

Minutes of the
Edina Park Board
January 8, 2008
Edina City Hall, Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ray O'Connell, Todd Fronck, Linda Presthus, Mike Damman, Andy Finsness, Howard Merriam, Randy Meyer, George Klus, Jeff Sorem, Carolyn Nelson

STAFF PRESENT: Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

I. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 11, 2007 PARK BOARD MINUTES

George Klus MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 11, 2007 PARK BOARD MINUTES. Linda Presthus SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Coffee Shop at Lewis Park - Carolyn Kohrs, Edina resident, went over her draft proposal and gave a power point presentation. Ms. Kohrs noted that her goal is to provide a comfortable environment for the people that go to Lewis Park. She stated that this is an opportune time to look at addressing replacing the building at Lewis Park. She pointed out that the city would be in control and if for some reason it fails and they are not able to recoup the seed money then the city comes out ahead because they would have a new building.

Ms. Kohrs indicated that she is respectfully requesting that the Park Board approve this concept so that it can move on to the next step, the City Council.

Mr. Fronck noted that at the last Park Board meeting he felt Ms. Kohrs was proposing a building where people could grab a cup of coffee and visit with their neighbors and create a community atmosphere. However, it now sounds like they are planning on 20,000 athletic users using this building's services annually. Mr. Fronck indicated that there seems to be a shift in position. He noted that if the building were not there then those 20,000 athletic users would quite possibly be stopping at the businesses at 70th and Cahill. Ms. Kohrs replied that it's not really a shifting of position because the vision really is to create a place where people are comfortable whether they want to sit down and have a cup of coffee or if they are going to a game. It's a convenience thing.

Ms. Kohrs stated that she thinks if they move forward they will still need to spend time with the people at the community businesses at 70th and Cahill and come up with options that will help them meet their goals and help her meet her goals. Ms. Kohrs pointed out she is really trying to be flexible to see how they can make this happen.

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

Lowell Swanson – 7200 Cahill, #303
Virgil Dissmeyer – 7250 Lewis Ridge Pkwy.
Phil Reinking, Owner of Honkin’ Joes
Chris Greene – Owner of Honkin’ Joes
Cassandra Moholchick, 7227 Lewis Ridge Pkwy.
Laura Lehmann, 6820 Wooddale Ave.
Lisa Zacharias, Owner of Edina Market
Alice Hulbert, 7221 Tara Road
Jeff Melin, Representing owner of 7001 Cahill Rd.
Brent Fisher, Owner of Sammy’s Subs
Gene Persha, 6917 Cornelia Dr.

(Lowell Swanson presented a petition signed by 21 people which represents 2/3 of the residents at Lechataignier Condominiums because the other residents have left Edina for the winter.)

(Cassandra Moholchick, President of the Lewis Park Neighborhood Association, presented a petition signed by an additional 150 residents that are not immediately adjacent to the park.)

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

Barb LaRose, 7456 Shannon Dr.
Therese Kakalios, 4908 Arden Ave.
Greg Good, 7028 Shannon
Jay Cherner, 5829 Dewey Hill
Kara Stechman, 7460 Shannon
Jennifer Moquist, 7428 Shannon Circle
Ellie Barger, 7023 Down Rd, Student at EHS
Hannah Kohrs, 7444 Shannon, Student at EHS
Patti Plourde, 6721 Hillside
Duke Bascom, 7505 Gleason
Claudia Westholder, 7448 Shannon Dr.
Camille Nash, 6920 Hillcrest Lane

George Klus MOVED THAT THE PARK BOARD ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF HAVING A NEW WARMING HOUSE AT LEWIS PARK THAT WOULD INCLUDE AN AREA FOR CONCESSIONS AND ASK THAT THE CITY ALSO WORK ON AN AGREEMENT WITH MS. KOHRS ON THE CAPITALIZATION OF HER GIFT TO HELP THIS BECOME A PROJECT.

