

**Meeting Minutes  
New Prague Park Board  
Tuesday, April 13, 2021  
6:00 PM**

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chair Amanda Judd. Members present were Joe Barten, Maggie Bass and Steve Roesner. Absent was Vice Chair Anthony Anderson. Staff present was Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director.

**2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Roesner, to approve the March 9, 2021 regular meeting minutes. Motion carried (3-0, Bass Abstained).

**3. Review Financial Reports**

Planning Director Ondich presented the financial reports to the Park Board noting that during the month of March there was \$862.24 added to the Park Equipment Fund from 2 new home permits being issued and that a total of 7 new home permits had been issued so far in 2021.

A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Bass to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion carried (4-0).

**4. Dog Park Discussion**

Planning Director Ondich stated that at the Park Board Meeting on March 9, the Park Board discussed the topic of dog parks and concluded the discussion that staff should contact the individuals that contacted the City about a dog park to suggest that they further organize before revisiting the topic with the Park Board and to possibly conduct a survey at some point in the future. He stated that the City Council noticed the discussion in the Park Board's meeting minutes at their meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup> and asked staff to provide an estimate on the construction cost of a dog park while also noting that past discussion on the dog park idea was voted down previously due to maintenance concerns and other park projects in the queue. He stated that since the discussion in March, staff has done some further research, specifically with area cities that have dog parks and obtained detailed information from the City of Lonsdale regarding their dog park, how it has operated and any issues they have had. Other cities information collected was from Jordan, Belle Plaine, Shakopee, Savage, Cleary Lake, Lakeville and Northfield. He stated that the last time the idea went before the council for a formal discussion was November 1, 2010 and the Park Board's recommendation to set up a dog park at Sliding Hill Skate Park was voted down 3-2. He stated that the Council at the time said to not bring back the topic again because as Council member Kratochvil stated – "Parks are for people, not pets". He noted that since this time, the topic has been left to occasional Park Board discussion and has remained as a long-term project of the Park Board with no specific year identified. He stated that discussions with individuals and groups have suggested that a more organized community group with possible donations could help move

a dog park forward. He stated that the area identified at Sliding Hill Skate Park would be approximately 1.3 acres in size and that staff would suggest requiring a New Prague Dog License, which is \$10 annually, to use the park for both residents and non-residents. He stated that the estimated construction costs are just under \$45,000 including fencing, lighting, picnic tables and drinking fountain plus an additional \$4,000 for annual maintenance.

The Park Board discussed having the option for both an annual pass and a daily pass and that the cost should be reasonable but also help pay for the upkeep. They noted that the dog park would need to be self-policing in order to operate and that signage will also be important. A suggested fee of \$20 per year was discussed as well as a way to convince out of towners to get a license to use the park. The Park Board discussed gathering public input through a survey and possibly via a group of volunteers conducting a fundraiser to help get the project going. The Park Board also discussed leaving some improvements beyond the basics for future completion. Regarding the survey, the Park Board discussed asking about desire for a small dog versus big dog area, asking what residents think would be essential items versus optional for a dog park, and asking if they would be willing to donate or volunteer to be on a focus group. The Park Board also asked about having the local veterinarians promote a survey. The Park Board asked for draft survey questions to be reviewed at the May Park Board meeting. The Park Board suggested that trash cans, signage and concrete or crushed gravel be added by the entrance to cut down on mud. They also discussed planting trees or installing a shade structure.

A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Bass to have staff complete further research on the development of a dog park and to draft survey questions for review at the May Park Board Meeting that could be put out for community input. Motion carried (4-0).

## **5. Miscellaneous**

- a. Annual Park Board Tour in May 2021** – Planning Director Ondich stated that each year in May, the Park Board conducts an annual tour of three to four parks to review them in person and allow the Park Board to ask staff questions about any relating topics. He stated that last year’s park tour was conducted as “self-guided” due to Covid-19 and included Memorial Park, Greenway Park, and Heritage Park. He stated that staff believes that we can hold the tour in person if we maintain social distancing and drive our own vehicles and that staff would suggest that the Parks to tour this year include Southside Park (review before grading/drainage project begins and drinking fountain project), Settlers Park (general review of the past grading project and Green Meadow future restoration), Northside Park (review court area, sliding hill for lighting). He stated that he would recommend starting the tour at 5PM by meeting at one of the parks.
- b. Expiring Park Board Member Terms** – Planning Director Ondich stated that terms expiring at the end of May 2021 include Amanda Judd, a vacant regular seat and the youth representative seat. He stated that current members can reapply to serve another term and that it is also worth noting that there is another year remaining on another vacant seat on the Park Board so there are currently openings for three regular seats and one youth seat. Amanda Judd stated that she would not be reapplying for a second term.

- c. **2022-2026 Project Plan** – Planning Director Ondich stated that attached is the 2022 to 2026 Project Plan as updated following the last Park Board Meeting when the idea of a dog park was discussed. He stated that also discussed under the miscellaneous section of the March Park Board meeting was regarding park signs and updating to the current design. He stated that it was noted at the March meeting that Memorial Park and Southside Park had not yet been updated, but Southside Park had, in fact, had its signage replaced in 2015 which leaves only Memorial Park’s entrance sign under the old design. He stated that back in 2014, the Park Board and City Council discussed a replacement sign for Memorial Park that could include an electronic message center and the costs were upwards of \$55,000 at the time. He stated that a sign matching the other park entrance signs with no electronic component was estimated to be closer to \$7,000. Joe Barten asked about the greenway signs and Planning Director Ondich stated that staff believed the signs were not all necessary with the trail kiosk maps and with the maps being available on the City’s website. Joe Barten stated he believed there was still value for some of the signs if it helped identify areas which might not be outwardly visible. Planning Director Ondich stated that staff would complete an inventory of the greenway signs for review. The Park Board discussed the Memorial Park Sign and there were varying opinions on whether or not an electronic message center on the sign would be appropriate and noted concerns about the adjacent homes that would be subject to the light from the sign. The Park Board also discussed the need to advertise for the golf course and park ballroom on the sign as well. The Park Board also discussed the Living Lab sign and Planning Director Ondich noted that it was a school district property and maintained sign, not the City and that they had offered the information on replacing the sign with one that would match other park signs in the past. Joe Barten also asked about the Liberty Park sign on the corner of Columbus Ave. N. and 7<sup>th</sup> Street NE. Planning Director Ondich stated that was a private sign on private property advertising Liberty Park Apartments. Joe Barten also asked about bathrooms for the east side of Memorial Park and if ADA portable bathrooms were in the plans at this time. Planning Director Ondich stated that the Park Board had determined to not put them in at this time and to hear to wait if there is demand for them, but that an ADA bathroom could easily be rented and set in the park immediately if demand is demonstrated.
- d. **Fitness and Aquatic Center Update** – Planning Director Ondich stated that included in the packet was a monthly update for the Fitness and Aquatic Center which the Joint Powers Board reviewed at their meeting on March 22, 2021. He stated that the financials show that the year-to-date losses continue to exceed the budget, even though the losses have been reduced with the recent reopening and partial lifting of restrictions.

## 6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 PM by order of Chair Judd.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Ondich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "O" and a distinct "ndich" at the end.

Ken Ondich  
Planning / Community Development Director