1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included, Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Nate Pasko, Marvin Puspoki, Madeline Seveland, and Elise Raarup. Staff members in attendance included Ann Davy, Jo Colleran, Darin Ellingson, Jennifer Garvey, Dave Johnson, Becca Sytsma and Perry Vetter.

Chair Raarup called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Evenrud moved and Kvam seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of March 4, 2015 as submitted. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

None

4. Business Items

A. Review of 2014/2015 Outdoor Ice Rink Operations

Chair Raarup called on Jennifer Garvey, Recreation Services Park Services Manager, to provide the staff report.

Garvey reported on the maintained ice rinks and warming houses located in Minnetonka at eight park locations that include Boulder Creek, Covington, Gro Tonka, McKenzie, Meadow, and Spring Hill; as well as the use of two Hopkins School District locations at Gatewood and Glen Lake Elementary Schools. Garvey mentioned that the city also has one unstaffed location at Knollway Park. Garvey noted that outdoor ice rinks with warming house attendants are scheduled to operate for a 10-week period from mid-December to mid-February, contingent upon weather conditions.

Garvey reviewed attendance figures for all locations during a three year period from 2013 – 2015. She noted that historically, Gatewood and Covington Park have had the lowest attendance with an average of 5 and 7 users per day respectively as compared to the heaviest used site being Meadow Park with an average of 22 users per day over the same period.

Garvey noted that staff routinely receives requests to extend the hours of use on Friday evenings to 9:45 p.m. (parks close at 10 p.m.); as well as to extend hours on Saturdays from 5 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. at Glen Lake School, Meadow Park, Gro-Tonka Park and McKenzie Park which are the most popular locations.
Garvey reported on some operational challenges that the outdoor ice rinks experience due to weather related conditions such as warm and cold temperatures, and snow removal.

Garvey also reviewed the challenges specific to Gatewood School, primarily utilizing a non-conforming utility trailer as a warming house. She explained that use of the trailer requires that all power, including the ice rink lights, be on each time the building is open for use. She also noted that the trailer does not meet the requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Garvey noted that it was staff's recommendation to eliminate the warming house trailer at Gatewood School for a two-year period to determine the rink’s future. She stated the ice rink would still be maintained for skating. Garvey also noted that this recommendation was based on low attendance and the lack of a permanent warming house.

Dave Johnson, Recreation Services Director informed the board that, if staff's recommendation was approved by the park board, a neighborhood meeting would be scheduled to receive resident input related to the loss of the warming house.

Garvey asked the park board for any comments, questions or feedback.

Kvam asked if restrooms were made available at the Gatewood location. Garvey indicated that they were not included in the trailer, but added that a portable restroom is provided on site. Kvam asked if the portable restroom would continue to be available if the trailer was removed for the two-year trial period. Garvey indicated that the porta potty would remain on site.

Raarup asked if Gatewood School ever used the ice rink for programming. Garvey indicated that the school did but they have not used the trailer.

Kvam asked if skating could still take place without an attendant, Garvey indicated it does happen at locations especially when warming houses are not open.

Kist asked if staff has received a large number of requests for extending the ice rink and warming house hours. Garvey indicated that the requests have been consistent over the past several years but not a large number.

Seveland asked if all supervising staff at the outdoor rinks were salaried. Garvey responded yes, and also mentioned the volunteer program that is in place and managed through Recreation Services. She noted that the purpose of this volunteer program was to increase access to the rinks without expanding the budget.
Evenrud voiced support for extending the hours, noting that Sundays are a popular night to skate.

Puspoki asked what budget savings might be experienced under the staff recommendation. Darin Ellingson, Parks, Trails and Streets Superintendent noted that the trailer cost is approximately $1,300 annually. Johnson estimated the cost to staff would save $2,000.

Hearing no further discussion, Evenrud moved and Puspoki seconded a motion to schedule a neighborhood meeting for later this year to review the park board’s recommendation to eliminate the trailer used as a warming house and continue to provide a maintained skating surface for skating. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.

Nelson moved and Puspoki seconded a motion to direct staff to extend skating hours at all warming house locations from 9:00 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. effective with the 2015-2016 skating season; and to extend Sunday hours to 9:45 p.m. at Glen Lake School, as well as at Meadow, McKenzie, and Gro Tonka parks. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.

B. Consideration of the 2016 – 2020 Capital Improvements Projects related to Parks, Trails and Open Space

Perry Vetter, Assistant City Manager, provided background for preparing park and trail improvements for the 2016 – 2020 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Vetter reviewed criteria used for prioritization, and the five different categories used for projects that include:

1. New trail construction
2. New park amenity construction
3. Existing trail rehabilitation
4. Existing park rehabilitation
5. Athletic field improvements owned by the city
Vetter then reviewed all project pages submitted by staff. Projects reviewed included:
1. Shady Oak Beach Improvements
2. Emerald Ash Program
3. Park and Open Space Purchase
4. Athletic Field Improvements (partially unfunded)
5. Burwell House Improvements
6. Upper Minnehaha Creek Corridor Funding
7. Park Investment Plan Funding
8. Oakhaven Park – Completion of Phase II
9. Trail Improvement Plan Funding
10. Unscheduled Trail Segment Construction (unfunded)
11. Trail Rehabilitation Funding
12. Miscellaneous Trail Connection Funding
13. Purgatory Park Improvements
14. Big Willow Park Enhancements (partially unfunded)
15. Ridgedale Area Park Improvements (unfunded)

Kvam asked if funding was included in the CIP for improvements to be made to the recently acquired Cullen-Smith property. Vetter responded that operating funds are in place for the first two phases which include removal of the existing house and work by Natural Resources to remove invasive species.

Puspoki asked if staff was planning on submitting a grant request through the Hennepin County Youth Sports Program for the addition of lights to the Civic Center fields. Johnson indicated that the plan is to submit a grant for the next funding cycle this fall.

Seveland asked for further explanation of the funding/ranking policy in place for trail improvements. Vetter noted that if the project is fully funded, priority is given to improvements to existing trails, followed by new infrastructure. He added that road improvement projects are often opportunities to advance scheduled trail improvements or additions. Seveland commented that she appreciated staff’s foresight to advance projects when opportunities exist.

Hearing no further questions or comments, Puspoki moved and Gabler seconded a motion to forward the proposed 2016 – 2020 Capital Improvement Program projects funded under the Park and Trail Improvement Fund to the city council for consideration. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.
5. Park Board Member Reports

Kvam thanked Public Works for their timely clean-up of broken glass on the trail system. She also reported on the pet waste clean-up day at Purgatory Park sponsored by the Natural Resources Division, noting that 134 pounds of waste were collected. Evenrud added that the day provided good publicity and educational opportunities.

Kist commented that the Natural Resources information recently included in the Minnetonka Memo was excellent.

6. Information Items

Colleran noted that the first pet waste campaign event will take place on March 14.

Ellingson reported that the 2014 outdoor skating rink season was extended a week before closing with the recent snow fall.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Johnson reviewed the park board’s 6-month schedule included in the meeting packet. The board discussed possible stops to be included on the May 13 park board tour.

8. Adjournment

Raarup adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.