

CLOQUET CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, February 17, 2015, 4:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Present: Bjerckness, Kolodge, Langley, Maki, Rock, and Mayor Hallback.
Absent: Wilkinson.
Staff: Fritsinger, Klassen, C. Peterson, L. Peterson and Stracek.
Other: Tim Krohn, Barb Wyman, Mark Roberts, Rick Stowell, Amy Louhela, John Badger, Tom Urbanski, Al Raushel, Dan Lundquist, Mike McKinney, Karen Smith, Troy Smith, Bert Whittington, Gregg Calpino, Dan Hinzman, Paul Charon, and Dani Lundeen-Pine Journal.

JOINT MEETING WITH PARKS COMMISSION AND WATERFRONT COMMITTEE

The meeting began with introductions of everyone in attendance and then SEH staff took over from there and began with an update on the Pinehurst Park design efforts. They are still working on the lighting design, signage and landscaping. Soil borings in the area of the tennis court were completed earlier in the day. The concept right now is to have all bid documents ready this spring, receive bids and then take on the construction in the fall after the pool is closed. Caleb noted that the next big step is to review the plans with the Parks Commission. Councilor Bjerckness inquired as to whether or not any of the work can be accelerated to get the project underway? SEH responded that they have concerns about starting early and the impact to the park users. The City Council asked that a “coming soon to a park near you” sign be developed and placed at the Park this spring so people are aware of the use of sales tax monies and the project itself. Staff will work to develop a sign that can be used.

SEH then provided an update on the Highway 33 landscape improvement designs. The next step is to complete the final design for the Skyline Boulevard work. Once that is done, the next step is to prioritize the remainder of the corridor and then finish up plans for 2-3 of these sites for construction yet this summer. The Council was supportive of this approach.

SEH then reviewed the process to be followed with the Waterfront Committee and the development of the Riverfront Park plans. The Riverfront plans include everything from Veteran’s Park, Dunlap Island, Spafford Campground and the Riverfront Park areas on the north side of the river below the Chamber and Hospital.

Commissioner Louhela suggested that the idea of trains should be a prominent component of the park area and considered in the designs. Councilor Bjerckness suggested that the waterfront can be an economic influence so if we increase activity it would be beneficial to the community.

It was suggested that the deeds for all of this property be reviewed carefully to determine what, if any, deed restrictions are in place that might impact the various ideas that will be considered. SEH also noted that the wetland information in each area will also need to be studied carefully. Commissioner Louhela suggested a look at Branson, Missouri and how they have used holistic and tourism based activities such as zip lines. The Council asked how the process will engage the veterans to better explore the opportunities at Veteran’s Park. Staff noted that the City had met with representatives of the various local veterans groups earlier in the day to begin engagement. 2-3 representatives are also being considered for appointment to the Waterfront Committee.

A question was asked about the development of trails and the use of different types of trails. SEH responded that all connectivity is being studied as well as the different types of connectivity. It was suggested that winter maintenance of trails also needs to be considered by the City. SEH then reviewed the role of the Waterfront Committee.

The Council asked how the recommendations of the Committee interface with the commercial/industrial property owners along the riverfront? Someone asked if there is any need to investigate the quality of the water in the river in this area of the river in the case that plans identify any actual uses of the river? It was suggested that more concentrated cleanup of the river in this area should take place especially with some of the rebar and other construction materials that are present.

Caleb Peterson then shifted discussion to the proposed skateboard park. He handed out a copy of the survey matrix results which were used to try and help the Council and Commission with site identification. He also gave a quick history lesson of the skate park in Cloquet and efforts of the current skate club to try and get a new park developed. The key hurdle to this effort has been site identification.

Commissioner Badger talked about the fundraising efforts of the club and those interested in a new park. He referred to Bemidji as a comparable community with a successful concrete park. The kids prefer Athletic Park as a location but they had not really talked about the Cloquet Avenue option. The group discussed the idea of using the Cloquet Avenue site as a temporary location until the club can prove that it can be responsible for the park with minimal problems. The Council asked if we were setting them up for failure if a short term idea was used. A variety of ideas were debated regarding managing the problems that are typical at these parks, not only here, but across the state. Staff noted that those communities that have been successful have the parks in very visible locations and use staff to manage or monitor the activities. It was suggested that some type of livecam be used to also help monitor. The Council would like more information regarding the idea of staffing and the cost of that concept. It was also suggested that if the School District needs to design a new play area adjacent to the new proposed middle school that they be approached to see if they would consider including the skate park in that concept.

The group concluded thanking each other for attendance.

FUTURE AGENDAS

There was no discussion on future agenda items.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45.

Respectfully Submitted:

Brian Fritsinger
City Administrator