



PARK SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN REFINEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 09, 2021

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue N.E.

AGENDA

Present: Mike Heintz, Traci Wuchter, Dan Gourde, Don Whalen, Kim Ferraro, Malcolm Mitchell, Jordan Hurst, Jeremy Powers, Pete Borman, Jim Stangler

Absent: E.B. Graham, Liz Novotny, Ken Schultz, Maija Sedzielarz

Others Present: Alyssa Kruzel, Community Engagement Specialist, Jeff Jensen, Operations Manager for Streets, Parks and Facilities, Candace Amberg, WSB Landscape Architect, Mike Maher, Community Services Director, David Ostwald, City Councilmember, Melissa Moore, City Clerk, Anna Disco, Nick Skochinsky

Mike Maher, Community Services Director, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

1. Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2021 Refinement Advisory Committee Meeting

Mr. Mitchell informed the group that the bonding for Springbrook did not from the City, but from the State. Ms. Moore agreed to revise the minutes to reflect the correction.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2. Community Park Plans Review and Discussion

Mr. Maher reviewed the Committee's agreements for meeting decorum established at the August 12, 2021 meeting and reminded the group they were to go out and review the plans for the three community parks.

Ms. Amberg directed the group to page 17 of the agenda regarding the concept plan for Moore Lake Park. The plan the group will review today was developed from WSB's research and direction from the City gained from the resident survey. Moore Lake is a highly visible park and referred to as a "community gem" from the resident survey. Residents ranked the community parks as what was most important. Moore Lake ranked first.

Ms. Amberg stated the current proposed plan improves parking areas, adding a dog park area, creating a flexible open lawn space, improve existing volleyball space, adding a new group picnic shelter and picnic lawn, larger playground spaces, new beach pavilion and lakeside plaza. This plan does shrink down the

beach area, to accommodate other water activities than swimming, such as canoes and paddleboards, a lakeside boardwalk, improvements to existing docks and improvements to the lake's water quality. The plan does remove the tennis and basketball courts. If residents wanted to play tennis, there are nearby courts at Totino Grace and Briardale Park. And anyone wishing to play basketball could visit Briardale Park and Hackman Circle.

Mr. Heintz noted Moore lake is closed to swimming due to water quality. Mr. Mitchell asked for an update on the water quality. Mr. Jensen answered the City received a grant from the Rice Creek Watershed District to install an enhanced sand iron filter system, and is treating the water for phosphorous levels. There are issues with e-coli, due to geese, which is heavily dependent on the water levels. Mr. Jensen informed the group that to fix the water will be a 50+ year project. The water is relatively clean, but has floating debris in it, so its mainly an appearance issue. The City continues regular testing and is researching different filtration solutions.

Mr. Powers asked if plant filters could be placed to assist. Mr. Jensen answered that plant buffer zones are great to help with water quality, and is a part of the plan for Moore Lake.

Mr. Stangler asked if there was a cost breakdown by amenity. He asked if the City considered Moore Lake as a location for the splashpad. Ms. Amberg noted there is some amenity cost breakdown in the committee's information.

Mr. Mitchell asked if it would be possible to connect both sides of the lake under Highway 65. Mr. Jensen said that would be up to the State and would be extremely expensive.

Ms. Disco commented that if there was something there to draw people to the lake, such as a splashpad, since the water quality keeps people away.

Mr. Heintz would like to see an emphasis on park shelter spaces. The group agreed the park currently gets a lot of use for gatherings. Ms. Amberg asked the group for feedback on the shelter areas. Ms. Wuchter added these would be needed especially if there's a splashpad. The group agreed.

Mr. Gourde commented he felt the dog park area was not necessary because of a larger County-owned dog park nearby. The group agreed.

Ms. Amberg asked the group if they approved of about the baseball fields being repurposed. The group agreed.

Ms. Amberg asked the group for feedback on removal of the tennis courts. The group agreed on the plan to remove them for more green space. Mr. Gourde noted Commons Park has tennis space.

Mr. Mitchell suggested a basketball half court be added. The group agreed.

Ms. Amberg asked the group for feedback on the play spaces. The group expressed approval of the proposed area.

Ms. Amberg asked the group for feedback on the boardwalk or trails. Mr. Mitchell said there should be a loop. Mr. Jensen said the trail through the swamp to the north would need to be a boardwalk.

Mr. Heintz asked about stationary exercise equipment and bike repair stations. Ms. Amberg replied those amenities are in the Commons Park plan.

Mr. Mitchell asked if alternative energy solutions were considered. Ms. Amberg said those are considerations for discussions at a later stage. Mr. Jensen noted the City is testing solar lights at the park to the east of City Hall.

Mr. Hurst noted his desire to include food stations for guests to the park. The group agreed that would be an option for future consideration.

Ms. Amberg opened a discussion on Community Park. This park was ranked third in the resident survey. The plan includes new walking trails, creating new flexible spaces and improving existing athletic fields. The proposed plan includes new turf fields, a new parking area, new playground, interactive sport court, edible orchard, demonstration gardens, and resizing one of the fields to youth ball sports.

Mr. Heintz expressed concern that this proposed plan does not accommodate baseball. The group discussed various layout options. Mr. Stangler suggested turf fields.

Mr. Miller noted this park should be more coordinated with the Civic Campus. Mr. Jensen noted the City's leadership eventually wants to see a connection with the Civic Campus with Community Park, via an overpass.

Ms. Amberg opened a discussion on Commons Park. This park was ranked second in the resident survey. Two ball fields are proposed to be removed for flexible space. Ms. Ferraro noted the ball fields are used heavily by kids who walk directly from the Middle School. Mr. Stangler and Mr. Heintz expressed concern that baseball players age 12-16 do not currently have ballfields that accommodate the size fields they require. Mr. Powers asked if a needs assessment was done for ball fields. Mr. Jensen asked if different ages could play on the same fields but have some sort of movable mound. Mr. Stangler said field one at Community is the only field that meets the 75-foot baseline requirement for baseball. Mr. Powers recommended feedback is needed from the local associations to assess the needs. Ms. Farraro said if a baseball field was removed from Community, the 12-16-year-old kids would not have a field to play on. Ms. Amberg will consult with the City and baseball associations to alter her proposals for baseball fields among the community parks.

Ms. Amberg noted the plan's winter recreation activity area. The group supported the idea and expressed a strong desire to not decrease the size of the sledding hill.

Mr. Stangler asked why the hockey rink needs to move. Mr. Jensen said the biggest feedback from the survey was for warming houses and restrooms for public use.

Mr. Jensen added the City is extremely short on soccer fields. Mr. Mitchell asked if there are projections on needs for soccer, and other sports. Ms. Amberg said it depends on each community.

Ms. Amberg asked the group for their desire to keep the splashpad and pavilion. The group agreed.

3. Review Next Steps and Future Meeting Dates

Mr. Maher asked Ms. Amberg if she could have alternative plans for the next meeting. She said she would have a line drawing concept plan generated from this evening's discussion for the October 14 meeting.

Mr. Mitchell asked if there was information on changing demographics of neighborhoods. Ms. Amberg answered they do have demographic assessments and needs assessments. She plans to review as many neighborhood parks as the group can work through.

Mr. Maher reminded the group the next meeting dates are October 14 and November 10. The best preparation committee members can do is to review the proposed park plans in the neighborhood plans, and review the public's comments.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Moore, City Clerk