

Minutes of the
Edina Park Board
November 13, 2007
Edina City Hall, Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ray O'Connell, Todd Fronek, Linda Presthus, Jeff Sorem, Mike Damman, Carolyn Nelson, Andy Finsness, Howard Merriam

MEMBERS ABSENT: Randy Meyer, George Klus

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

I. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 9, 2007 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Linda Presthus MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 9, 2007 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Mike Damman SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Proposed Coffee Shop at Lewis Park – Carolyn Kohrs went over the proposal that she presented at last month's Park Board meeting.

Ms. Kohrs explained that the original proposal in regards to public/private ventures on parkland proposal has been modified. It now states that as soon as the building is constructed it will immediately be donated to the city. The city will take immediate control over the entire property, therefore eliminating the issues regarding property taxes and insurance. She noted that it also simplified the legal piece of it in that it is a lease agreement that sets up expectations from the city and the community investment group so that everyone understands how the procedure will go. Ms. Kohrs did point out that the park is currently zoned as residential and therefore they may need to have some kind of a variance use.

Ms. Kohrs indicated that regarding the businesses at Cahill and 70th she went in person to the businesses and was able to talk to the owners to which she was happy to hear that in every single case people were supportive. Ms. Kohrs pointed out their intent is not so much to build a coffee shop but rather a gathering place for the residents.

Ms. Kohrs noted that she met with an executive from the Dunn Brothers Coffee Shop in Eden Prairie and showed her the projected net income she came up with. The person from Dunn Brothers thought she did a good job and thought the numbers were very conservative. She also thought the proposed area was in a great location and was very encouraging.

Ms. Kohrs stated that in regards to the concerns about the actual building when they get to that stage everyone will have a say as to the size, shape, space, etc.

Ms. Kohrs informed the Park Board that after last month's Park Board meeting she created a website and has relied on word of mouth to get the information out to the residents. She noted that as of 3:00 pm today there were 458 survey responses/petitions signed to which 95.64% were for it and 4.4% were against it. She stated that there have been some negative comments although she thinks for the most part they could be managed through community input and design.

Sandy Remes, 7420 Shannon Circle, stated that she is in favor of the Coffee Shop at Lewis Park.

Mr. Finsness asked if the seed money for the project has been identified to which Ms. Kohrs replied that right now she has a commitment of one-half million dollars. She stated that as they go forward if they need to generate more money she is willing to figure out how to get more money committed.

Ms. Presthus asked Ms. Kohrs to explain the financial arrangements such as who will take care of the maintenance and upkeep of the building. Ms. Kohrs replied that the revenue generated from the operations of the coffee shop will pay for all of the maintenance and upkeep of all of the operations. She noted that conservatively they think it will generate approximately \$50,000 a year which would be generated back to the seed capital. Once that money is recouped the revenue flow would go directly to the city because it is the city that would have control of the building. Ms. Presthus commented "assuming that it doesn't do that, then what would happen". Ms. Kohrs replied that if it doesn't do that then the city can do with it what it wants. She noted that her feeling is the risk that is being taken by the community investors that want to make this happen.

Mr. Finsness asked Ms. Kohrs if there is an estimate on what the building would cost. Ms. Kohrs replied it will cost approximately \$400,000 to build and approximately \$100,000 for all of the coffee supplies.

The following people who spoke were **not** in favor of a coffee shop at Lewis Park:

William S. McKenzie, 6250 Lewis Ridge Parkway, spoke on behalf of the people from the Lewis Ridge Condominiums. He pointed out that he did talk to one of the owners of Honkins Joes and that person was very upset about it.

Barbara Hustad, 5501 Dewey Hill, spoke on behalf of the people from Edina Dewey Hill East

Dick Langert, 5501 Dewey Hill Rd.

Cassandra Moholchick, 7227 Lewis Ridge Parkway

Beth Waterman, 7220 Lewis Ridge Parkway.

The following people who spoke were **in** favor of a coffee shop at Lewis Park:

Claudia Westholder, 7448 Shannon Drive

Chrissy Colby, 7416 Coventry Way

Susan Donovan, 7404 Shannon Drive

Duke Bascam, 7505 Gleason Road

Jim Callclausus, 4908 Arden Avenue
Sharon Burns, 6012 Dublin Circle
Pam Berling, 4129 w. 62nd St.
David Cherner, 5829 Dewey Hill Rd.

Todd Fronck MOVED TO REMOVE THE ITEM FROM THE TABLE. Jeff Sorem
SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. O'Connell indicated that he has listened to both the pros and cons and has spent a lot of time looking at it from all angles. However, the most pertinent thing he has heard is there needs to be a meeting of the minds.

Mr. Fronck stated that he is very hesitant to take public land away from the public and no matter how you want to slice it this is taking public land and making it a private enterprise. He noted that another concern he has is over the development of parks. He indicated that one of the greatest uses of parks is getting away from everything and getting out into green space and into nature.

Ms. Nelson stated that she doesn't necessarily see park space as going into nature all of the time but also sees it as a place to gather with friends, walk a dog, etc. She noted that she agrees with the proposed building because even though it is a private ownership it really would benefit the public.

Mr. Sorem stated that on one hand he is looking at it and saying it is an awfully nice building that the city is going to get and it appears to be pretty low risk. However, on the other hand it is one of the largest community parks they have in Edina and therefore they need to decide what is best for the city as a whole and not just the Lewis Park neighborhood. He pointed out that warming house is used by a lot of people right after work every day. Therefore, the drawings would need to make sure that the warming house is a big part of the building. He stated that he is in agreement with Mr. O'Connell in that it probably needs to be discussed further and he would be in favor of supporting getting together with some different groups and discussing this further even if it's in a smaller group setting and not as a formal Park Board.

Mr. Damman stated that he thinks this is a great idea. However, he is not positive that Lewis Park is the perfect place for it. He noted that they definitely need a new building at Lewis Park, he's not so sure about a private enterprise. He added that they would probably need to look at doing a feasibility study on it.

Mr. Merriam indicated that he strongly believes there is a seed of an idea and he would hate to see all of this work go to waste. He noted that he has heard some very serious concerns from some of the neighbors. He stated that maybe they need to get some of the concerned neighbors together in a room and figure out how something could work. He noted that he sees an opportunity for a gathering space.

Ms. Presthus stated that she lived by Lewis Park for 16 years and walked it just about every day and noted one of the things she loved the most about the park is that there wasn't much there. Ms. Presthus pointed out there are places in the community that

could really use something like this such as Edinborough Park but the city doesn't have the money to do it. Ms. Presthus commented that at last month's meeting she asked for input from the businesses and not just the residents because she is very concerned about those businesses that are a block away. She pointed out that she has just heard testimony that the businesses want this yet in their packet is a letter stating that they don't want it. However, all of this has been hearsay and none of it has been first hand. Therefore, she really feels that they need the input of those businesses before they should even consider something like this.

Ms. Presthus also indicated that in the past they have discussed putting in artificial ice as well as using a Zamboni to resurface the ice at Lewis Park. Therefore, they need to look ahead to the future because Lewis Park has one of the biggest hockey and skating rinks.

Mr. Finsness noted that he personally thinks this is a good idea because it sounds like there is some private money available. He indicated that he would be in favor of further discussions.

Mr. Keprios stated that if the Park Board is in support of this concept and proposal and would like for this to move to the next step in the process, then his recommendation would be for the Park Board to hold a public hearing. He noted that he would also recommend that staff meet with Ms. Kohrs and come up with some answers to some of the questions such as the zoning issue, financial agreement, maintenance, etc. He commented that it is important to have a more definitive proposal in writing from Ms. Kohrs for staff and Park Board to review. Mr. Keprios suggested that perhaps staff could work with the proponent to discuss it further with the neighborhood and then move forward with an official public meeting. He pointed out that if the Park Board chooses to conduct a public hearing, staff would mail out notices to every property owner within 1,000 feet of the park which would include all businesses and residents.

Mr. Fronck asked if this is something that would need to be approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Keprios replied that he thinks where the Planning Commission would get involved would be when it gets to the zoning issue to which they would then have their own public hearing to go through their process as well. He stressed that concept wise it needs to start here.

Mr. O'Connell indicated that he thinks this is a good concept however, the problem is utilization. The park belongs to the city and the taxpayers take care of it and it's the Park Board's job to see that it is put to the best use. He stated that he feels it's necessary to try to get some meeting of the minds and then go to the process of having a public hearing.

