

**MINUTES**  
**WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**February 11, 2020**

**Parks & Rec. Members Present:** Jay DeLaRosby, Brad Erickson, Bob Gausman, Dave Lynch, Rachel McNamara, Mike Petrasek

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

**Presenters:** Savannah, Zoe, Karen, Lucy and Quinn, and Carlie, Heritage School. Problem Solving Based Lego Team  
Luke Moren and Eric Fosmo, Kimley Horn

**Guests:** David Carr, Heritage Coach, FFL Team;  
Kevin Hendricks

**1. ROLL CALL**

**2. REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES**

Chair Petrasek called the meeting to order at 5:29 pm.

The meeting minutes from January 14, 2020 meeting were approved.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Giant Blue Picnic Table Presentation**

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Schletty reported that the City was approached by the FIRST LEGO League team from Heritage School team back in November. The LEGO teams compete in middle schools around the country. The teams are challenged with a certain problem and present their solutions in the form of a skit. The teams perform their skits in tournament competitions. The Heritage team has “made it” to the state finals. The team came before the committee to practice their skit. The team’s objective was to find ways to increase usage of the parks, specifically Marthaler Park. The skit challenged the kids to think like scientists and engineers and solve real world problems. They investigated problems in a building/public space and used creative solutions.

The team performed their skit for the committee. The skit talked about the history of West St. Paul and the health benefits of being outside in nature. They also talked about why Marthaler Park is underused; it is badly in need of repair. They proposed the construction of a giant blue picnic table to encourage people to visit and take pictures in the park. They also proposed a scavenger hunt in the park. They talked about the boost to overall health (physical and mental) that nature and exposure to natural light provided.

The skit was well received. Petrasek said they did a “good job.” Member Lynch asked if the “Big Blue Table” was like the “big green chair.” The students replied yes. Schletty asked the team to let the City know how they do in the tournament. Schletty will update the committee. Petrasek thanked the students for their presentation.

**b. Presentation on Oakdale/Thompson Trail Feasibility Study**

Schletty informed the committee that the City has constructed a segment of trail on Oakdale and Marie Avenue. The City is now working on an extension of that trail. . Luke Moren and Eric Fosmo from Kimley Horn came before the committee to present a Feasibility Study for Oakdale Thompson. They apologized for not having a skit prepared. The City received a grant from Minnesota State Health Improvement Program (SHIP) take a look at this project. The segments are Thompson Ave from Robert Street to the city limits east of Trunk Hwy 52, and on Oakdale Ave from Wentworth to Butler Avenue. The study is being done to find ways to improve bicycle and pedestrian routes on these segments. . There are three priority stakeholders for this trail: St.

Croix Lutheran Academy School, the Living Longer Stronger Group and the Carousel Apartment complex. Kimley Horn has met with the school. The school mentioned student safety issues on Butler and Moreland Ave. They were very concerned with safety, specifically on Moreland. The Living Longer meeting is scheduled late in February. They are trying to meet with Carousel. The Public Open House is scheduled for early March.

Kimley Horn presented different options for the trails. Kimley Horn recommended on Thompson Ave., a multiple-use trail on the south side and sidewalk on the north side. There are currently developments on the south: Hyvee, the YMCA, and a portion of the former golf course area. There are cost advantages from these developments because “pieces of the trail” are already being developed as part of these projects. The City already has the right of way for the rest the [undeveloped] golf course area.

The trail for Oakdale Ave. was “more in the development table”; it was not as clear-cut. There were a couple options or hybrid options. Option A consisted of the construction of a multiuse trail on the east side of Oakdale, Wentworth up to Butler. Option B consisted of the conversion of existing shoulders on Oakdale Avenue to bike lanes. A sidewalk would be constructed on the west side for pedestrians.

Each of the options has, “good things and bad things.” Option A provided a continuous trail from Mendota Road to Butler and eliminated the need to cross over for the school on the east side. The school would fund the trail along their side of the property. There would be no change to the road way and no loss to on-street parking. The “cons” to this option were construction challenges along the east side on Emerson to Logan. There are grade challenges and retaining walls would be need to be built. There would be 25 owners with easement costs. Lynch asked if the power poles would need to be moved. Moren said not necessarily. They would work with Xcel.

Option B would have lower construction costs. It would involve restriping the streets and [putting up] no parking signs. Easement costs would be significantly less. Construction on the west side would only affect six parcels. [The City] would reorient the corridor to connect to bike lanes on Annapolis. The “con” would be that the City loses parking along the existing corridor. The loss of parking may have additional political impact. Recreational bikers would also lose the trail and bikers would be traveling adjacent to traffic.

The committee looked at the layouts of the feasibility study options.

The committee talked about these issues:

- Safety/Amenities to schoolchildren
- Access to Parks
- Need for protected bike lanes
- Connectivity to the River to River Trail
- Safety for pedestrians traveling to bus stops
- Equity to apartment dwellers/home owners

Schletty told the committee that they would see the plan again at a future meeting.

**c. Easter Celebration Planning**

McNamara hoped that the City would have better weather this year. April 11 is the date for the celebration. The committee will stuff the eggs again this year. Schletty said that he would like to spread out the Easter egg hunt area with the older children in the big baseball field. The age divisions would be split-up more this year. Schletty will have a proposal for the committee next month. Petrasek said, “Stay the course.”

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Art Park Subcommittee Update-**

Kevin Hendricks reported that the subcommittee is “nailing down” preliminary meeting dates. He will find out if the City receives the grant at end of March. He is working with the Thompson Park Activity Center staff to put a “blurb” in their next Community Education packet. The project will be featured in the July 31 and August 7 dates if the City receives funding. [Thompson Park] is excited about it. It will be an intergenerational thing with the seniors. The City needs to fund \$2,000 by itself. Hendricks is in the process of writing a fundraising blurb in the next City newsletter. Petrasek thanked Hendricks for his hard work.

**5. OTHER**

**a. City Council Update-** Clpn Berry did not have any updates, but encouraged committee members to bring up ideas to her for Council to consider. Council does not get many Park and Recreation items in Council. She welcomed big and small ideas. She supported the Giant Blue Picnic Table’s idea of a scavenger hunt. Lynch suggested clearing out a section of the trees in Marthaler Park to recapture the vista on top of the sledding hill. Schletty said that the City is working with Dakota County for the reconstruction of the park. “Elements have not come together yet.”

**b. Staff Update-**

**i. Interviews for Parks and Recreation Programmer-** Schletty said that the final interviews are being conducted. There are three good candidates.

**ii. New Committee Member-**Schletty said that the committee would have a new member at the next meeting, Kirsten Mulraney. She will replace member Erickson. Petrasek thanked Erickson for his work on the committee.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

The committee members adjourned at 6:39 pm. The next Park and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon G. Hatfield