

**MAHTOMEDI PARKS COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
MARCH 17, 2021**

Chair Lindberg convened the special Park Commission meeting telephonically at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2021.

Present were Commissioners: Vice Chair Costello, Commissioner Metz, Commissioner Fischer, Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Strehlow

Also present were: PW Director, Bob Goebel, Council Liaison Charlesworth and Kate Andersen, Mahtomedi Community Ed Director

**AGENDA**

Upon motion by Commissioner Fischer; seconded by Commissioner Thompson, all members voting in favor, the agenda was approved as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Yea: Thompson, Strehlow, Metz, Lindberg, Fischer and Costello. Nay: None

**MINUTES**

Upon motion by Commissioner Fischer; seconded by Commissioner Metz, all members voting in favor, the February 17, 2021 Park Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Yea: Thompson, Strehlow, Metz, Lindberg, Fischer and Costello. Nay: None

**STAFF REPORTS**

Director Goebel gave a brief update on current public works activities. Public works crew plowed 4 times in February and used about 51 tons of salt, snow piles have been removed 4 times from downtown. Trimming of all the Right-of-Ways throughout the City have begun. Vehicle maintenance and repair have kept our mechanic busy. Street sweeping will begin in early April. Preparation for the **2021 construction season** is underway with several projects again this year. Phase 4 East project which includes up by Charlie's neighborhood, Rose, Spruce, Tamarack, Quail and East Shore Ave. The Glenmar diversion project where we're diverting the stormwater through the library property. We have a very large mill and overlay project coming through town, we are doing many, many roads. Director Goebel stated that some of the commission members may be getting a letter next week from either him or Scott Neilson as we are starting to address some of the no parking areas throughout the historic district and the Lake Links Trail. He also stated the Banners, brackets and baskets are being ordered for the downtown streetlights. **Parks and Trails:** Trails have been cleared, trees are being trimmed in all the parks. We've had very few complaints at the beach and many compliments on the behavior. The electric vehicle charging stations at Veterans Memorial Park should be installed in March. A second one will be installed at City Hall in the coming weeks. **Utilities:** Water meter installs are still on hold since March 2020 due to COVID. Stormwater pumping in the Lincolntown and Edith areas have kept the crew busy. Hydrant flushing will begin in the coming weeks. **Personnel:** This is the time of year that the employees go to a lot of training to keep up their licenses such as water, sewer and tree inspector. We're still in limbo cause of COVID so a lot of the training is taking place virtually.

## OPEN FORUM

**Council Liaison Charlesworth** updated the commission on things that are going on at City Hall. He stated that at last night's council meeting he was appointed liaison to the Parks Commission and Jane Schneeweis was appointed liaison to the Personnel Committee. He also stated that we had reappointments last night of people that are on commissions. One new person was appointed for the Planning Commission but everyone else was reappointed and a great thanks to Ross and Charlie for their great efforts on the Parks Commission and are appreciated by the Council. He also stated that he learned far more than he ever wanted to about Cable Franchise fees and contracts. There is some movement on redeveloping the Lakeside Club property, about 5 years ago that property was approved for a senior co-op but did not go through because the developer was not able to presell enough units. Now they are looking at putting up about the same size of facility in there, a market rate facility, a couple years ago we updated the Comp Plan with the Met Council and identified that location as a good place for that as it's right next to a park, near trails and I think chances are that they will probably be able to figure something out however there are a lot of residents in the area that have been emailing saying that they don't want this apartment facility. They talked about the traffic but more traffic comes in and out of a restaurant than an apartment facility. These are going to be nice apartments, similar to what is behind Aldi and they want to put on a gabled roof versus a flat roof which would make it look more attractive. This is all in the Planning Commission's hands right now and it's interesting that we're having a study done and discussions about the pond water that we are pumping by Lincolntown so if they want to have an underground parking garage, it is going to be interesting to see how the City with this current study and with the developer to figure something out so the parking garage doesn't flood. He also informed the group about the Hwy. 244 turn back to the County and as part of that turn back the County will be doing some improvements such as a left turn lane to Ridge Way, a traffic light at Wedgewood. Also as a part of that discussion we are acutely aware of pedestrian and bicycle safety through there. It would've been nice if we could've put a lane down that causeway between the two ponds but it's just too expensive so Old Wildwood Road is going to be kind of the pedestrian and bicycling path through there to make things a little safer and we don't really have any plans on that yet as it's in the design process right now and as soon as we do he will share them with the commission.

