

REGULAR ANDOVER OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 10, 2018
MINUTES

The Regular Meeting of the Andover Open Space Advisory Commission was called to order by Chairperson Gretchen Sabel at 6:04 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners present: Anna Dirkswager, Joy Faherty, Aaron Jarson, and Jim Olson
Commissioners absent: Rebecca Dahlberg and Kim Kovich
Also present: Kameron Kytonen, Natural Resources Technician

RESIDENT FORUM

No one wished to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 13, 2017

Motion by Commissioner Dirkswager, Second by Commissioner Olson, to approve the minutes of September 13, 2017. Motion passed 5-0.

UPDATE ON BIG RIVERS GRANT WITH GREAT RIVER GREENING

Mr. Kytonen stated that the funds must be used by June and therefore activity is continuing. He noted that prescribed burning will be done in the prairie area this spring and advised that the forestry mowing was done the previous fall. He stated that following the burn they will continue with over seeding for flowers and grasses. He stated that he met with a representative from Great River Greening to discuss the list of priorities. He noted that the funds are nontransferable and anything unused would need to be returned. He stated that a trail camera may be installed at the entrance in order to catch some of the people going in and vandalizing items within the preserve. He stated that he would attempt to keep the Commission updated as the activity continues. He noted that he has not yet heard a response on the other grant that they applied for that may be awarded for Maple View.

DALSKE WOODLANDS BOARDWALK/BRIDGE UPDATE

Mr. Kytonen stated that there is an opportunity that the Commission may be able to apply for, the Federal Recreational Trail Program, through the DNR. He stated that the application would be due at the end of February and there would be a 25 percent match required, if awarded. He noted that the topic had been brought forward to a City Council meeting to get authorization to apply for the grant and staff was able to obtain approval from the Council that there would be matching funds available for this purpose. He stated that staff will submit the application.

Commissioner Dirkswager noted that if the City was able to get the Conservation Corps to do some work in the preserve, that would help to provide a higher priority ranking of the application.

Mr. Kytonen stated that partnership with other organizations also helps to provide a higher ranking. It was noted that perhaps offering the use of the preserves to a high school outdoor adventure group for educational purposes could be considered.

Commissioner Faherty stated that she visited some of the preserves on Sunday, when the weather was nice, and brought two people that had never been to the preserves. She noted that she asked her visitors for input on items that they would find helpful. She stated that additional directional markers would be helpful as it is confusing with the no trespassing signs posted near Dalske Woods.

Mr. Kytonen noted that he does have a work order in with the sign department to move the entrance sign further towards the entrance and away from the no trespassing sign.

Commissioner Jarson stated that when you turn on the dirt road from the main road, it can be very deceiving because it feels like you are on someone's driveway and then there are multiple no trespassing and keep out signs.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he has an additional request in for signage on the roadway once you turn off the main road. He provided a copy of the trail map layout for Dalske Woods.

OVERVIEW OF NATURE PRESERVES PROGRAM WITH QCTV

Chairperson Sabel stated that the programs turned out great and confirmed the consensus of the Commission.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that the programs were also put onto the City website. He stated that it was really nice to partner with QCTV.

DISCUSSION OF COMMISSIONERS' FIELD OBSERVATIONS OF NATURE PRESERVES

Commissioner Dirkswager stated that she is excited to get the trees thinned in North Woods preserve, noting that the poor condition trees continue to deteriorate. She noted that she has a contact that she can pass on to staff that may be available to help. She stated that in the warmer months, that dead wood and pine needles could be a fire hazard.

Commissioner Jarson asked how much thinning would be needed.

Mr. Kytonen estimated that perhaps one third of the trees could be thinned.

Commissioner Dirkswager stated that it would be nice to have estimates of the different levels of thinning that could occur.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that he would follow up and attempt to gain estimates on the cost for thinning.

Chairperson Sabel asked the timeline for the additional access.

Mr. Kytonen stated that the additional access would be provided when the last part of that development is constructed.

DISCUSSION FUTURE OF OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION (OSAC)

Chairperson Sabel stated that this has been talked about in the past.

Mr. Kytonen stated that when Mr. Carlberg left the City he spoke with the Commission about the transition from acquisition to management. He advised that the Commission has been in the management role for the past two years now and noted that eventually the management could be handled entirely by staff. He asked the desire of the Commission for the future.

It was mentioned to perhaps pursue whether there would be interest in attempting another referendum to purchase additional property for preserves.

Commissioner Olson suggested that the Commission propose to the City Council what they would want the Commission to do in the future, whether that is to continue to manage the properties as intended in the referendum.

Chairperson Sabel stated that a discussion could occur with the Council to determine if there would be support for another referendum.

Commissioner Olson stated that for the near future, he would believe that there would be a need for the Commission to assist with management.

Chairperson Sabel stated that perhaps in the future the Commission could be involved with developments that come forward. She explained that when a new development comes forward, it would be nice to be able to preserve open space areas or high priority natural areas within the development to remain as open space.

Commissioner Dirkswager stated that a discussion with the Council would be timely because of the bonding issue that may move forward with the expansion of the community center/ice rinks.

Mr. Kytonen stated that the previous year the Commission met jointly with the City Council in May.

Commissioner Dirkswager stated that perhaps the idea could be talked about with the City Manager or Mayor in the time between now and then to gauge the interest level.

Commissioner Dirkswager noted that there may be alternate options for funding, outside of bonding as well.

It was noted that perhaps it would be helpful to find the original corridor map that was created when the group first began.

It was confirmed that Mr. Kytonen would meet with the City Manager within the next month to determine possible dates that the topic could appear on a City Council workshop agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

a. Next Meeting

Mr. Kytonen stated that perhaps it would be wise to meet in March to plan for a discussion with the Council.

Commissioner Dirkswager asked if the timber thinning estimate could be obtained by that time.

Mr. Kytonen stated that the Commission could also brainstorm in preparation for the future discussion with the City Council.

It was determined that the next meeting will be held on March 14, 2018.

b. Other

Mr. Kytonen stated that there is a new development, White Pine Wilderness 4th Addition, that will begin and will drain some of its water onto the preserve property. He stated that in collaboration with that activity, the developer will be filling the low-lying area of the trail with about one foot of material to prevent that from flooding out. He provided additional information on the access that would be provided to the preserve from the development. He stated that a contractor was hired to spread the remainder of the woodchips on the trails within Martins Meadows, noting that the giant piles of woodchips have been used.

Commissioner Jarson noted that this is his last meeting with the Commission because of scheduling conflicts. Mr. Kytonen and the rest of the Commissioners thanked him for his efforts.

Commissioner Faherty stated that she will begin work on the welcome signs for Maple View and Dalske and once completed, she will send copies to the Commission for input.

Chairperson Sabel asked for an update on the kiosk for Dalske Woodlands.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he has been approached by scouts, but they haven't been following up. He stated that the goal is to have a kiosk built by spring/summer.

Commissioner Dirkswager stated that dog waste is becoming a problem and perhaps a sign reminding people to pick up after themselves would be helpful. She noted that perhaps the City could provide little bags for people at the entrance to pickup dog waste.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Dirkswager, Second by Commissioner Olson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kameron Kytonen
Natural Resources Technician

Drafted by:
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary