

**City of Woodbury
Woodbury City Hall
8301 Valley Creek Road
Woodbury, MN 55125
651-714-3583**

**Minutes of
Parks and Natural Resources Commission Regular Meeting
Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2022**

Commission Members Present: Greta Bjerckness, *Chair*, Bruce Montgomery, Deborah Musser, Rachel Nelson, Wallace Wadd, Brandon Mersch

Commission Member(s) Absent: Timothy Brewington, II, Arin Kurttila, *Co-Chair*, Emerson Siefken

Councilmember Absent: Councilmember Steve Morris

Staff Present: Michelle Okada, Parks and Recreation Director
Joshua Kinney, Parks Planner
Belinda Reed, Recording Secretary
Reed Smidt, Recreation Manager

Staff Virtual: Jodi Sauro, Parks and Recreation Coordinator

Call to Order

Chair Bjerckness called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Open Forum

Mr. Rich Ryan, 10436 Lancaster Lane, and Mr. Quinn Foley, 1883 Lochaven Drive, were present.

Mr. Foley, requested that the city consider installing outdoor 3-wall handball courts in the park system.

A discussion ensued as to handball court dimensions. The court was described as similar to a racquetball court, minus the back wall and played without a racquet. With regard to the number of Woodbury players interested in handball, Mr. Foley noted there are currently 15 or so, not including the approximate 40-50 racquetball players that currently frequent private indoor fitness facilities.

Chair Bjerckness thanked Messrs. Ryan and Foley for joining the Commission during the Open Forum segment.

Action Items

A. September 6, 2022, Parks and Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes

Chair Bjerckness asked for the approval of the Minutes of the September 6, 2022, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Commission.

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Motion: Moved by Commissioner Montgomery, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the September 6, 2022, Parks and Natural Resources Commission Minutes.

Vote: In favor All present
Against None
Absent Commissioners Brewington, Kurttila and Siefken

B. Turnberry Park Project – Memorandum No. 22 - 24

Mr. Kinney noted that Turnberry Park, as outlined in the memorandum, has remained in a natural state since 2002. At the time the Turnberry Development was being proposed and within that plat approval, it was clear that once the properties to the north and east were to be developed, improvements to the 10-acre Turnberry Park site would take place.

Mr. Kinney noted that with the north and east area now under development, staff embarked on the design process, which included a space and site topography exercise, identifications of all the tree resources and a wetland delineation, in order to identify what could potentially fit in the park space. Subsequent to the design process, Mr. Kinney noted that the overall parkland area became smaller once the tree resources and wetland areas were subtracted out of the total park area.

Mr. Kinney noted that public engagement included a meeting with a focus group, consisting of residents of the Legends of Woodbury, and an informational mailing to 170 property owners in the vicinity of the park space, with a separate public open house held.

Staff noted that there is a logical trail connection to the park space for the neighborhoods to the south, with access off of Addison Alcove. Of the 170 survey letters mailed to immediate area property owners, staff received 33 survey responses.

Of the potential amenities listed in the survey, the top three amenities identified were: connections to Legends of Woodbury, seating, and a pollinator habitat. Others also shared that they would like to see some connections and modest improvements, such as gathering node and connections throughout the site, while providing some resting opportunities to observe nature.

Mr. Kinney noted that during the development of the Legends of Woodbury 10 years ago, an oak stand had been planted. In order to avoid disturbing this oak stand, the planned northern trail will be moved further to the north. Mr. Kinney noted that the trails constructed would be bituminous, allowing access to the park for individuals with mobility issues for year-round access.

A discussion ensued with regard to the onsite wetland which Mr. Kinney noted experiences intermittent water levels, depending on rainfall, and which water levels are recorded throughout the year.

It was noted that the access to the park off of Addison Alcove would be through an area the size of two building lots. If the trail connection from Addison Alcove is not initially added, and a “cow path” of community traffic results in erosion, a paved trail connection could be added at a future date.

The Commission inquired as to why there was opposition to the trail connection from Addison Alcove. It was noted that responses voiced during the community engagement, included concerns with traffic and the perception that access could bring crime into the neighborhood; however; staff pointed out that traffic from the alcove may likely be from the local neighborhoods, as there is no parking lot, and the park is more of a neighborhood park; not a destination park. It was also noted

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that a mowed trail could provide access from Addison Alcove; however it was noted that if the overall benefit to the community is such, then a connection outweighs the opposition.

The city's Comprehensive Plan, along with the Planning and Parks and Recreation Commission's Staff Reports were cited. With the two lot opening adjacent to the Addison Alcove cul de sac, and opening to the park, staff noted that it would be odd not to add the trail connection.

The Commission noted they liked the concept plan, including the realignment of the trail to avoid the existing tree segments. The consensus was to put a pause on the potential trail segment south to Addison Alcove, which connection could be added at a later date. Staff indicated they would further review previous planning documents and gather more information and bring that back should staff recommend a different approach.

Ms. Okada thanked the PNR for their feedback. Staff will post information on the City's website park project page with updates, timeline and next steps.

C. Discussion Items

Ms. Okada polled the Commission as to their preference with regard to being provided a listing all the projects, or if they prefer a brief update with no memorandum. There was consensus that having the park projects listing is helpful and being provided a brief update each meeting is welcomed; however, a memorandum is not necessary.

A discussion ensued with regard to the completed Bridlewood Farms Park. Staff noted that the park is very busy following the dinner hour and that user feedback has been that the fence and bushes look great and that the park is aesthetically pleasing.

D. Monthly Update – Memorandum No. 22 – 25

Mr. Smidt noted that the annual Big Truck Day event was again a success and that if anyone has a connection with a monster truck or combine for next year's event, to connect with staff.

Mr. Smidt noted that registration for the winter/spring recreation brochure begins Wednesday, Nov. 30.

Ms. Okada noted that the change to a smaller print brochure mailed to Woodbury households, with the full brochure available on the city's website, has not affected registration.

Council Report – Councilmember Morris

None

Announcements/Miscellaneous

There was consensus to hold the November 1, PNR meeting at M Health Fairview Sports Center, in the upper level conference room, to be convened at 7:00 p.m. Prior to the meeting, a tour of the facility will be organized to begin at 6:15 p.m. (It was noted that the meeting will be held in-person; no live/virtual technology will be available at the site.)

There was also consensus to hold the December 6, PNR meeting at the Central Park Facility.

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Mr. Smidt noted that following a staff member transfer to the Parks Division, the Recreation Division recently welcomed Recreation Program Specialist, Joseph Vaughan to the Recreation team. Mr. Vaughan will be focusing on adaptive recreation.

Mr. Smidt also noted that Recreation Program Specialist, Elizabeth Owens, will be working with a senior focus group, to provide feedback and identify what additional programming might fit with the design spaces being considered at Central Park.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Belinda Reed

Belinda Reed
Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Parks and Natural Resources Commission on November 1, 2022.