

Minutes of the
Edina Park Board
Tuesday, May 8, 2007
Edina City Hall
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Damman, Ray O'Connell, Carolyn Nelson, Howard Merriam, Randy Meyer, Jeff Sorem, Todd Fronek, Karla Sitek

MEMBERS ABSENT: Andy Finsness, Linda Presthus, George Klus

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton, Vince Cockriel

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Todd Fronek MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 10, 2007 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Ray O'Connell SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Edina Curling Club - Mark Willmert and Ken Olson, members of the Edina Curling Club, gave the Park Board an overview of the Curling Club and noted that it is a growing sport that has been around for a long time. The Edina Curling Club met with Susie Miller of the Edina Park and Recreation Department to work together on a joint program opportunity to help promote the sport of curling.
- B. Forestry Report – Tom Horwath, City Forester, gave an overview to the Park Board on the year-end forestry program and the projects that are coming up. Mr. Horwath also explained to the Park Board what his duties and roles are as the City Forester. He stated that he probably answers more than 1,000 calls from residents every year with questions regarding diseased trees.

Ms. Nelson asked if there are any future plans to prevent the spread of Buckthorn or try to contain it because she knows it's a huge problem. Mr. Horwath replied yes, he would say there are plans. However, with Buckthorn you need to be persistent and you should expect a secondary growth that will also need to be controlled and removed. He explained that with the abundance of Buckthorn it's a huge management issue. Mr. Horwath pointed out that approximately one-quarter of the United States is infested with Buckthorn. He stated that he fully agrees it is harmful to the health of the existing trees. He noted that they need to keep being persistent with it because it is a long-term effort that they need to stick with. He commented that they have had excellent volunteer efforts and he hopes that will continue into the future.

- C. Insurance Requirements for Edina Youth Athletic Associations – Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board that this is last piece of the Edina Youth Sports Task Force set of recommendations that remains undone. He stated that the Youth Sports Task Force questioned if there should be a minimum mandate of insurance that the

athletic associations need to carry to use Edina's public athletic facilities. He pointed out that the school has a minimum amount in place of one-half million dollars.

Mr. Keprios explained that Ceil Smith, Assistant to City Manager, contacted some insurance consultants to which the recommendation came back that they ought to implement a mandatory minimum liability general coverage of one million dollars. In addition, they ought to mandate that the athletic associations who have employees, not independent contractors, carry workers compensation insurance.

Mr. Keprios commented that he did not receive any e-mails, phone calls or letters from any of the associations regarding this issue which leads him to believe this is not an issue for them. He explained that approximately 15 years ago the city did mandate that the associations were to have one-half million dollars of insurance coverage. However, when the State of Minnesota passed a law that granted some of the association's immunity, some of the associations came forward and asked the city to waive their liability mandate to which the city accepted their request. Therefore, since that time there has not been a minimum amount of liability insurance for the athletic associations. Mr. Keprios stated that if the Park Board wants them to go down this road and mandate a minimum coverage, it's really not for the benefit of the associations as much as it is for the city. The city needs to make sure they are protected because the athletic associations are not covered under the city's insurance policy.

Mr. Damman asked if anyone has ever come after the city for any insurance liability cases to which Mr. Keprios replied in the past 30 years he can recall two cases. One was thrown out of court and was denied to go forward because of the immunity law. In the second case, the city helped bail out the Edina Soccer Association because of an improperly registered player to which the city was never named in the lawsuit. Mr. Keprios pointed out that they've had numerous verbal threats of lawsuit; however, we have been fortunate that none of those ever materialized.

Mr. Sorem asked, assuming they act on this, when would the insurance be in place for the athletic associations. Mr. Keprios replied what they are going to recommend as staff is that it becomes implemented with a long enough lead time so associations can budget for it.

Mr. Meyer asked Mr. Keprios what the estimated cost would be for each of the associations to get this insurance to which Mr. Keprios replied that he has asked each individual association to do their own homework and let him know if there are any issues to which he has not heard a word.

Marcia Friedmann, Edina Girls Athletic Association board member, informed the Park Board that they desperately try to keep their fees low and this will definitely have a huge impact on them. Ms. Friedmann informed the Park Board that at the Presidents meeting it was discussed that the groups that currently are not insured are going to try to form a group together to which she does not know what the current status is with that. Mr. Keprios asked Ms. Friedmann if she thinks it would be beneficial to request that the Park Board delay action until the June Park Board

meeting to which Ms. Friedmann replied yes. Mr. Keprios stated that he wishes the associations would have communicated that they would have liked to have more time to research this.

Mr. Keprios stated that at this point staff would recommend that they delay this to the June Park Board meeting to which he will send a follow-up memo to the associations requesting information as to what the impact is as well as any comments they may have.

Mr. Meyer asked if the city has looked at the cost of putting them under their umbrella to which Mr. Keprios replied that he did ask that question and their carrier informed the city that they would have no interest in pursuing it.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Edina Athletic Facilities Fund Raiser Committee/Foundation – Marcia Friedmann informed the Park Board that George Klus was unable to attend so he asked her to take his place. Ms. Friedmann read the mission statement of the Edina Athletic Facilities Fundraiser Foundation. She indicated that the committee is looking at the city's project wish list as well as items on the capital improvement plan that will not be addressed for many years. She indicated that the committee is made up of presidents and past presidents of the athletic associations as well as Steve Dove and Kim Nelson from the Edina High School along with George Klus and John Keprios. She explained that they are trying to get a well-rounded group.
- B. Bike Edina Task Force Update – Todd Fronek – Mr. Fronek informed the Park Board that Bike Edina Task Force is well under way. They have signed on “Community Design Group” as the consultant that will be aiding them in moving forward as well as having their comprehensive bike plan be a part of the overall comprehensive plan. He commented that the initial plan is to have the comprehensive piece done by September to which all further planning will stem from that comprehensive plan.
- C. Schedule Comprehensive Plan Workshop Meeting – Mr. Keprios asked the Park Board if they feel there is a need for a workshop to go through the comprehensive plan. It was decided that the Park Board would like to have a workshop.
- D. Park Board Assignments - Mr. Damman asked the Park Board if this is something they want to continue to be involved with. Mr. Keprios explained how this idea came about. He commented that they have now come full circle and have seen presentations on all of the parks. He asked the Park Board if they want to continue with this practice or just have the parks listed on the website that indicate which Park Board member is responsible for which parks and to contact that particular Park Board member.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – There was no Public Comment

V. UPDATES FROM STAFF –

- A. Courtney Ballfield Maintenance Building - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that they've hired an architect firm, ATS& R, to design the maintenance building as part of the capital improvement plan for the Courtney Ballfields complex. He noted that they will open bids the middle of June and construction should be complete this Fall.
- B. Alden Park - Mr. MacHolda informed the Park Board that the old playground equipment has been removed, they've excavated the site and have installed the new concrete container. He noted that next week they will begin installing the new playground equipment followed by the safety surface and site restoration. He commented that everything should be done by late May.
- C. Gymnasiums – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the gymnasium project is essentially done. Currently there is a move to get colored murals on the walls of the gymnasiums. The Edina Public Art Committee has volunteered to take on that project. They will be using some of the interest earnings from the bonds to help cover those costs.

Mr. Keprios indicated that they have decided to wait to have the grand opening until the High School is finished with its construction to which they will do a collective grand-opening with the school in the fall.

VI. PARK BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Sitek asked why there is being another public hearing regarding the hockey rink at Todd Park. Mr. Keprios explained that the City Council brought up the discussion of how to handle the Park Board's recommendation. They talked about discussing it amongst themselves at their May 15th City Council meeting and they also talked about holding a public hearing. He stated that after a lengthy discussion the Council decided to direct staff to mail out notices to the same survey group and conduct an official public hearing on June 5th.

Mr. Merriam asked Mr. Keprios if there is any value to the Park Board communicating to the City Council within some capacity by giving their recommendation in person. Mr. Keprios replied that he has always advised Park Board members and commissioners that if you have a strong interest and want to communicate with your elected official about how you feel about an issue, written correspondence is always a good thing.

Mr. Keprios stated that his recommendation the night the City Council hears it is if they don't accept the Park Board's recommendation in its entirety then they should give the Park Board one more opportunity before the July 1st deadline to readdress whatever the issue may be that the City Council is concerned with.

Mr. Fronck indicated that it seems to be a bit redundant to have a public hearing given the fact that he thought that the Park Board already conducted a public hearing on the matter again last month. Therefore, it's kind of a waste of time that they sit there and

listen to everyone present on whether or not they approve or disapprove. Mr. Fronck stated that he thinks it would be good for the City Council to send back the recommendation or send the Park Board and staff back on a further fact finding mission. He commented that if they are not in a position to make those decisions then maybe next time they should just bypass things and move right up to the City Council. Mr. Keprios stated that Park Board members should communicate their concerns regarding the process with their elected officials.

Meeting adjourned.