

EDINA PARK BOARD
TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2006
7:00 P.M.
EDINA COMMUNITY ROOM
EDINA CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andy Finsness, Linda Presthus, Todd Fronek, Jeff Sorem, Mike Damman, George Klus, Gordon Roland

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Weiss, Jeff Johnson, Karla Sitek, Ray O'Connell

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

OTHERS PRESENT: Dianne Plunkett Latham, Dan Latham, Suzanne Kerwin

I. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2005 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Linda Presthus MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 7, 2005 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Mike Damman SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. INTRODUCTION OF NEW PARK BOARD MEMBER GORDON ROLAND

Mr. Klus welcomed Gordon Roland, Park Board's new student member. Mr. Roland indicated that he is a junior at Edina High School and he has attended Edina public schools all of his life. He noted that he has participated in a wide variety of sports including soccer, football, hockey and lacrosse. He stated that he has probably used every park within Edina. Mr. Roland commented that he has been interested in getting into government and that is why he applied to be on the Park Board.

III. EDINA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS STUDY – SUZANNE KERWIN

Suzanne Kerwin, a member of the League of Women Voters Edina, informed the Park Board that she is here regarding a study that the league is doing on volunteer boards and commissions in Edina. She noted that they are very interested in getting the Park Board's input for their study on boards and commissions. Ms. Kerwin stated that all Park Board members should have received a survey and asked that everyone please fill it out and added that the more that is written the better.

Mr. Klus asked if they are going to see the results of the survey to which Ms. Kerwin replied that their study should be completed in the spring and as soon as they are able to they will share those results with the Park Board. Ms. Kerwin thanked everyone for their participation and time.

IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Mr. Klus pointed out that one of the things that the Park Board has discussed off and on over the last year is to take a good look at their parks and try to come up with some long range planning with the residents for the parks. He noted that he feels having resident involvement is very important because he wants the residents to be sure that their interests are represented, they are being listened to and the needs of the park are being visited. Mr. Klus stated that in light of wanting to make sure that residents get involved he thinks they should split up the parks among the Park Board members and work with the people who live around the parks. Mr. Klus pointed out that there is a capital improvement plan that is approved every year for the parks; therefore, some planning has already been done. However, that plan is usually changed somewhat each year depending on what needs have changed. Mr. Klus again stated that he hopes each Park Board member will be able to have meetings with the residents who have some real interests.

Mr. Klus suggested that three or four Park Board members who are not currently serving on the Youth Task Force Committee meet with staff and come back to next month's Park Board meeting with some recommendations on how you think the Park Board should proceed with the needs assessment survey.

Mr. Keprios noted that he wishes to applaud and thank the City Council members for supporting the Park Board in going forward with the needs assessment survey. He commented that it is recommended by the National Recreation Park Association to assess the community and find out how they feel about their park system and programs at least once every five years. He stated that this is a great way to find out what the issues really are and have valid statistics confirming them. Mr. Keprios explained that the success in doing a needs assessment survey really depends on getting as much community input as possible at the front end and involve as many people as they physically have time for in an organized fashion. He stated that they are going to need to hire a consultant to help them through this process; however, it's going to take a lot of the Park Board's volunteer time to help staff in the process and come up with some ideas.

Mr. Keprios pointed out there are different ways they can approach this. It can be done park by park or they could hold general public meetings. The important thing is to draw out and listen to the community, what are the key issues and needs that we are facing that are not currently being met. He commented that at the end of this they may find that there are only a couple of things where they really need to change their direction. He explained that the capital plan sets the direction, however, that is currently on more of a maintenance track.

Mr. Keprios explained that a needs assessment survey is going to tell them what the community feels the issues are and with the consultant's help they will then be able to formulate the questions to then validate what kind of support there is in the whole

community for those perceived issues. He commented that even though they do evaluate their programs regularly it is important to do a community wide needs assessment.