Jeff Sorem SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Fronek asked to clarify that the motion basically covers the \$500,000 in capitalization without deference to Ms. Kohrs other stipulations. Mr. Klus replied that the other stipulations include things that are already in most of the new warming houses. He stressed that right now he is recommending that they work on a proposal to find a way to use the \$500,000.

Ms. Presthus pointed out that she doesn't think they are just taking \$500,000 of capitalization because the concept goes further than that. She noted that they are not just building another warming house but also approving the concept of a commercial business on our parkland in competition with the community. She stressed that they also need to take that into consideration. Ms. Presthus stated that she has been opposed to this concept since she first heard about it. She commented it is her opinion that there is no way 74,000 people are going to go every year to support this coffee shop and pay back the \$500,000 capitalization.

Ms. Presthus also mentioned that a needs assessment survey was recently done and nowhere was a coffee shop at Lewis Park mentioned. In addition, Lewis Park was listed further down in the capital improvement plan projects. She indicated there is no need for this kind of an amenity, especially when there are private businesses just down the street that supply these. Ms. Presthus stated that this project is not in the best interest of the community. In addition she thinks it sets a precedent on public policy and future proposals to which she has a major concern and therefore is opposed to the concept.

Mr. Meyer commented that he thinks they need to find a way to take this money. He stated that the Park Board is just being asked to move this on to the next level to continue the exploration and see if we can take the money in a way that is not detrimental to the city or park. He indicated that he does not see any reason not to move forward with this.

Mr. Merriam stated that his biggest concern is that he's not sure this is a good public policy. He noted that we all want to enhance the visitor experience and create a gathering place. However, he can't support any kind of commercial use on public land. He indicated that he just doesn't think it works. He noted that at this time he is still not sure of how he will vote.

Mr. Klus indicated that he has always been a proponent of the public and private sectors working together because sometimes it's the only way that the city can get the services that the community wants.

Mr. Klus explained that he sees this seed money as a donation. Ms. Kohrs is not saying that the city needs to find a way to pay her back. Ms. Kohrs is the one who is taking the risk. Mr. Klus commented that by saying we are not interested in the concept what he feels we are really telling the people in our community is that we are not interested in your donations. Mr. Klus stated that one of the greatest assets we have in this community is the willingness of our people when there's a need to give.

Mr. Damman stated that he would like to see a new warming house at Lewis Park. However, he is not comfortable when it comes to dealings with parkland and private interests. In addition, he does not believe we should be competing with nearby business establishments. Mr. Damman stated that although it's a great idea for some people in the community, it's not a real priority for the community as a whole.

Mr. Sorem stated that he supports the concept and would like to see it taken to the next level.

Ms. Nelson stated that speaking as the youth representative on the Park Board she is in full support of the concept and thinks it's a good idea.

Mr. Fronek stated that he doesn't think that private businesses run on public property is without precedent and asked is this the precedent that we want to set for how this process is supposed to work.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he needs to be consistent and therefore opposes the motion.

Mr. Finsness indicated that it is his personal opinion that this is a very novel concept and is something new and fresh for the city. He stated that he thinks any opportunity to build community in our city should be given a priority and therefore he is in favor of the concept.

IN FAVOR: Randy Meyer, Howard Merriam, George Klus, Andy Finsness, Carolyn Nelson, Jeff Sorem

OPPOSED: Linda Presthus, Mike Damman, Todd Fronek, Ray O'Connell

MOTION PASSED 6 TO 4.

The Park Board members thanked Ms. Kohrs for all of her work.

III. UPDATES FROM STAFF

- A. Winter Neighborhood Night Out – Mr. MacHolda informed the Park Board that on Friday, January 11th from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm there is going to be a Winter Night Out at the warming houses. Ms. Tilsner, Ms. Aarsvold and Ms. Beitel have put together a lot of crafts, activities and games for this event. Also, on Sunday, January 13th from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm there will be a winter ice festival at Centennial Lakes.
- B. Outdoor Ice Rinks – Mr. Sorem commented that the outdoor ice in Edina has once again been phenomenal and gave kudos to the staff making the ice and stated that it is very much appreciated.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:25 PM