore the next time to apply would be April 2017. Chair Kalkofen asked that this item stay on the radar for next year.

Oakwood Trail Relocation

WSB Trail Memo

Planner Gindele referenced the memo in the packet and reviewed the proposed location for the crossing location on Oakwood Drive and Clearwater Road. He explained that the Cities concern was the blind crossing and thus the reason for the study. The Council approved the suggested crossing locations in this memo at their last meeting. CD Director Doty recapped the previous locations for the crossing.

Second Meeting with Camp Vanasek

Planner Gindele will set this meeting up and discuss the new proposed crossing location.

OK Pavilion Grand Opening/Music Event-Planning

CD Director Doty stated that all though staff hasn't contacted all of the locations Chair Kalkofen suggested, they have placed the grand opening in the June city newsletter, made contact with WJYJ Radio station to have announcements made, the Dispatch has been notified and the Baxter Police Facebook page is being looked at for a post.

Council Liaison Nystrom gave a brief update regarding the Mayor speaking, musicians and Commission being present for the ribbon cutting ceremony. CD Director Doty stated that hot dogs and refreshments will be provided. Council Liaison Nystrom indicated that the Council is excited and looking forward to the grand opening.

Construction Updates

OK Pavilion

Chair Kalkofen stated that he drove by and is concerned that the pavilion will not be ready for the grand opening; he indicated that there is still a lot of work to be done. CD Director Doty confirmed that there were more challenges with the project than foreseen, which is the reason for the cushion when working on a project like this. The Commission discussed the completion date and the concerns regarding it being completed.

Whipple Beach ADA Observation Deck

CD Director Doty stated that this project is completed and being constantly used.

Other Business

Chair Kalkofen asked for a remaining balance in the park dedication fund. CD Director Doty stated he will get that balance for the next meeting from the Finance Department.

The next scheduled meeting is July 25, 2016 at 4:00 pm.

Adjournment

MOTION by Commissioner Brecht, seconded by Commissioner Barrick to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Jim Kalkofen

Shanna Newman, CD Administrative Assistant