



PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2015

Central Hillside Center
12 E 4th St



1. Call to Order

Commissioner Hall called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Commissioners Albright, Schmidt, Viken, Hall, Torch, Holak, Schraepfer, Crosby, Braun, Welles, Dodge

3. Welcome to New Officers

Commissioner Hall introduced new officers: Jon Welles, Vice President and Erik Torch, Secretary. Commissioner Hall thanked outgoing officers Tom Albright and Eric Viken. Commissioner Hall also mentioned that Commissioner Braun and Commissioner Viken will be finishing their terms later this year and a process to fill these vacancies is underway.

4. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Schmidt motioned for approval of the January 14, 2015 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Holak, motioned carried unanimously.

5. Presentations

A. STEVE KRASAWAY, St. Louis County Public Works

The planned 4th St. reconstruction between 6th Ave. East and Wallace Ave. in 2016 and 2017 will impact the park at 4th St. and Woodland Ave. St. Louis County has reviewed various options for this intersection to accommodate multiple uses and improve traffic flow and safety. The project will realign orientation to make the intersection more of a 90-degree angle.

The project will abandon 20th Ave. E and turn that into a park. There will be a net gain of parkland as a result of this reconstruction project. Currently the existing park is an isolated triangle without much use. Reconfiguration will include sidewalks to make for easier and safer access. Approximately 4,000 square feet of parkland will be added through this project. The County plans to meet with adjacent landowners to discuss the project.

Councilor Sipress stated that he lives very close to the intersection. The current layout is very problematic with a blind corner. The design is done to fix the problem. Councilor Sipress had concern about the impact on the park, but he is satisfied that the new park will be larger, and accessible. Councilor Sipress is supportive of the project.

Commissioner Schmidt asked about the removal of existing trees in the park, noting that some residents are concerned about destruction of trees. Mr. Krasaway stated some of the larger trees will remain, but some will need to be removed. They intend to plant trees 10 -12 feet in height.

Commissioner Schmidt asked Councilor Sipress if he spoke with the tree group about these trees.



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Councilor Sipress stated he had not, and that they are mostly concerned about boulevard trees. Commissioner Schmidt stated he would like to have the County get that group's input into design.

Mr. Krasaway stated that Federal funding makes this request time sensitive. They need to have all right-of-ways prior to submission of plans.

Commissioner Hall clarified with Ms. Bergen that final design will be approved in the future and tonight's request is only seeking release of 4(f) property for realignment.

Commissioner Viken motioned the Duluth Parks Commission support the plans for releasing the 4(f) property at the intersection of 4th St. and Woodland Ave. to be used in the reconstruction of the intersection. Commissioner Braun seconded, motion carried unanimously.

B. LAKEWALK TASK FORCE – Andrea Agar, Chair of taskforce; James Gittemeyer, taskforce member; Sue Eiserhagen, taskforce member, resident of The Ledges.

The taskforce was commissioned by the City Council to find a resolution to the long-standing issue of Lakewalk placement. The taskforce has developed a plan that addresses safety issues, pedestrian access, and ADA. They also considered the cost and benefits of the recommendation.

A footpath will follow the shoreline and separate users. Fast moving bikes, strollers and pedestrians will go along Water St. The path along the shore will be for slower moving users. The footpath will use material similar to that recommended in the Hartley Plan. There will be four formal access points along this path.

Hours of use for the footpath will be sunrise to sunset to respect the privacy of residents. No lighting or benches will be placed along the route. The eastern end of the path will provide access to Endion Ledges, a geological feature. Two alternatives identified to align with 22nd or 23rd Ave. The taskforce expressed a desire to narrow the intersection of 23rd Ave. and Water St., which is too wide.

Potential funding sources for the project include Coastal Program, Legacy Amendment, and the MNDOT Transportation Alternative Fund. Next steps are to conduct a feasibility study, short-term fixes for intersection, and look for a long-term redesign.

Commissioner Schmidt asked if access to water would be limited to the access points.

- No.

How will the fast section be marked?

- This has not been designed yet, but will have Lakewalk look and design.

The taskforce worked with residents to acquire input. Residents are supportive.

Commissioner Viken asked if there are plans to lessen the slope where the Lakewalk comes into the intersection at 23rd Ave. and Water St.



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- The taskforce is asking the City to look at reducing the grade. The issue is addressed in the report.

Commissioner Albright asked the recommended width for the path.

- 3-4 feet is the recommended width. It is currently 2-3 feet. Access points will be wider for turn around.

The City needs to secure the right-of-way at the 23rd Ave. property. Owners are open to selling it but funds would need to be secured.

Commissioner Crosby asked if the path would be accessible for people with disabilities.

- Councilor Sipress responded that he believes that the grades are sufficient to be accessible. The City trail designer reviewed the path for ADA compliance. It is believed the trail can be accessible. Follow-up is needed through a feasibility study.

Questions were raised about the hours.

- They won't be enforced, but the taskforce felt they are needed to encourage people to respect privacy.

Because there will be no lights, the taskforce doesn't think there will be much use after dark.

- Ledges resident testified that there is not a lot of afterhours use right now. Problems are parties on the beach, not trail users.

