

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES - CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

Tuesday, January 18, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Chambers - 8150 Barbara Avenue

Chair Bartholomew called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Tom Bartholomew
Pat Simon
Dennis Wippermann
Tony Scales
Paul Hark
Christine Koch
Harold Gooch

Commissioners Absent: Damon Roth
Mike Schaeffer

Others Present: Allan Hunting, City Planner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the December 7, 2010 meeting were approved as submitted.

APPLICANT REQUESTS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mark Borgwardt, Park Superintendent, explained that the City received a grant from Dakota County Active Living Program to conduct a Trail Gap Study. City staff and Hoisington Koepler Group Inc. are requesting that the Planning Commission either confirm or recommend modifications to the list of trail prioritization criteria and the draft gap map which identifies key gaps in the City's trail and sidewalk system. He advised there will be community review as well and hopefully a final trail improvement map and recommendations will go to City Council in February or March. Mr. Borgwardt discussed the draft trail gap criteria for prioritization, including 1) connecting existing trails and sidewalks, 2) connecting residents to key destinations, 3) trails being located primarily in the developed area of the City, 4) enhancing safety, 5) minimal land use concerns, 6) creating loop trail opportunities, 7) using available right-of-way, 8) determining whether it was feasible and cost effective, and 9) can it be coordinated with planned road improvements. He then asked Commissioners for their input regarding prioritization criteria.

Commissioner Wippermann asked if the nine criteria just mentioned included the recommendations from the Park and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Borgwardt replied that both the Park and Recreation Commission and City Council agreed with the proposed criteria and did not recommend any additional criteria. They did, however, recommend additional trail segments, including a trail segment connecting the college, library, and high school, as well as a trail segment near the Moose Lodge and along Cliff Road in Southern Lakes.

Commissioner Gooch asked how many of these areas would have a separate sidewalk constructed rather than just striping the street, to which Mr. Borgwardt replied that wherever possible the preferred route would be a detached trail or sidewalk as opposed to a painted

shoulder.

Commissioner Gooch asked if they were proposing to create a trail from Babcock to South Robert along upper 55th as opposed to a wide shoulder, to which Mr. Borgwardt replied in the affirmative. Mr. Borgwardt advised that City Council expressed an interest in having a connection to Robert Trail.

Commissioner Gooch asked for clarification of Gaps P and C.

Mr. Borgwardt explained that they are proposing to run a trail along 70th Street from the golf course to South Robert Trail and also to run a section of sidewalk along Upper 55th in front of the abandoned gas station where there currently is a gap.

Commissioner Gooch asked if they planned to complete the proposed bituminous trails indicated with a dotted yellow line.

Mr. Borgwardt replied in the affirmative, stating they would need direction from the City Council on prioritization as well as input from Public Works as to what would be the most feasible from a street reconstruction point of view.

Commissioner Simon noted that the existing trail shown along Babcock between 70th and 75th Streets was actually located on the east side of Babcock rather than the west side as shown.

Mr. Borgwardt advised he would correct the map.

Commissioner Hark asked if the intent was to make all trails equally accessible to pedestrians and bikers, stating that people were more likely to ride bikes rather than walk in the less populated areas such as Gap K along Courthouse Boulevard, and therefore perhaps an on-road trail would be sufficient. Trails in the denser portions of the City, however, were more likely to cater to pedestrian traffic and would benefit from a separated bituminous trail. He noted there were many proposed bituminous trails in the Northwest Area.

Mr. Borgwardt stated this study does not address the Northwest Area; the proposed trails in that area come from the Comprehensive Plan. He stated they concentrated mostly on the developed portion of the City and would likely construct multi-purpose trails for both bike and pedestrian traffic.

Commissioner Hark asked for clarification of how the City would complete existing trail gaps, to which Mr. Borgwardt replied they have not identified materials yet (concrete vs. bituminous) and specific trail locations would depend on available right-of-way.

Commissioner Hark stated there could be a large cost savings in building an on-road trail primarily for biking versus a separated bituminous trail for pedestrians.

Mr. Borgwardt showed a brief video from Blue Cross Blue Shield regarding active living.

Chair Bartholomew recommended that the prioritization criteria be approved as stated. He asked if there were any recommended changes to the trail gap map.

Jim Huffman, 4237 Denton Way, stated the Park Commission was concerned about the Southern Lakes trail that dead ended at Cliff Road. For the safety of residents, they would like a trail built along Cliff Road.

Chair Bartholomew asked if City Council removed the proposed Southern Lakes trail from the Comprehensive Plan, to which Mr. Hunting replied he did not recall which specific segments were removed.

Commissioner Simon asked if the existing Southern Lakes trail was constructed of birch bark, to which Mr. Huffman replied that it had since been paved.

Chair Bartholomew asked why the recommended trail segment for Southern Lakes was not shown on the trail gap map, to which Mr. Huffman replied that it was and that he was here to show his support for it.

Commissioner Simon asked who prepared the basic recommendations, to which Mr. Huffman replied the Park and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Simon asked if it would help if the Planning Commission stated they supported the proposed Southern Lakes trail segment, to which Mr. Huffman replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Wippermann asked where the proposed extension would be located, to which Mr. Huffman replied the trail would come out of the southern end of Southern Lakes and continue west on Cliff Road to Alison Way. He advised the County would grant an easement for its construction.

Commissioner Wippermann stated the proposed Southern Lakes segment would meet the criteria for creating a loop trail opportunity.

Mr. Borgwardt questioned whether it would meet the criteria for being located in the developed area of the City, to which Commissioner Wippermann advised that Southern Lakes was a developed area of the City and it should therefore meet that criteria as well.

Chair Bartholomew suggested the Commission vote on both requests on a white ballot.

Motion by Commissioner Simon, second by Commissioner Hark, to approve the listed trail criteria for prioritization and the map of trail and sidewalk gaps with the addition of the Cliff Road gap near Southern Lakes.

Motion carried (7/0).

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bartholomew adjourned the meeting at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Fox
Recording Secretary