



City of Blaine

Park Advisory Board

September 26, 2023 | 7:00 PM
Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Square Drive NE
Blaine, MN 55449

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The Blaine Park Advisory Board met in the Council Chambers of City Hall on Tuesday, September 26, 2023. Chair Lester called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Boardmembers Ford, Keraka, Lizakowski, Neubert, Paulseth and Chair Lester.

Members Absent: Boardmember VanBuren.

Staff Present: Jerome Krieger, Senior Parks and Recreation Manager.

Guest: None.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.1. 2023-458 Approval of the July 25, 2023 Park Board meeting minutes.
Sponsors: Jerome Krieger, Sr. Recreation Manager

Motion by Boardmember Ford to approve the minutes of July 25, 2023 as amended. Motion seconded by Boardmember Neubert. Motion approved unanimously.

4. Open Forum for Citizen Input

Chair Lester opened the Open Forum at 7:03PM.

Paul Perez, 12971 Legacy Creek Parkway, explained he has worked with the local little league for the past nine years. He stated he has heard the fields at the National Sports Center near the airport are going away. He reported the city would need more fields if these are eliminated. He suggested a 150' foot field be considered at the BBC. In addition, he believed there was room for a second field at Northwoods Park. He suggested the city consider an additional ballfield at

Jefferson Park. He urged the city to consider turning the basketball court at Jaycee Park into a parking lot.

Commissioner Neubert asked what the status was of Airport Park. Senior Recreation Manager Krieger stated after speaking with planning staff, it was his understanding this park would be developed in the next three to five years. He understood the city would have to create more baseball and softball fields to make up for this. He commented further on the restrictions that were in place for using park dedication funds. He reported staff understood the needs of the community but would have to work within the funding it had available for park improvements.

Mr. Perez discussed how he had worked on fundraisers for the little league and noted he would be willing to continue these efforts to assist with park improvements.

Boardmember Ford requested further information regarding Airport Park. Mr. Krieger provided the board with historical information regarding the Airport Park ballfields noting the city was no longer leasing this land and noted the land was now being leased by the NSC. He stated at some point in time, the city will have to replace these four fields.

Mr. Perez commented on how registrations for baseball were on the rise in the community, which meant there would be a continual or greater need for ballfields.

Chair Lester questioned if the city should be planning for more than four fields going forward. Mr. Perez stated Blaine was almost fully built out, which would mean the number of families would level off. He stated from 2010 to 2022 the city's population has increased by 14,500 and 33% of these new residents were under the age of 18.

Chair Lester asked what the ideal number of fields would be in the community. Mr. Perez stated the little league association currently has access to 17 fields which was providing kids two games per week and three practices every two weeks. He noted the traveling league was tight on field space as well, because time was limited.

Boardmember Neubert indicated she could see a second ballfield at Northwoods Park, but only if the park had additional parking spaces.

Boardmember Ford stated he was more in favor of the mayor's vision which would provide a five or six field complex, instead of making the ball fields spotty throughout the city. He anticipated the mayor's vision would allow the city to bring in tournaments and more visitors.

Boardmember Paulseth asked if a pinwheel could be considered at Happy Acres. Mr. Krieger stated this was discussed in the past, but would require the one fence to be removed and for the three existing fields to be reconfigured. He reiterated that it may be easier to build a baseball complex from scratch rather than trying to reconfigure an existing park and noted this would also allow the city to utilize park dedication funds.

Chair Lester asked if the landfill behind the Sanctuary neighborhood could be used for a ballpark. Mr. Krieger stated it was his understanding this land could not be disturbed.

Boardmember Keraka stated she liked the idea of a community park with multiple ballfields in one location. She asked if the city had land available for purchase for a baseball complex. Mr.

Krieger reported the city did not own any land for a complex of this type, but rather the city would have to purchase this land from a private seller.

Boardmember Lizakowski recommended that staff take into consideration the amount of parking that would be required if a new baseball complex were to move forward.

Mr. Perez suggested staff consider Jaycee park being absorbed by the BBC. Mr. Krieger stated he had not considered this and noted the soil within this park would have to be further investigated.

Jen Rhodes, 10001 Abel Street, explained she was a representative of the Spring Lake Park Softball Association. She indicated her association services the Spring Lake Park School District and 56% of her players live in Blaine. She asked that the park board consider installing fast pitch softball fields with 200' fences. She commented on how her association has had double digit growth in the last few years and anticipated this would continue again in 2024. She stated as the city plans for future ballfields, she urged the city to consider installing a fast pitch field. She reported her organization would be willing to partner with the city to fundraise for a new field. She estimated there were 275 young ladies that played softball in Blaine and did not have a proper field.

Chair Lester asked if modular fencing would be an option for these fields. Ms. Rhodes stated this would be an option.

Chair Lester closed the Open Forum at 7:46PM.

5. New Business

5.1. 2023-459 2024 - 2028 Parks CIP and Parks and Trails Budget Discussion *Sponsors: Jerome Krieger, Sr. Recreation Manager*

Mr. Krieger reviewed the Parks CIP and Parks and Trails budget for 2024 - 2028 in detail with the board. He explained the city has 755 acres of parks, 42 shelters, 14 park buildings, 54 playgrounds, 826 acres of open space, 76 miles of trails, 110 miles of sidewalks and 102 ballfields or courts. The park capital summary was reviewed along with the 2024 parks capital by fund and type. The proposed parks and trails projects for 2024 were further reviewed. He commented on the proposed revenues and expenditures for the next five years. Staff reiterated that this was a working document and adjustments could be made going forward. He then asked for comments or questions regarding the CIP.

Chair Lester asked if there was any requirement on what the balance had to be in the 404 fund. Mr. Krieger stated there was no balance requirement for this fund.

Boardmember Neubert asked how many miles of trails would be improved in 2024. Mr. Krieger estimated the allotted funding would replace five miles of trails.

Moved by Boardmember Ford, seconded by Boardmember Neubert, to recommend the City Council approve the 2024 - 2028 Parks CIP and Parks and Trails Budget.

Motion adopted unanimously.

5.2. 2023-460 Park Updates

Sponsors: Jerome Krieger, Sr. Recreation Manager

Mr. Krieger provided the board with an update on the following matters:

- Aquatore Bandshell update - Staff reviewed photos of the progress that had been made on the bandshell.
- Sunrise Pond Park update - Staff reviewed photos and commented on the progress that has been made at this park.
- Carrara East Court update - Staff noted the fence was in and the city was waiting for the court to be painted.
- Jim Peterson Park Lighting update - Staff reviewed the location of the light poles for the west field.
- World Fest recap - Staff reported 700 people attended this year's World Fest.
- Harvest Dinner - The Harvest Dinner will be held at MAYC on Thursday, September 28 at 5:30PM. Staff noted they were still seeking volunteers for this event.
- Oktober Fest - It was noted Oktober Fest would be held on Saturday, October 7 from 12PM to 8:30PM at Tom Ryan Park. Staff explained Kat Perkins would be performing at this event.
- Harvest Hustle at TPC Golf Course - Staff was approached by the TPC to partner with them for a Harvest Hustle Fun Run on their course on Thanksgiving Day at 9AM.
- 2018 - 2023 Park Projects recap - Staff provided the board with a recap on the parks projects that were completed from 2018 through 2023 for Ward 1, 2 and 3. It was noted the city has been working intentionally to improve parks throughout the entire city over the past five years.
- Veterans Memorial Park - Staff reported the Freedom Rock and POW MIA statute were unveiled this past weekend at Veterans Memorial Park.

6. Adjournment

Boardmember Ford motioned to adjourn. Boardmember Paulseth seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Chair Lester adjourned the meeting at 8:36PM.