

Minutes
of the
NORTH MANKATO PARK & GREEN SPACES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
North Mankato, Minnesota
November 10, 2009

A meeting of the North Mankato Park & Green Spaces Advisory Committee was held at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 in the Police Annex Community Room.

Park & Green Spaces Advisory Committee members present: Chair Diane Norland, Nancy Gehrke, Mike Fischer, Tracy Malm, Bess Tsaouse, Tom Hagen, Robert Johnston, Mark Porisch, Scott Thiem and Chris Corley. Also in attendance was Lynn Solo.

Chair Norland reviewed the agenda items as follows:

1. Community Gardens: Lynn Solo
2. Updates on potential funders
3. Recycling of old LeSueur River Bridge
4. Plan: Update of Benson Park
5. Other

Community Gardens: Lynn Solo

Lynn Solo, Nicollet County Community Gardens, gave a report on SHIP: The Statewide Health Improvement Program, reporting the SHIP goal is to help Minnesotans live longer, healthier, better lives by preventing risk factors that lead to chronic disease. SHIP is an integral component of an overall health care reform initiative passed during the 2008 Legislative session. The Minnesota Department of Health has SHIP grants available for community health boards and tribal governments across Minnesota. Grantees will work in their communities to employ strategies to make policy, systems and environmental change in four settings: Schools, communities, worksites and health care systems. SHIP focuses on broad, behind-the-scenes changes that make it easier for people to incorporate healthy behaviors into their daily lives.

Lynn presented a Community Garden Start-Up Guide and reported there is a waiting list for the community garden at Good Counsel. She is asking for support of the idea of starting a community garden in North Mankato and asked if an insert about community gardens could be placed in the utility bills and a message in the *City News & Views*. Discussion was held about getting residents and businesses involved in the idea of a community garden in North Mankato. Tom Hagen suggested a community garden demonstration project. In response to a question, Lynn reported that plots in community gardens are typically 10'X10' and 10'X20'. The cost at Good Counsel is \$10 per plot per year and the City of St. Peter charges \$20 per year for a 20'X20' plot. Some issues to consider are fencing, water, parking and implementing rules. Lynn volunteered to head up the community garden effort in North Mankato.

Update on Potential Funders

Chair Norland reported that AgStar is offering grants for nature-based amenities in parks and believes some of the proposed improvements for Benson Park could fall into this category. Mike Fischer has researched their website and printed off a copy of the grant application. Tom Hagen requested that considering a grant application was submitted for Benson Park, that an

application be submitted to restore Spring Lake Park to remove the buckthorn and replace it back to its natural state with wildflowers and other plantings.

Recycling of Old LeSueur River Bridge

Chair Norland reported there was a possibility that the old LeSueur River Bridge could be used as the bridge across Benson pond. Nancy Gehrke reported the Construction Inspector has viewed and measured the bridge and in his estimation believes it would be very difficult to move this bridge to Benson Park. She reported she will bring pictures of the bridge to a future Park & Green Spaces Advisory meeting.

Updates on Benson Park

Chair Norland reported that Drummer Companies has planted 8 of the 25 oak trees that they donated for the oak savanna. Members of the committee asked about the grading plan for Benson Park and reported that mowing was continuing down to the lake and in other areas of Benson Park that they understood would not be mowed. Chair Norland reported that some mowing was necessary for removal of the thistles. Members of the committee asked if the leaves collected by the City could be used as cover for Benson Park.

Other

Chair Norland reported the next Park & Green Spaces Advisory meeting would be at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 and the agenda would include an update of Spring Lake Park. Members of the committee asked that a recommendation for a trail around Pleasant View Park be presented to the City Council.

Some discussion was held about a corn gluten demonstration plot.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Chair

Secretary