Will the path be maintained year-round?

- It will be used year round, but the City does not clear snow because it is not a smooth surface. The Lakewalk along Water St. is maintained year-round but it is unlikely this path will be ADA accessible in winter.

Funding for the Water St. multi-use path is secured and is moving forward. Money is not secured for the footpath along the lake.

If the path in front of Beacon Point is deemed not feasible, it is recommended the City surrender easement to property owners.

Taskforce is unanimous and enthusiastic about recommendations.

Community member, Allison Clark, stated she has been very involved in this project and she is concerned about the release of easement recommendation. She believes it's too loose.

- Councilor Sipress assured her the issue will be addressed if options are deemed unfeasible. City Council will ultimately decide if it's feasible or not. He believes the easement recommendation is important. This has been a difficult issue because of lack of trust and breakdown in communication. Different sides united and rebuilt trust. Easement recommendation acknowledges the need to move on from issue if it's not deemed



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feasible. It is critical to get backing of Beacon Point residents. Removing it from recommendations would damage trust built. Release of easement will not be done lightly. Ultimately, the decision rests in City Council hands.

Commissioner Albright motioned the Parks Commission support the recommendation of the Lakewalk Task Force regarding potential scale and routing of a pedestrian trail along the water's edge near Beacon Point and The Ledges Development as well as restructuring of the intersection at 23rd Ave. E and Water St. Motion was seconded by Jon Welles and passed unanimously.

C. PROPER ZONING OF CITY PARK PROPERTY - Chuck Froseth

In an effort to blend current park property into the Unified Development Chapter (UDC), the City wants to put parkland into proper zoning. Some parkland is currently zoned residential, or another status inappropriate for parkland. The City is starting on the east end of town and working west.

Motion made by Commissioner Hall to support an ordinance amending the official zoning map of the City of Duluth to provide for rezoning park property to Park and Open Space (P-1). Second by Commissioner Welles, motion passed unanimously. (The Parks Commission's supporting resolution language is included at the end of these minutes.)

D. DULUTH BOAT CLUB – Mike Sawinski – treasurer for Boat Club, Vice President of Sailing Association.

The Duluth Boat Club returned with modified and more detailed plans at the request of the Commission at the January meeting.

- 1) 13th St. Plan - Some of the descriptive text was clarified for better understanding. Mr. Sawinski explained the development has been planned for about 10 years and the development currently sits on vacant land formerly owned by the Department of Defense.
- 2) Park Point Recreation Area - Described the topographic features of the area as presently used. Plans to dredge some areas to increase access and add a new DNR public boat ramp. Plans to add floating docks, in protected area, to allow for safe conveyance to and from boats.

Luke Sydow of SAS Associates gave a detailed description of amenities to be added. The Club is seeking to add fencing to secure area to prevent vandalism. The new plan has an 88% increase in public dock space. Public access would be maintained until new boat launch is built. Type of fencing has not been determined but needs to comply with City code. Commissioner Dodge thanked the Club and Mr. Sydow for clearer graphics. A question was asked if public access areas are going to be well signed. The areas have standard DNR signage.

Duluth Sailing Association runs the facility and has boats there. The primary focus is on teaching youth to sail. They never turn anyone away because they can't afford it.

They are seeking to develop a master plan to get approval to develop space for future programming. Fenced space is needed for secure boat storage and programming space. The



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13th St. site will be fully accessible to public. They may have to add fencing to the boat storage area if there is vandalism.

Commissioner Albright inquired about the phasing of the work. Mr. Sawinski stated their first need is to get fences up to protect their assets. Second, they need to add facilities for students, especially toilets. The organization serves a lot of young children and these facilities will improve the experience. Third, they will add docks that stand up to the weather better.

The Club needs the DNR to step forward to build a new boat ramp. DNR is seriously looking to this area while it reconstructs Rice's Point. They may use dredging to provide fill for airport projects at a fraction of the cost to haul it in.

Timelines and phases have been submitted to the City. Because of the nature of the work, it's a project proposal and does not go in front of Commission. Commissioner Hall would like to see options presented and understand what we are being asked to approve. Materials need to be fleshed out. Plan is a significant deviation from existing use and needs to go in front of Commission.

Mr. Sawinski stated that the Park Point Community Club has received presentations on these projects and have been supportive. The Community Club donated \$5,000 for the Watersports Center.

Public Comment:

A question was asked about the duration of a lease. The club is trying to get a 20-year lease on the 13th St. site. They will not be restricting UMD Boat House access.

Denette Lynch stated that she spoke with Park Point Community Club President and she hadn't heard of these plans. Shouldn't use of site be a community wide discussion?

Mr. Sawinski stated the leasing process with the City is locked up until Commission approval. They are very much committed to providing public access and want to keep fencing at 13th St. minimal. The Boat Club took initiative to purchase land and convey it to City.

Clarified process to make modifications like new fencing. Need to get City approval. There is a City process to make longer-term leases for longer-term partners.

Commissioner Holak expressed concerns at the amount of fencing on the Park Point project.

Commissioner Dodge commented that she likes the project.

