

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings
Of The Park and Recreation Advisory Commission
Wednesday, June 13, 2012**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Eiden called the June 13, 2012 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Al Eiden; Vice Chair Dennis Schueller; Commissioners: Chris Solberg, Jim Huffman, Joe Boehmer, Stan Johnson, Desta Meyer, and Mary Hapka
Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson

Absent: Commissioner Willie Krech; Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Welcome New Commissioner – Mary Hapka

Director Carlson wanted to take the time to introduce and welcome a new member, Mary Hapka, to our Commission. She was elected by the City Council in May. Mary will be taking the place of Marty Silvi, who decided not to renew as a Commissioner.

Commissioner Hapka was excited to be here. She looks forward to serving the City of Inver Grove Heights.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

www.invergroveheights.org

B. Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 11, 2012. Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Approval of May 9, 2012 Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Solberg, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Aye: 8

Nay: 0 Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

8. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Elect Chair and Vice Chair

Park and Recreation Director Eric Carlson stated each year at this time the Commission selects a Chair and Vice Chair to serve for the year. The Chair runs the meetings and the Vice Chair serves when the Chair is absent from the meeting. At this time you should nominate and elect a Chair and a Vice Chair. Chair Eiden has been Chair for the last 12 months, and Vice Chair Schueller has been Vice Chair for the last 12 months.

Commissioner Johnson nominated Chair Al Eiden and Vice Chair Dennis Schueller to continue serving. Chair Eiden has kept us on task and on point and his knowledge and experience has served us well. Vice Chair Schueller has stepped in well and is very involved in the Golf Course.

Commissioner Solberg nominated Vice Chair Schueller to be Chair this year.

Director Carlson stated we have two Chair nominations, and one Vice Chair nomination at this point.

Vice Chair Schueller appreciated the nomination for Chair but would decline. He would be more than happy to continue on as Vice Chair as so elected. He would like to see Chair Eiden continue as Chair.

Director Carlson stated that Chair Eiden serves as the Chair and Vice Chair Schueller serves as Vice Chair.

**Motion by Commissioner Solberg to keep Al Eiden as Chair and Dennis Schueller as Vice Chair.
Seconded by Commissioner Meyer.**

Aye: 7

Nay: 0 Motion carried.

B. Review Friends of the Mississippi River Proposal for a Natural Resource Management Plan

Director Carlson stated this item is to hire Friends of the Mississippi River in an amount not to exceed \$3,900, to conduct a Natural Resource Management Plan of 17.28 acres of Rock Island Swing Bridge property with funding from Park Dedication Fund 402. The City hired Friends of the Mississippi River to do a similar study of the Heritage Village Park Parcel back in 2002. They will assist us in securing Grants from the State of Minnesota and other granting authorities to do natural resource restoration on the acres of property associated with the bridge. Some granting opportunities require us to have a Natural Resource Management Plan in place to apply for the grant. The money won't make actual improvements on the property, but it will help us make a plan to apply for grants for those projects.

Commissioner Solberg asked how this is different from the Comprehensive Plan that we recently developed?

Director Carlson said that plan is more conceptual and focused. This talks of natural resources, plants, and plant life, those types of issues on the property itself.

Commissioner Huffman asked if they are going to plant vegetation?

Director Carlson stated if we move forward with this plan, it will help us decide what type of plantings to put out there, and what to remove. It will help identify issues on the property and develop a plan on how to restore it. It will help us apply for Grants with the goals of the plans we have to put forward with the proposal.

Chair Eiden asked if this covers both water and land?

Director Carlson responded it is just the land.

Commissioner Boehmer asked why we can't have Parks Superintendent Mark Borgwardt go down there and determine what the buckthorn is and other things. We have Staff that can do this.

Director Carlson stated some of the Grants that we would apply for would require us to have a Natural Resource Management Plan in place to apply for some of those grants. Hopefully this will aid us in some of the Grant opportunities.

Motion by Commissioner Solberg to approve the \$3,800 disbursement. Seconded by Commissioner Huffman.