Ms. Presthus stated that she agrees it is important to assess the needs of the community, however, they need to remember if they talk to the people who live around the parks they may have very single issues. She noted that she feels what they need to look for when doing a needs assessment survey is to remember that this is a city with city parks and therefore we need to look at the overall picture. For example, they are not just looking at those 150 homes that surround Arden Park. They are looking for an overall picture of the direction they are going and the only way they can really do that accurately is by hiring a consultant. Ms. Presthus informed the Park Board that her background for 35 years in is market research and she knows that the upfront input from listening to what people have to say and then working with a consultant will turn the needs assessment survey into a genuine study that goes out to everyone and not just the people who live around the parks. Ms. Presthus suggested that they possibly look at having two different written surveys, a long form and a short form in order to get a genuine sampling. She stressed in her opinion they cannot have individual people talking to individual groups because there needs to be some component of continuity. She stated that unless there is a consultant who sits in on every meeting and takes notes then it really isn't valid research, it's just a bunch of ad hoc answers. Ms. Presthus noted that she has seen a lot of bad studies done.

Mr. Fronck indicated that he would agree with Ms. Presthus in the sense that they do need to look at some of the broader things, however being a board like this it's easy to look at just the problem that's in front of them. Therefore, he feels that they need to come up with some overarching goals as well as decide what the Park Board should be involved in. Ms. Presthus replied that these overarching goals can guide the smaller minute problems so that they can point to the biggest goal and say this is what they are trying to achieve and therefore this is what lead them to make the smaller decision that's now in front of them.

Mr. Finsness asked who came up with the amount of \$19,000 and what does that pay for? Mr. Keprios replied that he was told by Decision Resources that a general needs assessment survey done by either phone or mail would cost approximately \$16,000. He noted that he added on another \$3,000 just in case they wanted to add some things to youth sports. Mr. Finsness asked if the City Council is recommending that the Park Board do a needs assessment survey. Mr. Keprios replied that it actually comes from him and the money for this is in their operating budget. Mr. Finsness asked how many people would be surveyed for \$19,000 to which Mr. Keprios responded approximately 400 to 600 depending on whether it's done by phone or mail. Also, it will depend on what type of survey they want done to which the consultant will tell us based on the issues what the best method would be. Therefore, that's why they need a consultant at the table in order to be able to answer those questions. Mr. Finsness stated that he thinks this is important and absolutely should be done.

Mr. Sorem indicated that he doesn't have a lot of experience working with surveys but does feel that Ms. Presthus makes a very good point in that they need to look at what is

best for the parks for the community as a whole and not just for those people who surround the park.

Mr. Damman asked Mr. Klus if he is suggesting that they have an ad hoc committee as well as a consultant to go and talk to groups. Mr. Klus replied he would like to see a committee made up of a few Park Board members meet with staff and come up with a recommendation of how they see fit to move forward with the needs assessment survey. He noted that he would like for the committee and staff to have a recommendation ready by the February Park Board meeting.

Ms. Presthus pointed out that the first thing that needs to be done is they need to write their objectives and what their expected outcome is. At that time a consultant then comes in to figure out the best way to go about it. Therefore, it's very important to actually write the objectives of why they are doing this. Ms. Presthus commented that she also thinks they need to look at what has been done in the past as well as who has done them because then they can compare what the read of the community was five years ago and see how the interest has changed over that time. She noted that there are a lot of different ways to go about this.

Ms. Presthus asked Mr. Keprios if it would be possible for him to get copies of surveys that have been done in other community park and recreation departments to which Mr. Keprios replied yes, he can do that. Mr. Keprios commented that a consultant will also be able to help them and share data because they have done hundreds of surveys and can share a lot of what they have learned. Ms. Presthus asked if Decision Resources would be conducting the survey to which Mr. Keprios replied not necessarily, there are a lot of firms out there. Mr. Keprios commented that depending on how they go about doing the survey whether they address a master plan or strategic plan and do they want to measure customer satisfaction or have it be a management study. Mr. Fronck asked if the ad hoc committee would be able to decide that scope within the next month assuming there are all of these options. He noted that he would like to volunteer to be on the ad hoc committee to figure out the scope of what the needs assessment survey is.

Mr. Roland stated that he thinks it's very important that they find out what needs to be done in the future. Also, it's very important that the survey is done right because it will set up a precedent for years to come. Therefore, he feels that resources from prior tests and other cities would be important in creating what kind of survey they want. Mr. Keprios commented that he thinks Mr. Roland could be a big help in finding out what's the right venue in getting input from students.

Mr. Sorem indicated that he thinks they should do a two-part survey. He thinks that they should talk to the neighbors and ask about the little things such as where to put a swing set or if they need more garbage cans because they aren't going to get that information from a survey. He suggested that each Park Board member could take a park they live by or have an interest in and knock on a few doors and ask people what they would like to see in their parks. Mr. Sorem commented that the small things are important to a lot of the residents. Mr. Finsness noted that they would be looking at two separate surveys in

that one is random and the other is not. Mr. Sorem stated that it could almost be two separate parts because there really wouldn't be any extra cost to it other than the Park Board's volunteer time.