Commissioner Schmidt stated his opinion that the Park Point Community Club needs to be in support in order for him to vote in favor of this.

Commissioner Hall commented we could add a contingency to the motion.



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Commissioner Albright motioned to remove from the table the issue of development of the 13th St. and end of Park Point for improvements related to boat access, so that it can be brought forward for consideration by the Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Braun, motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Viken motioned to support the concept of the mini-master plans presented by the Duluth Boat Club at the 13th St. location and the Park Point location by the break wall, contingent on support of the Park Point Community Club. Commissioner Crosby seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

E. WESTERN SPORTS CORRIDOR MINI-MASTER PLAN

Kathy Bergen provided an update on the planning process.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Presently, work is being done to provide an assessment of needs. Meetings are being held with a variety of groups. An advisory committee of users has been formed. Plans are being made to have listening sessions and an online assessment questionnaire will soon be on the Parks' website.

The Commission will receive an update from consultants on March 11. The Parks division is utilizing the same consultants that did the master plan and trails plan.

The plan is part of the Mayor's St. Louis River Corridor project. Funding has been allocated. Ms. Bergen mentioned the School District intends to build tennis courts on the old Laura McArthur School site for Denfeld use. This new information will fit into planning. Additionally, the former Holiday Station land swap fell through and an outright purchase is being pursued.

Commissioner Schmidt asked if there was a staff person responsible for the Complex. There is not. Responsibility is shared by Property and Facilities Management, Park Maintenance, and Parks and Recreation. The plan will connect with Heritage, but only in regard to trail connectivity. Internal staff are participating in the process. Many people are involved.

6. Commission Committees

Commissioner Schraepfer will chair the Facilities Committee. All other chairs will continue for another year.

- A. Parks and Facilities – meeting date: TBA
Chair – Michael Schraepfer– Jon Welles, Ed Hall, [Dale Sellner]

No update.

- B. Administrative (E-Board) – meeting date: TBA
Chair – Ed Hall – Eric Viken, Tom Albright, [Kathy Bergen]



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No update.

- C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBA
Chair – Tom Albright - Eric Viken, Andy Holak, [Judy Gibbs], [Art Johnston]

No update.

- D. Recreation Programming (youth and adult) – meeting date: **March 3rd**
Chair - Jon Welles – Andy Holak, Erik Torch [Pamela Page]

Chester Bowl Concert deadline is February 13. Surprised at how much interest was generated. 32 applications were received.

7. Old Business

A City Council Committee of the Whole meeting is scheduled for February 23rd to explain the St. Louis River Corridor Projects and the coalescence of the vision. The March 2nd “State of the City Address” provides additional public presentation of the plan. There will be a presentation at the March 11 Parks Commission meeting seeking support of concepts.

The Annual Meeting will also have public input opportunities. The Annual Meeting is scheduled to begin at 5:30 pm on April 15th at the Spirit Mountain Grand Avenue Chalet.

8. Public Comment

A question was raised about zoning P-1 for parks. Is that a permanent designation? No, it’s just zoning, it has nothing to do with sale of property. Sales need to go through the Parks Commission and requires a super majority vote of the Council. Zoning determines what can and can’t be built on properties.

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Albright made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Schmidt second, unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.

10. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held 5 pm, Wednesday, March 11, 2015, at Central Hillside Center.

MOTION(S)

1. Commissioner Albright motioned the Parks Commission support the recommendation of the Lakewalk Task Force regarding potential scale and routing of a pedestrian trail along the water’s edge near Beacon Point and The Ledges Development as well as restructuring of the intersection of 23rd Ave. E and Water St. Motion was seconded by Jon Welles and passed unanimously.

2. Commissioner Viken motioned the Duluth Parks Commission support the plans for releasing the 4(f) property at the intersection of 4th St. and Woodland Ave. to be used in the reconstruction of the intersection. Commissioner Braun seconded, motion carried unanimously.
3. Resolution supporting an ordinance amending the official zoning map of the City of Duluth to provide for rezoning park property to Park and Open Space (P-1).

Whereas, rezoning to Park and Open Space (P-1) is the zone most reasonably able to implement the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan related to the proposed land use for this area; and

Whereas, the rezoning is consistent with the Comprehensive-Plan Future Land Use Map; and

Whereas, while providing protection for these areas, the P-1 zone will also provide flexibility to permitted uses the ability to improve their facilities, via the Special Use Permit process as required by section 50-37.10 of the Unified Development Chapter, in order to increase their public benefit.

Therefore, be it resolved,

That after consideration of the rezoning of properties considered to be critical to the City's open space system to Park and Open Space (P-1), the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends the approval of the rezoning of park property.

Motion made by Commissioner Hall. Second by Commissioner Welles, motion passed unanimously.

4. Commissioner Albright motioned to remove from the table the issue of development of the 13th St. and end of Park Point for improvements related to boat access, so that it can be brought forward for consideration by the Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Braun, motion passed unanimously.
5. Commissioner Viken motioned to support the concept of the mini-master plans presented by the Duluth Boat Club at the 13th St. location and the Park Point location by the break wall, contingent on support of the Park Point Community Club. Commissioner Crosby seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.