

# Cambridge Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

## Monday, April 14, 2024

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Cambridge Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission was held at Cambridge City Hall, 300 3rd Avenue NE, Cambridge, Minnesota.

Members Present: Commissioners Jeff Andres (Chair), Jeff Soderquist (Vice Chair), Adam Schorer, Katie Solar, Silas Peterson (Youth Representative), Susan Blom (Isanti County Parks Board Representative), and Mark Ziebarth (Council Representative)

Members Absent: Christina Thayer-Anderson (Community Education Representative)

Staff Present: Community Development Specialist Amy Norling

### **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Andres called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Organization Meeting**

#### **2F. Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**

Chairperson - Soderquist nominates Andres, Blom seconded. All voted aye, motion passed unanimously. Vice Chairperson – Schorer nominates Soderquist. All voted aye, motion passed unanimously.

#### **2A. City Council reappointment of Adam Schorer.**

#### **2B. City Council appointment of Katie Solar.**

#### **2C. City Council appointment of Youth Representative, Silas Peterson.**

#### **2D. Council Member Mark Ziebarth will be the Council Representative for 2025.**

#### **2E. Distributed the Membership List.**

### **Approval of Agenda**

Blom moved, seconded by Soderquist, to approve the agenda. All voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Schorer moved, seconded by Ziebert, to approve the July 8, 2024 meeting minutes. All voted aye, motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

No Public Comment

## **Unfinished Business**

### **6A. Follow-up from July 8, 2024 PTRC 'Commissioner Updates and/or Concerns' regarding directional signage on how to use the equipment at Parkwood Park**

Norling discussed how the equipment at Parkwood Park has instructions on each piece of equipment instructing you how to use that equipment. Andres stated that he believed the concern was that people were not using the equipment as intended, but that instructions nor signage will not likely prevent that from happening.

### **6B. Follow-up from July 8, 2024 PTRC 'Commissioner Updates and/or Concerns' regarding proposed clock tower and Wayfinding study projects on hold due to Hwy 95 expansion**

Norling noted that any discussion regarding the proposed clock tower or items identified by the Wayfinding study that have not been implemented yet will not go further due to Hwy 95 expansion project. A handout provided to commissioners, shows the road construction project details. Andres asked that the Wayfinding Study be explained the new members. Norling explained that the Wayfinding Study was completed in spring of 2024 and was looking at ways that could improve signage to help find key locations in town like public parking lots and City Hall. The study also recommended pedestrian crosswalk signs on Main St, which have already been implemented. Implementing those changes will be paused until after the expansion of Hwy 95. Afterwards will look at the area again and see what is needed. Blom asked is the map was the proposed expansion of Hwy 95. Norling confirmed yes. Schorer asked for confirmation of the 2 stages. Westover confirmed that there is 2 phases. 2026 will be the Phase 1 of construction and believes that will start on the west end, from the bridge towards the center of town. Phase 2 in 2027 will be from Main St to the East. Blom asked if the funding has been approved. Westover confirmed that it has been. Vogel is still waiting for the legislature to give the answer on bonding. The funding has been set aside and is secured but waiting to see if the state will pay for a state project. This is the last round to receive the funding and if the funding is not received this year, then has to be paid with city taxpayer dollars.

Soderquist asked for confirmation that 3 lanes are coming from the bridge than it goes to 4 lanes. That there is not much change on the bridge. Westover confirmed that is correct.

Blom asked that the area of proposed infiltration basin, what is there currently. Andres and Soderquist answered that is the old nursing home. Westover stated that these questions are for the City Engineer Greg Anderson who has been working on this project. Blom said she had concerns on the river. Westover answered that herself and Norling work on those details.

## **New Business**

### **7A. Park Dedication Fund vs. Land Dedication review, highlighting Cambridge Cove**

Westover stated Park Dedication funds happen anytime there is a subdivision. Example – There is a raw piece of land, 40 acres, and a developer comes in wanting to subdivide and create 80 homes. Any developer is required to pay the city Park Dedication Funds. We have a subdivision ordinance that lays it all out, it is not unique. Every city in MN has these Park Dedication Funds. During the sit down with the developer, this is discussed and the developer coming in usually knows this is a requirement. There are a whole slew of funds owed and the Park Dedication Fund is one of them. City has the sole discretion on how to determine how to get the Park Dedication Funding. A developer has a list of their bottom line and bottom numbers. City Staff works with the developer months in advance to

work thru the negotiations before it gets to PTRC. City Staff looks at multiple things - well site needs, lack of public works staff, might have a park within a .25 of a mile. All those things are looked at and negotiate with the developer on what the City of Cambridge's needs are. Also look at wetlands and layout of their streets. Would like a concept from the developer to determine what are the obstacles, the barriers, where can a park be fit and do we want a park. This is all determined before going to City Council or any of the Commissions. At times it is determined that a park is not necessary, that there is no room for it, no need due to another park close by. In that case, the developer is required to provide cash funding. Currently it is \$1,600 per residential unit. Every few years, staff will look at neighboring cities to see what they are charging to see if the fees are in line with neighboring communities. That cost has not changed in 20 years. The Parks Commission and Planning Commission will review a subdivision before it goes to PTRC. The Parks Commission and Planning Commission area an advisory board, they hear it, they look at plans and make recommendations but ultimately the City Council has sole discretion and authority on how those funds are handled.

Examples on how it is determined what is needed for the area.

Yerigan Farms 2<sup>nd</sup> addition is a 5-lot subdivision. The amount of cash contribution was going to be very small and there was a trail leading up to the subdivision on the West side of Opportunity. Asked the developer that instead of paying cash, see how much it would cost to continue the trail. Ultimately the goal is to extend that trail to the Middle School. It was a good negotiation for the developer to continue the trail vs a cash contribution.

Yerigan Farms 3<sup>rd</sup> addition did progress to the Final Plat state but the developer pulled out a few years ago. The City needs a new well site so was working with the developer to give land for a well site. The City would have than created a park around the well site.

Westover continued that Cambridge Cove is a mix of land, trails and cash contributions. Ultimately there was 206 lots x \$1,600 per lot = \$329,000. The decision was to have a .67-acre lot which was valued at the time for \$90,000. The trail was valued at \$200,000 and cash contribution would be \$39,600. The \$39,600 did go into the Park Dedication Fund. That can sit there and build up over time. Since subdivisions do not happen every month or year, that Funding source needs to be padded/cushioned. Our Finance Director and City Council have to find creative ways to pay for park infrastructure or pay for a new park. There are all kinds of funding sources. If you have questions, our Finance Director can walk you thru the last 15 years of how things have been paid for. There is never enough money in that Park Dedication Fund as we do not have a lot of subdivisions happening. There has been grants over the years, more specific DNR grants, donations, local option sales tax that is dedicated for certain improvements in our city. Other funding from the general revenue fund has come in to help pay for parks. Generally, the money received doesn't pay for a beautiful new park. Park equipment and trails are very expensive with costs always rising. City Council and the Finance Director can get creative on how to pay for those things. At the end of the year, City Council determines how to spend Northbound Liquor proceeds. In the past some of those proceeds has been used for parks.

Westover stated that Page 16 shows the Cambridge Cove trail and shows how the trail will be laid out.

Page 17 shows the overall map that identifies our wants and where the trail should connect in the future. Would like a trail that goes from Hwy 95 on the West side of County Rd 14 all the way to our city limit boundary. The developer, engineer and city engineer met with the county. The curvature, topography, everything was difficult to continue the trail.

The trail contribution that the developer made started goes for a little bit on County Rd 14 and then West between 2 homes, the than trail continues along the street and sidewalk thru the development. The path is not ideal but is the best option with the topography, contours and working with the county and the developer to get it dedicated to that point. Goal is for residents to be able to cross 95 safely and then go down to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and then head into City Park or rest of the city via our streets and trail system. Staff has been in contact with Isanti County and MNDOT about the safety concerns.

