

Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2016

Attendees: Michael Mertaugh, Sally DeLuca, Diane Davison, Belinda Ray, Carol Hutchins, Nathan Robbins, Cynthia Loebenstein, Travis Wagner, Steve Morgenstein, Jaime Parker, Meri Lowry, Ethan Hipple, Laurie Mondor

Citizen Comment: George Rowe, from Bayside neighborhood, mentioned that he saw on the city website over weekend that there will be a celebration for the Capisic Pond improvement project. He stated that this seemed convenient the weekend before voting. He stated that councilmen Suslovic was running for his second sentence and he will be at this celebration. Friends of Capisic Pond Park have posted an alert for people to attend this celebration. He stated that the project is not even complete. He also stated that Deering Oaks had no city celebration like this and that he feels this is old time politics. The entire city paid for this with state funding as well and it is a great project but people may not feel welcome as he feels that this celebration is being held now for the convenience of a politician. Mr. Rowe felt that the Parks Commission should ask for this to be postponed after election day or even the spring when some of this work will be apparent. He stated that he feels this is improper. Diane stated that she believes the celebration announcement was issued from Mike Murray. She told Mr. Rowe that she heard what he is saying but she is not sure that it is our (Parks Commission's) purview to stop this. Sally stated that she appreciates Mr. Rowe for bringing this to our attention but this is not something that Parks Commission can not do anything about it. She said she would make the city manager aware of this tomorrow.

Minutes: A motion to accept the minutes was made by Michael with noted grammatical changes, this was seconded by Belinda with all in favor.

New Business: Lori Paulette, from the City's Economic Development Department, presented a request to purchase strip of Peppermint Park to Montgomery St. They are looking for permission to take out of Land Bank. Sally said this used to be a way into the park but police requested for us to close this area. The city put a fence there for safety reasons. Belinda added that the East Bayside Neighborhood Organization reported that this was a constant problem area. It was considered a dangerous area. It is not a usable strip of land. Jaime stated this is an access way to the park and 20 years from now the city may or may not want to use this as an access to the park again. Michael questioned about the purposed use and if the purchaser indicated what they would use this for. The neighboring owner requested to purchase just to add to her property. Lori stated that it would have to be offered to both abutters and it has possible driveway potential for the owner. Steve asked if there would still not be any access to the park from this spot which Lori answered no. It would have to be continued to be fenced off. Travis shares Jaime concerned about the precedence. If they had specific plans that would be different. Cynthia asked if it could be a right of way or could it be a lease situation so if down the road the city needed it they would still own this parcel. Lori stated that this was going

out to bid so there is no dollar figure yet. Michael feels after Congress Square precedence it is quite awkward to sell city property. The potential value of this area in the future is unknown which argues the favor of a temporary use of this space. Meri stated that she is personally of the view that because this is for purchase by only two owners it does not matter what kind of change especially where there is already good access to this park. She stated that she is very comfortable selling to one of the abutters. Nathan fully appreciates the challenge of this space as well as the safety but he is still leaning to protecting this space. The idea of selling the space concerns him. Sally stated that from previous experience people were dumping stuff there and dumping unwanted items here. Her guess is the person wants to buy so they can have control of this area/space. Cynthia asked the width and was told it is 488 square feet total. George, from Bayside Neighborhood asked to give public comment and was granted. He states that the history of this park would be important to know. He feels that this is something that can be improved and he is disappointed there is not more creativity here. Diane confirmed timing with Lori who stated that there was no push. More information will be gathered and we will discuss this again next month.

Communications

Amethyst Lot - Ethan Hipple discussed Amethyst lot stating that we are in the process of selecting designers and have initial interviews set up. Cynthia wanted to know who they were interviewing but Ethan was unsure if everyone had been contacted at this time. They are interviewing three. Diane and Dory have been involved in this. Cynthia stated that she would like to participate.

