



**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2021, 6:30 PM
ARDEN HILLS CITY HALL**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Acting Chair John Van Valkenburg called the January 19, 2021 meeting of the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee to order at 6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Acting Chair John Van Valkenburg, Committee Members Paul Beggin, Jill Anderson, Dan Dietz, Terry Finlay, Micah Kiernan, Marie Hinton, Suzanne McGaugh, Tim Nelson, Kristine Poelzer, and Rich Straumann

OTHERS PRESENT: Staff Liaison Joe Vaughan and Public Works Director/City Engineer Todd Blomstrom

ABSENT: Committee Member Harold Peterson, and Council Liaison David Grant

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: The agenda was unanimously approved by the Committee.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 17, 2020 PTRC Minutes

MOTION: The minutes were approved by the Committee.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Snelling Avenue South Update

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom said the trail along Snelling Avenue from County Road E to Highway 51 is part of a feasibility study currently underway. The section of roadway south of County Road E is a City roadway and a Municipal State Aid route. Lane width, shoulder width, grade, slide slope, and ADA trail design are some of the design requirements that must be met. Alternative 1 includes a trail along the roadway. Alternative 2 is the roadway reconstruction without a trail but includes narrowing the drive lanes and potentially narrowing the shoulder on the east side, allowing for a wider shoulder on the west side of the roadway for pedestrian use. There is the possibility of a no parking zone and rumble strips on the west side of roadway. There has also been discussion of lowering the speed limit and adding speed display signs. The cost difference between the two options is approximately \$2 million.

Committee Member Poelzer was concerned about a six-foot wide shoulder with larger vehicles passing bicyclists. She would rather do a trail and not just shoulders. She felt parents would rather have their children using a trail that is divided from the road and not just a shoulder.

Committee Member Kiernan agreed and said he would strongly push for a trail.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained Alternative 1 was for an eight to ten-foot wide paved trail separated from the edge of the roadway. Alternative 2 doesn't have a curb but provides for a ten-foot wide paved shoulder on the west side of the roadway. There is currently a 40-foot wide roadway. Alternative 2 would allow for an eight-foot shoulder on the east side, two 11-foot lanes and a ten-foot shoulder on the west side. If the City Council decides to go with Alternative 2, that will be the staff recommendation.

Committee Member Anderson expressed that she and her children walk this road daily in the summer and nearly daily in the winter. It might be a worthwhile investment in the long term given how much the road is used. Without a curb traffic could easily veer off.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom noted that State Aid dollars are allocated out for at least five years and the cost for the project isn't using State Aid money although the City has to comply with the design requirements. The City's portion of the project will come from the general fund. The City assessment policy states that properties are assessed for the roadway they are addressed on and a vast majority of properties along the corridor are addressed on side streets.

Committee Member Poelzer asked if they made the shoulders the same width and the travel lanes narrower, could they still have one or two crosswalks.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom said they could look for potential locations for crosswalks along the corridor.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom explained the time line. There will be a public engagement period and comments will be collected and reported to the City Council in April or May. At that time the Council will decide on which alternative to pursue.

Committee Member Anderson asked about the corner of County Road E and Snelling and the proposed roundabout.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom discussed the traffic study that was done in 2018. The intersection is now a separate project from the roadway and the intersection will be restudied to see if a roundabout is justified. The road improvements are on track to be done in 2022.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom discussed project funding.

Committee Member Nelson Asked if one shoulder was made even narrower and the speed limit was lowered would that solve the problem.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom said you could get up to a 12-foot shoulder on the west side but that it would be better to keep it at 10 feet and have an eight-foot shoulder on the east side, in part due to bicyclists moving with traffic.

Committee Member Poelzer felt they could make the travel lanes narrower, lower the speed limit, widen the shoulders on both sides and put in traffic calming measures and flashing beacon cross walks. Her concern was being able to cross the street safely.

Committee Member Finlay commented that the kids need to be off the street and onto a trail because there is very little visibility in some areas.

Committee Member Nelson asked if there would be a pedestrian study done.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom said they do not have pedestrian counts at this time.

Acting Chair Van Valkenburg asked if staff would include committee members when the public discussion is scheduled.

B. Mounds View High School Trail Update

Staff Liaison Vaughan said the City Council had recently expressed the desire to focus on the Mounds View High School trail, which is an extension of the existing trail on Snelling Avenue North. The trail would extend from County Road E2 to Lake Valentine Road, continuing on to the east parking lot of Mounds View High School. The Council requested that staff continue to look for funding opportunities.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom noted that cities opportunities to tap into the Safe Routes to School funding comes from the regional solicitation process through Met Council. Staff has applied for grant funding for this trail section. Arden Hills scored well but there weren't enough funds to reach far enough down the list.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom mentioned that the traffic volume on Snelling Avenue south of County Road E is about 1600 vehicles a day. Traffic volume on Lake Johanna Boulevard is over 5,000 vehicles a day. And Snelling Avenue north of County Road E leading to Lake Valentine Road is about 5,600 vehicles a day. Estimated cost for the Mounds View High School trail is about \$1.6 million.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Park Benches Proposal

Staff Liaison Vaughan said the City Council recently asked the Arden Hills Foundation for a financial contribution to assist in acquiring additional park benches. They asked staff to identify four potential locations. The Council supported the locations and the Arden Hills Foundation agreed to donate the benches and plaques.

Discussion ensued regarding the bench locations.

Acting Chair Van Valkenburg suggested a thank you letter be sent to the Arden Hills Foundation.

B. Ice Rink and Recreation Update

Staff Liaison Vaughan stated the City ice rinks officially opened to the public on January 2, 2021. The warming houses remain closed to the public due to COVID-19. City staff has received positive feedback from many residents and the community as a whole. While a rink attendant is on site, the rinks are averaging around 20-30 skaters per hour. The City is not conducting ice rink reservations or warming house rentals this winter season.

On the Recreation side, the City offered two Holiday events, Letters from Santa and a Virtual Santa event, during December 2020. Both programs were received well by residents. This was the first year the City has conducted a Virtual Santa event. There were around 10 kids who participated in the event and they were able to chat with Santa over Zoom. There were about 20 participants in Letters from Santa. The City Council also instructed staff to begin offering the monthly Foot Care Clinic for adults and that has been running each month since November, 2020. Skating lessons have begun at Cummings Park with one instructor teaching two sets of lessons.

Committee Member Poelzer asked how many rinks there are in Arden Hills.

Staff Liaison Vaughan said there are 4 locations, Cummings Park has a pleasure rink only, Perry Park has a hockey rink only, Hazelnut and Freeway Parks have pleasure and hockey rinks.

C. Election of a Committee Chair

Staff Liaison Vaughan stated that in December of 2020, Rich Straumann stepped down as chair of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee. At the City Council meeting on January 11, 2021, the City Council approved the appointment of John Van Valkenburg as the new chair. They are looking for a motion from the Committee to approve.

The Committee unanimously approved John Van Valkenburg as the new chair of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee.

Chair Van Valkenburg asked the committee to let him know if they had things they wanted to focus on that could be brought to the Council.

5. REPORTS

Public Works Director/City Engineer Blomstrom stated that a letter was received from the Ramsey County Commissioner and an attachment from the Ramsey County Public Works Director regarding Lake Johanna Boulevard as a response to the City's letter to Ramsey County. They intend to take a study of three corridors around the County, and Lake Johanna Boulevard is one of the corridors. The County will share the scope of work with City staff so the City can comment. Staff will share that information with the Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next PTRC Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.