CITY OF COLUMBUS
PARK BOARD MEETING
INTERACTIVE MEETING FORMAT
STATUTES SECTION 13D.021
04-20-2023

The 04-20-2023 Park Board meeting for the City of Columbus was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chair Brad Norling at the City of Columbus City Hall. Present were Board members Kris King, Bob Bodene, and Steven Ray (5:34).
City Council Member Janet Hegland, Associate Planner Frank Koenen, and Recording Secretary Lorie Spangler were also present.
Absent: Andrea Messina
Also present: Alternate City Council Park Board Liaison Ron Hanegraaf

AGENDA APPROVAL:
Motion by King to approve agenda as presented.
Second by Bodene.
Roll call vote: King – aye; Norling – aye; Bodene – aye. Motion carries**.** All in favor, motion carried.

APPROVAL OF PARK BOARD MINUTES:
Motion Norling to approve the minutes of the 02-28-2023 Park Board meeting as written.
Second by King,
Roll call vote: King – aye; Norling – aye; Bodene – aye. All in favor, motion carried.

DISCUSSION:
Park & Trail Master Plan Goals & Priorities: The objective of this meeting is to determine what the goals are for the Park Master Plan.
Goals & Priorities: Koenen recapped the previous meeting topics stating that a vision statement was adopted by the Park Board. "*To promote and maintain natural spaces and trails for community-building and recreation, accessible to all citizens of Columbus and beyond*." Additionally, the board agreed with the Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure definitions and adopted the broader goals from last meeting's 1. Financial Viability, 2. Connections, 3. Social Gathering Space.

Koenen questioned how the board members view this board: a) Park Board, b) Parks & Recreation, c) Parks & Events. Determining their purpose will help solidify the goals to develop the Parks Master Plan. King stated that at present a recreation department really doesn't exist and commented that the board is deemed as an advisory board.

Councilmember Hegland shared that a Fall Fest committee has been established and is planning an event in September. It is essentially a pilot project for the future. If successful, this may expand to other events, such as music and arts in the park, and movies in the park. Janet inquired if the board was interested in being the advisory board in charge of events in the park and reminded them that part of their vision statement is to create a sense of community.

Norling indicated that when he hears “parks and recreation”, it's having a park that allows for recreational activities, which he stated the city park does, so to him that fits; not necessarily looking at their role as planning events.
Ray added that he felt the board has a custodial role for the park and could possibly take the position of a representative/liaison of the park board to the events committee. In this position the representative would relay ideas back to the board to decide if the event was suitable for the park area. Norling shared that he would like to have the board steer away from event planning, however, felt a liaison for the event committee is a possible fit and may add connectivity to event planning that utilizes park space to the Master Plan. Bodene agreed with Norling’s position. King asked if the Council needs to approve certain events such as food trucks. Mursko stated that this would be more under park rules if the park would allow food trucks in the park. They are already permitted through Anoka County and the State. Norling stated this can be an ongoing conversation for the next meeting to discuss what the board feels their involvement should be in community events beyond a liaison position if any.

Koenen provided a list of options for park plan goals to review and have the board. The board found some of the goals are similar and felt they can be amended to include the essence of each. It was reiterated that the board feels financial viability with park maintenance is a high priority as it is important to maintain along with improving the park assets we already have.
King indicated that the city park is the only true asset and feels that this community would not entertain a residential trail system as she does not see residents giving up portions of their property to provide these trails, adding that we should not mislead the community that this is a plan in the next 10 years. Bodene added that it was possible down the road but agreed that at this time he doesn’t see the interest or need.

Mursko shared that Anoka County is looking at making improvements to Potomac and Lake Drive in the future. She informed the board that the County may pay for widening of the shoulders but not sidewalks, which would be a city cost. King stated the importance of having the city present in conversations when the county starts initial planning of county road improvement projects to voice our desire to widened shoulders along those roads, giving opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Council Member Hegland added when considering connectivity of existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure of surrounding communities, they could think about promoting the bike path that runs along Main Street in Lino Lakes into the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes, there is accessibility to Main Street using the wide shoulders on Lake Drive in Columbus.

The board asked about obtaining and the use of parkland dedication fees. Mursko explained that when a new subdivision is developed, the fee is $1,525/lot and when commercial lot is developed, the commercial fee is $762.50/lot. Mursko added that commercial businesses inquire what benefits do they receive from these funds, so she reminded the board that they need to clarify between residential goals and commercial, as they both have needed amenities ie: park amenities vs sidewalks and walkability. Mursko explained that parkland dedication fees can be used for assets and not for maintenance.

