

PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION MINUTES
October 28, 2013

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jim Kalkofen, Commissioners Gail Brecht, Lori Thramer, Mari Holderness, Ken Hasskamp and Council Liaison Jim Klein.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Gordon Heitke and Community Development Director Josh Doty

OTHERS PRESENT: None

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION by Commissioner Thramer, seconded by Commissioner Hasskamp to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 23, 2013 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Riverview Park Access

Chair Kalkofen asked staff if there was an update regarding the gate situation. Administrator Heitke stated that the Council did have extensive conversation regarding the gate. Council has asked staff to put some costs estimates together for a trail to the picnic table/benches, a trail that loops back to the opening of the park or a flip down gate/posts instead of the gate. The Council is not looking at the option of paving a parking area at this time. Chair Kalkofen asked if signage was discussed, it was. The next step is to get these cost options presented to the Council.

Park Pavilion Cost Estimates

Administrator Heitke stated that the Council was pleased to hear this commission is discussing this type of a project. There is still a need to continue looking at what size and materials will be, then a more specific motion can be made to the City Council.

Council Liaison Klein stated he was reconsidering the kitchen being installed in the pavilion at Whipple Beach Recreational Park. He stated that it might keep people from going to the beach if the pavilion is rented out all day and there are an additional 75 people hanging around at the beach. It was asked if a partial rental would be better than all day rental. Administrator Heitke stated that currently all pavilions are a daily rental and administratively it would be harder to track and maintain half day rentals so it will need to stay a daily rental. Chair Kalkofen didn't see how the pavilion would prevent people from using the beach area.

The Commission discussed the rentals at the other facilities and who was responsible for the clean-up of the facilities. Administrator Heitke noted that he had included the park rental form in the packet, there is language in there regarding the clean-up of the kitchen/pavilion area. However, if it is not left in the same manner, then the Parks Department does end up cleaning the pavilion.

Chair Kalkofen asked if there is signage that indicates if the pavilion is rented. Administrator Heitke was not sure if there is specific signage indicating that the pavilion is rented.

Inclusive Playground Equipment

Administrator Heitke indicated that 3-4 months ago Shane's Inspiration contacted him and they were in the process of designing the equipment. He was then informed that Marta McClanahan was sent a design and she did not like the design and it went back for a re-design. Then an email was received that the designer was no longer going to be with Shane's Inspiration and that someone else would be handling the design. To date, he hasn't heard anything else. Chair Kalkofen asked that the Commission be informed of any new information.

Disc Golf Proposal

Administrator Heitke stated that the Council has learned this is a bigger project than originally thought. Staff has been working with the proposer regarding the design, construction and maintenance costs. Council Liaison Klein stated that these costs were supposed to be available in September. Administrator Heitke stated that staff just recently had a meeting with the proposer and is working on this project as time allows.

Discussion of Parks and Trails Component of Comprehensive Plan Update

Administrator Heitke expressed concern over getting enough information for the comprehensive plan update. He indicated that the past has been rough without enough staff to focus on the parks portion of the plan. He asked how the Commission would like to proceed. He passed out Stillwater and Ramsey park plans from those cities comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Holderness stated that the Commission should look at these and try not to reinvent the wheel. Administrator Heitke indicated that the Stillwater Park Plan was a close fit to what Baxter is looking for in a parks plan. The Commission and Administrator Heitke reviewed the Stillwater information and found that it was a good template.

Administrator Heitke talked about how the Commission could identify park classifications, future parks/trails and finishing parks/trails and how to proceed with staff help. He asked if the Commission would like to continue marking up plans and have staff pull some goal and policy information for review at the next meeting.

CD Director Doty handed out a land use map that the consultant prepared. Administrator Heitke suggested the Commission review the map and determine if the existing parks are in good locations and if there is a need for additional parks in other parts of the city.

The Commission held a conversation regarding a small park area north of Clearwater Rd. on Atwater Rd. and Jewelwood Dr. Council Liaison Klein indicated that in the past, residents have asked for that park land to be developed in this area.

Chair Kalkofen asked if the southwest side of town has ever been researched for a park. He told the Commission that the late John Sullivan told him that southwest Baxter should be looked at for a park before the land is all development and a park is no longer possible. Administrator Heitke stated that the comprehensive plan may provide that situation and in turn then the park option would be brought back to this Commission. Administrator Heitke stated that there is a ton of land sitting around Mississippi Overlook Park and people feel that more of that land should be purchased to keep the resource available; once it's gone it will not come back. The majority of the land around the park is owned by Potlatch and it is up to them to determine what they want to do with their property.

Chair Kalkofen stated that this Commission needs to inform the Long Range Planning Commission was the vision was for this Commission. Some should be specific and others don't need to be overly specific, his example was having a trail or path from east to west on Highway 371.

The Commission discussed the trail link from Crow Wing State Park to the 371 Mississippi River Bridge. Administrator Heitke indicated that he had asked for a map over a month ago from the DNR and received it today. CD Director Doty handed out a copy of the map. The anticipation is to start in the spring. The Commission was very impressed with the map. The map showed the trail going from Crow Wing State Park to Highway 371. This is a paved trail that is being proposed.

Council Liaison Klein suggested that a motion be made to have staff engage with MnDot if the Commission was serious about wanting a trail connection over/on Highway 371. He had started to work with a lady from the MnDot St. Cloud office and was shot down by City Council. The Commission agreed that this is an item that would need further discussion and asked how to proceed. Administrator Heitke mentioned a possible study might need to be done. He agreed that a crossing is needed.

The Commission discussed the joint powers agreement regarding the Paul Bunyan Trail and the possibility of allowing the snowmobiles access on the trail. This will be a future agenda item for discussion and ultimately Council approval. The Commission discussed the volume of people that this new trail might bring to the area.

Chair Kalkofen asked if the Chamber is involved in promoting this new trail. Administrator Heitke indicated that there was some conversation regarding trails.

The Commission discussed the following areas in need of review for trails:

1. Excelsior Rd. to Fairview Dr. was a trail connection that Council Liaison Klein mentioned. (Council Liaison Klein clarified that he meant a trail for Inglewood Dr. to Fairview Rd. later in the minutes).
2. Chair Kalkofen suggested that trails should be looked at near/on the former golf course property being there is a possibility of senior housing going there too.
3. Cypress Dr. is another area that was suggested.
4. Oakwood Dr. and a trail leading to Whipple Beach was an area that was suggested and the Commission looked at different ways to make those connections.
5. Administrator Heitke suggested possibly have the Crow Wing County Land Commissioner stop by and discuss the possibility of using county land.
6. Johler Rd. was an area of discussion.
7. Council Liaison Klein suggested the former water treatment plant location as a potential park.
8. The Commission and Administrator Heitke discussed the wood chip trail behind Fitquest and getting it in shape prior to promoting that trail area.

The Commission discussed the need for trails to be connected to the commercial districts and where the connections could be made. There is no obvious trail connection from the Paul Bunyan trail and the business districts.

The Commission discussed that the plan should identify a trail crossing with a strong recommendation that something needs to happen. The commission discussed the concept of a bridge vs. a tunnel. The commission agreed that a study would be needed to determine the best option.

Staff stated that there a number of things for staff to research and bring back to the commission at the next meeting. Staff will also plan to draft some goals and policies for you to review. The next meeting may be in the conference room with the GIS system running to dive deeper into planning.

Council Liaison Klein stated that that on November 5, there will be a public hearing on the street and utility project on Woida Road.

The Commission agreed that the December meeting should be moved from December 23, 2013 to December 16, 2013.

The city's Planning Consultant, Phil Carlson stated that they would be ready to discuss the parks sections of the Comprehensive Plan in January or February of 2014.

Other Business

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for November 25, 2013 at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

MOTION by Commissioner **Thrasher**, seconded by Commissioner **Holderness** to adjourn the meeting at 5:36 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Jim Kalkofen

Shanna Newman CD Clerk