

**REGULAR ANDOVER OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 4, 2019 MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Andover Open Space Advisory Commission was called to order by Acting Chairperson Kim Kovich at 7:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners present: Joy Faherty, Jim Olson, and Brian Perra

Commissioners absent: Anna Dirkswager, Ryan Ingebritson, and Gretchen Sabel

Also present: Kameron Kytonen, Natural Resources Technician

RESIDENT FORUM

No one wished to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 10, 2019

Motion by Commissioner Olson, Second by Commissioner Faherty, to approve the minutes of April 10, 2019. Motion passed 2-0-2 (Kovich and Perra present).

DISCUSS MAPLE VIEW GRANT (PARTNERSHIP WITH GREAT RIVER GREENING)

Mr. Kytonen provided an update noting that he met with a representative from Great River Greening in July to walk the parcel and briefly discuss what could be done with the grant funds. He stated that the intent of the grant funds is to combat invasive species and enhance the native plant community. He noted that he will continue to work with Todd from Great River Greening to develop a plan for the grant funds. He confirmed that he will send those materials to the Commission once developed and further discussion could occur at a future meeting.

Commissioner Perra asked what the reed canary grass would be replaced with.

Mr. Kytonen stated that typically a natural seed is used for an area that large. He explained that often once the reed canary grass is removed, that allows other native plants to thrive. He noted that the intent is not to change the property but simply enhance the plant community.

DISCUSS STATUS OF DALSKA WOODLAND BOARDWALK

Mr. Kytonen stated that the City once again applied for the DNR grant but was not awarded the grant funds. He noted that they will apply again the next year.

Commissioner Olson stated that a boardwalk was mentioned, which he would think would be similar to the boardwalk near the fire station. He stated that he is unsure that a boardwalk of that nature is needed, as they simply need something to cross the water. He was unsure how wet the area outside of the creek is and perhaps just a bridge would be sufficient rather than an expensive boardwalk. He believed that if the purpose is just to cross the creek, there would most likely be a less expensive option.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he spoke with his supervisor and the Building Official earlier today and the issues of safety, liability, long-term maintenance, and legality were discussed related to this crossing. He stated that because Andover is a second-tier suburb there would be a structure standard. He stated that the risk manager is working with the League of Minnesota Cities to determine the standards the City would need to work under. He agreed that perhaps a boardwalk similar to Crosstown would not be needed, and perhaps a different style of boardwalk would be sufficient. He stated that if the grant funds were awarded in the requested amount, it would cover the cost of a boardwalk similar to the Crosstown boardwalk.

Commissioner Faherty stated that perhaps the Kelsey boardwalk would be a better model.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that could be an option, but maintenance would also be an issue to consider.

Commissioner Olson stated that the width of the creek is probably at most 20 feet wide and provided a crossing suggestion that could be sufficient for the preserve. He stated that perhaps that option be considered as an alternative.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that there are less costly options that can and will be reviewed.

Acting Chairperson Kovich stated that the 40 acres to the south was previously offered to the Commission for purchase. He stated that although the Commission does not have the funds to purchase the property at this time, that could be a cheaper alternative to the boardwalk.

Commissioner Perra asked if applying for a larger amount reduces the chance that the grant would be approved, noting that the request jumped from \$40,000 to \$80,000.

Mr. Kytonen explained that the grant request was based off the cost for the Crosstown boardwalk, as there are a lot of unknowns on the Dalske site. He agreed that tightening up the amount that would be needed for construction of the boardwalk could improve the chance the grant would be awarded.

Acting Chairperson Kovich referenced the adjacent DNR owned land that is used for hunting. He noted that if there was a trail connecting from the DNR land to the preserve, that could increase the amount of people using the preserve.

Commissioner Perra asked if grant funds could be used for purchasing additional land.

Mr. Kytonen explained that a different grant would need to be applied for.

Acting Chairperson Kovich stated that perhaps the adjacent landowner be consulted to determine if they would be interested in selling as that could be a less costly option. He stated that the option could then be discussed with the Council. He noted that additional land would make that preserve a larger attraction as well.

Mr. Kytonen noted that the boardwalk has been slated in the CIP as well, which would be an alternate source of funding.

The Commission stated that perhaps the preserve be walked during the winter months.

FUN FEST RECAP

Commissioner Olson stated that he and Commissioner Ingebritson staffed the booth. He explained that the booth was combined with the City Council and Community Center and believed that additional interest would be gained for the preserves if the Commission had its own booth with eye catching elements, perhaps a television playing the QCTV segments on the preserves. He stated that although the Commission had information available and on display, that information seemed to get lost in all the other information available and on display.

