



**April 5, 2010**

## **Meeting Minutes of the Birchwood Parks and Natural Resources Committee**

Members Present: Craig Aichele, Mike Connelly, John Lund, Kathy Malles, Cynthia Tomlinson,  
Gene Ruehle, Deb Harrod

Guest: Tom Hoffman

Also Present: Barb Carson, Council Representative

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Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.

February 1, 2010 minutes pending Cynthia's notes

March 1, 2010 meeting minutes approved.

### **Tennis Courts**

Birchwood was awarded the \$3,500 USTA Northern Adopt-A-Court Grant that Tom had submitted on our behalf.

Several groups checked out Eagan's FlexCourt surfaces (2007 installation). Tom reported that his group was pleasantly surprised--it's a good choice for our purposes since a full reconstruction is not an option. It's not too sticky or slippery. Ball action is a bit slower (somewhere between the fast grass court and slow clay court surfaces), but allows for more reaction time which is not a bad thing, and it's easy on the joints. Eagan's setting was similar to ours.

Cynthia wondered if cleaning would be a concern, but John had spoken with Eagan's park director who said that little maintenance was needed, except when beverages were spilled. Barb would arrange for regularly-scheduled maintenance.

Trees near the court: Cynthia said that there isn't any money for tree removal in the parks budget and that she thought we were all done with the tennis court process. However, the last council meeting had raised questions about the city's specific obligations in meeting grant requirements. John obtained pricing for the southwest corner patching and tree root removal which is a necessary part of the court preparation. He also obtained costs for meeting ADA requirements needed by the Adopt-A-Court Grant and the national grant. A qualified tennis instructor has been lined up for the QuickStart tennis lessons which would be paid for by the participants.

It was decided that we request council authorization to go forward with the repairs and FlexCourt surface, accept the \$3,500 Northern USTA Adopt-A-Court grant, and schedule repairs. The total cost to the city would be \$38,689 which includes \$500 for new nets and the \$2,000 changes for ADA requirements.

Discussion was held on the USTA's Public Facility Assistance national grant application (\$7K potential). Tom had prepared responses to their questions/comments on behalf of the Parks Committee. It was also decided that our recommendation to the city would also include that we continue with the Public Facility Assistance national grant process. Barb will supply this information to the council and John will present at the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting for a decision of whether or not to proceed. If approved by the city, these responses will be sent. The next step would be to wait for the USTA's reply to our initial responses to see if we want to follow their final set of recommendations.

## **Change in Date for Park Committee Meetings**

*Moved by Deb, seconded by Craig, that the Park Committee change its scheduled meeting date to the fourth Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. beginning April 26, 2010 in order to have time to prepare materials needed for the next council meeting. Motion unanimously approved.*

## **Purchases**

Kathy requested purchasing one large and one small weed wrench to be used for buckthorn removal by city residents, and that the cost come out of the city's budget. Residents can borrow a wrench with a refundable deposit (amount TBD). Since they're for use by all residents, it Soccer replacement net purchase was also requested.

Canoe rack placement was discussed. Kay Easement (no rack at present) was suggested 1) to serve residents on that part of town and 2) because parking was available. The city's insurance company is okay with it, but Debbie said she thought it was prohibited by the city and will bring in the information on it for next meeting. Safety was a concern. Other locations were briefly discussed.

Purchase of replacement nets for the basketball hoops was authorized.

## **Buckthorn/Trees**

Kathy suggested offering volunteer help for those who wanted assistance in getting buckthorn removed from their yard. Cynthia will reprint the newsletter buckthorn attachment from several years ago for the next newsletter with the addition of weed wrench availability and ask those wanting help to contact the city. Information on the Sentence-to-Serve plan wasn't available yet. It was suggested that we provide tree / buckthorn information at the next quarterly potluck. Erika Peterson had volunteered to help and will attend the next Parks meeting.

On April 17, John will rent a wood chipper for approx. \$225 to make chips for Ash Walkway using branches from park tree removal and cleanup. (He and Gene have been saving the city a great deal of money by hauling out and removing wood and branches from tree cutting.) A chipper will supply the needed wood chips while disposing of the many branch piles. Volunteers are welcome.

Without a tree budget, Cynthia cautioned that we need to be watchful of how the remaining \$500 for the year is spent. \$1800 was spent last year, with \$500 carried over to this year. Barb reported that there is more available for diseased trees from the city budget.

## **Stormwater Runoff/Elm Erosion**

Several committee members had a site visit from the Washington Conservation District engineer who will draft a plan to help Birchwood reduce the runoff/erosion at Elm Easement on a cost-share basis with Rice Creek Watershed District. When received, it will be sent to council for their consideration. Kathy offered to schedule a raingarden and shoreline planting presentation by the Blue Thumb educator with an announcement in the next newsletter. Discussed that the Parks Committee will initiate recommendations for addressing stormwater runoff that affects the park areas.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Submitted by:  
Kathy Malles