Sheridan Street – things are just stuck at the moment. Have moratorium pending. The moratorium is worded as parcels abutting public parks and grounds in the R6 zone in the first district. Her focus is to begin a discussion about protection of our parks. Hopefully this will put things in place.

CIP: Ethan stated that he has \$1.9 million of projects that he is requesting and provided a prioritized list.

1. Lincoln Park - remove fence, take off site, lead abatement retreating it, restoration of this fence. Been there since 1866. Granite foundation for the fence have deteriorated will replace and resetting these.
2. Lyman Moore this is all next to Lyseth school. The water does not drain and we cannot use these fields when it rains. This is only project left over from 2011. Not completing this has halted other projects.
3. Deering Oaks Park & Deering High School tennis and basketball courts - resurfacing of tennis courts which we have not been doing but should be as it will prolong life. This is a lot cheaper than replacing.
4. Lyseth playground: this is a large playground. We will work with some of the existing work that has already been done.
5. Evergreen Cemetery: the stone wall is literally crumbling. This will complete the entire wall along Stevens Ave. Ethan stated that the staff is picking up the pieces as they have been falling off; have taken care of the pieces that are a hazard.

6. Harborview Park Community Garden: we currently have a waiting list of 250 people for community gardens with more are being added to the wait list each year. Over the next 10 years the plan is to build a new community garden every other year. Hoping to get wait list down to 50 to 100 people. Harborview, lower harbor view close to the tunnel is where they are looking to build. There is some state land in there so this will need to be worked out. Travis asked if the soil had been tested and Ethan said some up on the slope. It is possible to build community gardens since they build up but soil tests will be done.
7. Peaks Island facilities - we have a playground on Cliff Island from 1990 that is not doing well. This would bundle a few projects together. Peaks Island needs one small upgrade to a piece of equipment. There is a dog park potential on Peaks Island which the council is in favor of. Great Diamond needs a new playground, basketball standard and tennis court.
8. Park Signage – Planning on putting some of the smaller signs out as this went into operating budget. No official estimate yet. Five parks that we have studied will be larger signs.
9. Payson softball A - 30 year old wires are crumbling which will be replaced with LED: half the number of poles and fixtures which will lower electrical use. This is a very popular field.
10. Riverton School - there is a lot of drainage coming down the hill towards the softball fields. The fence is falling over and foundation is exposed. We need to divert that water and get into the channel it belongs.
11. Cemetery expansion – there are 480 spots in each columbarium. Only one was installed at this time. It's a circular design to make quiet space in the middle for family. This is not completed at this time. It is near the front driveway to the left. The boundaries would not expand. We do have some existing funding that we would add to this.
12. Fitzpatrick Stadium - the scoreboard is very old, outdated and is not functional a lot of the time. While doing the scoreboard, they will fix the drainage issue as well.
13. Valley Street Basketball Court – this is next to the community garden and dog park. There is a little basketball court here. Have been working on a forestry thinning project here which has reduced hangout spot in these woods. St John valley neighborhood organization is itching to have some kind of play feature here. There is an existing court there and it just needs to be reconstructed. This could be a great community gathering spot.
14. Payson Park – parking and curbing engineering. There are a ton of large events there. Hiring a traffic engineer to help plan this out. Will reference master plan on this.

Jaime questioned how playgrounds get designed within the City and stated that we should be thinking how to design a better playground. Ethan stated that a landscape architect would be part of the process and they would be working with manufactures. The Lyseth project is a big ticket and Jaime feels that came out of nowhere. Ethan cannot speak for last year but he bumped it up. We wanted to implant the work that has been done. This is the time to do it as it would be total completion of this project. Meri asked if we get to

have a second look once the changes come about associated with the city approval process. Sally will make sure that the Parks Commission will see the list she is bringing to the city manager. Meri moved that we accept the priorities for CIP monies as presented to us by Ethan with an understanding that the city approvals process Michael seconded all in favor.

Motion to adjourn by Cynthia Belinda moved all in favor.