Andres asked that the list in the packet be explained for the benefit of the new people. Norling asked if he was referring to the Parks Priority List. Yes. Norling stated the Parks Priority List on paid 18 is a list that is assembled and can only be added to by City Council. The Parks Commission can make recommendations of what would like to be seen on there but up to City Council to add to the list. Maintenance costs are tracked. When a request for a bench on 6<sup>th</sup> Lane SE was made, the item is identified as a future improvement. If a bench is donated and if the donation was made without a specific location in mind, then it can be asked that the donation be made for that specific location. Then if City Council has received a donation or identified funds that they would like to spend on a park project, City Council can go to the City Parks Priority List and choose an option off the future improvements list of what they would like to see achieved. Can make steps towards to accomplish or as seen highlighted in orange, there have been several items over the last year be completed. Will get into more of that in the Parks Update from the Public Works Director. Also, there are identified items where the Local Options Sales Tax is spent. Example – Sandquist Park Improvements and on Cambridge-Isanti Bike/Walk Trail Connection. This is where the items are put for City Council to review and consider.

#### 7B. Parks update from Public Works Director, Todd Schwab

Norling read an update Schwab. Covering several months here since there has not been an update since July 2024. There are exciting projects listed.

- Vandalism – has been sporadic with a little upturn when school was on break over MEA weekend.
- Planning on adding a gravel parking area on NW side of the baseball fields at Sandquist Park. Which will accommodate the added usage of the fields. There is a star on the aerial photo that indicates where the parking lot will be added. Sandquist Park does get a lot of activity with the Lacrosse leagues, soccer, softball and baseball (youth and adult) and other leagues. It is a very active location.
- Added a small dog section to the Dog Park, which was on the Parks Priority List. It has since been completed.
- Paved an extension of the Parkwood Park Trail which has a small seating area next to the retention basin. The trail is over a vacated gasoline easement that connects the trail in Parkwood Park to 4<sup>th</sup> Lane. It will continue North on the vacated easement to 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SE when we do the street project on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave next year. There is a nice picture of the trail being

completed and there is an aerial photo that shows where the trail will be extended through. On the updated aerial imagery, you can see the little black line of the trail being completed. The trail will be continued all the way up to 2<sup>nd</sup> and that will be the little road that is south of Busy Boys and Taco Bell, that 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Will be a great way for residents to walk into that business area.

- Paving 2<sup>nd</sup> Drive NE was on the Parks Priority List and has been completed.
- Central Drive NE is now paved including a bike trail on the east side of the road. This completes our Cambridge-Isanti bike trail that connects the two cities as the whole trail is paved now. Norling stating that the bike path is a beautiful area and highly recommends everyone to check it out. Andres stated the split cedar fencing and lighting is beautiful.
- Operations went well at the ice skating rinks over the winter. There was a small amount of vandalism and a couple of broken panels of glass.
- The bike/walk trail has been opened for the season and the inspections of its conditions have started.
- Plans and specifications are being finalized for a 20-stall parking lot that will be constructed in the East right of way of Central Drive at 313<sup>th</sup> for the bike walk trail. That is down by the ambulance garage. Currently you will see a lot of people park on the side of the road on what we are now calling Central Drive. Residents have been asked to park at the Park N Ride but that is not being done, they park on the sides of the road.
- Plans and specifications are being finalized for a trail connection between Central Drive and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the west right away of Main St S which will include a trail on the railroad bridge deck. In the aerial photo, the yellow square at the bottom is the proposed parking lot just discussed by the Ambulance Garage. With the 2025 Improvement Project they are looking at the alternative Bike/Walk Trail which will actually be on our Main St S and will go over the railroad bridge. Heading southbound will no longer be 2 lanes. It gets congested right at the gas station and 313<sup>th</sup>. The engineers are looking at narrowing it down to one lane and then using that extra space as this bike/walk trail. It would connect all the way up to 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. That is the road off Brown Park or street across from Dollar General. There is a lot of foot traffic in that area around Goldenwood with residents crossing the street to get to the commercial area. It is also going to include a Pedestrian Crosswalk at 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Soderquist asked if there will be any guardrail between the walkway and the roadway? Norling answered that it is being discussed to have one over the railroad bridge. Soderquist stated this is a 50-mph zone and to be riding your bike or walking along that traffic at that speed, there should be more than a striped line. Norling stated that the barrier will be going over the bridge but not sure how far south it will extend.
- Plans and specifications are being worked on for additional parking at Central Green Park. This is an alternate project for the 2025 Street Improvement season.
- Closed Sandquist Park and blocked off parking lots for the winter due to a group that thought it was acceptable to drag race trucks in the parking areas. We will open Sandquist Park mid-April. The tire burn marks are visual in the updated imaging.
- Hired a contractor to remove an Osprey nest that has been built in a section of lighting at Sandquist Park. The weight of the nest was threatening the integrity of the lighting system. The contractor installed a pole with a platform on it and relocated the nest onto the platform. He has had good luck with this procedure in the past. The new nest location is south of the

