

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

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

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

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

Absent: Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Strehlow

**AGENDA**

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

**MINUTES**

Upon motion by Commissioner Costello; seconded by Vice Chair Lindberg, all members voting in favor, the December 16, 2020 Park Commission meeting minutes were approved as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Yea: Charlesworth, Metz, Lindberg, Fischer, and Costello. Nay: None

**STAFF REPORTS**

Director Goebel gave a brief update on current public works activities. Public works crew plowed 7 times in January and used about 65 tons of salt, all the trails have been cleared many times and snow piles have been removed 3 times from downtown, twice by us and once by the county. Brine making has been very busy this year, we've had a lot of other cities that have been picking up a lot of brine from us this year. We've been using a new product called Ice Be Gone Magic, it's a derivative of alcohol, drinking alcohol and it's been working phenomenal. We've been able to use it in 4 different ways, as rock salt on sidewalks, treating it for salt on the roads, using it with brine to pre-wet the salt and as a mixture used to pretreat the roads. As cold as it has been the past week nothing works on the ice. Lots of repairs and maintenance on vehicles has kept the mechanic very busy. We have also been very busy preparing for the **2021 construction season**, the crew has been out gathering data for WSB as well as locating utilities. Also as part of this, we have gone through all the property files at City Hall and have pulled all the sewer maps for each property in Mahtomedi and are scanning them ourselves so when these physical files go away we will have everything electronically. **Parks and Trails:** The skating party was cancelled due to Covid, the beach access remains open for the ice fisherman, we haven't heard of any complaints down there and it is being used every night. Council Liaison Schneeweis updated the Commission stating that residents have come to her to point out two things about the beach access, one is that this is not a typical year, usage is down to about 1/10<sup>th</sup> what it has been in past years, that it's almost like someone told everyone that the access is closed but the people who have been using the access have been very respectful. She also stated that a couple neighbors are concerned that there are some pickup trucks that make a run out to a fish house for about 5 minutes and then come back and it seems to happen quite often. Director Goebel stated that he will inform the Washington County Sheriff about this activity and that it is a concern to the neighbors.

**STAFF REPORTS Con't**

Second item is that she has heard from the neighbors that were part of the group that met a few months back about the access issues and have said they have decided to shut down that neighborhood group because they feel like they've gotten too much flak from others. Council Liaison Schneeweis stated that the ice fisherman want to be on the lake in the winter, the boats want to be on the lake in the summer and everyone wants to feel safe at the beach, she is confident that the Parks Commission will be helpful in seeing it all work out. The next item is the Electric Vehicle Charging stations, it was supposed to be here on Monday, still has not been delivered although they reached out a couple weeks ago and they feel terrible that it has not been delivered yet, they are waiting on supplies to build these stations. They have offered to give us an additional station which will be installed at City Hall next Tuesday on the East side of the building. Water meter installs are still halted due to COVID hopefully something will be decided in the near future as to resuming installations. The new Bevins Lift Station, on the South end of town off of Warner went online a couple weeks ago, it is up and running and we have residents connected to City sewer. Director Goebel stated that we have been working on the streetscape downtown on CSAH 12 and just last night they decided on some banners they'd like to use and they're going to the City of Willernie tonight for their decision if they want to use them as well. We ordered these banners from a gentleman who happens to be a resident of Grant, he has also donated the banner holders for the poles, says he drives by every day and felt it was the least he could do. The poles, the banners, the flower baskets and electrical outlets will be going up very soon. Chair Charlesworth asked about the Brine making operation and selling it to other cities and wondered if this is a money making deal for the City. Director Goebel stated that we buy the salt off the state contract and therefore cannot resell it for profit. The other city's that buy it from us pay us back in salt. Commissioner Fischer asked if the background of the new banners are a dark blue or green, Director Goebel stated they are dark blue and gold to try to match the Zephyr colors. Commissioner Fischer stated that they look great and then asked who will be taking care of the hanging baskets and are we getting them through the Mahtomedi Garden Club. Director Goebel stated that Public Works will be taking care of the baskets and we have several different vendors in the area that we are looking into for getting the flower baskets. Commissioner Fischer suggested Costa Farms, they're great and they supply all the flowers for White Bear Lake. Director Goebel also stated that the Garden Club is not having their plant sale this year due to COVID.

**OPEN FORUM**

**Kate Andersen, Mahtomedi Community Ed Director**, stated they were busy in January, they partnered with Pete Scholl, who did an ice fishing clinic for Community Ed, 23 students signed up, and some were little so they came with their parents. Director Goebel attended and agreed that it was a success. Starting yesterday, all the K-5 students were brought back in person, full time. With the Governors announcement, tomorrow they will be starting to plan for secondary students to return in person full time. She also stated that she is currently working with the City to get some permits for their Food Truck Friday's, they have 3 trucks that have confirmed that they will attend, The Big Cheese, an Egg Roll truck and Pigs Approved BBQ. They are still working on getting a couple more as well. The dates are April thru August. Kate stated that the hockey rinks are busy all the time and asked Director Goebel if Safe Routes to School received a grant, that she and Barb, Superintendent had heard that. Director Goebel stated that last Spring we drafted a plan for a sidewalk or trail extending from the south side of OH Anderson down to Bevins Lane on the west side of Warner within the

**OPEN FORUM Con't**

City of Mahtomedi and then another sidewalk on the south side of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street from Warner to Glenmar, those were the two most important pieces to the Safe Routes to School that we needed financial assistance with. We applied for a \$335,000 grant, which is an 80/20 match grant, it does not include any of the engineering fees however it includes all the rest. We heard back that we did not receive the grant. Ironically a month or two later, John Sachi, City Engineer, received an email wondering if the grant recipients could move the construction date of the Safe Routes to School, John got in touch with grant Administrator and found out that due to COVID they decided to award grants to everyone who applied. We were awarded the \$335,000, we are frantically starting the design phase of the route, and it may happen in 2022 or 2023. He also stated that unbeknownst to us, the County had also applied for a grant for Safe Routes to School on the south side of Stillwater Road from Hilton Trail to the new stoplight in front of the middle school and they were awarded their grant as well. Kate stated that Community Ed is planning to run a normal summer, Adam will be assisting in working on getting all the fields ready. They are working on the summer brochure which will probably come out after spring break around mid-March. Director Goebel asked if Kate knows what the school schedule might be once they bring the students back. Kate stated the principal and the leadership group are discussing options and that the school board asked them to look at changing the start and end times. She believes that this may implement beginning this fall.

**Council Liaison Schneeweis** updated the commission on things that are going on at City Hall. She stated that Bob does a wonderful job of updating things. Bob presented speed limit changes and parking changes, he had a wonderful map of what they're going to do, a lot of it had to do with emergency vehicles, Chief Fischer was present as well, we have to keep the streets safe and make sure emergency vehicles can get through. Jane also stated that the Farmers Market is coming back and Heather Thumblison is making that happen and she is looking for help if anyone knows anyone, it will take place at Veterans Memorial Park. The Council also discussed the CSAH 12/MN244 turn back and one of the controversial items discussed was the desire for more space between the two lost lakes for wheelchairs and safe route to school and walkers. Jane stated that Washington County Engineer Kevin Peterson did a great job of presenting this project and said this is a high volume route that includes freight/bus/truck and commuter traffic and it would be too expensive to build the road up to accommodate wider space. She also stated that the downtown business owners indicated they cannot withstand another summer of construction and asked the County to take that into consideration. There will be 11 foot lanes, continuous off road trail from Century Avenue to the trail at Old Wildwood Road, curb modifications at the Aldi crossing, traffic signal at Wedgewood Drive, extend sidewalk to Ridge Way, pedestrian crossing refuge at Ridge Way, causeway paved shoulder and a pedestrian crossing refuge at Lincolntown Avenue. Jane also stated that she has noticed more police presence at the beach and out on the ice just monitoring everything.

Director Goebel stated that we are doing to deer survey tomorrow morning to count the deer that we have in the city. He thinks it will be comparable to past years but may be slightly higher. This has been a controversial subject with the community. Vice Chair Lindberg asked if there is ever any discussion about a target number of deer for the population of the city and Director Goebel stated that it has not been discussed but is something they want to discuss such as what the city should have for a deer population. The DNR Wildlife Mgmt said somewhere around 60 would be a good, suitable population and right now we're probably pushing around 100 to 110. After we get a more accurate count then the Council will discuss the possibility of another deer hunt. There would be a public hearing to find out if the residents want a deer hunt or not.

### NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Wedgewood Park Improvements** – In the Park Capital Improvement Plan, Wedgewood Park is up next for improvements. We started gathering information and pricing last year, we have a budget of \$150,000. The plan is to remove and replace the playground, the woodchips underneath it. 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. We're going to replace a couple benches up there. The big question right now is do we want to remove and replace the basketball court or just refurbish it, either way we will be getting new basketball goals, if we redo the whole court then it will be new standards as well as backboards, if we just refinish it, then it will be just new backboards. The budgetary number for all this right now is around \$153,000. We plan do some of the improvements in house so that should save some money. At the next Park Commission meeting we would like to bring some playground designs that would fit in that location. We have asked a few suppliers to draft up some playground options that would be for all ages but would like the commissions input on that. Director Goebel stated that he has seen all ages of kids using the playground that is currently there. Vice Chair Lindberg is in favor of removing and replacing the basketball court and keeping an all age's playground structure. Chair Charlesworth stated that if the same process can be done on this court as what was done at Pheasant Run then he would be in favor of refurbishing. Director Goebel stated that it is about \$9,000 to refurbish and \$18,000 or more to replace. Chair Charlesworth said that if the asphalt is in tough shape then it should be replaced. Director Goebel stated that a Girl Scout has reached out to him about doing an Eagle Scout project of building a couple benches so this could work perfect in coinciding with this project. We are installing a couple benches as well as other amenities as part of this project. Kate Anderson asked Director Goebel to send any scouts that we may not use her way as they could use them for sure.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Parks & Amenities Brochure &**
- b. **Parks & Trails Map Brochure** - Director Goebel updated the commission on the progress of this brochure. He stated that we took everyone's feedback and made some minor changes and is confident that we have a final draft of the brochure that will be printed very soon and will be put on the City's website and copies at different facilities. He also stated that the Lake Links Trail is in purple now which is a different color than the other trails on the map. Commissioner Metz asked about DEC not being on the map and Director Goebel stated that they did not want to include it as it belongs to the school district.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS Con't**

- a. **Update – Mahtomedi Beach Winter Access – Director Goebel** updated the commission members on the progress of possible solutions to several concerns that have been brought to our attention concerning the winter access at Mahtomedi Beach. **Director Goebel** stated that the green light has been installed and the ice fisherman that he's heard from love it and really helps direct them right to the beach. There is not a lot of usage happening at this time as a lot of the activities that are planned for this time of year have been cancelled and the weather hasn't been very cooperative either. Vice Chair Lindberg stated that he goes down to the beach quite often during the day and noticed that a lot of people park by the snow fence, has that been an issue for anybody as far as walking out to the ice. Director Goebel stated that people who don't feel comfortable driving and parking on the ice will park close to shore and that is the most safe area and thickest at that point. It's never been a problem in the past, we've had some litter that has melted through the ice that we've had to pick up.

**Chair Charlesworth** would like to make an announcement before the meeting adjourns. He informed the commission that Steve Wolgamot, who is on the City Council is not well and he had to resign his position on the council. Mr. Wolgamot's term expires at the end of this year and that he was encouraged to fill the vacancy to end of the term and at last night's council meeting he was appointed to that position. His intent is to fill the term out and come back to the Parks Commission in January 2022. He stated that he is proud of the commission members and all they do and looks forward to joining them again and that this is an opportunity to serve the community and that's what we're all doing right now. I've been on here for a while and it's been very good and he's still very passionate about what we do here and looks forward to the progress that will occur so it's not like goodbye, it's just I'm doing this other thing for a little while and he knows the commission will do a great job while he's gone. His first council meeting will be March 2<sup>nd</sup> and he's honored to do that and also honored to work with this commission. Thank you.

**Director Goebel** stated that we all know that Chair Charlesworth is the right person for that position and how passionate he is about the parks and also the City that he cares about the City, the residents and we fully support however we can. We definitely look forward to you coming back as soon as you can and we know you'll be on our side when we bring things to the City Council.

**Council Liaison Schneeweis** stated that she fully supported him being appointed as he is able to hit the ground running and listens to everyone and handles both sides of issues perfectly.

**Director Goebel** stated that the commission members need to make a motion to accept Chair Charlesworth's resignation and a motion to appoint a new Chair.

**Upon motion by Commissioner Costello, seconded by Commissioner Metz, all members voting in favor to accept the resignation of Jeff Charlesworth as Chair of the Parks Commission. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Yea: Charlesworth, Lindberg, Metz, Costello and Fischer. Nay: None.**

**Upon motion by Chair Charlesworth, seconded by Commissioner Metz, all members voting in favor to appoint Vice Chair Lindberg as Chair of the Parks Commission and appoint Commissioner Costello as Vice Chair of the Parks Commission. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Yea: Lindberg, Metz, Costello, Charlesworth and Fischer. Nay: None.**

### **NEXT PARK COMMISSION MEETING**

The next Park Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via electronically.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by, Commissioner Fischer; seconded by, Vice Chair Lindberg, all members voting in favor by roll call vote. Yea: Charlesworth, Metz, Lindberg, Fischer and Costello. Nay: None. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

*Bob Goebel*

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Bob Goebel, PW Director