

Florence Township Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes, July 16th, 2012

Attendance: Joe Ellingson, Ben Boege, Bill Siewert, Dale Messenberg, Brad Stone

Meeting Called to order at 7:00 pm

Minutes from June 18th were approved

The meeting was a long one and consequently, the minutes are also long.

General discussion regarding the approval of the Park Commission Ordinances and Bylaws ensued. The advisors will recommend to the Town Board that the public meeting to consider and approve the establishment of the new commission be rescheduled to August 27th, prior to the Town Board meeting to allow for the required period of public review. The new ordinances and bylaws will be posted on the Township website (<http://www.florencetwp.org/>) and outside the Town Hall to allow residents to review the documents before August 27th.

Clarification was made that the Ordinances and Bylaws are not the Park Plan. The Park Plan will be developed separately by the advisers (per their original assignment from the Town Board) and eventually by the commission members as the process unfolds. The process for developing the Park Plan was explained:

- first, the advisers will complete a working draft of the Plan;
- second, they will forward the working draft to the Planning Commission and the Heritage Commission for their comments;
- third, the advisers will post a draft to the Park Commission website and at the Town Hall for public review and then host a public discussion at a Park Commission meeting with appropriate public notice;
- fourth, present a final draft for Town Board approval;
- fifth, present a copy to Goodhue County for their signature.

The advisers will consider each commission's comments and residents' comments, and incorporate them into the draft presented to the Town Board.

It was then suggested by a resident that the Park Commission provide public notice, e.g. in the local newspaper, after its meetings to inform residents regarding the Park Activity Application Process after the public Park Commission meetings. The Committee offered to consider the request.

It was also requested that an email list be developed so that individual residents could be notified regarding the developments in the Park Commission's public monthly meetings. The Advisers agreed to consider the request.

Bill Flies then made a presentation regarding his perspective on the history of Valhalla Park since the 1970's.

- He first discussed and provided pictures of two 'clear cuts' that occurred in Valhalla Park, the 'Gagnon Cut' which occurred 35 years ago, and the 'Krohn Cut' which occurred 26 years ago. He concluded that even though both 'cuts' had Town Board approval, they were poorly supervised and exceeded the limits of the Town Board's permission.
- He then discussed the 1989 Township Ordinance which concerned the 'maintenance and use' of Florence Township Parks and Beaches. He suggested that the Ordinances should

be observed in creating the Park Plan. (An adviser observed that this would be difficult since the 1989 Ordinances would not permit activities already performed in the 2006 Park Plan and appears to be outdated.)

- He then commented on the 2006 Park Plan, and the Valhalla and Wakondiota Park Maintenance Plan 2007, and observed that the approved 'vistas' in the Plan have not been maintained. He cited lack of funds as the primary cause of this failure.

- He then commented on the 'Wakondiota and Cemetery Tree Harvest'. He attributed the failure of this project to lack of supervision, and used it as an example of how important supervision is in responsibly maintaining township parks.

- He then commented on the Buckthorn Eradication Program that needs to be continued at an accelerated rate. He observed that over the past few years mostly resident volunteers, along with help from Sentence to Serve last fall, have made limited progress in eradicating Buckthorn.

- He also stated that the parks should be surveyed to establish clear boundaries for public land. He suggested this could be accomplished as funds become available.

- He observed that the 2005 county ordinances allowed for the cutting of 4" trees so long as they weren't cut in the context of 'clear cutting'. (Goodhue Ordinances have since been amended and eliminated language regarding 4" trees.)

- He then offered a few recommendations:

He suggested a continuation of the permit application process.

He suggested that land owners with properties abutting the areas where Park Activity Approval Process applications have been received be notified.

He encouraged cooperation of land owners in managing the parks.

And perhaps most importantly, he recommended that park projects be well supervised.

The committee thanked Bill for his time and his thorough report.

Brad Stone recommended, in light of resident comments regarding the 'public nature' of Park Commission activities, that email correspondence to advisors/commissioners relating to Park business, be copied to all advisors/commissioners, and be attached to the minutes of the monthly meetings, which will be posted to the township website. The committee believes attempts to influence advisors/commissioners should be a matter of public record.

One resident encouraged the Committee to develop the Park Plan with an overall 'Vision' in mind. The committee agreed, and stated that an overall Vision for each township park has played a central role in the drafts of the Park Plan.

Another resident encouraged the Committee to remember the distinctive history of the Parks as we create our Park Plan. The committee also affirmed this suggestion, and commented that so far all the drafts of the Park Plan have talked about 'Honoring the Legacy' of our parks. The US Department of the Interior offers guidance in managing Historical Vernacular Landscapes, that is, landscapes with distinctive histories created by our predecessors for specific purposes. The Department of the Interior suggests that communities respect both the current condition of a landscape, and its original purpose, in creating a vision for, and managing, its historical vernacular landscapes.

The meeting adjourned around 9:00 pm.

email attachments follow:

July 17, 2018

William B. Webster III wbw-ejw@mchsi.com

to me

Brad,

Bill F. gave an interesting presentation of Valhalla Park from the 1980's going forward. My suggestion would be for the next Parks Committee Planning meeting that a few of us present the historic aspect of Valhalla Park from Sept. 30, 1857 when the village name was officially Westervelt going forward.

Using numerous graphics, in particular the plotted map deeding the 3 parks for the people of the community, as well as the Steamboat Landing shoreline property from Block 9 to 13. (Bill F. said this was only for 40 years). The presentation would run up through the 1970's when a number of the homes on Garrard Ave. had significant overviews of the lake.

Also talk about Miss Schaller's legal action (that went to the MN or US Supreme Court?) to make the bathing beach private property for the Frontenac Inn Hotel and how it was defeated. End up in suggesting that as long as the Wakondiotia Park was surveyed with posts permanently marking the west boundary line to also survey and stake Valhalla Park. It's already surveyed at the Earnest/Miller property and because of Lake Avenue's 40' or 60' (I've seen both on maps) right of way on the South end, the park doesn't start by the stop sign. Also the park property line on the North end being unmarked is confusing.

Regarding the pages of Parks information that Bill presented, are we going to have this to look over (possibly on the internet) or is it for the committee's eyes only? I'm still a little uncertain on the procedural aspect of the Parks Commission's approval by the Town Board. Once the planning committee writes up the ordinance(s) with a 7-14 day notification review, is it submitted to the Town Board for their approval? Then the Parks are removed from the HPC and the Park Commission with the 5 new members becomes an entity in our local government? Hence the delay to August?

Bill

P.S. Your welcome to put this and your reply on the Park Committee website.