

WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Parks & Rec. Members Present: Bonnie Bellows, Bob Gausman, Jay DeLaRosby, Dave Lynch, Kirsten Mulraney, Mike Petrasek

Non-voting Members Present: Sharon G. Hatfield, Parks and Public Works Administrative Specialist; Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director, Wendy Berry, Council Liaison

1. **ROLL CALL**

2. **REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES**

Chair Petrasek called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Member Bellows made a motion to approve the November 10, 2020 meeting minutes. Member Lynch seconded the motion. The motion carried. All Ayes.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Approve 2021 Bylaws/Elect Chair and Vice-Chair**

In reading the Bylaws, Petrasek said that he “could not pick up a change.” Assistant Director Schletty confirmed this, and said that both the Bylaws and the Committee Expectations had not changed in the last two years. Clpn. Berry said that the Charter is looking at the Code of Ethics tonight; they may make changes. Committee members submitted their ballots to Schletty for Chair and Vice-Chair. Schletty said that Council will be reviewing all the committee appointments; three committee members’ terms end in March, (Bellows, Lynch, Gausman). There is one vacancy on the Committee. Schletty said that it was a tight race. The Committee voted in Petrasek as Chair, and DelaRosby as Vice-Chair.

A motion was made by Lynch to accept the election results for Chair and Vice-Chair and to approve the Bylaws. Bellows seconded the motion. The motion carried. All Ayes.

b. **Garlough Marthaler Trail Preliminary Plans**

Schletty reminded the Committee that City staff had been working with a consultant to get the final design done for Garlough and Marthaler Trail. The trail would be designed up to regional trail standards with the County. Schletty provided a picture of the final design to the Committee. Schletty said that is “seventy-five percent done.” There is one segment of the trail that is still being given final consideration. By the end of February, final design will be done; hopefully the project will be taken out to bid soon. The City is working with the County to see if the County will pay for a significant portion of the trail. The trail is an important piece in their corridor. The City took the lead in designing the trail and is paying for this part of it. It is possible to go to construction this year. Schletty asked Committee members if they had any questions. Lynch talked about the ninety-degree curb coming into the parking lot; he wondered if dirt from the cutouts could be placed on the low-lying swampy area on the northern part of the curb. Schletty said that the area is designated wetland and the City “cannot touch it.” Originally the City considered constructing the trail to the north of the wetland. The City then decided it would be better to avoid the wetland and the privately-owned land on the north border, and push the trail south. Lynch said it would be cool to have a bridge over the wetland. Schletty suggested having a secondary boardwalk over the space. Member DeLaRosby asked about the area of the path where it crosses Kraft Street, exiting the Garlough property, the trail bifurcates and one path travels up the hill. He wondered if the path would go away. Schletty showed what segment of the bifurcated path that will be removed; a new single point will be established to the south of the current path, and the new path will travel up the hill from the point. The City will be responsible for this part of the trail. Petrasek asked about the timeline for the trail. Schletty said the consultant would like comments from staff by the end of this week. The consultant will turn around the plans in 3-4 weeks back to the City. The City will work with the county to learn about the funding. The County thinks it may get funding back to the City within a couple years. Schletty said the County would almost fully fund the trail. Lynch asked if there were room in the budget for a bike rack or a permanent bench at entrance of the disc golf course. Schletty said that City funds would be used

for this amenity after the trail is completed. Member Gausman asked about buckthorn removal around the lake. Schletty said that the removal is not part of the trail plan; it is part of the Master Plan. It will be done after the trail work. It will be part of the discussion for Marthaler Park. DeLaRosby asked about the new shelter and restroom facility. Schletty said that the county still wants to put in a trailhead in Marthaler Park. It will not coincide with the construction of the trail. It will happen afterward. The large picnic shelter near the parking lot will remain in Marthaler Park. The trail construction will occur around the large shelter; the smaller shelter amenity that can be seen from the street will be removed. Bellows asked for a newsletter article to be done regarding the changes so that residents know what is happening in the park. Schletty said that this could be done; the changes will be on the Council Agenda as well when the advertisement for bid goes out. Schletty said that if Committee members have any other comments to please email him.

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Park Inventory Update

Petrasek said that City Council would like the Committee to focus on Marthaler Park. They would like to make Marthaler pretty. Berry said that if members are passionate about another park, the Committee should still discuss it. Bellows asked about the previous year's notes on Marthaler Park. Schletty said that he found some of them. The notes are from the June/July 2017 meeting; he did not have specific notes the voting on the about the prioritized list. He, however, did have the list of everyone's individual priorities. Lynch asked about the lakeshore restoration. He wondered if the City received the grant for the restoration. Schletty said it was through an outside funding resource; they were successful in getting the funding from the state. He does not know the timeline of the funding. It will be used for prairie restoration along the trail corridor. It will include the full lakeshore restoration, buckthorn cleanup and reintroducing native plantings. Lynch would like to be informed when the timeline is established. He will direct neighbors and volunteer effort for the shore cleanup. Petrasek said that there is a nice bench of the west side of the parking lot. He could not see the lake because of the overgrowth. Gausman said that land around the lake in Marthaler was disturbed when the park was created; there are some abnormal hills around the lake. He would like the lakeshore to be restored. Lynch said it would be interesting to know the history around the lake and the area around it. Schletty said that the City has owned the property since the mid to late 60's. The first development included the ski hill. The rest of the area was developed in the 70's. Petrasek was in the park this afternoon and there were quite a few people there for a Tuesday afternoon at 2 pm. There were a couple dozen people in the park. Petrasek has five priorities for the park. The shelters were the first priority and this is being taken care of by the new trail. Schletty said that once the new parking lot is finished, the new shelter and new restroom building and new playground would be developed. The Committee has talked about not over programming the park with two shelter areas. Marthaler Park will be a destination park and be really busy. The Committee talked about having one large shelter and then a number of smaller satellite shelters that could be used for small family gatherings. That way, there would not be potentially two wedding events booked into two large shelters competing with each other for space. The shelter would be comparable to the Thompson Oak North Shelter. Lynch said that he would still like to have the top of the hill developed, be it an observation deck or benches. He would like to clear some trees on the hill to restore the vista. It is a unique feature in West St. Paul.

Schletty showed the preliminary plan design for the reconstruction of Marthaler Park. The parking space has changed a little bit from the plan. The parking lot was cut down so that car headlights would not be pointing into the private properties. The tennis courts would remain; the new parking space would be created and then the trail would travel toward the center of the park. The center area would house the new shelter, the new play container; there would be a board walk built out giving a nice view of the lake. The north run would be restored on the sledding hill. On the top of the hill would be a small picnic shelter. Benches may be placed near the bottom of the sledding hill. There will be a loop trail around the lakes and the tennis courts and then connects to

the sidewalk along Humboldt Avenue. Schletty showed where the trailhead building would be. The top of the sledding hill would not necessarily be a full picnic shelter. It could almost be a unique art piece like a trellised area for sitting and observation. Schletty showed places along the lake shore where outcrops are planned. They could be used for fishing or observation. Lynch asked about staff's views on fire pits. Schletty said that staff does not have a formal position on fire pits as long as South Metro Fire was okay with it. It has to be done responsibly. Gausman asked if the park was gaining parking. Schletty said that although the southern parking lot will lose spaces, overall Marthaler will gain parking slots with the parking lot improvements done to the north end of the park. The park will have two distinct areas to the north and the south. The south end is the trailhead destination of the park and the north end is the volley ball, basketball and secondary playground. A small picnic shelter may be added to the north end in the future.

Bellows said she did not settle on one park that needed overhauling. Petrsek did notice some parks with playground equipment dated to 2004; Bellows said even though the equipment was dated for replacement, it may not need replacing yet. Schletty said the City does not budget and install new playground equipment if it is not needed. The Maintenance Department has a certified playground inspector; he inspects the equipment throughout the year and once a month during the summer. He is constantly watching the condition of the equipment and noting which playground shows the most wear and tear. There is money allotted over the next 3 years for playground equipment each year in the CIP. Bellows suggested making pickleball a priority. Schletty agreed; he feels pickleball is a high demand and the City needs a pickleball facility. Lynch suggested the swimming pool park. It has a lot of flat area. If the amenity were added, it might bring more customers to the pool. Petrsek asked if there were any pickleball courts. Schletty said that there were pickleball lines in two courts. They are in the tennis courts. They do get used. The tennis courts are not ideal because the nets are a different level than the pickleball nets. It is not true pickleball. Bellows wondered what happened to converting the court at Weschcke Park. Schletty said that the City looked at that and decided that basketball would stay in that court. It would be also cheaper to convert tennis courts for the pickleball because of the already existing fencing. Lynch asked if fencing would have to be put up for pickleball in Harmon Park. Schletty said [in the summer] the ice rink could have up to 6 courts; temporary fencing would be put up between the courts. Petrsek asked if it were possible for the City to put up a pickleball court as early as this spring. Schletty slowly said yes. Petrsek would really like to see a couple courts put up. There are West St. Paul residents that go to Mendota Heights to play pickleball. He would like to keep the residents in the City. He would like to see the City put the courts in and he would volunteer to monitor their use. It would be a good investment. Schletty said that Orme Park may be a good option if the rink were paved. Petrsek would like to use a tennis court that is underutilized for the pickleball trial. Lynch asked about the horseshoe structure at the Sports Complex. Schletty said that there was pushback from the Horseshoe Club when the Committee discussed the Master Plan and converting half of the horse shoe court. The Horseshoe Club does use the whole facility when they have their tournament. The Committee could look at different uses for the structure; the City serves a small portion of our residents with the horseshoe court; the City could serve more residents if the space is converted. Lynch said that it may be possible to look at this again; things may have changed since the discussion. Schletty said that there may be more options for the space. It was recently used for the Art Park sculpture meetings. Pickleball would be one use; converting the space for a picnic shelter would be another use. The space could even be flooded for skating. Member Mulraney asked about usage of the tennis courts. Schletty said that the courts in Marthaler and Weschcke are regularly used by seniors. The next one that gets the most use is Southview Park. Haskell and Emerson are minimal usage. Lynch said that Haskell has had the history of issues; pickleball may be beneficial to this park. Petrsek said that the Emerson Park court is closer to the street; it may be more appealing to pickleball players. Schletty will do some measuring to see what can fit in each court.

5. OTHER

- a. **Skate Park Subcommittee Update**-Mulraney would like to meet on Tuesday, January 16. City of Skate is available to meet with the subcommittee to discuss funding opportunities. The subcommittee is Mulraney, DeLaRosby and Petrasek. Berry and Schletty would like to be included in the meetings as well.
- b. **City Council Update**-Berry reported that the Council Strategic Planning meeting will be in March.
- c. **Staff Update**-NA

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The committee members adjourned at 6:26 pm. The next Park and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield