

**ANDOVER COMMISSION INTERVIEWS – JANUARY 17, 2018
MINUTES**

The Andover Commission Interviews was called to order by Mayor Julie Trude, January 17, 2018, 5:32 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Councilmembers present: Mike Knight, Sheri Bukkila, Valerie Holthus and James Goodrich

Councilmember absent: None

Staff present: Assistant Public Works Director, Todd Haas

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved as presented.

INTERVIEWS OF PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION / PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION / OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION / COMMISSION APPLICANTS

Nick Loehlein – Planning & Zoning Commission

Mayor Trude stated Mr. Loehlein was previously appointed as an alternate and was recently appointed as a Commissioner and has only had the opportunity to attend a few meetings as a Commission member.

Nick Loehlein stated he feels fortunate that he was able to learn as the alternate and then try out the position of Commissioner. He stated as the alternate he attempted to stay current on the matters of interest in order to be up to date on the slim chance that he was called up to the Commission. He noted the other Commissioners have been very welcoming and helped him learn the ropes.

Mayor Trude stated it is nice that Mr. Loehlein is an engineer and it was nice that he replaced an engineer on that Commission when he took that position. Mr. Loehlein agreed that it seems to be a good fit for his expertise.

Councilmember Goodrich asked for his input on new development and rezoning of land that was agricultural and the transition from rural. Mr. Loehlein stated Andover offers a good blend of suburban and rural areas. He stated he is excited to see how the Rural Reserve area transitions in

the future. He noted the trend for young people is a desire to live in a city type area. He stated he would not foresee a huge change in direction for Andover. He stated as a lifelong Andover resident, transportation is an issue. He noted Andover has the benefit of having County roads rather than State roads, as he feels that the County has done a better job managing their roadways.

Councilmember Holthus asked which neighborhood Mr. Loehlein resides in. Mr. Loehlein replied he lives in Red Oaks Manor 5th Addition.

Councilmember Holthus asked if the applicant would have interest in other Commissions. Mr. Loehlein replied because of his area of expertise he believes the Planning and Zoning Commission would be the best fit.

Councilmember Bukkila asked the challenges the applicant has experienced and what his contribution has been. Mr. Loehlein provided an example of a review that was done regarding a code change for accessory structures. He explained he was unsure how staff came to their decision and noted he did have questions that he held for the meeting. He stated looking back, perhaps it would have been better to reach out to staff before the meeting to gain additional information. He provided another example of a plat in which neighbors were requesting a park, noting the plat only included three lots. He stated he appreciated the way the Chair ran the meeting and welcomed the public input. He noted it was a learning opportunity for him, as it was a chance to hear a lot of public input, even though it was not a request that would be appropriate at this time. He stated he shared comments about possibilities for parks in future developments in the area, where it may make more sense to add a park.

Councilmember Knight asked where the applicant would see the City in ten years. Mr. Loehlein replied he believes housing will continue to grow. He stated he would hope to see a plan for the Rural Reserve area and that beginning to develop as well as development of some of the major roads and thoroughfares in the City.

Mayor Trude commented typically comments regarding parks would not be heard by the Planning and Zoning Commission but explained in that instance the public missed that opportunity to speak and therefore attended the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.

Councilmember Knight noted in the past the trend has been that more professional type individuals (lawyers, accountants, etc.) were choosing to live in Andover over surrounding communities and asked if the applicant believes that trend would continue. Mr. Loehlein confirmed he believes that trend would continue because of the value the community offers.

Mayor Trude expressed her appreciation for the work that Mr. Loehlein has completed on the Planning and Zoning Commission and his understanding of the importance of attendance.

Dawn Perra confirmed she was originally made an alternate and then appointed for almost one-year after a Commission member vacated their position. She stated in the beginning of her appointment she was quiet, in an attempt to learn more about the process. She stated after about three meetings she felt more comfortable and she is enjoying the process and believes that she is contributing.

Councilmember Bukkila asked some of the challenges the applicant has gone through in the past year and how she has overcome those issues. Ms. Perra stated she watched some of the previous meetings to gain background information on the process. She stated it has been a challenge to attempt to learn the history and upcoming goals. She noted the Chair has been very helpful in answering her questions and helping her get up to speed.

Councilmember Holthus asked what should be a priority in terms of budgeting. Ms. Perra stated safety should be a priority. She explained replacing an unsafe structure with a new structure, or even no structure, should be a priority. She stated there is a balance between safety and priorities, noting the cost of a paving a parking lot compared to people parking along a roadway for sports activities. She recognized the City is in a position where there are a lot of repairs to be made and limited funds.

Mayor Trude noted the park dedication received a healthy contribution this year with the spike in home development. Ms. Perra stated it was her understanding that after the lull in 2008 there was a surge and then a lot of parks were constructed.

Councilmember Bukkila stated a lot of that came from opportunity, taking advantage of the opportunity to purchase the land when it's available and perhaps not building on that land until later.

Councilmember Knight asked if the applicant has continued with the Charter School. Ms. Perra stated she has not participated with the Charter School for the past few years as she accepted this commitment.

Councilmember Goodrich asked if the applicant has any other ideas for the future of parks. Ms. Perra stated Andover is a young city and the needs are changing. She stated she likes that they are gaining input from neighborhoods when they are redoing the parks in an attempt to better gauge the current use and demographics of the area. She noted as developments age, the needs of that group of residents changes as well. She stated she lives near Maple View Preserve and her family heavily uses that area, noting the City has done a great job establishing the trails in that preserve.

Mayor Trude noted in that situation the developer wanted the park as an amenity to bring in young families. Ms. Perra confirmed the park is heavily used by the development. She stated the trail throughout the development is also heavily used, and a selling point for her when she considered purchasing her home.

Ms. Perra stated she believes she is in her stride on the Commission and would like to continue to contribute. She stated she feels that it is important to be involved in the community and loves to be outdoors and therefore she feels this is a good fit for her.

Mayor Trude stated the Council likes to see a mix of people on the Commissions that bring their own input and ideas. She noted when topics arise, it is important for everyone to provide their input because of the different experience that they bring. She noted Ms. Perra does fill an important position and does bring valuable information to the Commission.

Mary VanderLaan – Planning & Zoning Commission

Mary VanderLaan provided background information on herself, noting she moved to Andover in 1971. She stated she previously served on the Planning and Zoning Commission when the first Comprehensive Plan was created and when many important decisions were made which helped to guide the development of Andover. She stated in her time on the Commission, she worked in conjunction with the legislators, and helped to develop certain development standards, such as road standards. She stated she previously owned a business and has experience supervising different individuals. She stated now that she has sold her business, she would like to come back and attempt to serve the community. She noted she understands the importance of following the laws and regulations of the community, even if you perhaps do not personally agree with all of the regulations.

Councilmember Goodrich stated Andover has grown, noting about 100 homes were built in the last year, and asked for the opinion of the applicant on the change and property rights. Ms. VanderLaan stated the fundamentals are still in place even though the City has changed. She stated the infrastructure is important and controlling the urban sprawl is also important. She stated orderly development has been as good as it can be. She acknowledged the Comprehensive Plan has changed, as it has to over the years, in order to keep up with the changing times. She stated there are many more people than there were years ago, but the fundamentals are still the same and the priorities are still the same. She stated the goal is to keep the high-quality development standards in order to ensure the development will stand the test of time. She acknowledged as a Commission member you will sometimes have to make unpopular decisions for the better of the community.

Mayor Trude recognized Ms. VanderLaan would bring a lot of history with her and asked if she has been following the recent activity of the Planning and Zoning Commission. She asked if the applicant believes the Commission is going in the right direction. Ms. VanderLaan replied she has followed the minutes of the Commission. She believes the Commission is going in the right direction and believed that the staff members bring a lot of knowledge to assist the Commission in their decisions. She stated she has wisdom, experience, and a willingness to continue to learn.

Jim Olson – Open Space Advisory Commission

Mayor Trude asked if the applicant is happy with the progress that the Commission has made. Jim Olson stated he is happy with the progress the Commission has made over the years, noting

the four properties that were acquired are outstanding. He stated a lot of the decisions that will be made in the short-term, are decisions that the community will need to live with, and the Commission wants to make sure that the right decisions are made.

Councilmember Holthus asked for input on the future of Dalske Woodlands Preserve. Mr. Olson stated that area is still primitive. He noted there are some challenges with the nearby property owner and his attempt to block access but stated the Commission is trying to work proactively with that property owner to resolve the issues.

Councilmember Holthus asked the applicant's vision for that area and whether it would turn more towards Martins Meadows. Mr. Olson replied that Martins Meadows is more developed and he would not foresee the same type of development for this area. He stated the trails will be more established and perhaps a boardwalk for the creek to provide better access but believed that area will remain more primitive. He stated invasive species removal and plantings could occur, but he does not foresee much more development.

Councilmember Goodrich asked for additional information on what would occur on future agendas. Mr. Olson stated the Commission is developing management plans for each preserve. He stated the Commission would also like to review the language of the mission for the Commission in order to adjust to better fit what the Commission was and what it currently is and will be in the future. He stated there is a balance between keeping the area natural and providing access to the community.

Councilmember Knight stated open space is not a concept that many communities have delved into. Mr. Olson acknowledged not all cities have ventured into that area and if they have, they have not done it well. He stated at first, he was against the name change from open space to preserve but now believes it was a good change as it better describes the areas and better communicates it to the public.

Mayor Trude thanked Mr. Olson for his contributions to the Commission. She noted the recent programs on QCTV that the Commission did turned out excellent. Mr. Olson stated the Commission has been lucky that they have had great support from staff and the City Council over the years. He stated the Commission has also been lucky to continue to receive Commissioners that are enthusiastic and really care about the issue.

Mayor Trude encouraged Mr. Olson and the Commission to keep up the good work and hoped the Commission would be able to work something out with the property owner adjacent to Dalske Woodlands Preserve. Commissioner Olson stated he is confident the Commission and property owner would be able to come to an agreement. He stated he believes the property owner has posted those "keep out" signs in order to keep the hunters off his property.

Mayor Trude asked what type of skill set would be a helpful addition to the Commission as there are two vacant positions. Mr. Olson stated he would assume that anyone that would apply for that Commission would have a background in environmental issues.

Jake Widmyer – Park & Recreation Commission

Jake Widmyer stated he works for the Champlin Parks Department and noted as an administrative assistant he handles a variety of issues for not only parks but also public works. He stated he does attend the Park Commission meetings in Champlin. He stated he has lived in Andover for about five years and provided background information on himself. He stated he has always been interested in local government and that is why he pursued his current employment position. He stated he believes this position would be a good fit and would interact well with his employment position as well.

Councilmember Holthus asked for the experience that Mr. Widmyer has with the parks in Andover. Mr. Widmyer replied he does not have much experience with the parks in Andover, outside of his neighborhood park, but would look forward to learning more.

Councilmember Holthus stated Andover has three different types of parks, the small neighborhood parks, the larger regional parks, and natural parks. She asked which should be the priority. Mr. Widmyer replied he believes neighborhood parks should be the focus as those are the parks that are used most by Andover residents. He acknowledged the large baseball type parks are important for generating funds.

Councilmember Bukkila asked if the applicant has prepared for the possible appointment. Mr. Widmyer replied he has reviewed prior Park and Recreation Commission and City Council meetings on QCTV to learn background information and attempt to stay up to date on the current issues.

Mayor Trude stated sometimes there are residents that make complaints and asked how the City could be a good neighbor when they develop their parks. Mr. Widmyer stated he does have experience with that in his job. He stated listening is an important factor and then explaining the reasons why something is important. He acknowledged you will never make everyone happy, but the goal is to make the highest number of people happy.

Councilmember Knight asked for input on why the applicant would want to join the Commission. Mr. Widmyer replied he would like to be a part of the community and participate in order to give back to the community as well.

Councilmember Goodrich asked if the applicant has any ideas for the future or on how things could be improved. Mr. Widmyer stated he does not have any specific input at this time but is sure he would have more ideas if he were on the Commission and over time.

Mayor Trude asked if the applicant would make it a point to visit other parks in the City if he were appointed. Mr. Widmyer replied he recently had a son and before that he didn't have a reason as a 25-year-old man to visit the parks alone. He stated that if appointed, he would make it a point to visit more of the parks and think of that as part of the job in order to have background information.

Mayor Trude provided the example of replacing playground information and asked how the applicant would prepare for that meeting. Mr. Widmyer provided information on the process that he would follow. He stated he would visit the playground and then complete research on the recommendation online through the playground safety organization. He stated in Champlin there is a 20-year plan and 1.33 parks are replaced per year and noted he uses that plan and information to share with residents that express a desire for their park equipment to be replaced before that time.

Councilmember Bukkila stated it can be hard to budget for park replacement and needs and it can reach a point where there has to be a realistic understanding of the budget. She asked if the applicant is able to paint a realistic expectation and asked for the applicant's experience. Mr. Widmyer replied in his employment the park manager handles more of that aspect. He recognized the parks and public works department often has the largest budget in the City. He stated it is important to remind people that you are attempting to be fiscally responsible, because it is their tax money that funds these improvements, while improving the park system.

Mayor Trude asked if there is anything the applicant would like to add. Mr. Widmyer stated he may not have the experience that others may have but this is a place he wants his family to be and is committed to making the City the best it can be. He noted he would bring the expertise from his employment position to his Commission position as well.

Kyle Nemeth – Planning & Zoning Commission

Kyle Nemeth stated he has enjoyed the Vice Chair position. He recognized there can be challenges in managing public input and noted he has learned from the Chair and the process that he follows in order to keep things organized and running smoothly.

Councilmember Holthus stated a lot of time has been spent on the land use chart, conditional uses, and interim uses and asked for input on the City as a whole and the land use chart. She asked if anything should change on the land use chart. Mr. Nemeth stated the City did such a thorough job in creating that land use chart, noting it felt like a collaborative effort. He stated everyone worked together to create a great product that is well laid out.

Mayor Trude asked if the Commission has started work on the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Nemeth stated the Commission has not yet begun that work. He noted completion of the floodplain map is necessary before further action can occur. He stated it will be interesting to see the density of housing that would be appropriate.

Councilmember Holthus asked for input on what the applicant believes would be appropriate for the Rural Reserve area. Mr. Nemeth stated he believes that a mixed-use development would be appropriate. He stated there is still a desire for larger lots, of around one acre. He stated that County Oaks North is a good example of a mix in lot sizes and provides a variety of housing options for people. He stated even though there was push back on that development, he believes it is a good transition with the larger one acre lots bordering the more rural lots, and was a

successful development.

Mayor Trude stated the City has now successfully purchased four of the quad rentals and asked for input. Mr. Nemeth stated he feels positive about that action. He stated that while he realizes there is a fine line between wanting to keep renters in the City, he acknowledged the properties have not been well maintained. He stated he would like to see some multi-family options within Andover, using the example of a nice market value apartment building. He stated it would provide life-cycling housing options, noting that younger couples could begin in the apartments and then purchase a single-family home once they are more established.

Councilmember Holthus stated there are a lot of families that want their kids to go to school in Andover. She stated the City has had a hard time finding volunteer firefighters because that it has been said that some people cannot afford to live in the community anymore. She stated she would not be interested in high-density subsidized housing. Mr. Nemeth agreed, he would be looking for market rate apartments, which would provide an option for a working couple that would like to begin their start in the community but are perhaps not at the point where they can afford a home.

Mayor Trude asked where the applicant would see commercial opportunities for redevelopment. Mr. Nemeth stated 7th Avenue and Bunker Lake Boulevard would be a good spot and acknowledged the Council has discussed that area multiple times. He stated there is a lot of traffic in that area, but the question would be what would be attracted to that area. He noted perhaps a small strip mall would be a good fit.

Mayor Trude asked if the applicant would be interested in a position on the EDA, should that become vacant. Mr. Nemeth stated he does follow the City Council and EDA minutes to get a feel for what is going on. He stated he did previously express interest in the EDA but was told he could not serve on both the Planning and Zoning Commission and EDA at the same time. He stated as a Commissioner he believes the Commission works best when everyone is committed and values attendance and participation.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Motion by Councilmember Bukkila, Seconded by Councilmember Holthus, to appoint Frank Kellogg and Tony Howard to the Community Center Advisory Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilmember Bukkila, Seconded by Councilmember Goodrich, to appoint Dawn Perra and Jake Widmyer to the Park and Recreation Commission and appoint Brian Beck as the alternate. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilmember Bukkila, Seconded by Councilmember Holthus, to appoint Jim Olson and Brian Perra to the Open Space Advisory Commission and appoint Ryan Ingebritson as the alternate. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Councilmember Holthus, Seconded by Councilmember Goodrich, to appoint Kyle Nemeth and Nick Loehlein to the Planning and Zoning Commission and appoint Mary VanderLaan as the first alternate and Bill Crossman as the second alternate. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Bukkila, Seconded by Councilmember Holthus, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary
TimeSaver OffSite Secretarial, Inc.