Mr. Klus asked the Park Board members who would be interested in working on an ad hoc committee to help staff come up with a recommendation on what direction should be taken for the needs assessment survey. The following Park Board members volunteered to be on the committee: Andy Finsness, Linda Presthus, Todd Fronek, Mike Damman and Gordon Roland.

George Klus MOVED TO ENTERTAIN A MOTION TO APPROVE AN AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE PARK BOARD TO MEET WITH STAFF AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION AT THE NEXT PARK BOARD MEETING AS TO THE DIRECTION OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY.

Todd Fronek MOVED. Jeff Sorem SECONDED THE MOTION.

Diane Plunkett Latham, resident, informed the Park Board that the residents she has been talking to who live closest to the parks and use the parks the most feel that they are not being heard. She stated that if someone asked her what Weber Park looks like she could not tell you because she has never used it, however, there are other parks that she does use and does have very specific feelings about. Ms. Latham indicated that if the Park Board does go forward with a general survey, which has been done before, hopefully it will be more particular than the last survey. She commented that she does think the Park Board needs to talk to the residents by each specific park even though it may not be as important on the broad page but to the people who are using the parks the small things are important and that she feels there does need to be some sort of mechanism for hearing that.

Ms. Presthus pointed out that Edina is designed in quadrants which are very easy to define and the way it is set up rarely do the people move across their quadrants to use the facilities on the other side. Therefore, maybe they should look at holding open forums to discuss issues in quadrants instead of individual parks which would cut down a little bit on the one on one.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he thinks the whole process will be both very specific and very broad at the same time. He commented that there's no such thing as bad information so it would be great to hear from people even regarding the smallest things such as emptying a garbage can more frequently. Mr. Keprios stated that the key thing at the end of the survey is to identify what are the real issues of the community that we want to try to identify and validate. They are going to need to validate the issues that they feel they've identified through the public hearings, meetings, etc.

Ms. Latham pointed out that she likes the idea of quadrants and feels that would be good particularly for the local parks. However, for regional parks such as Centennial Lakes and Bredesen Park people do cross over the quadrants and therefore she would suggest

that they designate public hearings for the regional parks where anyone could attend the meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. 2006 PARK BOARD MEETING CALENDAR

Mr. Klus informed the Park Board that they will only have meetings when they need to and pointed out there is no Park Board meeting scheduled for July because of the Braemar Inspection Tour.

Todd Fronck MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2006 PARK BOARD MEETING CALENDAR. Mike Damman SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VI. OUTDOOR HOCKEY RINKS

Mr. Sorem indicated that he thought this would be a good time to discuss the outdoor hockey rinks in Edina. He noted that he thinks the Park Board needs to look at whether Edina has enough hockey rinks or are more needed. He commented that Todd Park will need to be looked at again in a couple of years and if they decide Todd Park is not working they will need to decide if they should put it at a different location or they may find they don't even need another rink. Mr. Sorem stated that, on a personal note, he has skated at the Todd Park hockey rink five times this year and the ice has been fantastic even with the bad weather.

Mr. Sorem informed the Park Board that a resident who lives across the street from Todd Park approached him to let him know that he loves the rink and noted that he was one of the residents opposed to it. The resident told him that by having removable boards he thinks it's perfect.

Mr. Sorem stated as far as Countryside Park's master plan they will need to decide in the future whether they want to put a hockey rink back there and if so would it be to replace the one taken out or would it be an additional hockey rink. He stressed that he really likes the idea of having a rink in Braemar's parking lot. Mr. Sorem noted that he would like to see the Park Board put a little bit of time and effort into talking with Mr. Thayer and staff about the possibilities of putting a rink there. He noted that he thinks it would be plenty big and if they were able to get a Zamboni out there the ice would definitely be good and therefore thinks it would be a great option to look into. Mr. Sorem indicated that he thinks they should also look into both portable and permanent refrigeration systems. He stated that he thinks people from EHA would pay for outdoor ice with a refrigeration system. Mr. Sorem stated this is not something that needs to be done right now but it is something to look at to be ahead of the curve.

Mr. Klus indicated that he would hope that this is something they can discuss and somehow incorporate into the needs assessment as they move ahead. Mr. Klus pointed

out that supposedly there are two new ice rinks being added to the community by a private owner to which the first one was supposed to open this month. Mr. Keprios replied they have not yet begun construction.

Mr. Keprios asked Ms. Presthus what it cost for St. Paul to put in their refrigeration system at the Landmark Center. Ms. Presthus replied they have been using temporary chillers but are now looking at turning that into a permanent facility. She explained that by permanent she means it would not be there year round but that the infrastructure would be there year round and that the chiller would then be moved to the basement of the Landmark Center. Ms. Presthus indicated that the grant she is currently writing is for putting in the chiller, boards, electrical, etc. and is for a little over \$300,000 which does not include the maintenance of it. Mr. Keprios asked Ms. Presthus if they own the temporary system or are they leasing it. Ms. Presthus replied that currently they are renting the temporary system and noted that they are responsible for putting it in and taking it out. She added that the rink is open from November through February 12th. Mr. MacHolda asked what the charge is to use the rink to which Ms. Presthus indicated there is no charge.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that they are on a two year track with the Todd Park venture and they will have to re-evaluate it in two years. He indicated that he has already been meeting with representatives from the neighborhood and has already come up with a whole list of questions that he would like for them to respond to. He noted that he is meeting with this group again in two weeks to go over some things and will also include some questions for EHA and the park users. Mr. Keprios stated that at the end of two years the question will become do you want a rink at Todd Park and if so, is it going to be permanent or portable. He added that in two years when they do make a recommendation to the City Council they need to be mindful that with the staff they currently have in place they cannot maintain any more than what they have. They would not be able to keep the one at Todd Park and put in hockey rinks at both Countryside Park and Braemar without adding more staff.

Ms. Presthus explained that the rink at the Landmark Center in St. Paul is a public/private cooperative in that the city maintains it but it's being built by grants and private money. She noted that maybe they should consider looking at getting a corporate sponsor who wants to put money into it or write a grant so that the only responsibility the city would have would be to maintain it and run the other infrastructure. Mr. Klus commented that the feedback he has received is that the city isn't always excited about having corporate sponsors putting their names on things within the city. However, they do have a mechanism for fundraising in this community which is the Edina Foundation and they help enhance groups to do things on a bigger focus.

Mr. Keprios reminded the Park Board that they did try to build a third rink at Braemar through a grant as well as offered naming rights and that didn't go anywhere.

Ms. Presthus informed the Park Board that she received an unsolicited comment from someone who was at Todd Park. The person indicated that there were a ton of people skating at Todd Park and with the lights it was an almost magical looking experience.

Mr. Finsness asked what has been the general consensus regarding Todd Park to which Mr. Keprios replied that he is only hearing from the folks who are obviously opposed to it. Mr. Klus commented that it's the same people who are writing the same issues and the only thing that will make them happy is to get rid of the hockey rink.

VII. UPDATES

- A. Potentially Proposed Building at Braemar - Mr. Klus informed the Park Board that a group of individuals in Edina is currently working with the city on looking at the possibility of putting up a 9 million dollar structure at Braemar Park. At this time the city is waiting to hear back from the group. Mr. Klus noted that this group is hoping to raise 3 million of it privately and finance 6 million.

Mr. Keprios explained that the city has been in the discussion stage with this group for over a year. This group is proposing to take over the golf dome and convert it into a much larger dome to accommodate golf, soccer, football, and a whole variety of other things. Mr. Keprios indicated that staff has expressed to them that the facility may be too big and have a negative impact on the site. This group has been asked to scale it down and show them exactly what it is they are doing as well as who's going to use it, how often, what they would charge and how they are going to retire the debt service and secure the mortgage. Mr. Keprios commented that they have not come back with their answers but they definitely have generated excitement in the community.

Mr. Klus noted that this group did want to come to the Park Board tonight to talk about this structure, however, he felt it was premature and that right now they need to work with the city and staff and when they come up with something more realistic, then bring it to the Park Board.

- B. Gymnasium Construction – Mr. MacHolda informed the Park Board that there was a Joint Powers Oversight Committee meeting this morning. He indicated that they went over the change orders which to date are approximately \$81,000. He stated that they learned that substantial completion should take place the end of July which is right on schedule.

