



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Draft HABITAT STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

4:00 PM

210 M L King Jr. Blvd. Room 108

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

A meeting of the Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee of the Park Commission was held on Tuesday, May 4, 2010 in the City-County Building, 210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Room 108. Chair Einstein called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. A quorum was present and the meeting was properly noticed. He suggested that meetings last for no more than 90 minutes and asked that this meeting end at 5:30 p.m. Members concurred.

Present: 4 - Janet Parker; Steven R. Bassett; Brock E. Woods and Daniel Einstein
Excused: 1 - Evelyn A Howell

Parks Staff Present: Marla Eddy, Russ Hefty, Jim Weinstock, LaVonne LaFave, Kay Rutledge

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Bassett/Parker to defer the Minutes of April 20, 2010 to the next meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no speakers for items not on the Agenda:

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Fireworks in Parks

Fireworks in Parks

Registered Speakers:

NAME	Support	Oppose
Maria Powell		Fireworks in Parks
Jim Powell	"	"

The speakers were concerned about the contaminants from the fireworks (perchlorate and heavy metals) that end up in the air, on the ground and in the lagoon following the fireworks. They are raising the issue in order to minimize problems. The paper casings containing residue remain in the area for a long time. They suggested that the City of Madison contract with Madison Fireworks Fund specify that they use fireworks that do not contain these contaminants.

Parks staff recommended that this is an issue for people who have more specific knowledge, such as the Health Department or the Commission on the Environment. The contract referred to is negotiated by the Mayor's office, on behalf of the City, with Madison Fireworks Fund and Parks administers portions of that contract. Habitat Stewardship could discuss the effects of the fireworks on the park's resources. Hefty and Weinstock suggested this be forwarded to Public Health and the Commission on the Environment because it is beyond Parks purview on the knowledge of chemistry. Parks is concerned about the impacts on parkland, wildlife and the water.

A motion was made by Parker/Woods to recommend that the Park Commission forward this issue to the Public Health Department and Commission on the Environment to review and make a recommendation that might include banning percholorate and heavy metals in fireworks; further that the Contract with Madison Fireworks Fund require better clean-up of residue following the fireworks; and finally that this issue be forwarded to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Fisheries staff for their comment. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A.. [18046](#) Authorizing the execution of a Declaration of Public Water Main Easement pertaining to lands located within Knollwood Conservancy Park.

Hefty reported that a route with a new alignment was surveyed. The map showing the alternate route and trees to be affected was distributed. This new route stays away from the oak savannah and sacrifices the box elders. The bike path will be concurrent with the water main project. He is comfortable with the revised plan. Engineering is also willing to remove additional box elders. Knollwood Conservancy will then be managed as an open oak woodland in the future.

A motion was made by Parker/Bassett to approve the new plan and Resolution ID#18046 authorizing the execution of a Declaration of Public Water Main Easement pertaining to lands located within Knollwood Conservancy Park. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

This Resolution was Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS, due back on 5/12/2010

B. Staff Reports

No signs in Trees

The policy for placing permanent signs in trees was reviewed. Parks staff are actively working to remove any signs that were previously affixed to trees. There are health issues with tree vitality when you wound them by nailing signs into them. It is also an aesthetic concern when trees are used as sign posts when there are reasonable alternatives. Parks staff are actively removing any signs in trees that they find.

A brief discussed ensued regarding the placement of temporary signs. Some signs marking ski trails are temporarily installed for the winter ski season. Parks staff were hesitant to pound more than 40 more posts into the ground at Elver Park for the short season, only to have them remain vacant the majority of the year. Staff will work to find environmentally friendly ways of posting those signs. These temporary seasonal postings will be an exception to the rule.

A motion was made by Parker/Bassett to approve the proposed policy for the placement of permanent signs in trees. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

It was noted there is a MG&E sign in a city tree along John Nolen Drive. MG&E will be contacted to remove this sign.

Mulching of Trees

The standards for mulching of trees were reviewed. Street trees are mulched by Forestry or the contractor when they are first planted. Thereafter homeowners may add layers of mulch. Trees in medians are mulched by Parks Maintenance, other city agencies and private contractors. This document will become a tool for education to promote proper mulching techniques.

A motion was made by Parker/Bassett to approve the standards for mulching trees. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Trimming Trees Near Solar Panels

Registered Speaker:

Kathy Miner Neutral

A clarification was made that utility line pruning is required by state law and the Parks Division cannot tell a utility what to prune or not prune by electrical wires.

City Forester Eddy noted that information regarding the length of time the tree has existing in that location and the height of the tree had been provided previously. This species will always be a narrow, upright tree. At the previous meeting the solar panel installer acknowledged he saw the tree but did not take it into account when the panels were installed. Kay Schindl of City Engineering who oversees the MadiSUN program was present to answer questions regarding solar panels.

The Miners' are looking for a policy that will address these types of situations in the future. They do not expect a recommendation to remove the tree that is the subject of their issue. This is an opportunity to discuss creating standards before another situation like theirs arises. There is no current policy regarding the removal of trees for solar panels. There is a practice to allow the removal

of a tree for the creation of a new driveway at the homeowner's expense, but that does not apply here.

A motion was made by Parker/Bassett to follow the written proposal of the City Forester to initiate discussions with city agencies leading to a recommendation for standardizing the criteria for trimming trees near solar panels. At this point Parker stated her husband works with solar electricity on a national level.

Kay Schindl, who oversees the MadiSUN program on behalf of City Engineering, reported he works with a consultant on the installation of solar panels throughout the city. He believes a standard should be developed for those installations and the trimming of trees. That standard would then be returned to Habitat Stewardship for review and approval.

While Madison does not have a process, the State of Wisconsin has a state statute addressing solar panels, that is based on first come first served i.e. was the house or tree there first with regard to the installation of solar panels. Whatever was present first has the right to remain and this is part of the solar assessment prior to installation of the panels. The city is currently reviewing applications on a case by case basis. Management of street trees is an element imbedded in a larger decision when dealing with the development of solar regulations. It was suggested that the City Attorney and City Planning Department be consulted on how the city would handle these types of installations.

The end result of developing standards is not that it allows people to install solar panels and then expect to come before Habitat Stewardship for the removal of infringing city trees. A suggestion was made that there should be a process for allowing landowners to install solar that would also consider whether a tree could be moved/removed and replaced with a different species of tree or other form of vegetation totally at the homeowner's expense.

There are many factors to be identified regarding this issue in order to more toward developing standards, they include types and locations of solar panels, locations of trees, arboriculture standards for pruning trees. It was also suggested that this involves more than just Parks staff and should be brought to the attention of department heads for further discussion on dealing with this issue since it involves more than just street trees. A recommendation was made to research and gather information within the various city departments in order to address all of these components. This would include research on how other municipalities handle these issues. Once that information has been gathered, a summary could be prepared and then used to define standards. It is anticipated this report can be completed by the end of summer.

The motion was restated: A motion was made by Parker/Bassett to follow the written proposal of the City Forester to initiate discussions with city agencies leading to a recommendation for standardizing the criteria for trimming trees near solar panels. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Olin-Turville Conservation Efforts

Hefty provided a written update on the progress his crew has made with their conservation efforts at Turville Point Conservation Park and his proposal for future conservation management efforts.

VI. Next Meeting

Subcommittee members discussed the frequency of meetings. It was noted the subcommittee has met as issues arise. Meetings will be scheduled at least quarterly, depending on need, on the first Wednesday of the month, beginning August 4, November 3 and February 2, 2011 at 4:00 p.m.

A request was made to change the agenda to have Old Business before New Business.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Parker/Bassett the meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.