baseball field overlooking the pond. We will monitor the new site but staff have already witnessed the Osprey using the new nesting space. This was all done with the DNR's blessing.

### 7C. 2025 Winter Fest Update

Norling said the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Winter Fest event was held on Saturday February 22, 2025 where the temperature was a high of 36 degrees and a low of 9. There was free ice skating (bring your own skates), snow sledding, bonfires and warming houses, cornhole, music via DJ, chainsaw carving demo, hot cocoa and smores (while supplies lasted), dog sled rides and horse drawn sleigh. There were many craft and food vendors present where attendees could purchase crafts, clothing, food and even chair massages. There was an incredible turnout of approximately 1,000 people this year. The DJ noted the increased attendance and increase in vendors this year which really made the event come to life. The cocoa vendors said that we went through our supply of cocoa by the half way mark which is a good indication of how this event has grown from the first year. After the event, asked the craft vendors for feedback and some of the comments were "I was very happy with Winter Fest, I do think most people were there for the free stuff vs from the vendors but still a way for us to get out there, not disappointed with how we did". Others said "Winter Fest went great, happy with the turnout" and have now asked to be part of the Art Fair this August.

Norling continued that the 2025 Snowman Snow Sculpture competition had 9 sponsors but only 7 entries. Last year there were 12 entries. The event ran for 52 days between January 1 and February 21. Although there was snow on the ground at this time, it was often very cold and the snow would not stick together. City staff will weigh the pros and cons of hosting the competition again next year as we would likely want to redo the banners and advertisements to better feature the Snowman contest separately from Winter Fest and to highlight that alternative materials are accepted. This could entail an increase in the total cost of the Winter Fest events but these banners could be used again the following years. If we proceed with these changes but still do not see an increase in the participation of the Snowman Snow Sculpture competition, then the City will not reinvest more resources into it and instead expand on the things that are doing well each year.

Winter Fest and the Snowman Snow Sculpture was advertised hand in hand. While the Winter Fest continues to grow in attendance the Snowman Snow Sculpture has dwindling engagement. Attached we have the Winter Fest advertisement, the site plan and photos of our entries this year. Photos from this year's Winter Fest which were collected from multiple sources. A commissioner asked about what alternative materials can be used. Norling answered that it has been opened up to any materials that you would like to use. It could be Play-Doh, bead it, craft it in any way they would like, stack of books. Use your creativity. If we were to feature this more concisely in the future, there might be better engagement. Also, the Winter Fest Facebook page had 2,500 people that had marked 'interested' in the event.

Andres stated that last year there was a problem with vendors wanting to leave early. Norling answered yes. Andres asked if it happened again this year. Norling answered no and that weather is a big factor with how many attend and that low attendance may affect the vendors wanting to leave early. Andres mentioned that he knows it is a lot of work for Norling and the city. Thanked Norling for her hard work.

#### 7D. Summer Parks Programming update

Norling said the two highly attended Kids Event, the Petting Zoo and Bounce Houses will be repeated until the community loses interest in these events. Attachments 2 and 3 shows how many marked themselves interested in these events last year. The area that shows the guest 'went' only shows who confirmed during or after the event that they attended on Facebook. Many people will mark 'interested' on the events so that they get the event reminders but do not later check in. Over the past years, these events have been highly attended and are still enjoyed by the community.

The third Kid's Event has rotated between Kid's Musical Acts and Kid's Theatre which have been poorly attended. Staff is currently trying to find a third event that will be recurring event for our community. We are working with a new business this year called BeepBeeps.com to try and coordinate a battery-operated car event. With a new vendor comes many considerations including insurance, tax forms and site considerations. Currently working thru that information and hope to sign the contract here soon. This is the largest event that this company has put on, they have many details to work out but it is a promising event. On the handout for the Kid's Event, you will see pending is currently listed over Beep Beeps. Believes this will be the event to draw people in.

Concert in the Park series will play music thru the decades this year. Although we have reached out to several bands, still negotiating prices and contract information. The Discover Downtown Street Dances have all of their bands booked. Working with North 65 Chamber of Commerce on a definitive backup location as last year they stated 'Bad Weather Backup location – watch for announcements on our Facebook pages and websites. This led to coordinating back-up locations the week of the event if the weather had a chance of rain. City Staff are asking that we coordinate the back-up location before publishing so we can work out the lease agreements, insurance coverage and band stipulations well in advance. City Staff has recommended the City Center Mall as a neutral back up location which we have used in the past and it has worked out. The North 65 Chamber of Commerce is still considering the matter.

The annual Art Fair and Chalk Art Contest is set for August 16<sup>th</sup> this year from 10 am to 3 pm. City Staff completes a road closure request for the intersection of Ashland St S and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave W. Effected businesses are notified of the road closure and they are invited to participate by setting up a booth or table doing sidewalk sales that day or by utilizing the sandwich board to draw in foot traffic.

Our Parks Programming budget did purchase some spray paint in 2024 for a potential a street art/graffiti project that did not happen. But to put the cans to use, we are considering purchasing some plywood panels and setting up a supervised street art/graffiti area during the Art Fair. This is not set in stone yet and will depend upon many factors including if we can get any volunteers. More information will be provided at our next meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup> regarding this event. For Mobile Food Vendors we currently have Ralph's Rib Crib, Midwest Mini Donuts and Rocky on the Road Ice Cream lined up. City Staff would like to get one more savory mobile food vendor lined up and we expect to host a few cottage food vendors.

Last year the Art Fair had 37 craft or cottage food vendors and staff would like to see 40 this year. Challenges faced while hosting the Art Fair is that staff is able to utilize one in town banner location during the summer months at Northbound Liquor. The other in town banner locations are reserved

for the Chamber of Commerce use. The event is held during the same day as the Cambridge Farmers Market. Many local vendors are already committed to that event. We have advertised our events at the Farmers Market Event while we have advertised for their event. It created two stops for the people out and about and we become competition. City Staff has plans to inquire about moving our Art Fair location to the Farmer's Market location or City Center Mall so that we can merge the two events. Which is good for everyone and also provides coverage in case of rain. More to come on this.

Last year's Chalk Art contest had 9 sponsors and 35 total participants. 14 entries in the 0-6 age category, 15 in the 7-11 age category, no entries in the 12-17 age category and 6 entries in the 18+ age category. Since there were no entries in the 12-17 age category, staff chose two winners in the 7-11 age category as it had the most participants. Blom suggested the high school art teachers be contacted to advertise. Blom asked if the information will be ready before school is out for the summer. Norling confirmed that yes, hoping to have this ready soon before school is out.

Asking for the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission to attend, if able, any events and to provide feedback to City Staff regarding the events. And also spread the information about the events to their network and community.

Blom asked if the Cambridge Farmer's Market open to the idea of merging the two events? Norling responded that this is a new idea and the two parties have not spoken yet.

### **Other Business/Miscellaneous**

#### **A. City Council Update**

Ziebarth has a few things to go over. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the city began a strategic plan update. In 2021 the city embarked on a strategic plan and used that to guide our decision making as a Council and as a city for about 4 years. It was decided to bring everyone back together and revisit it. The strategic plan will be finalized in the council chambers on May 5<sup>th</sup> after the Council Meeting. This will be shared with the community once completed. At each of our council meeting, every department within the city is presenting updates. The Council has heard from Schwab, today's update and also Westover's update. As stated in the minutes, the east side has been worked on. The city is working on the Cambridge Shores concept area with Munkberg Farms area. There is now an agreement with a developer to develop single-home housing as well as other multi-purpose homes in that area. An Environmental Assessment was done on the area, received feedback on it, heard updates from the state last month and the project continues to move forward. Will continue to provide updates. There have been conversations within this group regarding what has been going on with the project. Phase 1 is the single-family housing and then next is the conversation by the Parks and Trails Commission. Todd Schwab's presentation really highlights the significant improvements that have happened in the city in relationship to Parks in the last 18 months. Sandquist Park has activities going on almost every week night for softball, baseball, football, lacrosse, soccer, etc. It is amazing to see that being used in the capacity that was hoped for a few years ago.

Ziebarth continues that the CI Bike Path is transformational experience. Believe the community will really be excited about the project.

This summer, S Main St will continue to be worked on. Will be from Kwik Trip all the way up to General Store. There will be a trail and it will be another way to connect our community. During the Strategic Planning in 2021, that was the biggest things that was suggested by Residents.

#### B. Isanti County Parks Board Update

Commission Blom stated there is a Park Preserve which is the first time Isanti County has had a Park Reserve rather than a Park with recreational activities. The Park Preserve is designed in Maple Ride, a 173-acres. The parking lot that was just graded and is a little south of Maple Ridge Township Hall on County 14. It goes all the way over to Flamingo. It's been a wonderful addition to our park system. It will be primarily for observation. Had a volunteer park work day a few Saturday's ago. We tore down some houses that were there. It was purchased in part with a Legacy Grant and then the rest of the worth of the park was donated by the County Park Board Members who accrued the property over a long period of time. Suggest reading Isanti County Critters by Carol Urness. Carol Urness was very generous in donating the other half of the value of the land. Her book is about Isanti County animals, frogs, birds, you name it. It's on sale at Scout and Morgan. It's a wonderful book about all we have to enjoy in Isanti County Parks. Susan Blom asks that we encourage as much cooperation as possible between the City and Lake Fannie Association. Lakes don't distinguish jurisdiction. Cambridge Shores is in the city limits but it also has an impact on Residents around the lake. There is a county resident who lives adjacent to Cambridge Cove and wants to be involved in the park and bike trail planning.

#### C. Commissioner Updates and/or Concerns

Schorer would like to propose a crosswalk from the northern parking lot by the boat landing across to the Spirit River Nature Trail. People can park over in the dirt area but there is no crosswalk there.

Soderquist is concerned with crosswalk on 2<sup>nd</sup> and Fern. He personally walks that way and says it is a very busy road. Says many people walk from downtown into the City Park. There is no signage or stripes on the road. Also asks that the city post at the permanent restrooms the opening and closing dates if possible. There is a port-a-potty down there but it has been there since winter. Was down there the other day and 6 people in 3 canoes had stopped there by the fishing pier and were looking for restrooms. They walked up to the building and they were still locked. Sign said closed for the season. Informed them that there was a port-a-potty by the sliding hill. Wonders if there is a lot of maintenance when they are opened up. Zeibarth stated that the city has sustained thousands of dollars in vandalism so they facilities were closed for repair. The problem is the facilities have had sporadic closure time due to extensive vandalism damage. Blom asked if there were cameras around the building. Zeibarth states that now with winter being over, the Chief has been working extensively to come up with ideas so there are less closures. Soderquist asked if the vandalism was done while they were opened, stating it could have happened while it is locked as well. Zeibarth responded that fires were being started and sinks being ripped apart.

#### Adjournment of Council Meeting

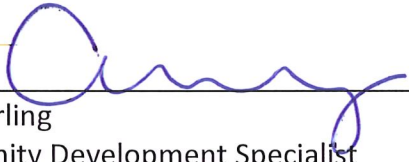
Being no further business before the Commission, Schorer moved, seconded by Blom, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:12 pm. Upon roll call, all voted aye, no nays. Motion carried unanimously.



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Jeff Andres, Chair

ATTEST:



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Amy Norling  
Community Development Specialist