Norling inquired the different opportunities that the board could receive additional funding. Council Member Hegland informed him the park board can receive sponsorships and donations from businesses and King added that may be a source to fund the new walking path or exercise equipment in the future.

Mursko shared that there is a transportation bill that is in the legislature right now and if it is adopted the city will be eligible to receive transportation dollars each year; this is a funding mechanism for road improvements, therefore, those extra wide shoulders could possibly be part of it. Mursko stated she would look into that as that's a potential funding source if we wanted to have those joint projects with the county. King inquired how the board would go forward in requesting partial funds from this bill. Council Member Hegland stated that the board would put a request for a portion of the funds to be set aside for projects such as possible walking paths or sidewalks along county road improvements. Mursko added that the importance of having this in the master plan so when we go to MNDOT during the planning phase, it shows you have goals and plans for this added infrastructure.

Koenen informed the board that he will take their suggestions of edits and deletions on the discussed Park Plan Goals and present the revisions at the next meeting.

Hidden Park
The Board discussed the future of Hidden Park. To determine if this park should be decommissioned and sold, the board felt it was essential to reach out to the surrounding neighbors for their input on use. It was determined at the next meeting to look at questions to be included in a mailed survey to those in the area to confirm the extent of use of this park. If the survey proves that there is existing use, then it should be considered to add goals for this park in the Park Master Plan. The park board discussed a road trip tour to facilitate whether the park should be improved or disposed of. They agreed to schedule a road tour on June 6th at 5:30 p.m.

Park Board Members Open Discussion:
Lighting: Norling has a concern regarding a light that is placed along Kettle River Blvd that is directed to illuminate into the park area. However, because of the light placement and tree growth, the light shines into the trees providing no light into the park direction. Norling added he was not certain of the initial light purpose, he presumed it was to light the park path. Hegland reminded the board that the park policy for hours is dusk to dawn. Norling confirmed there are four lights in the park, two of which are located in the parking lot and the other two that face inward to the path off Kettle River Boulevard. In the past the board had discussed additional lighting in the park and placed a dollar amount in the budget.
Norling stated he would like to see how much it would cost to move the light to a different pole, add an additional light in each parking lot, and provide information on who owns these lights and the cost.
King commented that the original intent of adding lighting to the budget was to illuminate the park more, which then the park rules would need to be changed. King stated to consider this plan they would need to get a budgetary estimate of what it would cost to place lights around the

park's path. Norling stated he is presently concerned on utilizing the lighting we have an agreed that looking at a lighting budget and include it in the master plan. This discussion will continue at the next meeting with the cost information requested.

Trees: King stated the importance of the tree maintenance of the existing trees along the baseline that have girdling involved. Messina provided information last July with a quote for 4 trees that have serious root growth. Norling will reach out to Messina and request her to obtain an updated quote including the cambistat treatment, which encourages fine root development. The board will review this quote at the next meeting and contact a contractor to contract these services.

Bodene shared he contacted to Rum River Nursery, inquiring about the appropriate time to prune the new trees. Rum River stated they recommend waiting until the fall of 2023 or early spring 2024. King and Bodene commented that the trees are budding and looking good.

Norling shared his concern if the plastic edging has been removed around all the trees. Spangler informed the board that public works has removed all the plastic edging. However, there are some areas where the plastic is intertwined into the root system and unable to be removed.

Park Board member Comments:
King noted that Winter Walking Bridge Safety was listed on the short term (1-4 year) priority list and felt it needed immediate action for this year as in the winter and wet conditions as the metal plate approaching the bridge is very slippery. The board requested public works to follow up and apply a product to adhere to prevent this condition as well as fixing the loose board on the bridge. Additionally, the parking lot posts need to be replaced, as each year more are missing. This project will be mentioned to the public works department.
Ray commented on the great job the public works department did on keeping the path clean this last winter.

Spangler informed the board that the 4 trash receptacles have been delivered and will be placed throughout the park next week.

NEXT MEETING: The next scheduled meeting is Thursday May 25, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. Items for the next meeting are tree maintenance, park lighting, Hidden Park, Master Park Plan draft layout, and mapping out park board road tour.

ADJORN:
Motion made by Bodene to adjourn.
Second by Ray.
Roll call vote: Ray – aye; King – aye; Norling – aye; Bodene – aye. All in favor, motion carried
All in favor.
Meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Lorie A Spangler

Lorie Spangler, Recording Secretary