1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included Nelson Evenrud, Chris Gabler, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Madeline Seveland, Marvin Puspoki, and Elise Raarup. Staff members in attendance included Jo Colleran, Jennifer Garvey, Todd Kasowski, Dave Johnson, Christine Petersen and Perry Vetter.

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

2. Approval of Minutes

Gabler moved and Evenrude seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of September 2, 2015. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

None

4. Business Items

A. Community Meeting on 2015-2016 outdoor ice rink operations

Jennifer Garvey, Park Services Manager, displayed a map that showed the locations of the eight ice rink locations in the city that included warming houses. She then provided information on three staff recommended changes to 2015/2016 outdoor ice rink operations that included:

1. Eliminating the Gatewood Elementary School warming house for a two-year trial period for the following reasons:
   - The lack of a permanent warming house facility and the need to rent a trailer annually.
   - The trailer lacks ADA compliance.
   - Utilities to the trailer are inefficient and not user friendly for the seasonal staff or Public Works.
   - Historically low attendance. The average daily attendance of five skaters over the years 2013 – 2015 ranks last among the eight ice rink locations with warming houses.

Garvey noted that the City’s Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) includes funding to partner with the Hopkins School District to upgrade youth athletic fields on District property, possibly at Gatewood Elementary. If so, she indicated that an option for building a permanent warming house facility could be reviewed at that time. In addition, Garvey noted that Glen Lake Elementary and Boulder Creek Park are both
1.6 miles from Gatewood and provide a total of three hockey rinks and a general skating area.

2. Extending ice rink operating hours by approximately 24 hours per week. Garvey noted that staff is recommending that closing times for all locations be extended on Fridays from 9 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.; Saturday times at Glen Lake Elementary School, Gro Tonka Park, Meadow Park and McKenzie Park be extended from 9 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. and that all locations be extended from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays.

3. Staff recommends that the park board consider eliminating the unsupervised general skating rink at Knollway Park. Garvey reported that while staff is not present at this site, use appears to be low and eliminating this site would allow for more attention to be provided at the other maintained locations. Because a meeting notice was not mailed directly to residents in close proximity to Knollway Park, Garvey recommended that the park board direct staff to develop a plan for collecting neighborhood input before developing a recommendation.

Garvey asked the park board members if they had any questions or comments prior to opening the public hearing.

Hearing no immediate questions from the board, Chair Raarup opened the floor to Public Comments.

Jason Ostby, 15101 Willowwood Road, was the only resident in attendance, informed the board that he has lived in his home for the past 11 years and uses the Gatewood Rink with his 6 year old son during the skating season 1-2 times each week. Ostby agreed that the rented trailer was not suitable for a warming house facility and reported that he seldom saw it in use. He also questioned how often the attendant was there and available to record accurate attendance records. Garvey informed Ostby that the attendant is assigned to Gatewood and Boulder Creek rinks and regularly goes back and forth. She agreed that it is possible that the attendant could miss some skaters, but the goal is for the attendant to make rounds to each rink every 30 minutes.

Ostby indicated that he was disappointed in having the Gatewood rink close in late January of 2015 due to poor weather. Todd Kasowski, Parks Maintenance Supervisor, indicated that this decision was made in February, about two weeks earlier than scheduled, so that his crews could focus on improving ice conditions at the rinks that attract the largest attendance. Kasowski noted that the lack of a paved surface added to the difficulty of trying to bring the Gatewood rink back to a quality skating surface.

Ostby indicated that his primary purpose for attending was to endorse that the Gatewood rink be maintained for the upcoming season. Garvey noted that staff’s
recommendation was to continue maintenance at the Gatewood site for a 2-year trial period to help determine a future course of action. She noted that benches would be placed at the rink for the public to put on and take off their skates; and added that staff still needs to work on a process for managing use of the hockey rink lights.

No public comments were taken regarding the staff recommended extension of warming house hours, or the elimination of the Knollway Park rink.

Raarup asked for park board member comments or questions.

Puspoki asked if rink attendance was counted hourly or by the day. Garvey responded that the attendants take an hourly count during the hours when warming houses are staffed.

Evenrud commented that he liked the staff recommendation to extend warming house hours and felt the additions scheduled for Fridays – Sundays were the appropriate days and times.

Raarup asked if the extended hours came as a result of public requests. Garvey indicated they did.

Gabler asked if the Minnetonka Youth Hockey Association used any of the outdoor hockey rinks. Garvey indicated that use by MYHA was minimal and reservations were required.

Hearing no further comments, Raarup closed the public hearing.

B. Consideration of potential changes to outdoor ice rink operations for the 2015-2016 season

Prior to the development of a motion, Raarup asked for park board member comments or questions related to the staff recommendation to eliminate the Gatewood warming house for a 2-year trial period.

Raarup asked if Gatewood School used the ice rink during the school day. Kasowski responded that the school does use the rink but has never requested use of the warming house. Raarup asked if the warming house at Gatewood has always consisted of a rented trailer. Kasowski indicated that it has.

As for the staff recommendation to collect resident input prior to eliminating the Knollway Park non-supervised rink, Johnson suggested that staff send out a survey to area residents to determine the amount of use the rink gets. He indicated that this information could be brought back to the park board at their December 2\textsuperscript{nd} meeting.
Hearing no further comments or questions, Gabler moved to eliminate the Gatewood warming house trailer for a two year period; extend the warming house hours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday as recommended by staff; and to direct staff to collect resident feedback on staff’s recommendation to eliminate an unsupervised general rink at Knollway Park and report back to the park board in December. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.

