

**MAHTOMEDI PARKS COMMISSION
MINUTES
AUGUST 19, 2020**

Chair Charlesworth convened the special Park Commission meeting telephonically at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 19, 2020.

Present were Commissioners: Commissioner Lindberg, Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Strehlow

Also present were: PW Director, Bob Goebel, PW Office Asst., Jeannie Novak; Council Liaison Schneeweis and Kate Andersen, Mahtomedi Community Ed Director

Absent: Commissioner Metz and Commissioner Fischer

AGENDA

Upon motion by, Commissioner Lindberg; seconded by, Commissioner Thompson, all members voting in favor, the agenda was approved as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Yea: Charlesworth, Thompson, Lindberg and Strehlow. Nay: None

MINUTES

Upon motion by Commissioner Lindberg; seconded by, Commissioner Thompson, all members voting in favor, the June 17, 2020 Park Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Yea: Charlesworth, Thompson, Lindberg and Strehlow. Nay: None

STAFF REPORTS

Director Goebel gave a lengthy update on current public works activities. **Phase 4:** The contractor poured curb today, they're shaping roads and hoping to blacktop in 2 weeks but will continue pouring curb as they can. It's wrapping up really nicely and about a month ahead of schedule. **Dahlia St.:** The project is nearly complete, just a few punch list items remain there. **Birchwood Rd/Lost Lake Ct/Lake Links Trail:** The contractor poured curb today on Birchwood Road, they continue shaping the road and hope to have blacktop down in the next 2 weeks as well. **Bevins/Bichner/Talahi:** This project is moving along very well, they finished the sewer on Talahi, Bichner and Warner. They are continuing with the sewage lift station as soon as they finish dewatering on Bevins and then put the line in on Bevins. The watermain is done on Bichner and Bevins. This project is coming along very well too. **Hallam Park:** Is near completion, everything is done there including the seeding but as you all know we got a pretty heavy rainstorm last Friday so a lot of the seed washed out, they will have to come back and reseed. The playground and trails are complete. We are still waiting on the basketball hoop and we will be painting the basketball court in the 1st or 2nd week of September. The rest of the amenities should be here this week, the benches, the garbage cans and bike racks. **Aaron's Playground:** The cement work is complete. Today all the memorial bricks were installed on the boardwalk under the bridge coming in. The playground equipment should be delivered later this week or early next week along with the dragon. They will start putting this all together next week to get the major stuff done before the community build on August 29th.

Commissioner Thompson stated that this progress is amazing and we must be ahead of schedule on everything. Director Goebel stated that the weather has been great this year and we've had some phenomenal contractors as well.

Chair Charlesworth stated that he looked at the powder coating at Pheasant Run and said it is outstanding, really, really nice. Director Goebel stated that the same contractor will be Hallam Park as well. He also stated that it has been a challenge to keep the kids with their bikes off of it to minimize the skid marks. It will come off, the sun will bleach it off but it is a little unsightly right now.

STAFF REPORTS Con't.

Chair Charlesworth stated that it is far better than he could've ever imagined, that it really pops. He's excited for Hallam Park, it really looks great, the great open green space, the trees, it just opened up the park so much and they really did a nice job. Commissioner Thompson stated that the curb along Neptune is all chipped, Director Goebel stated that he has heard about this and the contractor does have a plan to repair it and he will definitely go and check it out tomorrow. Commissioner Thompson also asked about the enhancements along the downtown corridor on Stillwater Road, Director Goebel stated that next year we are going to have electrical put on all the lights so we can have decorations, get the banners designed, ordered and put up and also the hanging baskets. We are onboard for everything but not sure about Willernie, they're going to go back and look at their funds to see if they can afford it. Council Liaison Schneeweis asked if there has been any follow up with the gentleman who did the wonderful video of Mahtomedi. Director Goebel stated that there hasn't been lately but he knows that he's been part of the discussions because they really like his designs for the banners.

OPEN FORUM

Kate Andersen, Mahtomedi Community Ed Director, stated that she drove by Hallam Park and said how awesome it looks and wishes she had little kids. She also stated that they are really working hard and that they pretty much ran every program they could during July and August, it was super successful, lots of happy parents and kids. They are working on getting the Fall brochure out which will be available electronically on August 24th. She also stated that the District has chosen the Hybrid model for the school year and Community Ed supports that piece by providing the child care and are working on a plan with E21 on how to do Tier 1 free care for essential workers and providing care from 1:15 to 5:30 for those workers who are not essential. Lots of discussions on space, protocols for safety and getting all of our PPE in place, making sure we're training staff. We actually had a very successful summer given the circumstances we were in. We've had lots of positive comments and we are hoping to move that forward. Having meetings to figure out more activities for middle school kids. Staff has worked really hard to come up with a plan that works for parents and kids. Kids and staff are most important.

Director Goebel let the commission know that the City now has a Facebook and to friend us and let us know about things that we could post to get the word out to the community.

Council Liaison Scheenweis updated the commission on things that are going on at City Hall. She mentioned that a couple people were interviewed for open advisory commission spots and that the woman that chose the open park commission spot is a very good candidate, her name is Anna Costello. They were very impressed with her and she has lots of experience. She also stated that the Council is a very good council, that everyone is so collaborative, respectful and willing to listen and change their mind.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Dog Park** – Director Goebel held a lengthy discussion about the request for a dog park in the city. The FedEx manager who was handling this was reassigned to Amsterdam. The new manager is aware of the request. There is an area off of Echo and Long Lake Rd that has 2 fences already that has been discussed as a good location for a dog park. A request has been made to consider the southwestern portion of Southwest Park as a location. This location is south of Aaron’s Playground, near the cell tower and the lower soccer field and the woody are along 60th St. Director Goebel said this area is very thick with brush and wood. It would be very expensive for us to get a fence in there as well as the dogs and the people that walk around. He feels the FedEx property is the best location. City Administrator Neilson wanted the commissions input on this topic. Having a dog park also brings a lot of responsibilities such as maintaining the fencing, having a good place for parking, it would be used year round so it would have to be safe for the users as well as the dogs. And finally we’d have to make sure it’s sanitary. Making sure that owners are picking up after their dogs, if not then public works would have to do that. Commissioner Strehlow is onboard with a dog park. He mentioned that Otter Lake has a dog park and it is always pretty clean. He also stated that he would be onboard with a dog park usage fee. Chair Charlesworth asked how public works feels about it and Director Goebel said “we might have to get our hands dirty once in a while” but said we are open to it, there is a desire and a need out there for it. Commissioner Thompson asked if there is any additional liability that comes with having a dog park. Director Goebel will look into that. Commissioner Thompson asked if there is a more centrally located area that would work for a dog park. Director Goebel stated that Glendale Park or Ferndale Park could be options but are both close to neighbors. The Commission is onboard with a dog park and Director Goebel will start the communication with FedEx again and see where they’re at and will give an update at the next Park Commission meeting.
- b. Park Usage Fees** – Director Goebel would like the Commissions input on charging usage fees for our parks. He stated that we work together with Community Ed to rent our fields to the sports. He said that Community Ed charges a fee to the different sports associations for the field usage. We use those fees to maintain our fields, such as mowing, striping, watering and making sure that they are playable. Recently and because of Covid we’ve had users coming into the parks that are not traditional for instance there is a yoga class that has been happening at Wedgewood Park, there have been some lacrosse camps in the parks but the one that stood out was last week and it was a soccer camp that Community Ed didn’t know anything about. This person holding this tryout camp is well known to Community Ed and has a history of just using whatever park he wants. This is a tryout camp for a very elite soccer team and participants pay a very large fee to tryout. This person is making a lot of money off of the City. I would like to come up with a usage fee for associations that are not part of Community Ed or from our City. The Park Commission members agree that we should establish some sort of fee for the usage of our parks and will do some research of what other cities are doing. Director Goebel will update the Commission at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS Con't

- c. Mahtomedi and Chautauqua Beaches** – Council Liaison Schneeweis held a lengthy discussion regarding the unfortunate timing of closing Mahtomedi and Chautauqua beaches before the 4th of July weekend and the negative and positive feedback she and other Council members received. She understands the beaches had to be closed due to the overcrowding and people not feeling safe amid Covid-19. She thanked Bob and public works for quickly putting safety measures in place at the beaches so they could be reopened the following week. As for the resident feedback, concerns and resolutions, Council Liaison Schneeweis put together a document from all the residents she heard from and Director Goebel will email the document to all the Park Commission members for their review.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Update – Aaron’s Playground SW Park** – The cement work is complete. Today all the memorial bricks were installed on the boardwalk under the bridge coming in. The playground equipment should be delivered later this week or early next week along with the dragon. They will start putting this all together next week to get the major stuff done before the community build on August 29th.
- b. Update - Hallam Park Improvements** – Is near completion, everything is done there including the seeding but as you all know we got a pretty heavy rainstorm last Friday so a lot of the seed washed out, they will have to come back and reseed. The playground and trails are complete. We are still waiting on the basketball hoop and we will be painting the basketball court in the 1st or 2nd week of September. The rest of the amenities should be here this week, the benches, the garbage cans and bike racks.

NEXT PARK COMMISSION MEETING

The next Park Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. via telephonically.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by, Commissioner Lindberg, seconded by, Commissioner Thompson, all members voting in favor by roll call vote. Yea: Charlesworth, Lindberg, Thompson and Strehlow. Nay: None. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jeannie Novak

Jeannie Novak, PW Office Assistant