

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings
Of The Park and Recreation Advisory Commission
Wednesday, August 12, 2009**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Al Eiden called the August 12, 2009 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Al Eiden, Vice Chair Dennis Schueller, Commissioner's: Willie Krech, Tammy Johnson, Jim Huffman, Marty Silvi, and Keith Joyce

Absent: Commissioner's Joe Boehmer and Stan Johnson

Park and Recreation Director Eric Carlson and Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek

3. PRESENTATIONS:

None

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our Web Site at:

www.ci.inver-grove-heights.mn.us

B. The next Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 9, 2009. Work Session 6:45 p.m.; Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Silvi, seconded by Vice Chair Schueller to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

8. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF TRAIL FUNDING FOR HWY. 52 BECKMAN AVE. CONNECTION

Park and Recreation Director Eric Carlson stated this is regarding a trail connection from Highway 52 trail to Beckman Avenue. The project cost is not to exceed \$25,000. There is currently a worn path to get to the trail. Bids were reviewed and Danner Inc. will be doing the work. City Council wanted the Park and Recreation Commission to identify a funding source. They are recommending it come out of the Park Acquisition and Development Fund (Fund 402).

Motion by Commissioner Joyce, seconded by Commissioner Silvi to approve the trail funding source as presented.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

B. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FENCE AND TRAIL QUOTES FOR SOUTH VALLEY TRAIL

Director Carlson stated this item has been discussed before. They were waiting for some work to be done on the storm sewer near the trail. It is currently being fixed. At this time they will be voting on the fence reconstruction on either side of the trail as well as replacement of a section of the trail. They will award it to the lowest contractors. Ace Blacktop for the amount of \$14,846 and Just –Rite Fence at \$14,400.

Commissioner Joyce asked who is responsible for the fence from now on?

Director Carlson responded it will be the City's responsibility.

Commissioner Krech can understand the blacktop and the fencing, but the tree removal and restoration could be done by Staff. He thought the cost of the additional work seemed high and it should have been part of their regular maintenance. He doesn't see charging ourselves to be doing what they should already be doing.

Motion by Commissioner Silvi, seconded by Commissioner T. Johnson to approve the fence reconstruction and the replacement of a section of the trail as presented to the lowest contractors.

Commissioner Joyce asked who was doing the tree removal.

Director Carlson responded Staff will do it.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 1 (Krech) Motion carried.

C. CONSIDER REQUEST FOR PARK PROPERTY BOUNDARY EXCEPTION AT 7907 CONROY WAY EAST

Director Carlson stated awhile back they started an exercise where they went out and marked the park boundaries in some of the City's parks. They have completed 16-18 out of 30 parks at this time. At times they have run across situations where property owners have encroached on park property. The City Council directed Staff to notify the property owners to remove the encroachments from park property. 30 people have received letters so far. One resident is here this evening regarding this. He lives at 7907 Conroy Way East, which is located in the Southeast corner of the Oakwood Park. His chain link fence, as well as a few items inside of the fence, needs to be moved. The property owner is requesting one of two things. Allowing their fence to continue to be on park property utilizing approximately 136 sq. feet of Oakwood Park for their personal use, which is providing them with an exception, or to sell approximately 550 square feet of park property. Staff's perspective would be to leave the boundary where it is. While the request sounds reasonable, consideration needs to be given to the potential precedent established. There are a number of other residents that have encroached. Staff isn't sure that selling the property under these circumstances is a good practice.

Commissioner Joyce asked if there wasn't a shed on park property out there?

Director Carlson responded there is.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if this is a City-wide park policy?

Director Carlson responded it is. 16 out of 29 have been surveyed so far. He has also visited several of the sites, as well as the Renner's property.

Commissioner Silvi stated that many homeowners have gardens, woodpiles, flowers, etc. If we allow one case it allows others to want the same. If this fence is moved it doesn't change their view point at all. He is against changing the park boundaries as there could be many more instances.

Doug Renner, 7907 Conroy Way East wants the matter resolved. They bought the home 18 years ago and the fence was in place. The park boundary post was put in without any documentation as to why it was there. He would like to keep his fence in place until his dog is no longer using the yard. He asked if he has to remove the fence, what will happen with the area?

Commissioner Silvi asked how the park property is maintained now?

Mr. Renner said they mow right up to the fence. There is an incline and weeds if the fence is removed.

Director Carlson said the City can change the grade so it drains down into the park.

Commissioner Silvi suggested he take out the fence and re-install it.

Mr. Renner said he would probably need new fence posts.

Commissioner Huffman asked how far the fence needed to be moved?

Mr. Renner responded it was 7 feet. It's approximately 135 square feet.

Commissioner Joyce was not for selling off park property. It would set a precedence.

Motion by Commissioner Silvi, seconded by Commissioner Joyce to let the policy stand with no variances, therefore, denying the request.

Commissioner T. Johnson asked if there was a rush to do this? Since there is a dog involved, perhaps they could set a timeline?

Director Carlson said the letter stated the fence was to be removed by August 31st.

Commissioner Krech suggested leaving it up to the City Council to decide. They may be more sympathetic. He would be okay with selling off the land.

Vice Chair Schueller stated that setting a precedence to selling parkland is not a good idea. He supports the motion as it should be done according to the agreement.

Commissioner Krech suggested the homeowner check to see if a survey was done at the time he purchased his home.

Chair Eiden agreed with the Commissioners that if we started allowing variances for one, we could have many more.

Director Carlson stated this item will be on the City Council's Agenda on August 24th. They will make the final decision.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Commissioner Silvi asked if we don't already have a plan in place regarding property owners who border parks?

Director Carlson stated that one is for screening. The homeowner and the City develop a landscape plan which is planted on City property.

Mr. Renner asked if the post will remain? Is there somewhere else they can put it? Underground?

Director Carlson said they can work with him to make sure it isn't such an eyesore.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:

A. Department Happenings

Director Carlson said he has nothing to update them with this evening and will stand by for questions.

Director Carlson noticed someone in the audience and asked, even though we are past the time to make public comments, if he would like to address the Commission.

George McQuay, 7367 Dawn Avenue would like to see a Dog Park in the City. South St. Paul has one and a lot of people use it. There is an empty ball field at the corner of 72nd and Dawn Way that would be a good spot for one. If a dog park goes in there, he would like to suggest the name Tucker Park after his dog who was hit by a UPC Truck on Dawn Avenue.

Vice Chair Schueller liked the idea of a dog park in Inver Grove Heights.

Commissioner Krech said there are about 20 acres of land behind the King of Diamonds that could be a potential area for a dog park.

Director Carlson said that area is located by the bridge but the City doesn't own it yet.

Mr. McQuay felt the ball field is a perfect spot. It just needs fencing.

Commissioner Krech commented those types of parks tend to be better away from neighborhoods due to dogs barking.

Chair Eiden said the dog park wouldn't be a neighborhood park. It would be a community park used by all.

Director Carlson suggested bringing back information at the next meeting. There are a lot of different types of dog parks. He can look up some information on ones that are in the general area to give comparisons.

The Commission agreed with Director Carlson.

Director Carlson said it would be more realistic if they were to take the winter to get some ideas and let residents know next spring or summer.

Commissioner Silvi asked that page numbers be put on the pages that have the financial information on them so they can easily tell a page number if they have any questions. He had a few questions about some amounts at the Golf Course.

Commissioner Joyce felt the amount indicated unsold merchandise still on the shelf.

Commissioner Schueller said he noticed that Simley Island Park has a lot of work going on. The wooded area was thick. It seems some Company is clearing it out. He asked for an update.

Director Carlson said the Council approved some plantings along the shoreline to help with the Geese issue on the Island. He is unsure what is going on off Carmen Avenue, but will check with Parks Superintendent Mark Borgwardt on that.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner T. Johnson had no comment.

Commissioner Huffman had no comment.

Commissioner Silvi had no comment.

Commissioner Joyce said we will have had Inver Grove Heights Days by our next meeting.

Vice Chair Schueller encouraged people with concerns regarding the Golf Course to take an active role in the process.

Commissioner Krech agreed with Vice Chair Schueller regarding the course. He commented it looks really good on Cahill Avenue to Inver Grove Trail now that a portion of the grass has been mowed.

Chair Eiden stated he was approached last week by several residents and was told many are pleased with The Grove and the Golf Course.

Director Carlson said Inver Grove Heights Days will be held the week of September 7th.

11. ADJOURN

Motion made by Commissioner Huffman, seconded by Commissioner Joyce to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.