Commissioner Faherty agreed that in her experience the larger display picture that they had a few years ago drew the most interest.

Acting Chairperson Kovich summarized that perhaps for the next event it would help for the Commission to have its own space with an eye-catching display.

Commissioner Faherty stated that a lot of fair event booths have wheels to spin for prizes. She noted that the wheel could feature questions about preserves to gain interest.

Commissioner Olson stated that there could be tours scheduled that could be hosted by a member of the Commission. He noted that even school groups could garner additional interest.

DISCUSS POTENTIAL FOR ANOTHER TOUR OF THE PRESERVES WITH QCTV

Mr. Kytonen explained that two years ago members of the Commission walked through four of the preserves with representatives from QCTV to feature and promote the preserves.

Commissioner Olson commented that the QCTV staff did a great job.

Commissioner Perra asked if the videos are available only on television or also available on a website.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that the videos are available to watch on the website.

Acting Chairperson Kovich noted that some of the preserves have changes or improvements that have occurred since the last video tours.

Mr. Kytonen noted that Dalske trail was not in at the last recording. He stated that he reached out to QCTV to determine if they would be open to the idea, noting that he was fairly confident QCTV would be interested in. He recognized that the timing may not be right for fall tours but perhaps spring tours would be nice too.

Commissioner Olson noted that some of the tours were done in October.

Commissioner Faherty agreed that the fall videos are beautiful and agreed that perhaps it would be nice to have spring videos as well.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that the City also features elements from the preserves on the City Facebook page a few times per year. He noted that he can keep the Commission informed once he hears back from QCTV.

DISCUSS ITEMS FOR JOINT MEETING WITH CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Kytonen noted that over the past few years the Commission has met jointly with the City Council on an annual basis to have a shared discussion. He asked if the Commission has ideas for the next joint meeting.

Acting Chairperson Kovich suggested that the Dalske boardwalk and Martins Meadows east access be placed on the agenda. He stated that it seems that the Commission does not meet enough to be kept in the loop on current events. He explained that in the beginning the Commission met monthly, then moved to bi-monthly, and now the Commission only met two times this year.

Commissioner Faherty stated that in her time on the Commission it seems that the group has entered phase two and therefore there are less agenda items.

Acting Chairperson Kovich stated that there is constant development around the preserve areas and therefore continued action is needed even though the funds to purchase property have been spent. He provided examples of certain elements he believed the Commission should have been a part of. He provided details on a nice chipped trail into Martins Meadows and down to the river. He noted that it appears the trail is part of the preserve, but it is actually on private property and not part of the preserve. He stated that there is no signage that states that the trail property is private property so it would be difficult for visitors of the preserve to know that is not part of the preserve.

Mr. Kytonen stated that mid-October or later could be a good time to meet with the Council in joint session.

OTHER BUSINESS

Acting Chairperson Kovich stated that if the Commission is going to be a group that does something, it should meet on a regular schedule. He suggested perhaps March, June, September and November continuing to meet on the second Wednesday.

The Commission confirmed the consensus to meet the second Wednesday of the month in March, June, September, and November.

Commissioner Perra asked the purpose or vision of the Commission.

Commissioner Olson provided background information on the Commission and how the mission/purpose has evolved over the years.

Mr. Kytonen noted that phase one was purchasing the property, phase two was to develop priorities and management plans, and perhaps the group is now in phase three. He agreed that perhaps the Commission should help to define the purpose of this next phase.

Commissioner Olson stated that perhaps dedicated open space could be a part of development, similar to how dedicated park space is allocated.

Acting Chairperson Kovich suggested that idea be brought up at the joint Council meeting. He stated that development will continue to occur around the preserves and the Commission should be part of the discussion as perhaps additional land could be dedicated that would increase the size of the preserves.

Commissioner Perra stated that it would be helpful for the Commission to better define its role and vision for the future prior to meeting with the Council.

Commissioner Faherty agreed that it would be helpful for everyone on the Commission to be involved in the discussion and on the same page prior to meeting with the Council.

It was the consensus of the Commission to meet again in November and to meet with the Council sometime after that.

Commissioner Olson suggested that the group continue to work on the discussed items prior to the November meeting.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that he would check the availability of the Council sometime after the November Commission meeting.

Commissioner Olson asked that the minutes from this meeting be distributed to the Commission members within a week or 10 days rather than waiting until the packet for the November meeting.

Commissioner Faherty stated that in the past there was discussion on the creation of the Commission and supporting documents.

Commissioner Olson stated that he has that information and could pass that onto the Commission members.

a. Next Meeting: November 13, 2019

Noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Olson, Second by Commissioner Perra, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kameron Kytonen
Natural Resources Technician

Drafted by:
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary