

WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
March 10, 2020

Parks & Rec. Members Present: Bonnie Bellows, Jay DeLaRosby, Kirsten, Mulraney, Bob Gausman, Dave Lynch, 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: Luke Moren, Kimley Horn

1. **ROLL CALL**
2. **REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES**

Chair Petrasek got the “road on the show” and called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

The meeting minutes from February 11, 2020 meeting were approved. The committee members introduced themselves to new member, Kirsten Mulraney. Mulraney came to West St. Paul in 2015 and is excited to be on committee. She moved to West St. Paul because of Garlough School. She likes the recreation activities especially the bike rodeo and the Easter Egg hunt and she likes the community here.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Presentation on Oakdale/Thompson Trail Feasibility Study**

Luke Moren of Kiley Horn gave an update of the Oakdale Thompson Trail Feasibility Study. Since last month’s committee meeting, there has been an Open House for residents and a Council Work session asking for input regarding the recommendations from the study. Over 500 neighboring residents were invited to the Open House. Council supported the recommendations for sidewalk and trail for Thompson Avenue. Council supported Option A for the multi use trail on Oakdale Avenue. There will be another meeting with Council at the end of the month. The intent of the meeting will be to get support for their recommendations for the grant application in April. The overall recommendation is for Option A after all the feedback.

The recommendations regarding Oakdale Ave had more involved discussions. Support for the multi-use trail was unanimous from the council members. The multiuse offstreet trail benefits both the commuter and the recreational bike user. There are however, many right of way costs and some typography issues on the east side of Oakdale Avenue. The City/Kimley-Horn would consider moving the curb line in on the east side to get the trail farther away from people’s property. The option would affect parking but also cut project costs.

Kimley-Horn met with one of the priority stakeholders, the Living Longer Stronger people. They liked the safety benefit of the trail and getting bikes off the road. There were concerned with the crossing at the five-lane intersection at Emerson Oakdale and Carrie. They would like to make a “refuge” for people crossing at that intersection.

There was a relatively low turnout at the Open House. The invitation mailer was sent to five hundred residents, and only eleven people signed in at the Open House. Everyone who attended the meeting supported the trail. No one was opposed to the bike lanes. There were no specific written comments regarding the trail versus the bike lanes. Participants commented on the safety benefit of the trail. There were some comments from people living on Thompson regarding the impact on their driveways and specific property impacts. These concerns would be addressed after funding is established. There will be pushback from people that live along the corridor. As a whole, people supported the project. An update on funding is due on April 15. Kimley-Horn did a mock application; the Thompson Ave segment of the recommendations did not improve the scoring of the application. It hurt the cost effectiveness because it does not expand the demographic group that benefits from the [proposed improvements.] Kimley Horn will ask for

funding for Oakdale Avenue only. Thompson Avenue will be part of the roundabout plans for Robert and 52 and changes to Thompson would be rolled into this project.

Moren explained that moving the curb would avoid expensive right of way costs; it would involve building new curb and new storm sewer and be cheaper for the City. Council members were interested in the cost benefits of this method. Schletty remarked that the right of way costs is more than the cost of the right of way acquisition. Each property is handled individually. It includes the individual property [analysis], appraisals and lawyers' fees. It is a lengthy process. Member Bellows wished more people showed up for the Open House. Schletty said that there would be a public hearing when Council discusses the plan. Moren said that the point of the study was to [develop] a recommendation and to educate in order to seek funding. Schletty said that the City would not put a trail on people's property without input from property owners. However, the City cannot "hand-hold" residents into coming to meetings. There will be more opportunity for feedback; it will just not be on the feasibility study. Bellows suggested having a feature on the study in the City Newsletter. Member DeLaRosby said that he received the mailer. He did not have the time to attend the meeting. The mailer was on card stock, in bold, had the date for the Open House, and how to submit feedback if you could not attend. He commented that the people along the Thompson Avenue corridor are "plugged in" because of the apartment complex and the Hyvee [project.]. With the St. Croix Lutheran construction expansion, there have been a lot of talk about safe crossings. Regarding the five-point intersection, he hoped [the City] could negotiate with property owners especially with one house in particular for the greater good of the community. He added that it is wise to leave off the Thompson part of the application. There will be a there will be a lot of activity opportunity to collaborate with the future Greenway [Trail], and the development of apartment complex and Hyvee. He bikes that section of the roadway a lot and it is the most harrowing part of his journey.

Petrasek asked about the funding chances. Moren said the project is going well; it is the #2 gap in the County system. The application has a [good]chance. The Thompson Ave portion will still be in the Feasibility report. Construction for the project would be slated for 2024. There is still some time for negotiations and to work out utilities.

A motion was made to recommend Option A with an emphasis of moving the curb. The motion carried. All Ayes.

Petrasek thanked Moren for his work. Schletty said that the plan would not be before the committee until the construction plan is accepted.

4. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Park Inventory/Master Plan Discussion**-Schletty asked committee member if they would like to resume their individual visits to the parks to resume the inventory and evaluation discussion.

A motion was made to inventory Haskell and Kennedy, weather permitting. The motion carried. All Ayes.

Schletty will send inventory information to committee members regarding these parks.

Gausman talked about the potential in parks for artwork. When the parks first went in, they were "pared down.". There were more attractions to get people to visit the park. He would like these old fashioned parks to be more attractive and be valuable to the city. Petrasek mentioned the big blue table from the Lego League presentation.

- b. **Art Park Subcommittee**- Schletty said they are still waiting to see how the grant scored.
- c. **Easter Celebration Planning**- Schletty said that there would be a slight change to how the fields would be laid out according to age group. The older kids would be in the bigger baseball field to the east. The younger ages would be separated and spread out into smaller groups. Petrasek said that would be a good idea. The petting zoo from last year is not available. He

secured the company the City had two years ago that featured baby animals. They will use the warming house if it is too cold for the animals outside. Schletty said that the event still needs an Easter Bunny; Petrasek said that this was an initiation for new members. Schletty asked Petrasek to contact the Hockey Boosters for a donation.

5. **OTHER**

- a. **City Council Update**- Clpn. Berry saw a presentation about the new playground for Marthaler Park. The Rotary Club donated \$12,000 for the equipment. It will be located in the lower part of the park next to the basketball courts. The school district was not able to use the equipment and the city was able to purchase the equipment for a reduced price. Normally the set would be \$70K; the cost for the City is \$49K. The installation of the equipment will cost \$9k.
- b. **Staff Update**
 - i. **New Program Coordinator-Sam Murphy**- Sam is a recent college graduate that has many years experience working in parks and recreation. Her first job will be to hire summer staffing. There are 7-8 postings for this summer.
 - ii. **Lego League**-The Lego League had their tournament. They did not win but ranked in the top one percent in the state of Minnesota. They won a judge's award for cohesiveness and team support. They thanked the committee for their feedback.
- c. **Egg Hunt Prep**- The committee adjourned to stuff Easter eggs for the upcoming event.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The committee members adjourned at 6:26 pm. The next Park and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield