



**Inver Grove Heights  
Park and Recreation Advisory Commission  
City Council Chambers  
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA  
Wednesday, September 8, 2021  
7:00pm**

***Televised on Town Square TV***

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PRESENTATIONS – NA
4. ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our web site at [www.ighmn.gov](http://www.ighmn.gov)
  - B. Find us on Facebook at Inver Grove Heights Parks & Recreation
  - C. Follow us on Twitter at @IGH Parks
  - D. Follow us on Instagram: @ighparksrec
  - E. Next Meeting; October 13, Regular Meeting 7:00 pm
5. CONSENT AGENDA – All items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine and have been made available to the Commission at least two days prior to the meeting; the items will be enacted in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Commission member or citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from this Agenda and considered in normal sequence.
  - A. Approval of Agenda
  - B. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2021
6. PUBLIC COMMENT – Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the Commission on items that are not on the Agenda. Please raise your hand to be recognized. Please state your name and address for the record. This section is for the express purpose of addressing concerns of City services and operations. It shall not be used to clarify individual's views for political purposes. Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per person.
7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - Items that are brought back to the Commission for action from a previous meeting.
8. REGULAR AGENDA - Items requiring action that are new to the Commission.

Recommendations to City Council:

  - A. Increase in Park Dedication Cash Payments for R1 and R2 Properties
9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS - Items that need to be discussed without any actions.
  - A. Department Happenings
    - i. Budget Process Update
    - ii. Parks and Recreation Director Position Update
  - B. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update
  - C. Discussion regarding proposed meeting with City Council in the Fall

- D. Northwest Area Park Updates
    - i. Vista Pines Park Update
    - ii. Peltier Reserve, Highlands at Settler's Ridge and Riley Studies Review and Discussion
    - iii. Commission Site Visits
  - E. South Valley Park Update
  - 10. COMMISSION COMMENTS – A chance for Commissioners to ask questions or make comments.
    - A. Commission Comments
    - B. Input from Commissioners on the Next Agenda
  - 11. ADJOURN
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*Since we do not have time to discuss every point presented, it may seem that decisions are preconceived. However, background information is provided to the Commission on each agenda item in advance from Staff; decisions are based on this information and past experiences. In addition, some items may have been discussed preliminarily at Work Sessions. If you are aware of information that has not been discussed, please raise your hand to be recognized. Comments that are pertinent are appreciated.*

*This document is available upon a 3-business day request in alternate formats such as Braille, large print, audio table, etc. Please contact Bob Bierscheid at 651-450-2587 or TDD/TTY 651-450-2501*

**THIS IS A PUBLIC MEETING**

**THIS MEETING IS TELEVISED ON TOWNSQUARE TELEVISION**

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**MINUTES ARE REVIEWED/APPROVED  
BY THE COMMISSION AT THE FOLLOWING MEETING**

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**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings  
Of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission  
8150 Barbara Avenue  
Wednesday, August 11, 2021: 7:00 p.m.**

**Televised on Town Square Television**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Steve Cook called the August 11, 2021 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Chair Steve Cook; Vice Chair Niki Barker; Commissioner's: Sandra Christensen, Elaine Prickel, Greg Stone, Kari Miller, Curt Ellingboe, Derek Schwanz, and Willie Krech. Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bob Bierscheid, Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda, and Recreation Superintendent Julie Dorshak.

**3. PRESENTATIONS:**

There were no presentations.

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our website at: [www.ighmn.gov](http://www.ighmn.gov)**
- B. Find us on Facebook at Inver Grove Heights Parks & Recreation**
- C. Follow us on Twitter at @IGHParks**
- D. Follow us on Instagram: @ighparksrec**
- E. Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 8, 2021. Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Approval of Agenda**
- B. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2021**

**Motion by Commissioner Stone, second by Vice Chair Barker, to approve the Consent Agenda.**

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Benjamin Stone, 1378 66<sup>th</sup> Street West, Settler's Ridge Development in the Northwest Quadrant. He thanked the Commission for doing such a good job with the parks. He said At Home Apartments is looking to develop land adjacent to the south side of Settlers Ridge. Part of the proposal is to dedicate land for park use. He said he had the opportunity to check the area out and shared the following concerns:

- If the locations topography was suitable for the park.
- Does the location contain any key natural features.
- Is the location a dump site filled with deeply embedded broken glass, metal, plastic, concrete, and potentially toxic debris, all of which has accumulated for over a century.

Chair Cook asked Mr. Stone if he would like to wait to discuss his item until later in the agenda when Settler's Ridge would be discussed. There would be discussion about the possibility of moving ahead with having a Consulting Firm look into possible plans for the area. It is possible Mr. Stone's questions would be answered during that presentation.

Mr. Stone stated what he was addressing did not relate to what was being discussed later. The topography from satellite views show it is the steepest spot and includes a basin that collects water in the spring. He said it was dedicated for the largest preservation of trees, looking back in history, there were not any trees there that were very old. He stated once on the actual site there are hundreds of broken glass jars, gas/oil containers, and batteries. Things have grown into the trees such as a tire and concrete. He said it was a disaster. He commented between a dump site or no park at all, they will take it. He asked if those were the only two choices.

Chair Cook stated when this item is discussed later in the agenda there will be a discussion about a potential different location than what Mr. Stone referenced. He said he has been out to see the site and agreed there are a lot of items there, it has a very large drop off.

## **7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

## **8. REGULAR AGENDA:**

### **Recommendations to City Council:**

#### **A. Xcel Energy Proposal to Construct a Renewable Gas Facility next to existing Rich Valley Park.**

Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bob Bierscheid stated Xcel Energy is proposing to construct a renewable natural gas small facility on a site located next to Rich Valley Park. It is a small site. He said it was suggested by the Planning Department and Staff to have this Commission recommend to the City Council to have the Park Dedication be in fees. The amount required is \$5,000 an acre. This proposal would take .41 acres in size, amounting to a Cash Dedication of \$2,050.

#### **Motion by Commissioner Krech, second by Commissioner Schwanz, to recommend to the City Council that a Cash Dedication be requested in the amount of \$2,050 from Xcel Energy for the Construction of a Renewable Gas Facility next to existing Rich Valley Park.**

Commissioner Krech stated the generating plant was shut down. The request is to build a new facility to take methane gas to the asphalt plant across the road. They would also try to use it to fill Xcel trucks with fuel. The surplus would be put with the natural gas that is burned within the city. The new facility would be to get rid of the methane gas. It is part of an environmental cleanup. He believes this is a good move.

Commissioner Stone said the idea sounds good but depends on what the facility would look like. He asked if it would impinge on the park. He said it would be nice to see what it would look like. Commissioner Krech responded the existing manifolds are already there, they are just making the pipeline facility wider at the location it currently sits across the road.

Commissioner Prickel asked if it was on park property. Commissioner Krech responded no. She asked if it had to be accessed for utility lines. Commissioner Krech responded a permit is needed for them to be able to do this. Xcel will be using land to make this possible and would have to pay Park Dedication as a result. Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bierscheid responded they are

not using any parkland, it's new land. When land is developed the city requires either a Cash or Park Dedication. In this case it they are suggesting Cash Dedication, not land.

Chair Cook asked if it would look similar to what it looks like now, but larger. Interim Director Bierscheid responded Planning would have the answer to that question.

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

## **9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:**

### **A. Department Happenings**

#### **i. Discussion - Budget Process Update**

Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda gave the following update relating to Parks:

- 2 Shelters at the Dog Park are nearing completion. Receiving a lot of good comments.
- Tree Trust finished the stairwell project at Seidl's Lake this week. They did a wonderful job.
- Working with Dakota County Land Conservation. The County has Grant opportunities to do some natural resource restoration projects.
  - There is an ample supply of funding. Trying to prioritize the list for places that could use some restoration.

Interim Director Bierscheid stated that Parks Superintendent Swoboda went out with a Representative from the County and did a walkthrough. It was explained how much could be done at no cost to the city.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda:

- Close to that time of year when letters are sent out for the Emerald Ash Borer Program.
  - For anyone that has an Ash Tree in the right of way, this gives residents a chance to get the tree removed free of charge.
  - A Contractor would come, remove the tree, grind the stump, and restore it.
  - This program started 10 years ago. There has been a lot of dead Ash in recent years.
- Summer baseball and softball has wrapped up.
- Starting to prepare for fall with football, soccer, and lacrosse.
  - This requires painting different lines, at different parks, on different fields.
- Crews have been dealing with hot weather and dry conditions.
- Due to dry conditions, crews were able to determine where sprinkler systems were not working well. Time was spent fixing irrigations where the dry spots were.
- Had a bit of vandalism this week.
  - The roof of the shelter at Oakwood Park was damaged.
  - Tagging in tunnels and on blacktop.
- With mowing, the two inches of rain we received greened things back up.
- Renovating baseball fields at Rich Valley Park.
  - Will work on Fields #5, 6, and 9 on September 1.
  - Those three fields will be closed for play.
  - This is being done because over the years the Ag line tends to build up on the lip of the infields and can cause hazardous play.

Chair Cook asked what the process for repairing them was. Parks Superintendent Swoboda responded they would be cutting the sod back up to five feet, removing irrigation heads along the lip, and leveling the Ag. Line back to where it needs to be. They would be sodding and reinstalling

all of the irrigation heads. Will also be going through all the clay pitching mounds. The Parks Department and a Contractor will work together to get the work done.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda:

- Starting to lose seasonal help.
  - At this time, have lost 4 of the 15 seasonal workers.
  - This makes trying to get everything accomplished in the fall challenging.

Commissioner Stone stated the toilet was vandalized at Lion's Park. He assumes Police keep an eye on things there. Looking in garbage cans in the morning there are beer cans from overnight.

Recreation Superintendent Julie Dorshak updated the Commission on items relating to Recreation: Budget Process:

- City Staff is working diligently on creating the 2022 Budgets.
  - Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda does the Parks Department portion.
  - Recreation Superintendent Julie Dorshak is working on the VMCC Budget.
  - Presentations will take place in October.
  - All information will be fed into the system by the end of the month. Working with Finance and Staff to get this ready to go.
- The City Council has set the max tax. More information to come.

Chair Cook asked if they were projecting some growth moving forward. Superintendent Dorshak responded there would be some growth. She said she believed the number was around 9% max tax. It is likely to be imposed less than that amount.

Superintendent Dorshak updated the Commission on the Parks and Recreation Director position stating the position is very close to being posted. Staff has reviewed the brochure Baker Tilly has been working on. Baker Tilly is the Consultant Company that has been working to help with the recruitment process for the positions of City Administrator and Parks and Recreation Director. The Parks and Recreation Director position should be posted soon. It will be open for three to four weeks with the interviewing and coordinating process after.

Chair Cook questioned if there has been an offer and acceptance for the City Administrator position. Interim Director Bierscheid responded Kristine Wilson is the name of the new City Administrator. She is currently the Assistant City Manager for the City of Bloomington and will begin on September 1.

Chair Cook stated he felt it was important that some, or one, Representative of this Commission be involved and a part of the hiring process for the Parks and Recreation Director position. He asked what the process would be and if it was something the Commission should forward to the City Council. Interim Director Bierscheid responded his recommendation would be to forward the request to current Interim City Administrator Heather Rand. He said the Interim Administrator is in the process of getting things ready to hand over to the new City Administrator.

Chair Cook asked the Commission what their thoughts were on representation during the hiring process. Commissioner Krech offered to help.

Interim Director Bierscheid stated he would pass along the information. Chair Cook mentioned he would send the request to Interim City Administrator Heather Rand as well. Commissioner Krech

suggested making a Motion and sending it to the City Council. Chair Cook asked if the Commission wanted to make a Motion.

**Motion by Commissioner Krech, second by Commissioner Prickel, to request the Chair of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission contact the Interim City Administrator and indicate the Commission's willingness and interest in being a part of the hiring process for the Parks and Recreation Director position.**

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak continued with a Recreation update:

- Memberships are up 77% from 2019 as of the end of July.
- Face Coverings are strongly recommended in all indoor buildings.
  - Staff is looking at exploring/reviewing requiring masks for Staff working with youth.
  - Children under the Age of 11 are not able to be vaccinated. It is important for Staff and students to be masked in the facility.
  - Working with Legal to make sure proper protocols are followed.

She asked the Commission how they felt about masking at the Community Center.

Commissioner Stone responded he felt it was a very good idea. If they cannot mandate that people are vaccinated then have people wear masks. Vice Chair Barker felt it was somewhat of a win/lose situation, they cannot make everyone happy but have to do what is right for the community. Superintendent Dorshak stated it would be for any of the Staff working directly with students and participants, that includes: Water safety instructors during swimming lessons, Kids R.O.C.K the all day, day camp program, and sports instructors. This is only when inside the Community Center.

Chair Cook asked if it was for adults working with adults. Superintendent Dorshak responded not at this point.

Commissioner Krech said he felt it was a good idea. Staff could get ill from students. Superintendent Dorshak responded they want to protect Staff and youth participating in programs.

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak shared the following information:

- A membership campaign will be going on over the next few months. Different campaigns and flyers include the following:
  - "Get your kids off the couch, come and splash in our pools". This is included in the current brochure.
  - "Get fantastically fit this fall, we'll cheer you on". Featuring a strength training program.
  - "Take time for you, relieve stress, be healthy". Looking to get people into the facility by mentioning the following amenities:
    - Have on-site childcare
    - Saunas
    - Hot tub
    - Fitness Center
  - Spend time with friends. Live love laugh, and stay young"
  - Affordably cool. Even for the cheapskate.

She stated they are trying to promote memberships. It is the most important part of the Community Center, the most important revenue stream they have. She said there would not be an enrollment fee during the month of September for Fitness Classes. If the facility can get back to their membership numbers, they can get back to operating at the level they had been, which is 90% of revenue the Council wants to achieve.

Chair Cook asked how far below they were from where they want to be regarding memberships. Superintendent Dorshak responded they are at 77%. There are approximately 10,000 check-in's a week. They are very busy, have a lot of people coming in and out of the building. This is just members checking-in at the front desk. This does not include ice center, turf, gym, or Kids R.O.C.K.

Commissioner Schwanz asked if it was at 0% last year. Superintendent Dorshak responded they were never less than 50%. There are very loyal members. Interim Director Bierscheid mentioned when reviewing other communities, these numbers are much higher than others. Many of them are still not at 50%.

Commissioner Krech asked what happens if Covid starts over again and gets bad. Superintendent Dorshak responded it would depend on the Mandates. They would follow social distancing, masking.

Chair Cook stated it could be difficult going forward because there isn't going to be a Governor Mandate. He no longer has that power. There would be suggestions and recommendations. He felt it could be more up to the institution about what to Mandate for facilities.

Superintendent Dorshak stated throughout the entire Pandemic, she was fairly confident there was no contact tracing to the facility. Staff knows how to manage the Pandemic, Staff, and participants. They will do that to make sure they provide a safe facility to everyone.

Chair Cook stated the brochure/flyers were catchy and would catch people's attention. He said from the hallways and the bathrooms, they have a way of engaging his attention and the attention of others as to what is possible at the facility. There are so many offerings. He said she has done a terrific job, it's part of the reason they are up 25% from where they were. Superintendent Dorshak responded she was sharing this information because she is very proud of the different marketing tools they have and the work the Communications Department has done. They have been phenomenal in assisting and capturing the essence of Inver Grove Heights. From pictures of this community and members and including them in the brochure. She said the brochure launched on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. She said she put a couple of flyers on Commission kiosks so they can see information that was shared with constituents during Night to Unite. One flyer was geared towards the older adult population with the other geared towards youth and family events. It includes everything from sports, Inspire to be an Olympian, taking diving lessons, and learning how to play water polo. There is a vast array of opportunities for all. There are some fun events planned for the fall.