Aye: 8

Nay: 0 Motion carried.

C. Review Policy on Other Power Driven Mobility Devices

Director Carlson stated this is regarding the Other Power Driven Mobility Devices associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The 2010 standards took place on March 25, 2011, with compliance required by March 15, 2012. We have been working on gathering information with regards to the accessibility of our facilities and our policies and procedures. It will take quite some time to complete compliances due to ongoing policy changes. One of the items we must deal with has to do with other power driven mobility devices that people with mobility issues could use to access facilities within the City. Be it here at City Hall, Trails, or our Parks. When Commissioner Silvi was on this Commission he spoke about electric bikes. This covers that. We put together a draft policy to address what types of vehicles can be used in the park system. We tried to limit it so it doesn't get out of control. We want to make sure we protect some of our areas of the park system, and we also want to make sure those with disabilities can enjoy our parks system. There are limited questions we can ask someone with a disability. For example, if someone was using an electric golf cart we can ask them if they needed that for a mobility disability. We can ask them to show us a placard, if they had one, or we would have to take their word, unless we saw them get off their golf cart and walk across their field without much effort. That assumes they do not need the golf cart for a mobility issue. This policy deals with that and a number of different things.

He would like to make two changes. One on Page 1 of the policy. Take out on the bottom, under objectives, with the word starting "or" in Inver Grove Heights. What we would do is ask to see a Minnesota issued parking sticker, if they don't have that, we would take them at their word. We are not going to get into the issue of having to issue our own tabs.

The next change would be on the second page, last bullet. As it is shown right now, it makes it look like it has to do with gas powered devices and it doesn't. We would have the right to change or modify the policy based on circumstances.

Commissioner Huffman asked about powered bicycles, similar to what Commissioner Silvi brought up.

Director Carlson stated an electric bike would be allowed under this policy. An electric golf cart would be allowed under certain circumstances. For example, out at Rich Valley, we wouldn't allow someone to run an electric golf cart during a ball tournament. It would be a safety issue. We would allow them to use it down a trail. We wouldn't let them use an electric golf car to go down the same trail in a park. The Golf Course policy talks about that in that the Golf Course Staff will work with that individual to use the device that works well with them. If one of our Golf Cars worked for them, we would let them drive it onto the green if they could stand. An able party would not be able to drive one onto the green. There are other devices in the golfing community that can be driven. We don't have any on site, but if a person called and requested one, we could get one.

Commissioner Solberg asked what we were going to be doing for signage? How will we be explaining this?

Director Carlson doesn't see us putting up signage. We can use media to have people be aware of it. We will have a public meeting about this. We will try to get our message out to as many people that we can. To date it has not been an issue that we have seen. As the population grows, it may be something we need to work with. Almost 20% of the population has a legally defined disability.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if they would be allowed on dirt trails? He can't imagine the safety on some of those trails. Some of the hills and things at South Valley would be dangerous. He asked who is going to help make a decision to where it is safe and where it isn't with a power driven device?

Director Carlson stated the policy talks about the use of the devices on trails. It speaks of other trails with trail type. But generally some trails have various tread widths. There may be other obstacles in the way, or trails made be eroded or muddy. It talks about single track trails. This would be similar to a bicycle for safety navigation. We don't need to make all of our areas accessible for that type of device. It is up to the user to decide whether they can access that given area.

Commissioner Meyer stated it is the same thinking with someone that brings their bike out at Harmon Park. People have to decide whether it is a risk they want to take or not. It's personal responsibility.

Motion by Commissioner Meyer to approve the policy. Seconded by Commissioner Huffman.

Aye: 8

Nay: 0 Motion carried.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:

A. Department Happenings

Director Carlson will stand by and answer any questions regarding what is found in the Department Happenings report.

Vice Chair Schueller stated due to the weather, the Golf Course has had an outstanding start. There were a large number of high schoolers out there. This year has been a very good year. The high school team, which he is one of the coaches, appreciates the Staff's help with our school, and other schools.

Chair Eiden asked how the Community Gardens are doing?

