

**MAHTOMEDI PARKS COMMISSION
MINUTES
APRIL 21, 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; Councilmember Ledermann and Mahtomedi Resident, Bill Coleman

AGENDA

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

MINUTES

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

STAFF REPORTS

Director Goebel gave a brief update on current public works activities. This is a very busy time of year, April is always our busiest. Street sweeping was finished last week and this week we started hydrant flushing. Clean ups in all the parks have started, we start with the baseball fields as they get used the most first. We are planning to open the bathrooms as soon as weather permits so probably within a week or two the bathrooms will be open. The banners have been installed on CSAH 12 and the baskets have been ordered and hopefully having those by the end of May. The street projects have all started. **Phase 4 East** – Xcel has moved the gas main last week and plan to move in next Monday to start construction. The **Mill and Overlays** – They have brought in signage for all the different mill and overlay streets. We've met with the contractor several times on the pipework that needs to be done and again they plan on coming in on Monday to start digging, I believe they are going to start on Deer Oak Run to install the storm sewer and then move to Gosiwin and then other areas after that. The **Glenmar Diversion Project** was staked today, they plan on moving in either tomorrow or Friday weather dependent. Starting the clearing and grubbing and then going to the pipework heavy starting next week. **Commissioner Thompson** asked about signage for the proposed One Ways and No Parking areas. Director Goebel said no, that the proposed No Parking is going to a public hearing and will be discussed at the May 4th City Council meeting. Then the council will decide what they want to do with the no parking along the Lake Links route, we've been direct to take the fire trucks down these narrow roads and take pictures for the council. Old Wildwood is proposed no parking as well, we need to get through the no parking process first and then we'll be working on the pedestrian improvements on that route.

OPEN FORUM

Kate Andersen, Mahtomedi Community Ed Director gave a quick update that lots of things are happening in community ed, baseball, fast pitch, soccer, lacrosse and tennis, everything has opened up. We did our first food truck Friday, we had well over 300 people there, long lines at the truck. We are looking to have two food trucks and one dessert truck for the May 21st Friday event. **Commissioner Fischer** asked if any of the proceeds comes back to community ed. Kate stated that each food truck is making their own decisions about how much they are giving back but most are doing five to ten percent. The iPierogi truck sent us a check for \$200. We are using all of that money to give out scholarships to students that want to go to certain things where the cost is too expensive. The community engagement is another reason we are doing the food trucks. The district is moving forward with outdoor graduation, that's great for our seniors, it's going to be at the stadium, limited to two tickets per student. The City has approved a parade for the seniors so we're super happy and thankful for that. The district is doing a boat event for prom. One other thing is Safe Routes to School, I am getting several emails a day on this and can't keep up but I believe that Erin Roche wrote a grant and we will be having a bike able workshop at the end of June.

Councilmember Ledermann thanked Kate for her patience with some our residents and appreciates her involvement, these things are really important and there are a lot of people who are really passionate about walking, biking and healthy activities like that. We've made a lot of progress but there's more we can do. **Vice Chair Costello** informed the commission that back about 10 years or more ago when she was on the Parks Commission, the area where she and Charlie live is called the Dwinnell Nature Area and it is actually mapped out on the City maps. She held a lengthy discussion about the property in that area regarding zoning and that it's complicated and can't be zoned commercial or residential as it's way too costly to put in any kind of septic or sewer system back in this area. So this is really to discuss making it officially the Dwinnell Nature Area, a place where people can walk and enjoy nature, it's a very beautiful area that has a lot of natural resources.

Councilmember Ledermann introduced himself to the commission and stated that he is entering his 4th year of his first term on the council and lives in the south east part of Mahtomedi and due to COVID has been doing a lot of biking and walking like so many others. Councilmember Ledermann held a very lengthy discussion regarding the Dwinnell Nature Area and that he's a DNR employee and has worked in outreach and education for most of his career and is very passionate about this stuff. He supports this area being developed into a place where residents can walk and enjoy all the natural resources.

Commissioner Fischer asked if the neighbors want something like this. **Vice Chair Costello** stated that most of the neighbors are onboard with it.

Council Liaison Charlesworth asked if we can decide where we could put some placement using GIS or we would have to have surveyor go through there? Can we put trails in the ROW? Director Goebel stated that we would have to ask our City Engineer if using GIS would be enough or getting it surveyed. The topography in that area is a big issue. The first thing our City Engineer was concerned about is getting it surveyed so we know what we own up there.

Commissioner Thompson asked is this area already designated as the Dwinnell Nature Area. **Vice Chair Costello** stated yes it is but it has just been in limbo and we need to take further steps to preserve it.

OPEN FORUM Con't.

Director Goebel stated that he can't speak to when we acquired the property if it was 30 years ago or not. Some of the property was donated by one of the neighbors up there and one of the stipulations was that it remained a natural area and that may be where the name Dwinnell Nature Area came from.

Councilmember Ledermann stated that is the Dwinnell Nature Area in the Comp Plan but Comp Plans can be changed. There are options to make permanent easements for something like this. So the question is what's next, the more conversations with the neighbors would be appropriate, there are probably budget concerns or needs on this and eventually a resolution from the Park Commission saying we want to put paths in and do what we need to do to make this more accessible with paths and usable to the community and all City residents. **Commissioner Thompson** asked what about the budget. **Director Goebel** stated that we do not have the money in the budget this year to do the survey or the paths, we could maybe do some clearing, manual labor type stuff. **Chair Lindberg** asked about getting some budgetary numbers together so we have an idea of what it's going to take to do this project and to get in the Parks Capital Improvement Plan. He also stated that in a future meeting we could make a motion to recommend making that a nature area. **Director Goebel** stated that we start to put some numbers together. **Councilmember Ledermann** added that at some point we would want to have a public hearing to let the neighbors know what is being planned for the area and get their input and feedback. **Commissioner Fischer** asked if that area would work for a dog park. **Director Goebel** stated that there aren't any fences in that area and dogs can't be off leash. He also stated that we are still working with FedEx regarding a dog park on part of their property. **Commissioner Thompson** suggested that possibly an Eagle Scout could do some projects in that area and **Commissioner Fischer** suggested a field trip to walk the area and see what's there and the potential for future trails.

Director Goebel stated that next month the commission needs to select a tree and a location to be planted for Arbor Day.

Mahtomedi Resident; Bill Coleman held a discussion with the commission members regarding the Dwinnell Nature Area. He's lived there for 20 years and says it is a beautiful area. There are some tight areas, lots of water, some very difficult areas. **Councilmember Ledermann** stated that it should be kept natural. **Vice Chair Costello** stated that just walking the streets is an experience in nature and that we need to get all the City lots committed for the Dwinnell Nature Area. **Councilmember Ledermann** stated that touching nature is important. **Mahtomedi Resident; Bill Coleman** would like it staked out, very steep. **Director Goebel** agrees that there could be trails back there but will be very limited and difficult to construct because of the wetlands and the wetness and the topography.

Council Liaison Charlesworth updated the commission on things that are going on at City Hall. He stated that we're going to be seeing some changes throughout the community with regard to pedestrian access, bike access, there are going to be some streets that are going to get painted for pedestrian and bike access, and arrows will be painted on the roads that will share with pedestrians or bicyclists. The Council also discussed creating a trail connection off of Gosiwin Ct to Dahlia, also running a trail up to Eastgate, the last time we tried this trail connection we got some resistance from the neighborhood, we think it's worth exploring again because it is a valid trail connection. He also stated that a recommendation from the Parks Commission to the City Council would be good. He also stated that last fall there was a lot of discussion regarding the hours at Mahtomedi Beach and extending the hours for the lifeguards, right now the hours are 5 am to 10 pm and the guards are only there until 7 pm. He believes a resident suggested the beach hours be changed to 7 am to 9:30 pm and the lifeguards will be there until 8 pm this summer.

OPEN FORUM Con't.

A recommendation should come from the Parks Commission to the City Council on the beach hours. He discussed the improvements from the turn back on Mahtomedi Ave from Stillwater Rd to Hwy 120, Old Wildwood road will become a more pedestrian thoroughfare. In addition to the no parking that will be discussed at the May 5th council meeting, we'll also be discussing lowering the speed limits in certain areas, safe routes to school and a trail at OH Anderson School. **Director Goebel** added that regarding the trail off of Gosiwin, a letter is going out to the residents notifying them of the plan to add the trail and that there will be a public hearing at the May 19th Park Commission meeting.

Commissioner Metz is in favor of the trail. **Commissioner Fischer** asked exactly where the trail is going and do we really need to spend the money on this little piece if a walkway is going to be added when Dahlia St. is reconstructed. **Director Goebel** stated that Dahlia reconstruction is several years away so it makes sense to put the trail in now to get people off the dangerous curve on East Ave.

Upon motion by Commissioner Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Metz, all members voting in favor to recommend the City Council approve the construction of the Gosiwin Trail to Dahlia and up to Eastgate. Yea: Lindberg, Metz, Thompson, Costello, Strehlow and Fischer. Nay: None.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Lake Links Trail – Council Liaison Charlesworth stated that the City Council discussed changing the name of Lake Links Trail through Mahtomedi to Wolgamot Way as a way to thank Steve and Karen Wolgamot and to recognize his efforts in getting this trail built and all the many ways he has dedicated himself to the community. **Director Goebel** said that he has been directed to come up with a sign that will be installed at both ends of the Lake Links Trail.

b. Four Seasons Trail – Director Goebel informed the commission that a few years back we reconstructed the Streetcar trail from behind Roma Market up to Fir St. we tried our hardest to get a spur off of there somewhere to get it downtown, we weren't able to utilize a DNR grant because we were not able to dump it out onto another trail so we had to turn down some grant money for the trail however we did get the trail built. Four Seasons is interested in allowing us to bring a trail through their property. WSB Engineer, John Sachi and I have been up there and we plan to spur off of the Streetcar Trail and go directly behind their business and dump that out into their parking lot and from there it would be a short walking trail through their parking lot to a new trail constructed out in front of Four Seasons near where the trail is now between Four Seasons and Finkins and then take a sharp right curve and have crosswalk at the intersection of what is now Mahtomedi Ave and Mahtomedi Ave across the street from Ash St. to connect it with the trail where the rapid flashing beacon is.

c. Gosiwin Trail – See Open Forum above

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. **Wedgewood Park Improvements** – Director Goebel held a discussion regarding the two vendors that submitted playground design options that the commission was given at the March meeting, and that he took all of their suggestions and ideas back to the two vendors, which they then submitted alternate designs for tonight’s meeting. After a lengthy discussion among the commission members, it was decided that Flagship Recreation, Landscape Structures design Option 3.1 is the favorite and was chosen as long as another large child swing can be added. Director Goebel also stated that any color combination can be chosen and we will send color options via email tomorrow.
- b. **Adopt-a-Bench** - Director Goebel updated the commission regarding the adopt-a-bench program. Last year a former resident requested to pay for a bench, in honor of a loved one, to be placed at Chautauqua Beach. The resident across the street from the park, just south of the old hotel, has a little picnic area with a bench right on the edge of the retaining wall. What we’re looking at doing is a patio directly below that, over the hill side, it will be a wooden constructed patio, with plastic lumber, it would have railings possibly using cables if the budget allows and then the memorial bench placed on top of that patio overlooking the park and the trail. This person would like to donate up to \$4,500 towards this project. The memorial bench will the family’s name on it, this is something that is very special to this guy’s grandpa as he grew up and worked in the old hotel and then lived across the street. If the Park Commission is on board with this then we want to move quickly to get this built and install so it is complete by Memorial Day for the Danforth Family. We are hoping to add another bench fairly soon after as the Dean’s family is wanting a bench for Ken Deans.

Upon motion by Commissioner Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Strehlow, all members voting in favor to recommend the construction of the patio and installation of the Danforth family memorial bench at Chautauqua Park. Yea: Lindberg, Metz, Thompson, Costello, Strehlow and Fischer. Nay: None.

Director Goebel also stated that we plan to continue this program that this is something that Tim Deans really wanted to see happen in the City while he was on the Council and our liaison. The bench at the bottom of the hillside will be an Eagle Scout project.

NEXT PARK COMMISSION MEETING

The next Park Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via electronically.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by, Commissioner Fischer; seconded by, Vice Chair Costello, all members voting in favor by roll call vote. Yea: Metz, Lindberg, Thompson, Strehlow, Fischer and Costello. Nay: None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Bob Goebel

Bob Goebel, PW Director