

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tiffany Bushland, Bruce Cantor (6:09 p.m.), George Foulkes, Elizabeth Griffin, George Hagemann and Rachel Salzer.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rich Bluma and Peter May.

GUEST(S) PRESENT: Danny McCullough, Three Rivers Park District

STAFF PRESENT: Rick Beane, Parks Superintendent, Brian Hoffman, Director of Inspections, Mark Oestreich, Westwood Hills Nature Center Manager, Brett Rannow, Intern, Cindy Walsh, Director of Operations and Recreation, Jason West, Recreation Superintendent and Stacy Voelker, Recording Secretary

1. Call to order

Commissioner Bushland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Presentation – Three Rivers Park District

Danny McCullough, Regional Trail Systems Manager, introduced himself to the Commission. Mr. McCullough explained the district has 160 miles of regional trails. Currently, they are reviewing the master plan for the north Cedar and Cedar Lake Trails, while interacting with the users of said trails. Mr. McCullough would like the commissioners to answer a few questions; same questions they are asking the public in the master plan process. The information received will guide the future of the trails. The district has talked with over 400 trail users already! Mr. McCullough distributed questions; if more time is needed, the survey can be collected from Ms. Walsh at a later date.

The plan includes a master plan for each of the eight regional trails advised Mr. McCullough. Trail alignment has already been established; they are looking for future enhancements on the corridor. Staff is in the process of analyzing the data received from the public. Individuals on the north Cedar Lake Trail corridor do not like the railroad division as feel it's dangerous. They are pleased the city is taking the initiative to install a bridge over the railroad tracks. Other items the district has heard include settling and cracking on the trails. There will be a complete reconstruction of some trail segments.

Mr. McCullough asked for feedback from the commission. Commissioner Cantor inquired if evening and night trail safety is a concern of which Mr. McCullough indicated it was not brought

up in the user conversations. The trail volume has increased to over four millions visitors annually. With the volume of trail users it is a challenge to get them all to do the right thing. Most common comments included the quality of the trail, the barrier of the railroad tracks and walkers do not like high speed bikers. Overall, more positive comments were heard versus negative. The users love the connections and would like to see more within the communities. Mr. Beane commented on more city accessed from trails, waypoint finding of city buildings and amenities; they are thinking kiosks. Mr. McCullough indicated they always work with city partners to help people get around better. They view themselves as a highway network of a regional trail system. A sign pointing to a main waypoint in the city is welcome. They point out main buildings or areas but cannot list them all.

Mr. Beane advised the commissioners that city staff maintains the regional trails in the winter. The biggest complaint received is ice on trails as they are not salted as the public works policy is followed. Mr. McCullough advised winter trail maintenance is tricky as they prefer salt not be used on the trails either. He feels anyone biking the trails should be prepared as only so much can be done.

Mr. McCullough indicated they are working with Jack Sullivan, Senior Engineering Project Manager, to realign a connection by Cedar Lake Road and the tunnel as part of safety improvements. Commissioners were encouraged to share any other areas that need more safety with Mr. McCullough.

Commissioner Hagemann offered to speak out to the biking community and support where the money is spent. He likes the resurface plan and inquired where the funding is coming from. Mr. McCullough indicated they were proactive and have maintenance funding. Commissioner Griffin inquired if signage can be added to the Belt Line area before the bridge is built as that intersection is very dangerous. Mr. McCullough indicated that is an ongoing challenge for the city and for Three Rivers. They do not feel signage would help since the road and trail are both high volume areas. They want to improve safety for all but until the throughways are separated, conflicts exist as it is confusing. Cars have the right-of-way until a bike or pedestrian enters the road, then traffic needs to stop for them to cross. Commissioner Cantor feels it is even more confusing as the bikes and pedestrians have the right to cross at the Wooddale Avenue junction.

Mr. McCullough mentioned that if light rail comes through, all bridges will go through. The Cedar Lake trail will be closed for four years for construction. North Cedar Lake trail will be the detour route and the city may add bike lanes on Minnetonka Boulevard to accommodate the construction. The construction will close the Cedar Lake Trail to Excelsior Boulevard (at the Depot). Light rail will be better but will make a large impact on crossings. Three Rivers is already working with city staff on local connections. Commissioner Cantor inquired what is causing the huge use of trails. Mr. McCullough feels bike commuting has increased. He mentioned seeing a lot of ebikes on the trails also, of which only a certain type are allowed. They are not allowed to go over 20 miles per hour.

Commissioner Hagemann inquired if bike repair stations will be added. Mr. McCullough advised bike repair stations will be installed at the kiosk in Dakota Park as well as some areas on the Cedar Lake trails. The master plan of the North Cedar Lake trail includes adding benches as the trail sees a high use of people from the retirement homes, especially between the Depot and Texa Tonka Park.

Commissioners thanked Mr. McCullough. Ms. Walsh invited Mr. McCullough to return at a future meeting to update the commission.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. May 16, 2018

Commissioner Hagemann made a motion to approve the minutes of May 16, 2018. Commissioner Griffin seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 6 - 0.

4. Business

a. Westwood Hills Nature Center

Mr. West introduced the core four staff members involved in the Westwood Hills Nature Center project which include Brian Hoffman, Mark Oestreich, Cindy Walsh and himself. The site plan was review via a presentation. Mr. Oestreich indicated staff met with RJM Construction Management Company on how they will continue operations during construction. Ideas were reviewed which include creating a new trail during construction and use the existing gates for access to the facility. They have a new golf cart with turf tires to provide assistance for accessibility to patrons, which is one of the various ideas considered. Ms. Walsh indicated they want to be transparent during construction. Since they cannot safely get people to the playground, it will be removed. Mr. Oestreich advised the bird nest art work will also be removed by the artist. Ms. Walsh reminded commissioners the art work was initially a two year project. Mr. West advised the main access will be closed during construction so the access Mr. Oestreich mentioned will be provided. The accessible and non-accessible areas were reviewed.