Director Carlson responded they are doing well. It's been well received. People can contact the Park and Recreation Staff and are assigned a plot to them and they pay a fee to use the plot for the growing season.

Chair Eiden asked if there was another place around here that has a Community garden?

Director Carlson responded yes, the Church across of Highway 52 north of 80th Street has one. There is also one at Pine Bend Elementary School.

B. Future of Our Parks Report – Park & Recreation System Plan

Chair Eiden stated at this time we have received three requests for proposal. The subcommittee has had a chance to look through them. Our next step would be to interview all three companies. They will try to determine a preference and those interviews will take place the latter part of next week.

Commissioner Huffman asked if any of these three give a price?

Chair Eiden stated they are all approximately \$65,000. They are all within \$5,000 of that amount. One of them had some extras they could add. The subcommittee has a number of factors that we have when we are looking at them. By the next meeting we hope to have a decision and hopefully the Council will have a project team on site.

Director Carlson stated our goal is to interview the three firms. At our meeting in July we will make a recommendation to the Commission and then it goes to the City Council. Hopefully they will approve the firm and we can get started in August with the selected firm. The process could take more than a year.

C. Review Park and Recreation Commissioner's Handbook

Commissioner Huffman commented it is prepared well.

Director Carlson stated we should also re-welcome Commissioner's Schueller and Boehmer to the Commission for another three year stint.

Chair Eiden stated under the Commissioner Questions, the second bullet point, where some wish to discuss the matter with the Commissioner and the Director. Discussion is always encouraged. He thinks they need to put something in there to indicate that they can be reached outside of the meeting if you have questions. He is just looking for a bit more clarification. The last item there, if you are approached on the Street, sometimes people want an answer from you. He wouldn't want you to make them feel like you have to respond, but if there is an issue it should be forwarded to the Director or Staff so you get the clarification you need. He also thinks as a matter of respect they deserve an answer, whether it is one they like or not. He has a quirk about people asking questions and not hearing answers. If people stop and ask you, it is a courtesy to give them an answer.

Vice Chair Schueller commented on the concluding remarks where it says facilities and programs. What is the procedure if a person on this Commission wants to visit a facility? Would they need to make an appointment or can they just go into that facility and observe how it works? Maybe it would be someone's office, or the green keepers building back there?

Director Carlson asked if it would be a public place or a staff only place? If you come to visit him, you will stop at the front desk and ask to see me. If you are at the golf course, and you want to see the the golf range, anyone can walk up and see that. If you want to see what is going on at the Turf Maintenance Facility, you should probably ask Staff if you can take a look at something.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Vice Chair Schueller commented a few people have asked him about the fountains at Simley Pond that have not been operating in a normal fashion. Is anything being done?

Director Carlson responded he knows of one that is not working. It was an electrical issue. He is unsure of why it is taking so long but will check into that.

Commissioner Boehmer welcomed the new Commissioners. He looks forward to working with them.

Commissioner Huffman had no comment.

Commissioner Hapka joined the Commission because her background is in Park and Recreation. She graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Parks and Recreation Management. She worked with the City of Mendota Heights most recently but in a differing capacity. She then worked from home and has the flexibility now to take this on. She has an interest in City Government and thinks it is a good idea to see what's going on in the Community and have a voice. She just took her son to a lacrosse game, her daughter will be up

at the Grove for ice skating. She runs every other day in the City. She loves the amenities here and is her family has a membership to the Grove. They use this Community everyday in some facet of recreation.

Commissioner Meyer had no comment.

Commissioner Johnson wanted to thank Marty Silvi for all his years of service.

Commissioner Solberg welcomed Mary Hapka to the Commission. He had a Trivia Question to ask. How many parks does Inver Grove Heights have? Visit our website for the answer. It might surprise you.

Chair Eiden welcomed the new Commissioner.

There is a lot going on this summer. Everything is on the website which is easy to get at. Have a happy, joyous, and safe summer. Use the amenities here to make it easy on yourself and enjoyable.

11. ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Solberg, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Aye: 8

Nay: 0 Motion carried.