Ms. Presthus asked what the status of the concession stand is to which Mr. MacHolda replied that it is part of the project and that the only item that is pending is the canopy. He noted that Council Member Scot Housh is very hopeful that the contingency fund will not be eaten up and that dollars will be available to put up a canopy. Mr. MacHolda pointed out that the concession stand is on the ECC site and not the South View site.

- C. Edina Youth Sports Taskforce – Mr. Klus thanked the Park Board members who attended the December Task Force meeting. He noted that he thought the forum went very well and felt that the people who were there were pleased they were able to give their input. He stated that the next Task Force meeting will be this Thursday and all of the athletic associations and clubs will be able to share their thoughts on this issue. Mr. Klus commented that a survey was sent out to each of the associations/clubs to which they received a lot of feedback and information. He indicated that their intent is to take all of the input they have received and at the end they will have another public session. He stated that in February they will come back with some recommendations to discuss. Mr. Klus noted that in March he hopes to have the final draft to bring to the Park Board for their approval and will then be sent on the City Council. He pointed out that there are great people working on this Task Force and he has been very pleased with the community's involvement.

Mr. Finsness pointed out that it's incredible the amount of responses they received through e-mails. He noted that their biggest problem is probably going to be sifting through everything in order to get a sense of which way to go.

Ms. Presthus commented that she thinks a lot of the people who spoke up really don't understand the purpose of this but rather want to discuss their little individual issues. Mr. Sorem indicated that he thinks this was the first chance for a lot of people to complain and get things off their chests because they've been asked their thoughts on these issues. Mr. Klus stated that at this point he would rather the Task Force listen to what the people have to say. Ms. Presthus replied that unfortunately what happens with something like that is that you hear more about the person complaining. She noted that you practically have to drag it out of the people who have had good experiences because they're happy and don't feel there is a real need for a Task Force.

Mr. Klus explained that they don't want to hurt the great volunteer parents who run these associations/clubs because they don't want to make these volunteers think it's going to be a real problem to run the associations based on what they have been doing. He noted that they want to keep a good environment out there so parents continue to be involved and take leadership roles in the associations/clubs. He added that sometimes there is better leadership than others but that is part of the cycle.

Mr. Sorem indicated that he feels if they pull back the reins too much that the program will essentially shut down. Ms. Presthus pointed out that they also have to watch that they don't bring the top down to the bottom because that is what some people want. Mr. Klus replied that sometimes he thinks that maybe they cut kids off too soon and they don't let them experience things. He noted that he really does think there are ways they can do that without hurting the top and that's something they will have to discuss very hard. One of the issues they are hearing is access to different levels of competition and he doesn't disagree with that.

Mr. MacHolda stated that he has a tough time with the word cut because he thinks that can be a misconception and that they should use the word placement instead because they really are two different things. He pointed out that he also thinks that a child is more likely to develop if they are at the appropriate level because pre-puberty and post-puberty can make a huge difference.

Ms. Presthus commented that if there are ten players on a basketball team do you want to be the 10th player on the A team knowing you will get little playing time or do you want to be on the B team and play the whole time. It's really a matter of perception and how that child and parent feel.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he thinks the timing is right to study this issue. He noted that it's an important issue and not just one for Edina. He added that a lot of people from other communities did attend the meeting. Mr. Keprios stated that at the end of this he hopes that the community will have an even greater appreciation for our volunteers and the process and checks and balances they already have in place. He commented that he thinks some of the associations feel a little underappreciated and he can understand that. He noted that he thinks once they get through all of the data that the Task Force and Park Board are going to learn that they really have a good system in place. Also, through the needs assessment survey could help to identify what the real issues are and what issues need to be fixed. Mr. Keprios commented that he thinks there are going to be better things in place when the Park Board has completed the mission.

VIII. OTHER

- A. Blair Ransom - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that he received a letter from Blair Ransom, the student member that came to their Park Board meeting and asked to play at Centennial Lakes. He noted that they were able to raise over \$1,100.00 for the hurricane relief fund.
- B. Braemar Golf Course – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that Braemar Golf Course will be hosting the National Wheelchair games this year.
- C. Cliff French – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that there have been only four Edina Park and Recreation Directors since the Department was created. He noted that the first Park Director in Edina was Clifton E. French who went on to develop Hennepin Parks which is now known as Three Rivers District Park. He noted that Mr. French passed away unexpectedly over the weekend.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Andy Finsness MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:40 PM. Todd Fronck SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.