Recreation Superintendent Dorshak continued with brochure offerings:

- The Department has been creating the brochure electronically only.
  - The older adults would like to get back to having the brochure mailed to them.
  - As a part of the Comprehensive Plan and the Parks Master Planning process, that question is being asked to all the different groups they are meeting with.
  - So far, they have heard there is no need to mail it to everyone.
  - Have copies on hand so they are available to everyone.

- Older adults would like to have some information mailed to them.
  - An example of a one-page mailing was shown.
  - This would be mailed out in the next couple of weeks.
  - On the other side of the mailer would be information about the Healthy Living Fair and Active Living Week activities that are planned for October.
  - Will try a direct mailing to the older population.
  - Allows information to go out with less costs than printing the brochure.
  - Allows for the brochure to be the attractive photo build colorful option.

Chair Cook said it sounded like a good balance to have some mailed out and have copies available. He suggested the Commission listen to hear if there is any feedback from residents who may say they miss having the mailing of the brochure. Superintendent Dorshak responded she was unsure of the total number but Staff was thinking of printing 1,000 or 2,000 copies, rather than printing 16,000 copies three times a year. Maybe people could come pick them up. She stated most younger families have said they don't need a brochure; they can just find it online.

Chair Cook said when buying a membership, the brochure is a gift to them. Superintendent Dorshak mentioned another idea they have had is what people thought about paying \$2.00/\$3.00 for a copy of the brochure. Prepay/preorder a copy of the brochure, or have an annual fee.

Superintendent Dorshak stated the Parks and Recreation Master Planning process is going well.

- They will have 19 events by the end of the Summer (September).
- Have had great engagement with the community.
- So far there are 40 people signed up to participate in Focus Groups. Expect to have more.
- The survey has had over 800 responses.
  - Expect it to be over 1,000 by the time they have completed the process.

She stated that the city has the opportunity to participate in a Unity Grant with Dakota County. The Vision of this project is to "Honor, recognize, and center the contributions of the Indigenous, Black, and communities of color to our community".

Parts the city would be involved in:

- Participating in the Unity Trail.
  - Have interpretative and way finding places along the trail loop with different nodes that celebrate the culture of Dakota County.
  - Inver Grove Heights would potentially be one of those sites.
  - Location is yet to be determined. Potential options could be:
    - Community Center
    - Swing Bridge
    - Another Park location
- This is still currently under development.
- The Grant has been awarded by Met Council for a total of \$160,000 to the County. The County is matching this with their \$160,000. There is some capital funding to it. She stated the city could host one of those nodes.
- Dakota County would have a consultant that would be hired to help work through the process and help identify what the artistic elements might be.

She stated one part she felt would be a good connection would be to have a Bike Lending Program. This could also include: Outreach Programs, Events, and Activities.

- Could have a bike ride
- A fun run through the trail

She stated there is a lot of work to be done surrounding this. A Joint Powers Agreement would be needed with Dakota County in order to participate (standard practice).

Chair Cook asked how quickly this would move ahead. Superintendent Dorshak responded the County still needs to identify the plan they would present to the Met Council. That meeting is in late September. The city would need to respond to them by September 2<sup>nd</sup> with the city's intentions to participate. She brought this item forward to receive feedback on the concept and to see if the Commission is supportive of the project.

Commissioner Prickel asked if it was all of Dakota County or if they were focusing on specific cities. Superintendent Dorshak responded it is specifically the Mississippi Greenway. All of the nodes would be located in Inver Grove Heights. This includes Inver Hills Community College and the School District. Commissioner Schwanz thought it was a great idea. He said he would be interested in hearing more about it when information is available.

Vice Chair Barker commended Recreation Superintendent Dorshak on the sheer volume of things being currently offered. She said she has been looking through the brochure with her kids and even though her kids are little, there is a lot for them to do. It was fun to be able to have them pick something new. She said since there isn't one start time for everything, things are staggered, so multiple things can be signed up for. She asked if a discount has been considered for signing up for multiple things or multiple kids in the same family. It adds up if wanting to do several activities. Superintendent Dorshak responded she believed they did this for Kids R.O.C.K. She said she would explore this further with Staff. Vice Chair Barker thought it could be an incentive to do more than one thing. Superintendent Dorshak stated new software will be coming. The current software is very limited in their ability to do that type of thing, she believed the new software may have that option and can check into it further.

## **ii. Discussion - Parks and Recreation Director Position Update**

(Previously discussed)

### **B. Parks Master Plan**

#### **i. Needs Assessment Analysis Draft**

Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bierscheid stated this process began about two years ago, but Covid set it back. The Consultant, HKGi, is helping with the process. Staff is beginning to go through the Needs Assessment. They are trying to determine what the plan was in 2009, what the needs are, and that everything that was intended is included and if it was completed. There are several chapters within the plan that will come back as it moves forward. He stated it is suggested, with regards to the Sub Committee, to meet before the September meeting.

#### **ii. Discussion - Schedule Sub Committee meeting - Next Steps**

Chair Cook stated the Heritage Village Park Sub Committee is at a hiatus for now.

Chair Cook asked if there was a need to get back to meeting with South Valley Park. Interim Director Bierscheid updated the Commission on South Valley Park, stating the Consultant has been moving forward and is at about 60% of the process to bring forward the recommendation and cost analysis. Staff has been meeting with them on a regular basis to go through each step as they move along. He said Staff could check again and would let the Commission know whether or not it is worth their time to get the Sub Committee together for discussion.

Chair Cook asked if the Sub Committee for the Northwest Area Parks was appropriate to meet again in the near future. Interim Director Bierscheid responded yes.

### **C. Discussion regarding proposed meeting with City Council in the fall, likely October**

Chair Cook stated there was discussion about contacting the City Council, through the Mayor, about having a joint meeting with the City Council. The Commission was potentially going to meet prior to tonight's meeting to discuss what the Commission would like to talk with the City Council about. The City Council is agreeable to meeting with the Commission in October, once other Staff positions are filled. He deferred tonight's meeting to move it closer to the timeframe they would be meeting with the City Council for a better focus about what they could discuss.

### **D. Northwest Area Neighborhood Parks Update**

#### **i. Discussion - Vista Pines Park Update**

Parks Superintendent Swoboda gave the following update on Vista Pines Park:

- Bid opening took place on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - 20 people pulled the plans, 5 turned them in.
  - Engineer's estimate was \$450,000.
  - The high bid came in at \$488,000.
  - The low bid came in at \$362,000, from Max Steininger.

Staff is working on getting the notice out for them to start the project.

- Having their first pre-construction meeting on Monday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Hope to get started shortly after.
- The City Council approved the award at their Monday, August 9<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting.
- Playground equipment and amenities have been ordered.
- The Contractor removed some trees where the playground is going to sit.
- The area where the bike skills course is going to be has been cleared.

He is working with Xcel Energy due to lines being down and broken poles along Argenta. Staff hopes to get a majority of this project in this fall.

#### **ii. Peltier Reserve Process Review and Discussion**

Interim Parks and Recreation Director Bierscheid discussed the Peltier Reserve proposal stating the City Council approved the project to move forward at their August 9, 2021 City Council meeting. The Park portion would hold off slightly until Staff can go through the planning process with this Commission. He highlighted the following points relating to the Parks portion:

- Determine how much would be dedicated land and how much would be in fees.
- Staff would want to do a complete study to make sure the park is appropriate.
  - Community engagement on what people would like.
  - The study would come back from the Consultant and show the Commission what is possible in the location.
  - Part of the park includes easement areas. It can be used for certain items, but not for playground equipment. It can be an open area for soccer, catch, or t-ball.
- When this item initially came forward a pocket park site was discussed.
  - The Systems Plan includes a definition of parks. For example: Community Park, Neighborhood Park. There is currently not a Pocket Park section.

He stated that is one of the items he would be recommending to the Commission and Staff, that a pocket park site be included as a part of the plan, and the definition. He said a pocket park is a smaller area, the requirements and dimensions would be included. This information would help Staff and the Commission understand what could be located in a site like this.

He suggested the Commission recommend that HKGi provide a study for the city. Development is beginning in the area; they want this study to help as they move forward. As development moves forward, so can the park.

Park Name:

- The Commission would be involved in what the name of the park should be.

Chair Cook asked for a Motion to recommend moving ahead with engaging HKGi Consulting Firm to look at a proposed plan for the city. Chair Cook asked if HKGi would be looking at different option plans. Interim Director Bierscheid responded HKGi will develop options. Through this process they would state that certain things wouldn't work and why.

Commissioner Ellingboe asked what Interim Director Bierscheid expected to get from the Advisor's that they would be unable to get from City Staff. Interim Director Bierscheid responded there are so many things that go into this process. Topography, size of equipment. That was why HKGi was hired to do Vista Pines Park. He said Staff will still be involved, but HKGi brings the knowledge.

Chair Cook stated he walked the site with Staff and the Developer Representative. He said it would be difficult to say what would work in the area. Interim Director Bierscheid responded topography is an issue. He said there were also beautiful trees that they may not want to see taken out because they would be a great addition to the development taking place. He stated that is the kind of feedback they need from HKGi. Commissioner Ellingboe asked if HKGi was looking at the overall development or the playground. Interim Director Bierscheid responded they would be looking at the park space.

**Motion by Commissioner Krech, second by Vice Chair Barker, to recommend the city move forward with engaging HKGi Consulting Firm at a cost not to exceed \$4,000, to look at a proposed plan for the city with the area currently referred to as Peltier Reserve.**

Melvin Moore, Builder's Lot Group, apologized to Staff and the Commission stating this project came forward with a park offsite, that park was not considered needed on this property. He stated in the future they would go through the normal channels. He thanked them for working with him.

Commissioner Schwanz asked for clarification on pocket parks. Interim Director Bierscheid responded pocket parks work well in some settings, in others they do not. This process would define a pocket park, especially with three other parks currently in discussion. Chair Cook asked what his definition of a pocket park was. Interim Director Bierscheid responded it's anywhere from a 2-4-acre type of park. It's a little pocket tucked into an area. A typical neighborhood park is 8-12 acres, more open, trees around it, other activities are included, such as a ballfield, basketball court. Vista Pines Park is a larger space. A Pocket Park is often a greenspace where people can come and relax, have a picnic, it could have some type of equipment for younger ones.

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

### **iii. The Highlands at Settler's Ridge-Staff Presentation**

Interim Director Bierscheid stated Melissa Duce, Land Entitlement Manager with US Homes/Lennar, is in attendance this evening from the organization doing this development. The Park Planning Process would go as follows:

- Review Developer Proposal

- Staff Review
- Commission Initial Review
- Community Engagement Process
- Commission Final Review and Recommendation to City Council
- Council Decision

Lennar is the Developer. Staff is recommending to have the Consultant look at this again, but also some different space that may have more potential. He referenced a map of the area and stated the trail connection should be included. It would connect to Peltier Reserve. He stated there is city owned land in another area and being used as a flood basin that would never hold water. In working with the Engineer, very little will happen there. It's a much flatter space, but if there is a bigger flood, water could get in this area. He stated Staff would like HKGi come in and do a study. It's for the same amount of money discussed in the previous item, the space is about the same. HKGi would bring forward options to help the Commission make a decision on whether the park would fit the area. Requirements for this site:

- If cash contribution: \$142,500
- If land contribution: 2.2 acres

Chair Cook mentioned if using city land for the development, it would go to the contribution. Interim Director Bierscheid agreed.

Interim Director Bierscheid discussed issues to consider for this project:

- Proximity to proposed Peltier Reserve Playground.
  - Proximity to the original site was just within a couple hundred yards.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda agreed and stated from where the two different park properties were the playgrounds would be 850 feet apart. If using the basin location owned by the city, it would be 2,000 feet apart. He didn't believe they needed two playgrounds, but trail connections to both areas would be an option.

Chair Cook asked if they would be asking HKGi to look at the whole area, in terms of options, or the city owned area. Interim Director Bierscheid responded Staff would have HKGi look at the entire area. He stated he felt the city land would be the better option. He said HKGi would give a study for all three areas including the Riley property.

**Motion by Commissioner Krech, second by Commissioner Miller, to recommend the city move ahead with engaging HKGi Consulting Firm at a cost not to exceed \$4,000, to look at a proposed plan for the city with the area currently referred to as The Highlands at Settler's Ridge.**

Melissa Duce, Land Entitlement Manager with US Homes/Lennar, stated the areas where the trail is shown on the plans have been staked. The trail connection is a link to where the Argenta Hills trail dead ends into the trees. That would be where the south trail starts. It then connects to the Peltier Project. She said there was an additional trail shown on the plan that goes from Auburn Lane, which is the connection through Argenta Hills. There is a trail that is connecting from that street over to the western proposed area. She said there was discussion about that trail being able to be used for emergency vehicles and maintenance of the basins.

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

**One additional location was brought up for discussion: The Riley Property:**

Interim Director Bierscheid stated this item does not have presentation materials. He said that Parks Superintendent Swoboda brought up that it makes sense to do this area as well because it is located in close proximity to the others. When these studies are done, one could affect the other. He said Staff proposes the same type of study be done on this area. They would begin with the Peltier property due to timing, then Settler's Ridge, and then the Riley Property.

Chair Cook stated there have been discussions about four potential park properties in the northwest area, this one would be the fourth. He asked if it was Staff's recommendation that this be the best option. Interim Director Bierscheid responded that would be a part of the study. He said in the cases of Settler's Ridge and the Riley property, the City Council has not approved those yet. The process should normally be catching up at the level they are at with Settler's Ridge. There should be a preliminary, then it comes before the Commission, and recommended to the City Council as the plan goes through.

Commissioner Miller asked what happened with the process to make this take place so quickly. Interim Director Bierscheid responded he was unsure.

**Motion by Commissioner Krech, second by Stone, to recommend the city move ahead with engaging HKGi Consulting Firm to look at a proposed plan for the city with the area currently referred to as the Riley Property.**

Commissioner Krech stated he made the Motion because City Staff doesn't have the time. This needs to happen so they know which direction to go. Interim Director Bierscheid responded this is important because they are already in the area and can do the whole area.

Benjamin Stone, 1378 66<sup>th</sup> Street West, stated At Home is developing three plots on the northwest corner of Highway 3 and 70<sup>th</sup>. That Developer has identified four acres for a park area. He asked if this proposes looking elsewhere. Interim Director Bierscheid responded no, on this request, they are proposing the Consultant look at the site to make sure it is appropriate, how it could work or not work. Chair Cook stated just because it is being proposed doesn't mean the Commission would accept it.

Mr. Stone stated there is a parcel of property that is heavily wooded. 20 years ago, when the Natural Resources Inventory Report was done, there was never a description on the land because it was based on landowner permission. That land has Oak trees he measured to be 41 inches in diameter, 11 feet around. He stated as the proposal sits now, those trees are going to be clear cut. He said those trees were not on any inventory, they are buried in a forest. He wasn't sure who to talk to, or what committee to go to about saving them.

Chair Cook asked Superintendent Swoboda if he was familiar with the area being discussed. Parks Superintendent Swoboda responded he understood the area, there is a ridgeline and trees. Mr. Stone agreed and said there was a grove of Oak trees at the highest point. Superintendent Swoboda did not believe there would be any excavating going on in that location. He said they would use the flatter areas, may also have a sliding hill there, could include a picnic area. He said he did notice the debris; the owner is well aware of it. Part of the deal is that it would need to be cleaned up.

Interim Director Bierscheid stated the area will be discussed for development. The Planning Commission would be discussing that further, and would be a good option to bring up the trees with. After the Planning Commission, it would go before the City Council. He stated this discussion only pertains to where the park is. Mr. Stone stated more people can hear about the trees that are there. Commissioner Stone commented that preservation was important.

Commissioner Krech suggested that Mr. Stone stay involved. He suggested when this item shows up at a City Council meeting, Mr. Stone should attend. Mr. Stone asked what else he could do. Vice Chair Barker suggested he take pictures of the trees and post them. Start telling people about the trees.

Mr. Stone stated once Argenta is connected to 494, that would be the main entrance into Inver Grove Heights. Having a park at the top of the hill with the massive Oak trees makes a statement. Vice Chair Barker stated another way Mr. Stone could make a difference is there are always Commission spots available.

Vice Chair Barker asked if the intention of the four parks would be to have playgrounds in all four. She asked if that was the conclusion that came about from public feedback. She asked if that was the goal. Chair Cook responded his understanding was that it depends on what fits best and what is in a nearby playground. Interim Director Bierscheid responded more information would come forward during the public engagement process and then back before the Commission.

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0      Motion carried.**

#### **E. Discussion - Swing Bridge Lighting Project**

Interim Director Bierscheid stated he met with Eric Satre from the Visitor's Bureau and Michael Piper from the Signify Company. They are ones that put lights on the 35E Bridge in Minneapolis. Several different options were shown to him during the meeting. He said the Visitor's Bureau is working on this item and will bring something before the Commission.

Chair Cook asked who the Visitor's Bureau was. Interim Director Bierscheid responded the Inver Grove Heights Visitor's Bureau is relatively small. They are funded from money from the city's hotel room taxes. The Bureau's job is to promote the city and encourage people to come and stay in Inver Grove Heights.

Commissioner Krech said that he discussed this item with Joe Atkins, it was said the County may be funding some of this. Interim Director Bierscheid responded he was unsure. He said one issue that comes up with something like this is who would maintain it, and if there are events taking place at the bridge, between Parks and Recreation, Police, and Fire, all of this has to be taken into the equation when a decision is made.

#### **F. Discussion - South Valley Park Update**

Interim Director Bierscheid stated this item is moving along. Staff is hoping that by October they can come up with the formal recommendation.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda stated information was received from the Outdoor Recreation Grant that the project, which was supposed to be finished in 2022, received a one-year extension

due to Covid. As a result, they are not so strapped to have this rushed through. He said building expenses are still being discussed.

## **10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

### **A. Commission Comments**

Interim Director Bierscheid passed out information about the Chapter in the Plan that discusses Park Dedication and how land and cash is determined. He stated Staff is looking at how Inver Grove Heights compares to other communities and whether the city should update and make changes. In his opinion, he believes it will happen.

Chair Cook asked what the process would be to change the amount. Interim Director Bierscheid responded the Planning Department is also involved. This Commission will be involved because it affects parks, with the City Council making the decision.

Vice Chair Barker stated she would be out of town on the 8<sup>th</sup> and is involved in the Master Plan Sub-Committee and does not want to miss that meeting. She asked if it could be rescheduled to a different day.

Commissioner Ellingboe had no comment.

Commissioner Miller had no comment.

Commissioner Krech had no comment.

Commission Prickel had no comment.

Commissioner Stone stated he goes to Lion's Park twice a day. He has noticed two young men on motorcycles on the trail. He said he has also noticed two guys on motorized scooters. He felt these were dangerous with the speeds they are going. He said he would like to see some signs to warn people that those types of bikes/scooters should not be on trails. It's a safety hazard.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda suggested that every time Commissioner Stone notices that, he should call Dispatch and they would send Police over there right away. He said with signs, people don't look at them, or obey them anyway. Commissioner Stone said if there were posted, people wouldn't have an excuse. With the speed they were going, by the time Police were called, they would be gone.

Commissioner Christensen had no comment.

Commissioner Schwanz had no comment.

Chair Cook asked if there was new information about River Heights Park, plantings, or Friends of the Mississippi's potential project. He stated there is a resident that has indicated concern about the fact that the city is trying to get rid of the invasive things there, but are not seeing new development.

Superintendent Swoboda responded they had partnered with the Friends of the Mississippi River who wrote a Natural Resource Management Plan for River Heights Park. They were going to fund part of the project whether it be tree removal, prairie burns, buying seed, or mowing. The funding

fell through. The Parks Department has been doing a majority of the efforts there. They have done some tree removal of non-desirables, such as Box Elder and Black Locust. Staff has sprayed to kill invasive weeds. They have tilled it once to get the soil prepped for seeding, doing so brought up more seeds and new invasive plants started to grow. It takes several applications before seeding it with the good stuff. He said they would likely spray it one more time towards the end of the month, till it in mid-October, and then dormant seed it. Hopefully next spring there would be good things growing out there. He stated the Friends of the Mississippi River may have secured some funding for this falls planting. They have been doing volunteer efforts tending to the garden and insect studies.

Commissioner Stone mentioned he read about climate change and very dangerous hemlock plants which are now spreading rapidly. He asked if they were in Minnesota. Superintendent Swoboda responded they are in the city. They have found them in several areas of the park. There was a patch in one area along the railroad tracks down by the dog park. They have been taking care of it when they see it. Commissioner Stone said he heard they can be very dangerous as dogs or children could eat them.

### **B. Input from Commissioners on the Next Agenda**

Chair Cook stated that himself, and Vice Chair Barker get together with Staff a week before the meeting to come up with the agenda. He asked the Commission to think about items they would like to include. This can include anything heard from residents or neighbors.

### **11. ADJOURN:**

**Motion by Vice Chair Barker, second by Commissioner Christensen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m.**

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0**

Minutes prepared by Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek.

CITY OF INVER GROVE HEIGHTS

REQUEST FOR COMMISSION ACTION

**A. ITEM:** Recommendation to Increase Park Dedication Cash Payments for R1 and R2 Properties

Meeting Date: September 8, 2021  
 Item Type: Recommendation to Council  
 Contact: Bob Bierscheid, 651-403-3680  
 Prepared by: Bob Bierscheid, Interim Director  
 Reviewed by: Heather Rand, Interim City Administrator/Community Development Director

**Fiscal/FTE Impact:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	None
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amount included in current budget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget amendment requested
<input type="checkbox"/>	FTE included in current complement
<input type="checkbox"/>	New FTE requested – N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other

**PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED**

Recommendation to City Council to increase the Park Dedication Cash In Lieu of Payment for R1 and R2 development properties from \$2850 per lot to \$3850 per lot.

**SUMMARY**

(Notes taken from Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, Spring 2010, John Crompton)  
 “Parkland dedication is a local government requirement imposed on subdivision developers or builders, mandating that they dedicate land for a park and/or pay a fee to be used by the government entity to acquire and develop park facilities. These dedications are a means of providing park facilities in newly developed areas of a jurisdiction without burdening existing city residents. They are conceptualized as a type of user fee because the intent is that the landowner, developer, or new homeowners, who are responsible for creating the demand for the new park facilities, should pay for the cost of new parks. The philosophy is that because new development generates a need for additional park amenities, the people responsible for creating that need should bear the cost of providing the new amenities. Neighborhood and community parks are intended to serve those people in the areas proximate to them. Thus, they make no positive contribution to the quality of life of existing residents, suggesting there is no reason why existing residents should be asked to raise their taxes to pay for them. In essence, what a community is saying to new residents is: “This is the quality of life we have here. If you move here, we expect you to maintain it. If you are not willing to pay this parkland dedication fee, then go elsewhere where the fee is lower, because that city has an inferior park system.”  
An appealing feature of parkland dedication is that it is responsive to market conditions. If fewer new people come to the city than predicted, then less money is forthcoming, so fewer parks are built. Similarly, as costs for acquisition and development of parks increase (or decrease), then parkland dedication requirements can be increased (or decreased) accordingly. A basic and long-held principle of growth management is that development must be supported by adequate public facilities and services and that private and public investment must be coordinated to achieve that objective. Parkland dedication ordinances are intended to ensure that park facilities are available when homeowners purchase their new homes, and to avoid authorizing development without ensuring that the park infrastructure necessary to support the new demands is available.”

Studies by Ehlers Finance (2021) and the Minnesota Parks and Recreation Association (2019) have shown these comparisons in Park Dedication rates for residential plots:

**2019-2021 Residential Park Dedication**

<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>Fees</u></b>		<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>If IGH Added \$1000 to fees</u></b>	
1	Plymouth	\$8000	1	Plymouth	\$8000
2	Eden Prairie	\$6500	2	Eden Prairie	\$6500
3	Chanhassen	\$5800	3	Chanhassen	\$5800
4	Bloomington	\$5700	4	Bloomington	\$5700
5	Shakopee	\$5340	5	Shakopee	\$5340
*6	Lakeville	\$4734	*6	Lakeville	\$4734
7	Brooklyn Park	\$4600	7	Brooklyn Park	\$4600
8	Champlin	\$4370	8	Champlin	\$4370
9	Blaine	\$4320	9	Blaine	\$4320
10	Maple Grove	\$4233	10	Maple Grove	\$4233
11	Roseville	\$4000	11	Roseville	\$4000
*12	Eagan	\$3579	*12	Inver Grove Heights	\$3850
13	Maplewood	\$3540	*13	Eagan	\$3579
14	Little Canada	\$3500	14	Maplewood	\$3540
15	Mounds View	\$3500	15	Little Canada	\$3500
16	Woodbury	\$3500	16	Mounds View	\$3500
17	Andover	\$3415	17	Woodbury	\$3500
18	Cottage Grove	\$3400	18	Andover	\$3415
*19	Rosemount	\$3400	19	Cottage Grove	\$3400
20	Oakdale	\$2886	*20	Rosemount	\$3400
*21	Inver Grove Heights	\$2850	21	Oakdale	\$2886
*22	Burnsville	\$2717	*22	Burnsville	\$2717
23	Hastings	\$2200	23	Hastings	\$2200
*24	Apple Valley	\$1935	*24	Apple Valley	\$1935
25	St. Louis Park	\$1500	25	St. Louis Park	\$1500
26	Fridley	\$1500	26	Fridley	\$1500
<b>AVERAGE</b>		<b>\$3,885.35</b>			<b>\$3,923.81</b>

\*Dakota County Cities

In comparing the following values:

- Neighborhood Park, Open Spaces and Trails
- Community Development Rates
- Need for Park Development Revenues

In Inver Grove Heights, the number of single-family residential development areas (including many without nearby accessible parks) is increasing as are the costs of developing park spaces within these developments. Inver Grove Heights clearly needs additional community development resources.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based on these reviews, it is the staff recommendation that Inver Grove Heights raise the R1 and R2 park dedication fees from \$2,850 to \$3,850 per lot. Staff opinion is that based on data from other communities, the current demand for housing in Inver Grove Heights would not be deterred by this increase.