



**City of Newport
Park Board Meeting
May 23, 2013**

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Board Members present – Tom Aguilar-Downing; Marge Meconis; Laura Duffey; Emily White; Mary Ann Newman;

Board Members absent – Anita Perkins;

Also present –John Neska, Executive Director;

3. APPROVAL OF PARK BOARD MINUTES

A. Park Board Minutes of March 28, 2013 Regular Meeting

Motion by White, seconded by Meconis, to approve the Park Board Minutes of March 28, 2013 as presented. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion carried.

4. REVIEW 2013 GOALS

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – There is a completion of one of the goals.

Laura Duffey – I established an interpretation guide to go with the Bailey School Forest Trail posts and it has been reviewed by several individuals and has been posted online.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – The guide looks great. I like that there are pictures of the Forest itself.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – I received the application for Pioneer Days and have filled it out and returned to Renee. It's August 11, 2013.

6. BOARD REPORTS

A. Report on the Adopt-A-Park Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – This was held this past Sunday during the middle of a storm so it was moved from the park to my basement. A good time was had by all but it wasn't well attended. Anita asked me to pass the thanks onto the volunteers and was wondering if we want to continue this in future years due to the lack of attendance.

Mary Ann Newman – I helped Anita with the notes and we sent out about 30. I think this time of year is not that great due to school. It was the same people that came last year as well.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – Anita does think that we should continue with thank-you notes.

Mary Ann Newman – We could always call the volunteers and ask them what they would prefer.

Emily White – Would fall be a better time?

Mary Ann Newman – I don't know. I think we need an updated list as well.

Executive Director Neska – One of our volunteers who cleans up Maxwell Avenue from 21st Street north loaded up an entire truck with garbage and I would like to thank her and all of the other volunteers.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – So do we want to call volunteers regarding it?

Mary Ann Newman – I think Anita and I could do that.

B. Report on the Bailey School Forest Trail Guide

Laura Duffey – I already spoke about the trail guide, which is online.

C. Discussion Regarding the Wall Gardens along Hastings Avenue

Mary Ann Newman – John sent an email to Bailey's stating that we have some difficulties with the roses and maintaining the planters. We're waiting to hear from them

Executive Director Neska – I contacted the President of Bailey's and kept stressing low or no maintenance for the planters and she said that they'll take a look but there is no such thing as no maintenance. While we're waiting, we'll continue to maintain them.

D. Discussion Regarding the Family Campout

Emily White – The family campout will be June 22-23 and all I need is the fire pit from the City and everything else will be provided. Hopefully the Bulletin will run something a couple weeks in a row. I'll send something home with the elementary kids and will let some churches know. I know it was in the City Newsletter. I plan on doing some crafts, a scavenger hunt, and other activities. I'd encourage families to come just for the campfire on Saturday if they don't want to spend the night. I'll also contact the Police Department to have them come through a couple times during the night to make sure everything looks ok.

E. Discussion Regarding a Summer Recreation Program Visitation

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – We do have a summer recreation program and I was wondering if someone has time during the day to visit the program and see what they all do and report to us about it.

Executive Director Neska – They hire a couple college kids to run the program and have different age groups throughout the day. There are tons of activities that they do. The last couple of years, they've moved it to Pioneer Park because Newport Elementary offers lunch for kids and it's an easier walk for the kids. It is a small group and the same kids.

Mayor Geraghty – The application and information is on the website.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – I wasn't looking for an evaluation but just a friendly visit.

Emily White – They have a field trip at the end as well because I've driven them up to Como Zoo a couple times. I've seen what they do; it's a nice little program.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – We can leave it for now and have a report at the end of the summer.

F. Discussion Regarding Bat Houses

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – Susan Lindoo had requested that we place bat houses in the parks and asked Bob Anderson to build them so I've asked both of them to be here tonight to give some insight.

Susan Lindoo, 1280 Wild Ridge Trail – Bats are wonderful creatures and important in the ecosystem because they help control the insect population. Bat populations are decreasing because of habitat loss and a certain disease. We had wanted a bat house for the Community Garden. When we asked Bob Anderson to build a bat house, he built five houses, one of which has been donated. We would like one in the Community Garden and the remaining three in parks. There are two types of bats in Minnesota that help control the population of mosquitoes, beetles, and moths.

Mary Ann Newman – One question is where and how do you put them up.

Bob Anderson, 1265 Kolff Court – I gave you a handout regarding bats and bat houses, which was gathered from the internet. The houses should be at least ten feet high and go on wood buildings. They should be at least 25 feet from trees due to predators and should not be shaded in the morning.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – How many bats will the house hold?

Mr. Anderson – About 200-300.

Executive Director Neska – They also don't like bright lights so I'm a little concerned about the Community Garden because there's a metal building with lights all around it and trees around the Garden. Where were you thinking of putting it Susan?

Mrs. Lindoo – I'll have to think about that.

Executive Director Neska – Does the Park Board need to make a recommendation to the Council on accepting these?

Mayor Geraghty – I don't see a problem with accepting them, I'm more concerned about finding places for them.

Laura Duffey – I think we'll need to meet to discuss where to place them. I was also thinking that we should place a sign nearby indicating what these are.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – Alright, let's go forward and take a look at where we can place them and figure out what maintenance would be required if any.

Motion by Aguilar-Downing, seconded by Duffey to accept the bat houses as a donation. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion carried.

Laura Duffey – At the last meeting we decided that I would contact Great River Greening regarding some partnership work. I spoke with them and they would like to meet with us to discuss which parcels we believe would work for the program. The Great River Greening group does restoration work with ecological experts and foresters. We certainly have a lot of parcels for work. The group does the grant writing and fundraising. It does help if the City is making efforts towards restoration on its own. If anyone else wants to meet with the group to discuss sites please let me know.

Mary Ann Newman – Do you want one of us to meet with Laura and the group and report back to you?

Executive Director Neska – Yes that would work.

Mary Ann Newman – I can do that.

Laura Duffey – I think we would just need your advice on potential parcels.

Executive Director Neska – I think it would need to be public property to benefit the community.

Emily White – There wouldn't be a cost to the City would there?

Laura Duffey – There shouldn't be.

Executive Director Neska – We would need to know who is responsible for maintaining afterwards too.

Laura Duffey – The South Washington County Telecommunications Network called me to do an interview about the Bailey School Forest on Tuesday, May 28. There will be some schools in the Forest at the same time.

Mary Ann Newman – Buckthorn Day is October 26, 2013. We'll have a flyer for Pioneer Day and Laura and I will work out some stuff and we'll have an open meeting to discuss the details in the fall. Tom and I did discuss about having a Buckthorn Day in the spring and fall.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – We may want to look at that. Marge, you've done some work with students in the past.

Vice-Chair Meconis – We've had them pull buckthorn one year and we would need more adult supervision because they can't distinguish between buckthorn and other flowers.

Laura Duffey – That's why fall is good for the school kids.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – There are folks who clear buckthorn on park property throughout the year. I was wondering if the City could help by picking up discarded buckthorn throughout the year.

Emily White – Night to Unite is the Tuesday before Pioneer Days so we could distribute the flyer that night too.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Update on the Archery Deer Hunt in Loveland and Bailey School Forest

Executive Director Neska – You asked for an update on the archery deer hunt and the only information I can provide tonight are the dates, October 19-20 and November 2-3. They will hunt both days in both parks from dawn to dusk. The agreement will be on the June 6 City Council agenda.

Mayor Geraghty – Councilman Gallagher, Deb and Bruce have been working on this and will bring the agreement forward on June 6 for approval.

Mary Ann Newman – Will there be signs at the parks to warn individuals?

Mayor Geraghty – Yes, I believe we'll be advertising on the website and newsletter regarding it.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – I spoke with Councilman Gallagher and he said that the parks would be open during the hunt.

Mayor Geraghty – I'm not sure that would be a good idea.

Laura Duffey – Parks should be closed.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – Councilman Gallagher also said that it's not an all day hunt. I'm getting a sense that closing the parks would be a wise thing.

Bob Graves, 1420 Wild Ridge Trail – My suggestion is that you ask the Bow Hunters Association for their recommendation because sometimes it can be advantageous to have activity in the park to move the deer throughout the park.

Emily White – I can't imagine too many people will be in the parks those two weekends. I think it's a good idea to ask the bow hunters themselves.

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – One other suggestion would be to send a letter to the adjoining property owners regarding the hunt.

Mayor Geraghty – Thanks, I'd like to thank Bob Anderson as well for building those bat houses.

Executive Director Neska – Renee has asked me to ask you if the packets could be sent electronically, you're the only board that gets them delivered. Would you be able to accept the packets through your email?

Chairperson Aguilar-Downing – The City Council and Planning Commission have iPads to view them at.

Emily White – We would still have to print it out though.

Laura Duffey – I'd be fine with an email.

Executive Director Neska – I do agree with the iPad.

Mary Ann Newman – It's happened on other boards I'm on as well so I'm fine with it.

Vice-Chair Meconis – I wouldn't print it out but I'm fine with emails.

Emily White – I like to work off of an agenda but she can send them electronically.

Executive Director Neska – We'll give it a test run.

Vice-Chair Meconis – I'd like to thank John and Bruce for all their work at the Community Garden this year.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Newman, seconded by White, to adjourn the Park Board Meeting at 7:59 P.M. With 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion carried.

Signed: _____
Tom Aguilar-Downing, Chairperson

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Helm
Executive Analyst