

**City of Isanti
Park & Recreation Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2010
Isanti City Hall**

A. Call To Order

Wimmer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Park Board members rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll Call

Members Present: Board Chairman Wimmer, Clell Bone, Yvonne Kennedy, Keith Koehler, Bridgette Parker, and Aaron Zdon (arrived at 5:05 p.m.)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Lisa Krause, City Planner

D. Agenda Modifications

Krause stated that there were none.

Motion by Bone, second by Parker to adopted the May 25th, 2010 Park and Recreation Board Agenda. Motion was unanimously approved.

E. Approve Minutes from the February 23rd and April 27th 2010 Park Board Meetings

Bone stated that there needs to be a correction to the April 27th meeting. Bone stated that he had notified City Clerk Bauer that he would not be present at that meeting.

Wimmer stated that Bone should make Park and Recreation staff aware of any absences in the future. Wimmer stated that he would check with Ms. Bauer.

Motion by Bone, Parker to approve the meeting minutes from February 23rd and April 27th. Motion was unanimously approved.

F. Athletic Elements Reservation Policy

Krause outlined the staff memo and presented background information on the item.

Wimmer stated that what is happening is that a group or organization could reserve every day for three months in a row if they wanted to. Wimmer stated that this was troubling to the Council, as the amenities are out there for the citizens. Wimmer stated that there needs to be some sort of balance to where say 20% of the time or one day a week the facility can be reserved. Wimmer stated that was the thought process by the Council and the reason that it was sent back to the park board.

Bone questioned how many courts were at the school in Cambridge.

Scott Larkin, Assistant Principal at Cambridge Middle School/Activity Coordinator Cambridge-Isanti Middle School, stated that there are five tennis courts in Cambridge that the high school and junior varsity tennis teams practice on in the spring and fall.

Wimmer stated that there were none in Isanti.

Larkin stated that was correct.

Wimmer questioned what level the students were that were scheduled for the courts in Isanti.

Larkin stated that they are the 7th and 8th grade Isanti and Cambridge tennis teams, both boys and girls. Larkin stated that neither one of these middle schools have tennis facilities at the school.

Wimmer questioned if there were any other activities in which the school uses City facilities. Wimmer stated that the school is putting out for a sport or activity and then the school is commandeering City facilities for the sports.

Larkin stated that the school district does not own a hockey arena, so they come to Isanti. Larkin stated that they do not own the soccer complex but there are teams that practice at the complex.

Wimmer questioned if that was scheduled through the soccer association.

Larkin stated that was correct. Larkin stated that they have about 30 boys in any given season that have tennis in the spring of the year and about 30 girls in the fall of the year that have tennis. Larkin stated that this is their opportunity to learn how to play tennis and there is a coach at the court so that the students are not unsupervised. Larkin stated that they have been using the courts since 2005 when the school had started the tennis program in the Isanti and Cambridge Middle Schools.

Wimmer stated that the situation with the current policy has allowed for the boys to have the courts scheduled for most of the spring and there was an individual that was kicked off the courts. Wimmer stated that is troubling to him. Wimmer stated that the individual has scheduled for most of the fall, which will conflict with the girl's tennis. Wimmer stated that he is within his rights to do so. Wimmer stated that the issue is brewing on both sides. Wimmer stated that we need to figure out what we want to do here. Wimmer stated that he was troubled by the fact that people were getting kicked off the court, even though the school did not have the courts scheduled. Wimmer stated that can't happen again.

Wimmer stated that he would throw out the first idea to get the conversation going. Wimmer stated that perhaps 20% of the time or one day a week the courts could be scheduled on an ongoing basis. Wimmer questioned if others had ideas.

Bone stated that Cambridge has five courts. Bone questioned why they could not use those courts too. Bone stated that he does not object to a day a week.

Wimmer questioned if the City of Cambridge has any courts.

Larkin stated that they have one in a city park. Larkin stated that the court is pretty beaten down. Larkin stated he is not a tennis expert, but he has been told that the court is not conducive for playing tennis.

Wimmer questioned if the school had considered Whisper Ridge at all.

Larkin stated that they had not. Larkin stated that he did not know this was an issue until the tennis coach had contacted him; and in-turn he contacted Ms. Krause. Larkin stated that he questioned what needed to be done, as they had never reserved the courts in the past, it had just always been available.

Wimmer stated that he has been on the board since 2003 and the courts have never been reserved for anyone specifically. Wimmer stated that is usually how we find things out. Wimmer stated that things are done and continue to be done, until there is an issue. Wimmer stated that what really got him upset were people getting kicked-off when they were not reserved. Wimmer questioned if Mr. Koehler had something to say.

Koehler stated that he had talked to some school districts and other communities on how they operate. Koehler stated that many were for ball fields. Koehler stated that there was a fee to use the facility on a multiple day basis as well as the district had to help pay for maintenance costs associated with the upkeep for the facility. Koehler stated that labor was also being thrown in. Koehler stated that one day a week is more than adequate for a reservation.

Zdon stated that he thought they should look at Whisper Ridge as well. Zdon stated that the court is hardly ever used and the court is in good shape.

Wimmer stated that it could be reserved using the same policy.

Zdon stated that is correct, but it would be another court that could be used another day.

Wimmer stated that in theory if they did the percentage, the school would have two nights on a court.

Warren Thunstrom, city resident, stated that Cambridge school courts are also lit. Thunstrom questioned if the lights are used by the teams.

Larkin stated that the teams normally practice after school from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. Larkin stated that if there are meets that run late, the lights may be used. Larkin stated that for servicing middle school students and having practice later in the evening would be difficult as students are unable to drive. Larkin stated that to his knowledge no one really practices under the lights.

Thunstrom questioned if they could. Thunstrom stated that people that play hockey arrange their schedules based upon when ice times are available.

Larkin stated that the difference is that hockey is not run through the school district. Larkin stated that with middle school sports, practice occurs after school because the students are there.

Thunstrom questioned if they were bused.

Larkin stated that Isanti students would walk and the Cambridge students are bused.

Wimmer stated that a group was already bused.

Thunstrom stated that they were bused anyway.

Larkin stated that they are bused from school. Larkin stated that getting bus transportation to come back to the school later at night would be difficult, if the students were to practice later in the evenings. Larkin stated that the school has not done this before for middle school students. Larkin stated that this may be a hardship for parents.

Thunstrom stated that if the school can light the courts in Cambridge, if school district could help to lit the courts in Isanti then the lights could provide for anyone who played later in the evening. This would be a win-win for everybody.

Larkin stated that he agreed. Larkin stated that if he could go back to the school district and request that new nets be added and the courts are serviced when needed, with new lines or re-surfaced; if an agreement could be worked out so the teams could continue to practice four days a week that would be something that he would support whole-heartedly.

Wimmer stated that the City is having a hard time getting the school district to help pay for a City parking lot that they use. Wimmer stated that the City has been trying to work with the school district on a number of items. Wimmer stated that the time periods reserved are the prime times for people to play. Wimmer questioned if the board would still want to have a period of time where the courts are completely blocked off even if we can't add the extra hours due to lighting. Wimmer stated that they run into this issue with the outdoor rink. Wimmer stated that the hockey group has some sweat equity into the rink, but they have the prime times. Wimmer stated that the remainder is then open to the public. Wimmer stated that council members are asked frequently if this is really fair. Wimmer stated that he would be willing to explore the lighting idea.

Thunstrom stated that he didn't think that the locking up is so much of an issue, if the courts would be lit. Thunstrom stated that earlier in the season, once the prime hours are gone, it is usually dark. Thunstrom stated that he would play later in the evening, if he could see the ball.

Wimmer stated that they could explore the option. Wimmer stated that the City is having a hard time getting a couple hundred dollars to help maintain the Unity Park parking lot that they are using. Wimmer stated the City still needs to set a policy, which will address the issue. Wimmer stated that the current situation could run its course for the remainder of the school year and at a future date a new policy will take effect. Wimmer stated if there is some other avenue to look at, the city could definitely review that. Wimmer stated that lighting for the Redbirds Field was a hefty price.

Larkin stated that adding maintenance items is one conversation, but there is no way that he will be able to get the school district to pay for lights. Larkin stated that he may be able to help with maintenance of the courts, but the lights would be a stretch.

Wimmer stated that money is tight everywhere and he understands that. Wimmer stated that the City could explore that as an option, but the cost would be great.

Koehler stated that a bulb is around \$100 for those types of lights.

Wimmer stated that he commended Thunstrom for trying to bring a solution.

Zdon questioned if they were done practicing for the year.

Larkin stated that the season ended last Wednesday.

Zdon stated that the policy would need to be set before next fall.

Larkin stated that the girl's tennis team would begin on August 30th.

Wimmer stated that a policy needs to be set so that the school district is aware of the policy and is able to make changes for the upcoming season now.

Koehler stated that the items to be reserved should be further clarified.

Wimmer stated that he thought that had been clarified, but they could review.

Larkin questioned if while the policy is being written, should he prepare something stating what the school is asking for. Larkin stated that when he walks in the door in the morning, there are going to be questions regarding how the meeting went as this affects a large number of student athletes. Larkin stated that the school is hoping to be able to use the courts from 3 to 5 p.m. Monday thru Thursday.

Zdon questioned how many nets were at Whisper Ridge.

Wimmer stated that there is one tennis court and one basketball court. Wimmer stated that there are two at Mattson. Wimmer stated that they had contemplated putting one at Bluebird Park, but the basketball court was constructed. Wimmer stated that he did not see a new court being constructed any time soon. Wimmer stated that the question is to whom is the City of Isanti providing the facilities for. Wimmer stated that it is City funds going towards maintaining these facilities. Wimmer stated that if the school district is relying on these facilities, first it would be a good idea to discuss that with the City so we are not trying to fix things after the fact.

Larkin stated that he apologizes that this has happened. Larkin stated that he was just following through with what he had been told. Larkin stated that he apologized if his coach was offensive in any way. Larkin stated that he will talk to the individual. Larkin stated that he will make sure that it doesn't happen again.

Wimmer stated that this is a small community and something starts; and it continues to occur without any questions asked. Wimmer stated that the roots were planted before any of us were here. Wimmer stated that this is similar to the red flag insurance issues associated with the school district using city property. Wimmer stated that there are more than just the scheduling issues associated

with using City property; there are insurance and other issues as well. Wimmer stated that if there is a school function scheduled on City property; the City needs to be indemnified on the school's insurance policy. Wimmer stated that while none of these things have happened, the City needs to work to get things fixed. Wimmer stated that the citizens are footing the bill on this and if they do not have reasonable access to these amenities, then why should we be asking them to pay for those items.

Wimmer stated that the City wants to cooperate with the school district on these items. Wimmer stated that many of the students are not from Isanti. Wimmer stated that it would be easier if this was day one and we were meeting to discuss this item; and do it the proper way. Wimmer stated that this issue was brought about by no fault of anyone there.

Larkin questioned if there was a way to sit down and work it out together. Larkin stated that at least half of the students on the team, their parents are from Isanti. Larkin stated that they could fill the room with tennis parents from Isanti. Larkin stated that he was willing to sit down at that grass root level and discuss the issue. Larkin stated that he was not against coming to more meetings to discuss the item.

Wimmer stated that the Park Board needed to make a policy recommendation to the City Council tonight. Wimmer stated that they could try to work out something. Wimmer stated that they needed to set perimeters and he doubted that they would have all four nights, given the discussions that have already happened. Wimmer stated that he would be surprised if half of the kids are from Isanti. Wimmer stated that they needed to find something that is equitable but not tie up all the equipment. Wimmer stated that this is City property.

Koehler stated that it is a public park and should be available to the public to use as much as possible.

Wimmer stated that some of these things are a surprise. Wimmer stated that he was unaware that this was going on until two months ago. Wimmer stated that this is a question of how much a person or group can reserve. Wimmer questioned how much time any one group could reserve the facility for or if they can do it at all. Wimmer stated that if it is limited to any one group, then five groups could come forward and each schedule a day, using up most of the whole week. Wimmer questioned if the 20% should be the maximum amount of time that it could be scheduled for anyone or any group all week. Wimmer stated that there will be future situations. Wimmer questioned if the 20% would be by anyone or any group or if this means that the courts can only be reserved for one day a week total by anyone.

Koehler stated that maybe it can be reserved by one address only once. Koehler stated that for example he could reserve it for one night and his wife could call and reserve it for another night. Koehler stated that if it is one address than they would only be able to make the one reservation.

Wimmer questioned in any one week how much could it be reserved.

Koehler stated that 20% or one day week is adequate.

Zdon questioned if any person could call and reserve a court for a night during the week.

Wimmer stated that in theory yes, the current policy would allow that.

Zdon questioned if they could reserve both courts.

Wimmer stated that he would say it would be per court. Wimmer stated that it is first come, first serve. Wimmer stated that there are three tennis courts. Wimmer stated that under this policy, the school district could reserve a court for three nights out of the week versus the four. Wimmer stated that two nights would be at Mattson and one night would be at Whisper Ridge. Wimmer stated that they could look at Whisper Ridge and see if there is more that they could do for that court.

Larkin stated that anything that they could do would be super. Larkin stated that he did not want the board to feel shy about asking for maintenance items. Larkin stated that this has been going on since 2005. Larkin stated that over time, the school district has had almost 140 tennis players using those courts. Larkin stated that they have put wear and tear on those courts. Larkin stated that the school district would thank the City for allowing them to use the court.

Wimmer stated that they have 20% a week per court. Wimmer stated that from one scheduling entity or address.

Zdon questioned if a time period should be specified.

Wimmer stated that currently for baseball, there are no time restrictions.

Zdon stated that he would hate to see someone come in and reserve the court for a whole 24-hour period. Zdon stated that there should be a reasonable time limit.

Wimmer questioned what the time schedule was for the middle school practice.

Larkin stated that it was from 3-5 p.m.

Wimmer questioned if the board wanted to put a 2 or 3 hour time limit on a reservation.

Koehler questioned if that was just for the tennis courts.

Wimmer stated that was correct.

Koehler stated that the school district has been using the facility for five years and this is the first issue. Koehler stated that if the courts are not reserved, then it is first-come, first-serve and they are able to use the courts. Koehler stated that he was fine with the time limit.

Zdon agreed. Zdon stated that the opportunity has to be there for other residents.

Wimmer questioned 2 or 3 hours.

Zdon stated that the three hours works better.

Wimmer stated that it looks like three hours, one day a week, per court is the recommendation. Wimmer stated that everything else is first-come, first serve; which is already in place.

Motion by Zdon, second by Koehler to recommend an amendment to the Athletic Elements Reservation Policy for the tennis courts to one day per week for a maximum of three hours per that day, per tennis court. Motion was unanimously approved.

Wimmer stated that they probably are going to want to have a discussion within the next month or so to review other creative issues.

Larkin stated that it is the school district's issue and he does not want the Park Board to feel that it is dumped on them. Larkin stated that it is the school district's issue. Larkin stated that there are students whether or not it is tennis or another activity that they need to find facilities for the students to use. Larkin stated that he thanked the board for the opportunity to discuss the item and for their support.

G. Evening Park Patrol

Wimmer stated that this item had come up because there are a lot of unfortunate circumstances that have arisen within the parks in the evenings. Wimmer stated that he questioned whether the reserve officers going through the parks in the evenings would help to alleviate some of the issues. Wimmer stated that the parks are the gathering points for teens when the sun goes down. Wimmer stated that the reserves do not cost us anything. Wimmer questioned if this was a reasonable option. Wimmer stated that this may be some way to get a few more eyes on what is going on in the parks in the evenings.

Police Chief Ron Sager stated that he thought this would be a good idea. Sager stated that the reserves are in a tough time; as they are working to rebuild the number of officers. Sager stated that they are more than happy to do that work. Sager stated that they have scheduled training for them. Sager stated that he has been after the officers to look at the parks in the evenings. Sager stated that they are being proactive. Sager stated that something on this issue is scheduled to run in the upcoming Isantian issue. Sager stated that it will be on the reserves list of things to do.

Wimmer stated that the next step would be to make a recommendation to the Council for us to get some kind of a process to direct the Chief to follow through and to provide feedback to the Board as to if this is working. Wimmer stated that having more eyes would be good.

Zdon questioned if the reserves are in a vehicle or on bike.

Sager stated that they use both. Sager stated that they are in the process of trying to find another vehicle.

Zdon questioned if there were police bicycles.

Sager stated that they had received some funding for some bike equipment in the past. Sager stated that they are out during Jubilee Weekend.

Bone stated that the south side parks have the most issues.

Sager stated that the main problems have been in Mattson Park recently. Sager stated that they have been aggressively patrolling that area. Sager stated that the problems have moved around. Sager stated that it used to be in the VFW Park. Sager stated that when the tot lot was first built, it was that park. Sager stated that they are chasing the kids around.

Koehler stated that he has seen the police department stopping to talk to kids in the parks. Koehler stated that the presence is out there.

Motion by Zdon, second by Bone to recommend that the City use the reserve officers to help patrol the parks. Motion was unanimously approved.

H. Volleyball Court Discussion

Krause presented the staff memo.

Wimmer stated that it would be \$3000 to \$6000 for a sand volleyball court.

Zdon stated that it would be around \$10,000 with all the materials.

Krause stated that the estimates are dated, as it has been awhile since the original discussion.

Zdon questioned where we are on park projects. Zdon questioned if everything had been shelved due to the economy.

Wimmer stated that there is the park dedication fund that would pay for new equipment. Wimmer stated that there are funds tied to the pedestrian bridge and \$50,000 towards the bike-walk trail. Wimmer stated that we are right at the mark. Wimmer stated that if there is a development project, then funds would be added. Wimmer stated that the funds are locked up. Wimmer questioned if that was an accurate statement.

Krause stated that it was accurate.

Zdon stated that the Board could not move forward with anything new.

Wimmer stated that would be correct. Wimmer questioned if the board would like to see the net moved to Mattson. Wimmer stated that it would probably get more use.

Zdon stated that it would be located in the sun versus the shade. Zdon stated that it may cost some money to have the net transferred. Zdon questioned the location.

Wimmer stated that the net would be placed wherever they recommend. Wimmer stated that it would be located near the pleasure rink.

Koehler stated that the layout shows the volleyball court and pleasure rink are in the same place and he questioned whether there would be maintenance issues. Koehler stated that with the freezing and thawing of water over the post pads, this could cause issues. Koehler stated that if there is room, they should be placed side-by-side.

Wimmer stated that there should be enough space there to do it.

Koehler stated that he has talked about placing the pleasure rink in the parking area instead. Koehler stated that he thought that would be a good idea to have the volleyball net over in Bluebird near the desired location.

Wimmer stated that Mr. Meyer would need to sign-off on the pleasure rink location change. Wimmer stated the volleyball net could be moved to just next to the pleasure rink. Wimmer stated that if the pleasure rink is moved to the parking lot in the future, then a second court may be placed in the future.

Motion by Zdon, second by Parker to recommend to the City Council that the volleyball net from Mattson Park be moved to Bluebird Park. Motion was unanimously approved.

I. Isanti County Public Health – Mini Grants for SHIP

Krause outlined the staff memo and the grant information that she had received from Ms. Perlick of Isanti County Active Living.

Wimmer questioned the time that is required to apply for the grant.

Krause stated that the application would appear to be fairly simple. Krause stated that the form would need to be completed and submitted. Krause stated that Isanti County Public Health reviews and approves the applications.

Zdon questioned if the City was good on the maps. Zdon stated that we have tackled that before. Zdon questioned signage.

Wimmer questioned if there was any need that is applicable to this grant. Wimmer stated that the City had chosen not to do signage in the past.

Krause stated that she was under the impression that the Park Board and City Council did not want to see the streets cluttered with signage.

Wimmer stated that is correct. Wimmer stated that the maps do not appear to be complicated or difficult. Wimmer stated that they could be printed and folded.

Zdon questioned if there was a program the City could pursue.

Wimmer stated that the problem with a program is that once it is in place, the City is responsible for funding the program in future years. Wimmer questioned if there was a time limit on when it has to be spent and if it can be used elsewhere if need be.

Krause stated that whatever the City proposes in the application is what we are responsible for doing. Krause stated that it would have been nice to have received this information earlier, so that we had some time to think about a project.

Wimmer stated that the other grants the City has applied for have been for capital improvement projects. Wimmer stated that the City does not have a park and recreation department, so it is limited in that aspect. Wimmer stated that he thought of using the funds to provide scholarship money for Community Education to help kids participate in summer programs. Wimmer stated that currently the City designates some funds to provide scholarships through the Community Education program. Wimmer stated that he was unsure if that would be viewed as a pass-through, rather than an implemental item by the City.

Zdon questioned if the City could have scholarships for kids that cannot afford to take a summer activity. Zdon stated that the City could issue the scholarship program directly rather than through Community Ed.

Wimmer stated that once we take the grant money, we have to instill accounting principles to ensure that the funds are being spent as they should. Wimmer stated that sometimes separate audits are then required. Wimmer stated that the staff time to monitor and the accounting requirements would result in \$500 in staff time just to manage the process. Wimmer stated that he does not want to deter them from applying. Wimmer stated that if we were already doing something, then it may make sense. Wimmer stated that we are going to have to create something new and then try to continue the project without the extra funds in the future. Wimmer stated that Ms. Perlick had mentioned applying to get walking maps.

Krause stated that was correct. Krause stated that she had dropped off a fairly large stack for future use. Krause was not sure if it was necessary to request funds for additional walking maps.

Zdon questioned if we need to order more.

Wimmer stated that the maps were created and provided by Isanti County Active Living.

Krause stated that was correct.

Zdon stated that it would be smart to do the grant. Zdon stated that the question is how to allocate it.

Wimmer questioned if there was consensus on applying for the grant.

Koehler stated he was fine with going for it. Koehler stated the only issue is the project.

Bone stated he would be for the grant.

Kennedy stated that it sounded more complicated and may not be that beneficial.

Zdon stated that he was for the grant, but they needed a smart use.

Parker stated that she was for the grant.

Wimmer questioned what a smart use was. Wimmer questioned if the County was copying the walking maps.

Krause stated that she was not sure who was copying them.

Wimmer questioned if it is not maps, what else could it be. Wimmer questioned if there were any ideas.

Thunstrom questioned if it could be used to light the tennis courts.

Wimmer stated that they would appear to want a tangible product with an outcome. Wimmer stated that they need to show that this was done and this was the outcome. Wimmer stated that once a program is initiated, then the funding ends and the City will become responsible for maintaining the program.

Krause stated that it cannot be used for capital improvements.

Koehler stated that they were looking for things like the hopscotch in Bluebird Park.

Wimmer stated that is the idea. Wimmer stated that other communities have received this information before and we are just getting it now. Wimmer stated that the Park Board could recommend that application be made for the grant, providing that by the time the item gets to Council we can come up with a project to apply for.

Motion by Zdon, second by Parker to recommend to the Council to apply for the mini-grant pending a project idea. Motion was unanimously approved.

J. Diseased Tree Ordinance

Krause stated that City staff has drafted an ordinance. Krause stated that the ordinance language had been forwarded to the City Attorney for review and for clarification on a few items. Krause stated that City staff hopes to have the draft before the Park Board at their next meeting.

K. Updates

1. Bike-Walk Trail

Krause stated that the meeting minutes from April 2nd had been attached to the staff memo. Krause stated that she has not received any additional information on the item since that meeting.

2. Mayor's Great Yard Award

Krause stated that the 3rd annual Mayor's Great Yard Award would be kicking off. Krause stated that if any of the Board members have nominations and/or receive nominations, to forward those along to City staff so that they can be added to the listing and pictures can be taken before the June 22nd meeting.

Wimmer stated that on the funding side the 3rd and 2nd place have continued. Wimmer stated that Landmark notified him that they would not be providing the 1st place monetary prize. Wimmer stated that he ran in to this issue a little bit last year. Wimmer stated that he does not know whether or not we will have the funding for first place. Wimmer stated that if not, then there will only be two prizes.

L. Adjournment

Motion by Bone, second by Koehler to adjourn the May 25th, 2010 Park and Recreation Board meeting. Motion was unanimously approved.

Meeting ended at 6:03 p.m.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota this 22nd day of June 2010.

Respectively submitted,

Lisa Krause, City Planner / Parks Coordinator