Ray O'Connell MOVED TO TAKE THIS CONCEPT TO THE NEXT STEP IN THE PROCESS BY DIRECTING STAFF TO GET ANSWERS IN WRITING FROM THE PROPONENT TO THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE BROUGHT UP THIS EVENING AND HAVE THE MATTER ON THE JANUARY 8, 2008 PARK

BOARD AGENDA FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION. Jeff Sorem SECONDED THE MOTION.

IN FAVOR: Howard Merriam, Mike Damman, Andy Finsness, Jeff Sorem, Carolyn Nelson, Ray O'Connell

OPPOSED: Linda Presthus, Todd Fronek

MOTION CARRIED.

B. Non-Resident Patron Card Proposal – Braemar Golf Course – This item will be presented at the December Park Board meeting.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Countryside Park Master Plan – Mr. Keprios introduced Greg Ingraham and Anna Claussen, architects from the firm Hoisington Koegler. He noted that they were hired to do some master plan concept drawings of Countryside Park. Mr. Ingraham and Ms. Claussen show six different concept drawings from staff's perspective on the important amenities. He noted that he would like feedback from the Park Board as to whether they think a particular plan is a great idea or specific pieces of the various plans that should be included in the master plan. He explained that what they are trying to do is get a consensus on a concept plan and direction for improvement to the park.

Mr. O'Connell noted that he personally likes plans one and six because of the way they are set up.

Ms. Presthus indicated that the features she would like is to keep are open space, basketball court, dog park, smaller shelter and no hockey rink. Mr. Finsness noted that he agrees with Ms. Presthus.

Mr. O'Connell asked Mr. Damman in conversations and planning which plan did he like the best to which Mr. Damman replied he believes they were plans two and five.

Mr. Finsness asked is there currently a budget for this park. Mr. Keprios replied that currently there is no budget to develop the park and there is no financing vehicle in place. He pointed out that to do it all at once we would probably need to have to rely on a referendum. He stated that another option would be to slowly piece meal it through a capital improvement plan.

Mr. Merriam commented the he personally likes concept three.

Mr. Keprios asked the Park Board how they feel about the hockey question. Mr. Sorem replied that a hockey rink really didn't work real well there and unless everything was completely redone and it was put in a different location he would be in favor of getting rid of it.

Mr. Keprios asked the Park Board to forward any other ideas they might have after tonight on to him. He stated that he would also like to discuss when the Park Board would want to show these concepts to the neighbors. He stated that he thinks it's premature and it would be a mistake if they don't have the financing in place.

Ms. Presthus asked what it would cost to do concept five to which Mr. Ingraham replied he would guess approximately one million dollars. It might be cheaper than that but probably not too much.

Mr. Keprios asked if he hears a consensus on holding this off for the neighborhood for now to which Mr. Finsness replied he thinks that makes sense. Mr. Keprios suggested that he take the comments he's heard and give everyone a few weeks to think about it and then he will regroup with staff and the architects to come up with a plan or two on what has been said and see where that leads them.

Mr. Fronck made one final comment and stated that he likes the idea of having a distinguishing feature in a park as a way to differentiate it. He noted that he does like the idea of a rain garden or a bridge.

- B. Pamela Park Athletic Field Project Update – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that he does not have enough money to pursue a study at this point. He noted that he would like to be able to pursue this next year through the operating budget whether they have the fundraising dollars or not. He stated that he thinks it's a viable project and they ought to keep it in their capital plan. He noted that the plan would be to put in artificial turf with lights and it would be located just to the north and slightly west of the existing fields.
- C. Athletic Association Presidents Meeting – Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that they had a very good athletic association presidents meeting. He noted that they are doing a great job and seem very supportive of the relationship document that the Park Board recommended to the Council which was approved. He stated that he thinks it is working very well for them.

IV. UPDATES FROM STAFF

- A. 2007 Park Improvement Projects Presentation – Mr. Keprios gave a Power Point presentation to the Park Board showing photos of several 2007 park improvement projects that been completed.
- B. Bike Edina Task Force – Mr. Merriam asked if it would be possible for the Bike Edina task force to give the Park Board a presentation on their final report. Mr. Fronck replied that he will ask someone from task force to do that.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.