

ITEM: Discussion on Sunfish Lake Park Prairie Restoration Proposals
SUBMITTED BY: Carol Kriegler, Project Assistant

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City has received a DNR Metro Greenways restoration grant for a prairie restoration in Area 2 of Sunfish Lake Park. The grant provides for \$27,425 for prairie restoration related activities conducted through June 31, 2011. The grant requires a match in cash or in-kind services.

Proposals were requested from 3 prairie restoration contractors for services related to the establishment and management of the 20 acre area through a 5 year period, when it's anticipated the prairie will be substantially established.

3 Proposals were received. The Park Commission is being asked to review the proposals and consider making a recommendation to the City Council regarding the selection of a project designer / contractor.

Staff will report on the prairie restoration related services available through the Minnesota Conservation Corp that could significantly reduce the level of service required from the selected prairie restoration designer / contractor. Staff will also report on contractor references and be prepared to make a recommendation on selecting a project designer / contractor.

Attachments:

- A. Sunfish Lake Park prairie restoration project *Request for Proposal*
- B. Applied Ecological Services prairie restoration proposal
- C. Prairie Restoration prairie restoration proposal
- D. Minnesota Native Landscapes prairie restoration proposal

**FINAL
Lake Elmo Park Commission
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
January 20, 2010**

Chairman Ames called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Zeno, Ames, Blackford, Larson, Dobbs

STAFF PRESENT: Project Assistant Kriegler

Agenda

Agenda was approved as amended (Dobbs / Blackford, 5-0)

Agenda item 9. added - - Discussion of park dedication for Eder's Century Pines

Minutes

December 21, 2009 minutes approved (Larson / Dobbs, 5-0)

Review of 2009 work plan / development of 2010 work plan

The 2009 work plan was reviewed and a new work plan was developed for the coming year. The 2010 work plan is attached.

Motion: Accept 2010 work plan (Larson / Dobbs, 5-0)

Update on Sunfish Lake Park Ski trail grooming and trail use

At the December meeting, the commission discussed the possible establishment of a policy related to the grooming of trails at Sunfish Lake Park, specifically the level of service desired for grooming. There was support for consistent grooming based on conditions and use with consideration of the unique characteristics of the trails, which are on relatively rolling terrain sheltered by woodlands.

Kriegler reported that the County's staff had been directed to increase grooming of the trails for the coming season. A compliment regarding the condition of the trails / park was forwarded to members of the commission along with a report of additional positive feedback.

Zeno, who uses the trails on a regular basis, suggested that additional trails be groomed including the area leading to the west entrance, though he acknowledged that groomer might be constrained by limited accessibility in some areas.

Update on the development of the Sunfish Lake Park and Natural Resource Management Plan

City Forester, Kathy Widin, provided an update on progress to date on the development of the plan.

The City has received a Metro Greenways Conservation Planning grant to develop a natural resource management plan for Sunfish Lake Park. Sunfish Lake Park is an area with significant natural features, wetland, woodland, and grassland plant communities which have become degraded over time, primarily through colonization by invasive plants. Water quality, wildlife habitat and enjoyment of the park by users have been reduced as plant diversity and habitat quality have decreased. These native plant

communities are still at a point where they can be improved with planned conservation management. Such management will result in improved wildlife habitat and water quality with the added benefit of improved aesthetics for park users.

The goal of the project is to assess current status of park natural resources and prepare a long-term management plan to address ways to improve the plant communities so that they function to protect water quality and improve wildlife habitat. The goal will be achieved with the following objectives:

1. Survey the existing plant communities to determine species composition and degree of disturbance/degradation
2. Survey presence of invasive plants and degree of invasiveness
3. Develop management protocols for invasive plants
4. Develop plans for re-planting and establishing native tree, shrub and ground-layer plant species

Update on Sunfish Lake Park Area 2 concept plan

Carol Kriegler reported that the concept plan had been forwarded to the Minnesota Land Trust for their review several weeks ago. She also reported that she would prompt them for a response so that the City can proceed with planned improvements in the near future.

Discussion on Sunfish Lake Park Prairie Restoration Proposals

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3 Proposals were received and reviewed. Proposals were received from Minnesota Native Landscapes, Applied Ecological Services and Prairie Restoration. Kathy Widin commented that she was confident that all three contractors were very capable of successfully completing the project, but that she recommended acceptance of the MNL proposal. Kriegler concurred. Staff and Park Commissioners shared the following comments regarding the proposals: Installation costs were fairly comparable, with MNL maintenance costs being lower; MNL offered the highest percentage of native plants in their project guarantee; MNL proposed more frequent site visits, which was deemed very important; MNL also proposed the most diverse species mix as well as provided the most qualified explanation for their proposed seed mix.

Motion: Recommendation to accept the prairie restoration proposal submitted by Minnesota Native Landscapes (Dobbs / Zeno, 5-0).

Discussion of park dedication for Eder's Century Pines

The Commission was asked to review and comment on staff's recommendation for applicants to pay cash in the amount of \$3,600 per lot in lieu of land dedication for the Eder's Century Pines Subdivision. The Commission expressed that they desired a closer look at the dedication to ensure that there were not any potential trail implications.

Adjourned 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kriegler,
Project Assistant