

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings  
Of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission  
Wednesday, December 12, 2012**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice Chair Dennis Schueller called the December 12, 2012 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Vice Chair Dennis Schueller; Commissioners: Mary Hapka, Joe Boehmer, Jim Huffman, Willie Krech, Chris Solberg, and Stan Johnson

Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson

Absent: Chair Al Eiden; Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek

**3. PRESENTATIONS:**

**A. Presentation from Parks & Recreation Staff**

Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson stated that Al Vandehoef, Recreation Coordinator, is here this evening to update you on some programming opportunities within the City.

Recreation Coordinator Al Vandehoef stated this time of year they are gearing up for all the Winter activities. Some upcoming events are:

1. Skating with Santa takes place on Friday.
2. There will be a Candy Cane Hunt on Saturday morning and then Holiday on Main Street Saturday afternoon.

With warmer than usual weather, they are hoping to open the outdoor rinks soon. Right now they are planning on having them open, weather permitting, on December 26<sup>th</sup>, with the rinks and warming houses.

The Adult Broomball League will have their league moved from Skyview to Groveland due to having one less rink at the Skyview location.

Winter break trips for kids are back. Numbers have fallen off a bit during the last few years, but now we are bringing it back again. We are taking two trips. One is to Vertical Endeavors on the 27<sup>th</sup> and the other is snow tubing on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Parents will have this as an option for older kids to take part in during the day when there is no school.

Some events coming up in the spring:

- We will be holding a Summer Registration Kickoff in early March. With that event we hope to get information out to people with what is going on during the spring and summer. If they register that day they will get a discount for the day. There is a soccer carnival that day as well as a lacrosse clinic. By bringing all those people in for those events, they may stop by and check out the registration kickoff.
- The Lacrosse Program is starting to take off. Last year we offered something to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Now we are seeing it spill down into younger and younger ages. Those numbers are really starting to rise. We have had a few requests for girls wanting to get involved in some of the leagues. Due to that, we are opening it up to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls now. Other Communities have struggled with the girls programs, so if we struggle, we can partner with another Community to get the larger numbers. There will probably be travel associated with that, but if the need is there, some may not mind it.

Commissioner Solberg asked if there is a Rugby Program starting?

Coordinator Vandehoef responded they will be offering a Rugby Clinic to see how it is received.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if we have attendants on duty at the outdoor rinks?

Coordinator Vandehoef responded they do, weather permitting. Oakwood and Skyview rinks are open seven days a week. Weekdays 4-8, Saturday's 1-9, and Sunday's 1-7. Holiday's are 1-9. Groveland is just open on weekends and Holidays.

Commissioner Huffman asked if Southern Lakes is being flooded as well?

Coordinator Vandehoef responded it's flooded, but there isn't an attendant. They have discontinued having an attendant at South Valley's rink as it seems most just come there for the sledding hill.

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our Web Site at: [www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org)
- B. Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 9, 2013. Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Approval of Agenda
- B. Approval of Minutes of October 10, 2012

**Motion by Commissioner Huffman, seconded by Commissioner Hapka, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

Aye: 7  
Nay: 0            Motion carried.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**8. REGULAR AGENDA:**

**A. Discuss Dog Park Issue**

Director Carlson wanted to bring them up to date regarding having a Dog Park within the Community. The City Council requested an update for its November 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. Council asked us to speak about the dog park and whether or not there is an alternative location for the dog park. The process we used to locate a dog park was as follows:

-In October 2009 the Parks Commission created a Dog Park Subcommittee and asked them to study the dog park issue. They looked at all potential park property within the system and made a recommendation to consider River Heights Park as a potential location for a dog park. We had an open house for those in the area, and they were against having the park there. There were approximately 28 residents at that meeting that spoke in opposition to the location.

-In September 2010, when submitting the Heritage Village Park Master Plan, the Subcommittee contemplated having a dog park there. The general consensus was that the park was not a suitable location due to the other amenities planned for the park, so it was not recommended for that location.

-Lastly, was the idea for a dog park to be located on property that the City is attempting to acquire at Lion's Park. That was the location the subcommittee recommended to the City Council. At this time, we are still working to acquire that property.

The Lion's Park location has adequate parking, rolling terrain, a trail loop, and the property could be easily fenced. The City Council asked Staff to look into other possible locations. They came up with four possibilities:

1. Property along 70<sup>th</sup> in front of the airport (Property we do not own).
2. Heritage Village Park
3. Marianna Ranch. This area has a 10 to 15 acre parcel that could be a possibility. However, there is a restriction on development there until about 2019. They are not sure if a dog park is considered development. That would be something they would need to look into.
4. The west side of the Golf Course, south of 70<sup>th</sup> Street. This is the former Golf Course property. One downside there is that the terrain is hillier and steeper there.

At this time, Staff is asking that we continue to be patient and wait to acquire the property at Lion's Park. If we decide to make a temporary park location, it is our concern that people would continue to show up there after it's been moved elsewhere. Therefore the suggestion is to wait until the property at Lion's Park is acquired.

Commissioner Solberg asked what other use the MN/DOT property would be if there was no dog park there?

Director Carlson stated the City is interested in acquiring the property to develop it with commercial, industrial, or residential development. The property would owe Park Dedication in either cash or land. As part of its dedication we could consider it being a land dedication and taking the piece next to Lion's Park and connecting it to Lion's Park. We would have a parking lot out there so that the parking lot could sit between where the dog park would be located, and where the current park is. There is no parking lot there right now, people park on the street.

Commissioner Solberg asked if there were any reasons to not have it located there?

Director Carlson responded they haven't had a neighborhood meeting there yet. There is a set of townhomes nearby, on 65<sup>th</sup> and Blaine. Those are the closest neighbors. There are no other residents adjacent to the location.

Commissioner Huffman stated he was on the subcommittee for the dog park. He likes the Lion's Park location.

Commissioner Boehmer commented that during one of their park tours, there were a number of people at Lion's Park with dogs. We also spoke about having it at Heritage Village Park, back by where the Gun Club is. Can we do anything there? It is currently open prairie.

Director Carlson stated he would have to check on the Grant restrictions on that area. He didn't think they could given the Grant they received for that property.

Commissioner Solberg asked how large of an area they were looking for?

Director Carlson responded they are looking for an area between 5 and 20 acres.

Vice Chair Schueller stated South St. Paul has a really nice dog park. He noticed it got a lot of use. Are there any other parks around us? He agreed it was a good idea to wait and use the Lion's Park site.

Director Carlson responded that Dakota County has a dog park in the Coates area. He thought both Eagan and Apple Valley had one as well.

Commissioner Huffman commented that Lion's Park has great terrain.

Commissioner Solberg stated the MN/DOT property has water on it. Will we leave it in the dog park?

Director Carlson wasn't sure where the water was located, but they would look into having it as an option.

**Motion by Commissioner Huffman that we look into the Lion's Park location. Seconded by Commissioner Solberg.**

**Commissioner Krech suggested they look into the land down by the Gun Club. That area could be a second alternate in case it is needed. He felt they should look into two spots anyway.**

**Commissioner Huffman agreed with what Commissioner Krech recommendation.**

**Aye: 7**

**Nay: 0 Motion carried.**

## **9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:**

### **A. Department Happenings**

Director Carlson stated he will stand by for any questions.

Commissioner Solberg asked when the Golf Course closed for the year?

Director Carlson didn't have an exact date, but felt it closed around Thanksgiving. We had 52,000 rounds played this year. Last year we had 50,000 played.

Commissioner Huffman commented about the railings down by the Bridge Overlook. They were completed. It looks beautiful.

### **B. Update on the Mendota/Lebanon Regional Greenway**

Director Carlson stated as you are aware we have identified a Regional Greenway in the Northwest area. Dakota County started working on a Master Plan process back in August for this. They will be holding a public open house on Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 p.m. at Lebanon Hills Nature Center to get public feedback on the plan. The County put together an advisory group of people from the Cities that the greenway will affect. That involves the Cities of Eagan, Mendota Heights, and Inver Grove Heights. There are three Staff members from our City that are on that group. They are the City Planner, our Public Works Director, and himself. Right now they are in the planning stages and hope to finish the process by June 2013. When we know more we will bring more information to you so you can weigh in on the process.

### **C. Future of Our Parks Report – Park & Recreation System Plan**

Director Carlson stated the subcommittee continues to meet. We met this evening to review a draft of the needs assessment. 470 people filled out the online survey. We held a neighborhood open house. We have met with some of our special interest groups. We attended neighborhood meetings to try to get people knowledgeable about the planning process. We had our graffiti boards out and available. We also attended the Inver Grove Heights Days Street Fair. We will be meeting with the full Commission in January and talk about what is being

said and what the information gathered is telling us so we can start a vision to go into the Future. We will be meeting with the City Council in late January. We have collected 40 names of people interested in being “park champions”. We will be meeting with them about what they want to be champions of, as well as the opportunities, challenges, park and recreation system threats, etc. Both Commissioners Hapka and Solberg were in attendance at the meeting we had this evening and may want to update you further.

Commissioner Solberg stated the dog park was one of the top six issues residents listed that they wanted.

Commissioner Hapka felt it was interesting to see what the residents were looking for. Trail connectivity and the dog park seemed to be big items.

Vice Chair Schueller asked which trails were cleared and useable right now?

Director Carlson stated the City Council has not adopted a trail and sidewalk plowing plan, so not all the trails will get to be plowed. The Highway 52 Trail is plowed. The trails at Oakwood and Southern Lakes should be plowed. He will provide a map for the Commission at the next meeting so you know what gets plowed.

Commissioner Hapka asked that if that information can be posted on the website?

Director Carlson responded they could.

Commissioner Huffman asked if they will do anything with the trails and the bridge overlook?

Director Carlson responded they do not plan to. The Mississippi River Regional Trail is the responsibility of the County to plow. They do not have to plow it; they can if they want to.

Commissioner Krech stated it was plowed over by him. It looks good.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if the Rich Valley parking lot is plowed by the City so they can use that for snowmobiling?

Director Carlson responded they do plow a portion of it. You can park there and hop onto the trail nearby to do so.

#### **10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Hapka had no comment.

Commissioner Boehmer wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Huffman had no comment.

Commissioner Johnson had no comment.

Commissioner Solberg commented it is a great opportunity to get out into the parks and see what they have to offer.

Commissioner Krech wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. He thanked everyone for serving here. He thanked Director Carlson as well.

Vice Chair Schueller stated we have a lot of events coming up for the Holidays. It is a good time for people to get out and get involved. With the outdoor rinks and sliding hills now is the perfect time to get out and about. There are indoor activities to get involved in as well. If you have any questions, feel free to call Director Carlson and his Staff. They do an outstanding job and would love to help out.

Commissioner Solberg asked if the Golf Course is open for those that like to get out and cross country ski?

Director Carlson responded the Golf Course is open for those that want to snowshoe or cross country ski. We do not maintain any trails, but people wanting to do their own trails are welcome to do so.

## **11. ADJOURN**

**Motion by Commissioner Huffman, seconded by Commissioner Solberg, to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m.**

**Aye: 7**

**Nay: 0**

**Motion carried.**