The landscape plan was reviewed by Mr. Oestreich. Staff is working with Barr Engineering and Bassett Creek Watershed Management with the focus on education for storm water management. The storm water plan was reviewed, along with the classroom locations and bog.

Mr. West reviewed the approach from the parking lot, main entrance and secondary entrance. Commissioners also saw a bird's eye view and inside layout of the facility including renderings of the multi-purpose room, acoustic panels inside room, open area by exhibit space and the welcome desk.

Mr. Oestreich described the exhibit space, which is being designed by Split Rock Studio. The great hall will have four main components including wood, marsh, prairie and pollinator exhibits. There will be a discovery table for children plus seating. Each exhibit will have a big feature, hands-on display plus content for 8th grade to adult level. The goal is to have the ability to change exhibits seasonally, which Split Rock is working on. Two of the exhibits will contain sensors for sounds that play. The animal wall will include all animals already existing in the aquariums. Split Rock proposed a large dragonfly, honeybee and other flying creatures to create a 3D version.

Ms. Walsh advised staff will attend the Study Session on September 17 to provide an update. Approval of the plans and specifications to go out for bid will be presented to the city council on October 1. Commissioners were encouraged to attend the October 1 council meeting.

Commissioner Bushland inquired if alcohol will be allowed at events. Ms. Walsh indicated it is not currently allowed but anticipate going to council to change the ordinance to allow a licensed caterer, similar to ROC and Rec Center Banquet Room protocol.

Commissioner Griffin asked when construction may begin. Mr. Oestreich indicated tree removal could begin in December and construction on the building could begin in 2019 as soon as road restrictions are removed. The goal is to move into the new building in the summer of 2020, demolish the old building with project completion in the fall of 2020. Their intent is to keep the existing nature center open until the new building is complete, with no break in service.

Commission Hagemann recommended proceeding with the Westwood Hills Nature Center project; Commissioner Cantor seconded. Motion passed 6 – 0.

b. Cedar Manor School / Park Spanish Immersion park improvements

Ms. Walsh indicated improvements inside and outside of Cedar Manor School / Park Spanish Immersion are part of a school referendum. The area east of the school with the playground equipment is maintained as a city park. Staff hopes to partner with the school to build one playground, accessible to all. Council member Brausen advised the school to follow the city's procedure for neighborhood input regarding playground equipment if they would like the city to contribute to the cost of the playground. Commissioner Griffin feels sharing the playground is important and will be very nice.

Mr. Beane feels the school understands partnering on the project but they do not understand the full process. Ms. Walsh advised if the partnership occurs, the city would move the playground replacement from the 2020 CIP to the 2019 CIP. Once the new playground is added, ours will be removed. The new playground will be completely accessible.

c. Dakota Park bridge addition

Ms. Walsh advised the Dakota Park walking bridge over the railroad will be replaced. The bridge, which will be on the north side of the dog park, will be large enough to allow maintenance equipment. Jack Sullivan, Senior Engineering Project Manager, will likely attend an upcoming meeting to present more details of this project.

d. Commission sponsored appreciation luncheon discussion

Commissioners discussed what all will bring to luncheon; list was updated.

e. Aquila Park site visit

Mr. Beane advised the main contractor, Peterson Companies, is 99 percent complete with the addition of fast pitch softball field's project. Staff is pleased with Peterson Companies work. Ms. Walsh indicated Mr. Beane will lead a site visit to Aquila Park for those interested.

5. Staff Communication

Mark Oestreich advised there were approximately 400 participants in Westwood Hills Nature Center summer camps this year (based on four-day camp), which is average. Fall school groups will begin in a couple weeks. This year, Tree Trust only had funding for two crews throughout Hennepin County. Westwood did not get a summer labor crew. The department hired two seasonal staff members to work on more labor intensive projects. General Mills is giving \$20,000 to Great River Greening to purchase plants for the nature center! Once the plants are purchased, General Mills will provide labor for planting. Tree Trust has begun tree planting, which will continue thru 2020. The city is required to plant inch for inch of what is removed as part of the building project.

A new boardwalk was installed last summer at the nature center advised Mr. Oestreich. The metal was able to be salvaged, along with the floats. Staff worked with MNBid to sell salvaged material and acquired approximately \$5,000 from the sale. The money will go back to the League of Minnesota Cities as it was an insurance claim.

Mr. West reminded Commissioners of a couple upcoming events to be held in the ROC. On Friday, September 28, the ROC will host ROCToberfest. Entry fee is \$5 and a mug is \$10. Professional wrestling is coming to the ROC on September 30. Commissioners were encouraged to attend these events.

The Park & Rec fall brochure was recently mailed and staff is working on the winter publication, Mr. West advised. Nate Rosa, Recreation Supervisor, and wife had their first child on August 10.

6. Member Communication

Tiffany Bushland, Chair of the Commission, announced she had a baby boy on August 9. Lincoln was 7 pounds, 13 ounces and 21.5" long. The Commission congratulated Commissioner Bushland.

7. Other/ Future Agenda Items

Next Meeting – September 26, 2018.

8. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Hagemann and seconded by Commissioner Griffin to adjourn at 7:34 p.m. The motion passed 6 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy M. Voelker

Recording Secretary

Birdseye View from West





LEGEND

- ADMIN
- BUILDING SUPPORT
- CIRCULATION
- EXTERIOR
- PUBLIC GATHERING
- PROGRAM SUPPORT

