

**MAHTOMEDI PARKS COMMISSION
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

Chair Lindberg convened the Park Commission meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 20, 2023.

Present were Commissioners: Costello, Thompson, Strehlow and Metz

Also present were: PW Director, Bob Goebel; Mahtomedi Community Ed Director, Kate Andersen and Mahtomedi Residents Susan and Tom Stewart

Absent: Council Liaison, Lilly Melander; Commissioner Fischer; and PW Office Assistant, Jeannie Novak

AGENDA

Upon motion by Commissioner Metz; seconded by Vice Chair Costello all members voting in favor, the agenda was approved as presented.

MINUTES

Upon motion by Commissioner Thompson; seconded by Vice-Chair Costello, all members voting in favor, the August 16, 2023 Park Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented.

STAFF REPORTS

Director Goebel gave a brief update on current public works activities. PW has been busy, we finished up our pipe project, cutting grass, pothole patching and have finished up most of our summer maintenance items. **Construction Projects:** The small trail project that is part of CSAH 12 in front of Dairy Queen will probably not go in until the spring. It's a long lead time to get the parts for the new lift station, around 12 to 16 weeks. We are working on the final plans and specs for CSAH 12 east from the library all the way out. There will be trails and sidewalks on both sides. We're adding a trail on the south side of CSAH 12 from Hilton Trail to Ideal Avenue and it will continue into Grant as well. We are also working on what roads will be rehabbed, milled and overlaid next year.

The budget is almost complete and will go to council in December for final approval. The commission will be discussing the new dock, parking lot and trail at the beach.

We've been working on the five year CIP, we have a lot of big projects coming up. One project is Mahtomedi Avenue, we're not sure when MnDot will turn that back to us and at what cost. We're thinking possibly in 2026/2027. Another big project coming up around 2026/2027 is Century Avenue from 694 down to East County Line. Also, a new City Hall and Fire Station is coming up as well.

Commission Metz asked about a location and Director Goebel stated that the new building would be on the current fire station property.

OPEN FORUM

Kate Andersen, Community Ed Director gave an update on Safe Routes to School and that they have a final plan. The parent volunteers gave a presentation to the City Council at their September 19th meeting and received a lot of favorable feedback. We are organizing some bike to school days, OH Anderson will have a walk to school day on the 5th of October and on the 4th we're going to do a middle school/high school campaign to try to get parents to drop and pick up kids at the St. Andrews area so it's not so congested.

In the middle of August the district did a facilities audit to look at all the indoor and outdoor spaces, at the end of August we convened a group of about 30 people, Bob is on that committee and we did some tours of the buildings, inside and outside to make some recommendations of what we need in the school district. It's been 20 years since the facilities have been looked at and Bob can attest that there is about a million things that we need to do with our fields, updating stuff in the fab lab, reconstruction parts of some of the buildings for safety and security, upgrading our athletic facilities. We have a couple more meetings and then the group of 30 people along with Wold Architects will make a recommendation to the school board of what they believe is really needed and if they'll approve for us to go out for a referendum. Director Goebel stated that a referendum, if approved, would be voted on in May 2024.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Update – Parks Budget -Director Goebel** added that we need the commissions blessing on the Echo Lake Playground – Replacing this playground is in the 2024 budget and asking to put this off next year. We're in the process of asking the neighbors it really needs to be replaced at this point. We did a thorough inspection and it is in really good shape for as old as it is. The reason for asking is because instead of pulling more money from the budget they would rather use this playground money for replacing the dock, the parking lot and trail at Mahtomedi Beach. The commission will discuss whether to agree or not and we will bring your decision back to the City Administrator and Finance Director. **Kate Andersen** asked if the playground is taken out of next year's budget when would it be looked at again? **Director Goebel** stated that it's not in the CIP again until 2028, not saying that it couldn't change, if there is a safety issue we could just remove the playground and leave it out until it gets replaced. After a brief discussion by the commission members a motion was made.

Upon motion by Commissioner Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Metz with all members voting in favor to defer the Echo Lake Playground replacement in lieu of a new dock, parking lot and trail at Mahtomedi Beach.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS Con't

Director Goebel stated that he will communicate this motion to our City Administrator and Finance Director. Then as far as the rest of the park improvement plan, we have money in the budget for amenities next year, benches, garbage cans, picnic tables etc....2025 is the Safe Routes to School plan for OH Anderson, that's the sidewalk from Glenmar to Warner and also from the south end of OH Anderson down to Bevins. The reconstruct of Warner has been put off for a few more years as we patched it this year and it's in good shape, at that time we will probably put in a sidewalk in front of the school. 2026 we're still looking for a grant for the boardwalk but it is in the CIP as well as amenities, benches, garbage cans, picnic tables etc.

Kate Andersen asked about The Metropolitan Council topic that was discussed at the council meeting last night. Director Goebel stated the Met Council responded last Wednesday morning, to a sewer leak bubbling out of a manhole at the intersection of Dunbar Way and Lincolntown Avenue in Mahtomedi. An air relief valve malfunctioned, they're pretty confident that is was about 2500 gallons of sewage spilled, some of it went into a pond on the west side of Lincolntown Ave., south of Dunbar Way but most of it infiltrating into the ground. Met Council has been out everyday testing and they put signs out alerting the public. They vacuumed out most of it and used about 8000 gallons of water to wash the rest of it down.

- b. Update – Pickleball Courts** - The pickleball courts are being used all the time, hopefully it will be finished the first week of October with the painting. The subcontractor installed the posts the wrong direction so that had to be repaired and coming back the last week of September to hopefully paint the posts. The courts are being played a lot and some people have requested that we put together a reservation system. We are going to reach out to Community Ed as they already have a reservation system in place. The landscaping needs to be completed as well.
- c. Update – Gosiwin Trail** – Director Goebel stated that they started the trail on Monday. They've ordered the plants for the plantings, Mary Kiel, President of the Garden Club is a little concerned about the deer eating the plantings but we'll stay on top of it with spray to hopefully keep the deer away. Everything should be finished up real soon.
- d. Dwinnell Nature Area** – The Commission members along with residents Tom and Susan Steward held a very lengthy discussion regarding the Dwinnell Nature Area **Chair Lindberg** said at some point we would need to ask the City Council to classify or designate it as a nature area. The commission members had a lengthy discussion as what they would like to see happen with this space. Director Goebel stated that he would find out what kind of designation can actually be done here, what it would take and that the consensus is to preserve this space. Can a moratorium be recreated on this property, are there any other conservation easements within the city, do we have to consider ADA compliance and will find out for Chair Lindberg what the rules are for a subcommittee quorum. Susan Stewart asked if there could be some sort of an agreement between the Friends of Dwinnell Nature Area and the City.

NEXT PARK COMMISSION MEETING

The next Park Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at Public Works Facility.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by, Vice Chair Costello; seconded by, Commissioner Thompson, all members voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jeannie Novak

Jeannie Novak, PW Office Assistant