

**Meeting Minutes  
New Prague Park Board  
Tuesday, December 13, 2011  
6:30 PM**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chair Sharon Brown. Members present were Matthew Lasch, Allen Mahowald, Sharon Brown, Maggie Bass, Mike Slavik and Council Representative Shawn Ryan (arrived at 6:45 PM). Absent were Amy Jirik and Youth Representative John Knoer. Staff present was Ken Ondich – Planning Director and Jim Calliguri – Parks Maintenance Supervisor. Others present were David Bruzek – City Council, Tom Wetschka – High School Baseball Coach, Tony Buthe – New Prague Youth Baseball Association and Mike Sticha – St. Patricks Youth Baseball Association.

**2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Mahowald, seconded by Lasch to approve the October 11, 2011 meeting minutes. Motion carried (5-0).

**3. Review Financial Reports**

Planning Director Ondich presented the financial reports to the Park Board, noting that during the month of November \$540.12 was added to the Park Equipment Fund from residential and commercial permits.

A motion was made by Brown, seconded by Bass to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion carried (5-0).

**4. Ball Team Fee Reservation Policy: Revisit Youth Team Fees**

Planning Director Ondich stated that at the October 11<sup>th</sup> Park Board meeting the Park Board had a “final” discussion regarding the Ball Field Reservation Policy and Youth Team Fees and that a motion was passed by the Park Board which stated the following: “A motion was made by Brown, seconded by Mahowald to forward the draft youth ball field reservation policy and application along with the “2011 New Prague Ball Field Use Costs” memo to the City Council for review and comment. Motion carried (5-0).” He stated that the fees recommended to the Council to be established were youth team fees at \$210 (for use two or more times per week) and \$177 (for use one time or less per week). He stated that the Council discussed the policy and proposed fees at their November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and in the end tabled a vote on the approval of the policy and establishment of fees for youth teams pending additional review by the Park Board and following re-notification to the team contacts. He stated that since the Council meeting, staff has met with Tom Wetschka, New Prague High School Coach, who has met with various youth ball team groups to gather comments from them for final discussions regarding the proposed fee. He stated that during a meeting between City Staff and Mr. Wetschka on

November 30<sup>th</sup>, a variety of concerns were discussed with the fees being the biggest point of discussion. He stated that they also discussed whether the City could set up an “improvement fund” to set aside a portion of the field reservation fees for future improvements on the fields but that it was not determined to be a viable option because the reservation fees do not cover the annual maintenance, let alone improvements to the fields. He stated that as an alternative, such improvements would instead need to be identified in a City Capital Improvement Plan for all city facilities. He stated that for discussion at the meeting, the various groups/teams have suggested that the youth team fee be a reduced rate from the adult teams based partly on the fact that a majority of the fields the youth teams use are not fenced or lighted like the adult fields and therefore the fee’s should be different. He stated that they suggested a range of fees of which staff has determined to be ½ the amount of the adult team fees and that staff had determined that the fees be suggested at \$105 for teams using fields two or more times a week and \$89 for teams using fields one or fewer times per week. He stated that while staff maintains that charging the youth teams the full adult amount would be justified based on maintenance costs, the City Council did indicate the possible desire to “ease into the fees” for youth teams. He stated regarding deadlines for field applications, staff had originally included a March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline which was determined by the various groups/teams to be too early and that they have suggested a later deadline of April 15<sup>th</sup> for the applications with the city publishing a final schedule by May 1.

Tom Wetschka, New Prague High School Baseball Coach, stated that he was not involved in the discussions at the onset, but that he was pulled into the discussion just before the Council discussed at the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. He stated that he has been meeting with the area youth baseball groups in the recent past to help bring a common umbrella among them. He stated that communication is a key piece of the meetings. He stated that the groups were New Prague Youth Baseball Association, St. Benedicts Baseball Association and the St. Patricks Baseball Association, all of which are made up of residents and non-residents of the City of New Prague. He stated that the groups all recognize that the fields being used for competitive purposes were not set up initially to be used as such, but that the situation and need for fields has the fields being used as such. He stated that the city fields are being used by kids 13 and under. He stated that the various groups are not opposed to fees, but would like consideration for improvements to be made to the fields as well as the fees to be eased into at the beginning.

Mike Sticha, President of the St. Patricks Youth Baseball Association, stated that they plan to have one of their midget teams (youngest age group) utilize New Prague fields this year because they have one field to share among nine teams. He stated that he personally understands the fees because he does the maintenance on the St. Patricks field. He added that some of the New Prague residents on the teams feel that since they pay city taxes they should not have to pay an additional fee to use the fields.

Tony Buthe, New Prague Youth Baseball Association, stated that he felt that Mr. Wetschka and Mr. Sticha had covered any comments he would have made and therefore he had no further comment.

Tom Wetschka stated that he did want to acknowledge that Deb Wegner does need to be recognized for her efforts the past few years in developing a schedule that has worked out each year and for also working with the groups when cancellations and changes have come up. He stated that she should be commended for the work she has done. He added that the groups had all met and discussed to have a scheduling meeting prior to the suggested April 15<sup>th</sup> application deadline which should greatly help the scheduling process among the groups following the deadline.

(Shawn Ryan arrived at 6:45 PM.)

Member Bass asked the representatives if they felt the fees being charged by the City would affect the participation by some children by becoming cost prohibitive.

Mr. Wetschka stated that he could see at least a slight impact because of the fee. He stated that the New Prague Youth Baseball Association already charges \$225 per participant plus they need to participate in a fundraiser on top of that amount. He stated that they would likely implement an increase if a field fee went into place.

Mr. Sticha stated that they would probably have to bump up the rate for the teams that might use a city field, which would be for the midget team this year. He stated that it would be a nominal increase and just for the team using the city field.

Mr. Buthe stated that they have 13 teams in the New Prague Youth Baseball Association that would utilize the field s and that the \$210 team fee would certainly have an impact and that a lower fee would help them ease into paying the fee.

Mr. Wetschka stated that they would be more accepting of the fee if a plan for field improvements were put into place to make updates. He stated that they also need to better communicate during the season as issues come up. He once again stated that easing into the fees would be very much appreciated.

Member Lasch asked if it was too late to include field improvements in the CIP for City Facilities.

Planning Director Ondich stated that it was not too late because the Council had not yet discussed the CIP and would likely be doing so in the coming year. He added that the Council also had identified in its Strategic Planning Session to plan for a future athletic complex by working with the school. He stated that whether it would include a 4 plex of fields or some other alternative was to be determined, but that talks would at least be initiated by the City in 2012.

Mr. Sticha asked was the policy was for cancellation of use of the fields.

The Park Board discussed and stated that a two day minimum notice provision would be added to the policy and that weather related matters would not apply as was already stated in the policy.

Member Bass stated that she would be ok with easing into the fees as long as there would be an annual review.

A motion was made by Brown, seconded by Lasch, to recommend that the City Council consider establishing youth ball team fees of \$105 for use two or more times per week and \$89 for use one or fewer times per week and to approve the ball field use policy with the amended application deadline of April 15<sup>th</sup> and adding a minimum two day notice to the City for cancellation of a reservation. Motion carried (6-0).

## 5. Miscellaneous

- a. **Hockey Rink: Warming House Hours and Board Warranty Issue** – Planning Director Ondich stated that weather permitting, staff plans to have the open house open 4PM to 9PM, Monday through Friday and 10AM to 9PM on weekends and holidays during the course of the season and as long as ice conditions hold out for use. He added that ice conditions are posted on the city's website. He also noted that staff has been discussing the possible options concerning the past damage that has occurred to the hockey boards and that they had contacted the City Attorney regarding possible options before the warranty runs out in 2012. He stated that some other cities had settled with the manufacturer for roughly ½ the purchase cost of the boards, but then had to find other options for boards.

Parks Supervisor Calliguri stated that it has been difficult finding applicants for the shelter at minimum wage and a minimum age of 18. He stated that they recent dropped the minimum age down to 16 and removed the operation of equipment from the job duties for someone under 18.

The Park Board asked about utilizing volunteers.

Planning Director Ondich stated that a volunteer program was actually discussed and established in 2010 and it ready to go should any volunteers wish to work at the shelter. He stated that the biggest concern with volunteers is maintaining consistent hours of operation. He stated that it would be possible to supplement paid attendants with volunteers should anyone be interested.

- b. **Expiring Terms for Allen Mahowald and Youth Representative John Knoer** - Planning Director Ondich stated that the terms for Allen Mahowald (after a 4 year term) and John Knoer (after a one year youth term) are coming to an end on December 31, 2011 and thanked them both for their service to the City of New Prague and all residents.

Member Mahowald stated that he enjoyed his time on the Park Board the past four years but that it was probably time for a new person to take his place but that he would continue until a replacement was named.

- c. **2012 Meeting Schedule** – Planning Director Ondich stated that he had provided a copy of the 2012 board and commission meeting schedule as information.

## **6. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mahowald, seconded by Bass to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 PM.  
Motion carried (6-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Ondich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "O".

Ken Ondich  
Planning Director