C. Update on pet waste reduction campaign

Jo Colleran, Natural Resources Division Manager, introduced Christine Petersen, Natural Resources Administrative Assistant who was the division’s designee to the Pet Waste Reduction Campaign as directed to staff by the park board.

Petersen noted that in April of 2014, Minnetonka resident Larry Wade addressed the park board and expressed his concerns related to unattended pet waste in the park system. Mr. Wade reported the he had collected about 200 pounds of pet waste in a two-week period while walking his dog in city parks. Petersen reviewed the following facts:
- On average, one dog produces 274 pounds of waste in a year.
- Pet waste does not disappear, it washes into local waterways and can sicken people and wildlife
- In urban areas, up to 95% of fecal matter in waterways comes from pets.
- Pet waste adds nutrients to the water promoting overgrowth of algae, feeding bacteria that consume oxygen needed by native plants and animals.

Petersen reported that the next step was for the Natural Resources Division to set goals and develop components of the campaign. Priorities developed include to:

- Increase stewardship of parks, trails, and waterways
- Encourage a community norm promoting the idea that good neighbors clean up after their pets
- Educate rather than regulate pet owners because staff believes that people want to do the right thing but do not always have the facts to inform their actions
- Address pet waste as an illicit discharge for state MS4 permit

Petersen explained an initial step was to develop a focus group to gather input from seniors who walk their dogs, however this event was cancelled due to low registration. She explained that questions were included in the annual community survey and that a Pet Waste Pick-Up Event was scheduled at Purgatory Park for
March 14, 2015. Petersen reported that during the 2-hour event, 134 pounds of pet waste was collected by approximately 50 park visitors. Media coverage of the event included the Minneapolis Star Tribune, two television stations and one radio station.

Petersen reported on the additional steps completed by staff that included:

- Development of communications materials including several in the Minnetonka Memo, postings on Clear Channel’s electronic billboards and postings on the city’s website
- Collaborating with Fortin Consulting which provides water resource education to local elementary schools to highlight pet waste as a form of non-point source pollution
  o Joined Fortin’s educator during her program for 4th & 5th grade classes at Clear Springs Elementary.
  o Introduced a service-learning project in which students produced art reminding park users to pick up after their pet
  o Collected student’s artwork and selected six pieces to advertise the Pat Waste Reduction Campaign on aluminum signs mounted at each park.
- Designed a button and informational cards (one for each of the six student designs) to promote the campaign
- Distributed sets of the cards to local pet-related businesses
- Contacted the four watershed districts in Minnetonka to inform them of the campaign
- The Center for Global Environment Environmental Education at Hamline University provided a traveling exhibit on non-point source pollution for the City’s open house event in October

Peterson closed by reviewing staff’s 2016 Pet Waste Reduction Campaign goals that included:

- Hold at least one focus group
- Schedule one or more pick-up events
- Continue all existing education and outreach efforts
- Reconnect with Fortin Consulting to broaden the campaign’s reach to local schools
- Involve watershed districts more closely
- Explore implementation of a park stewardship program
- Discuss using incentives to acknowledge residents who are picking up after their pets
Petersen asked for any park board input or questions.

Kvam commented that she felt using school aged children was a great idea.

Gabler asked if there have been reported problems on city athletic fields, noting that he has experienced problems with residents walking dogs on the fields at Bennett Park. Kasowski indicated that there are issues with dogs on athletic fields even though several of the fields are locked in an attempt to keep dogs off of the fields. Kasowski added that the city spends approximately $8,000 annually for Mutt Mitts and there are still problems with owners not using them. He noted that a contracted garbage collection service assists with stocking the Mutt Mitts along with about 12 volunteers. Kasowski noted that the Mutt Mitt bags staff purchases are biodegradable and disposed of by the County’s incinerator and not a landfill.

Kist asked if the 2016 clean-up event would take place in the spring once again. Petersen indicated that the plan was to hold it again in the spring. Kist asked if there were other potential locations other than the obvious ones (Lone Lake, Purgatory and Big Willow Parks). Colleran indicated that essentially every park and city trail would serve as an appropriate location.

Gabler noted that he felt a stewardship program in the area of pet waste pick up seems difficult because it places the volunteer in an enforcement role. Petersen agreed and reiterated that staff feels an awards program are more realistic. She noted that other communities who have similar programs in place report that education is more effective than regulation.

Evenrud commended staff for their efforts noting that the problem will never be 100% eliminated, however the approach staff has taken will go a long way in minimizing the problem.

Raarup concurred with other park board member and staff comments that the education piece is essential and suggested approaching the area middle schools and high schools as well as elementary schools. She suggested consideration of park signs that remind users that off-leash areas are a privilege. Raarup asked why dogs were an issue when it came to waste problems but other animals such as deer are not. Peterson noted that the problems from dogs are a result of sheer numbers as well as what dogs eat (meat verse vegetation that deer eat).

The park board thanked Petersen and Colleran for presentation of their work plan and status report.
4. Park Board Member Reports

Puspoki reported that he recently used the improved Saddlewood trail and was amazed with the end result of the improvements made. Kasowski reported that the section improved was 550 feet in length and 8 feet in width.

5. Information Items

Vetter reminded the park board that voting on the city’s annual photo contest would occur immediately after their meeting.

6. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Johnson reminded the board that the November meeting will be replaced with the annual volunteer recognition event; and added that the December meeting will include the annual joint meeting of the park board and city council.

7. Adjournment

Raarup gavelled adjournment of the meeting at 8:42 p.m.