**Commissioner Thompson** asked how many units is planned for the senior housing. Council Liaison Charlesworth stated that it won't be senior, it will be multifamily and approximately 40 units. Affordable housing is a big thing in our community as we don't have much of it.

**Commissioner Strehlow** asked what the location for this building is and Council Liaison Charlesworth stated that it will be built on the property where the current Lakeside Club is now.

**Chair Lindberg** asked how much property is there and Director Goebel stated maybe 2.5 acres but isn't sure.

**Kate Andersen, Mahtomedi Community Ed Director**, They've been busy in Community Ed, today was the launch of the summer brochure. The brochure is online to save costs. This week middle school and high school students are starting to come back in person. Everybody will be back in session this Friday, the first time since last March. Starting to think about end of the year events now that Governor Walz has opened some things up like graduation and prom. Even though these events can be at 50% we still have to keep 6' apart so we are trying to move forward with making a graduation plan and most likely will be outside.

### OPEN FORUM Con't

She also stated that most of the staff has had their first vaccine and a lot of staff have had the 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine. Everyone should be completely vaccinated by the middle of April. We have had some of our senior groups reaching out like knitting club, pickle ball, book club so that's nice that these things are back. Kate also told the commission about a fundraising event that the community is doing beginning April 16<sup>th</sup>, they will have Food Truck Fridays from 4:30 – 7 pm in the parking lot at the District Ed Center. Watch the Community Ed website and Facebook page for which trucks on which Friday. This information will also be on the City's website and Facebook page as well.

### NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Mahtomedi Beach** – Director Goebel stated that it's time to think about summer at the beach and there is a list of items that we had talked about, the buoys were ordered and have come in so there will be brand new buoys at both beaches, the swim area buoys as well as the rope buoys to totally encompass the swim areas. We are working on the rules signs as we speak to try to get some updated rules signs there. The contract is up for the YMCA, every year we have to sign a new contract for lifeguards. Scott Neilson and I have been discussing what we want to do there and I think we will be extending the lifeguard hours to 8 pm and keeping the beach attendant on duty as well. We're hoping things turn around quickly so that way we won't have to gate anything off, we're just trying to make everything better for everybody. I believe we will have the hand wash stations again as well. Just wanted to keep everybody up to date that we are working on the beach already.

**Chair Lindberg** asked if we're going to do anything with the lighting at the beach. **Director Goebel** stated that there will be brand new LED lights throughout the building, inside and outside and we did install a green light facing out towards the lake for ice fisherman. Lights and cameras were talked about at one point but we have not addressed that yet, but is definitely doable, what are the commission's thoughts on this? Chair Lindberg stated that there is a space between the building and the fence that is a concern as people could easily hide there. Director Goebel stated that motion lights would affect the neighbors on both sides of that area, infrared cameras have been discussed but the concern is who would monitor those and if something were to be spotted on camera it's highly doubtful that Washington County would be able to respond quickly enough.

**Commissioner Thompson** stated that sometimes if people know cameras are watching them they might be have. **Director Goebel** stated that's a great idea and he agrees.

**Commissioner Fischer** asked if the police are patrolling that area more, she feels like there's been less chaos this year cause there's been so much talk about the area. **Director Goebel** stated that surprisingly we have not heard one complaint at public works about the beach as a matter of fact Councilmember Jane Schneeweis commented at the meeting last night that there was a group of people picking up garbage at the beach, the boy scouts and cub scouts go down there once per year and walk across the lake picking up garbage. We've heard no complaints, everybody has behaved, partly due to the fact that we didn't have a really long ice season but a lot of people were out of work and there was still a lot of ice fisherman down there but not quite the usual amount.

### NEW BUSINESS Con't

Commissioner Fischer asked when it's going to transition from winter beach to summer beach as it's kind of dangerous down there right now. Director Goebel stated that it is not closed off but there is open water right there and people can see that. No one has been on the lake at all, people know that it's not safe. Typically in about 2 -3 weeks we will take the fencing down and open the beach back up again. It all depends on the weather and when the frost comes out of the ground and we can pull the fence posts out.

**Chair Lindberg** stated that if we use the cameras that it might give people a false sense of security there and if something were to happen and we can't provide footage that might be a liability for the City. Director Goebel stated that the neighbors have said that they have seen the deputy's in the area a lot more often than in the past and it's something that we have press harder to make sure they're in the area more in the summer to try to keep the riff raff off the beach late at night. Make consequences for these people, take their name down and give them a warning and if they're caught there again then ticket them. That's why we have the park hours and the ordinances.

**Council Liaison Charlesworth** asked about the secluded area where the picnic tables are and if a large mirror could be placed right on the corner there so you could see who was back there, someone from the parking lot could see them and the people who were there would know that other people can see them. Director Goebel stated that this is a good point and will look into it.

**Commission Thompson** asked about the traffic study and Director Goebel stated that we did not do a traffic study because the ice season was so short. He didn't feel it was going to be a realistic number but plan to do it next year for sure.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Wedgewood Park Improvements** – In the Park Capital Improvement Plan, Wedgewood Park is up next for improvements. We have a budget of \$150,000, \$75,000 of that is budgeted for the playground itself. We have more improvements to do there such as the basketball court and some amenities. This is a pretty small project and I got the blessing from City Hall to be the general contractor so what I would like to do is purchase the playground equipment off the state contract, we're going to hire a company to remove the existing playground, a separate company will replace the woodchips and another company to come in and overlay the basketball court. We're going to add a bituminous trail between the parking lot and the basketball court and the basketball court and the trail to make it a little more ADA compliant. The project is small enough that we don't need WSB to come in a manage it. We can save quite a bit of money that way and use it elsewhere. I reached out to a couple of our playground company's, St. Croix Rec and Landscape Structures, same companies that bid on the last 3 projects that we've done. I asked them to put together something within our budget and they both gave us many options. We don't have to pick any specific option, we can pick and choose what we like and dislike from every option and put together an option to have rebid. Landscape Structures put together 3 different options. **Commissioner Thompson** likes the giant swing. Director Goebel said the little tot piece off to the side generally doesn't get used and that a multi-function, multi age structure gets used a lot more.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS Con't

In option #3 there is a zip line and that is very popular at Aaron's Playground. The handicap and child swing is a must. **Commissioner Strehlow** agreed that his kids don't really use the small tot piece either. His younger child always wants to be with her older sibling so she tends to play on the bigger equipment. He likes the idea of two larger swings next to each other but agrees that the handicap and small child swing are necessary, he likes the two slides next each other as well. Director Goebel stated that a few people have mentioned to him that they didn't like all the ropes. **Commissioner Thompson** stated that her kids love the ropes and Director Goebel said that is good to know. She also stated that her kids don't really care for the activity board feature. Director Goebel asked about the spinning feature in design #3, Commissioner Thompson said her kids love that feature too. **Vice Chair Costello** stated that she's not a big fan of the color red. Director Goebel stated that red is a bad color for playgrounds as it fades the quickest. She also stated that the large climbing structures and large muscle activity features are always good. She also likes the swings behind all the equipment as opposed to in front. **Commissioner Thompson** asked about shade components in this playground, that it's important to have shade options. Director Goebel asked the commission to look at the Burke designs now. **Commissioner Fischer** commented on the blue slide at Wildwood School and how bad it has faded. Director Goebel stated that he has asked about that issue and was told that it was a different manufacturer than we use and every manufacture has a different way of adding chemicals to the plastic to prevent UV fading and that particular slide was probably not great quality. She also stated that she likes the idea of keeping all the playgrounds similar in the blue and yellow color to the other completed structures. Director Goebel said if you look at the Burke options, 1 & 2 are one set and 3 & 4 are another set and 5 & 6 are a third set. The blue and yellow are one set, the blue and red is another set and the blue, red and yellow is the third set. **Commissioner Thompson** asked what the red disc is and Director Goebel said it is similar to the swings only it spins. She said kind of a merry go round but a safer version, he said yes, he believes so. **Commissioner Strehlow** commented that there is that same feature at Patriot Park in Stillwater and that his girls liked it but got the brain spins pretty quickly and wanted to go do something else. It was good for a little while but also takes up a good chunk of space. Director Goebel feels that all 3 designs have really good swing sets and we change those out to anything we want. **Commissioner Metz** prefers 4 swings but maybe somebody with kids could speak on that. **Commissioner Thompson** stated that her kids really like the obstacle course feel of a playground. **Vice Chair Costello** stated that she really likes all the options and prefers that the swings not be in front of the rest of the playground equipment. Commissioners Thompson and Fischer agreed. Director Goebel asked if there is one design that stands out to everyone more than the rest and **Commissioner Thompson** stated that she agrees with Commissioner Strehlow about the small tot piece not getting used and likes the design of everything closer together rather than spread out. **Chair Lindberg** asked if the next step is to choose one and Director Goebel stated that he plans to bring everyone's input back to both suppliers, especially no red and have them rework new designs. **Commissioner Fischer** agreed about keeping shade options such as the umbrellas that are at currently at Wildwood. Director Goebel stated that he hopes to have new designs for the commissions review at the next meeting. Vice Chair Lindberg asked what happens to the current playground once it's removed, do we keep it and donate it. Director Goebel stated that the contractor keeps the old equipment as part of the contract and they typically donate it if it's still in useable condition. He also stated that the basketball court can be resurfaced so that will save some money.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS Con't**

- b. Deer Survey** - Director Goebel updated the commission on the deer survey. We had 99 deer in the city, of which 43 were up by Charlie and Anna's house. That was a big surprise as we thought there would only be about 20 however it appears they migrated from the south end of town to the north end, again zero deer in Katherine Abbott Park. The large area by the Lakeside Club only had about 20 deer there. Stacey had a large group by her house, they were all over town and the number was 99 which is pretty close to what we had a few years ago, about 102. We've stayed around 100 for many years but has been as high as 120 and as low as 67 with a pretty accurate count we believe. We've had some bad counts in the past but we feel this is a real good count this year. What was very surprising was all the deer feeders that were spotted, the council does want to do something about that in Mahtomedi, it is against state law, the DNR has banned deer feeding in Washington County as well as it violates our City Ordinance. **Commissioner Metz** asked how many feeder were spotted, Director Goebel stated that he was not in the helicopter but gave instructions to use tally marks for every feeder but was told after that there were too many to count, that they are everywhere and it ranged from piles of several hundred pounds of corn on the ground to small feeders but it was very evident where the deer are feeding with cattle paths going through the deer feeders. We plan to get code enforcement involved. **Commissioner Thompson** asked about another deer hunt, Director Goebel stated that having another deer hunt happens to be one of the questions on a resident survey that is currently being conducted. **Council Liaison Charlesworth** stated that the council has discussed it but if we do another hunt it has to occur during bow hunting season, can't just have a hunt anytime to thin the herd. Director Goebel stated that we're waiting to see the results of the survey and then decide from there but it is a long process to schedule a hunt with the Metro Bow hunters group and we would have to hold a public hearing, right now we're in the gathering data stage. **Commissioner Metz** asked what the rules are and can residents bow hunt their own property, Director Goebel stated that residents cannot hunt their own property, we have a restriction in Mahtomedi. He also stated the Grant allows it and possibly Pine Springs as well, Dellwood allows it by permit so there are some communities close to Mahtomedi that do allow it and Birchwood did have the hunt last year and 4 deer were harvested out of the 10 they were targeting, they did make a small impact but very minutely.
- c. Update – Winter Access at Mahtomedi Beach – Chair Lindberg** asked about the Dellwood Beach access and Director Goebel stated that he never did find out who owns that. He didn't have anything to add except that we have received zero complaints this year.

**NEXT PARK COMMISSION MEETING**

The next Park Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via electronically.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by, Chair Costello; seconded by, Commissioner Metz, all members voting in favor by roll call vote. Yea: Metz, Lindberg, Thompson, Strehlow and Costello. Nay: None. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

*Bob Goebel*

---

Bob Goebel, PW Director