1. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included Nelson Evenrud, Cindy Kist, Peggy Kvam, Marvin Puspoki, Madeline Seveland, and Elise Raarup. Staff members in attendance included Dave Johnson, Sara Woeste and Perry Vetter.

Chair Raarup called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

Gabler moved and Puspoki seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of April 8, 2015 as submitted. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.

3. Citizens Wishing to Discuss Items Not on the Agenda

None

4. Business Items

A. Status report on pickleball play at Meadow Park

Dave Johnson, Recreation Services Director, provided a brief background on pickleball enhancements the park board has made to date noting that in September of 2011, the board directed staff to add four pickleball courts to the two existing tennis courts at Meadow Park and provide designated times for the courts to be used for pickleball play. In addition, the board directed staff to add four pickleball courts to one of the two existing paved skating rinks. These courts were to be made available for pickleball use at all park hours. Johnson noted that both of these improvements were completed and ready for play in the summer of 2012.

Johnson then introduced David Allan, who serves as the coordinator of the Minnetonka pickleball program, and Deb Renshaw the past coordinator.

Allan stated that he has been a Minnetonka resident for over 50 years and has served the past two years as the pickleball coordinator. He noted that having a resident in this position is unusual in that most cities have a staff person assigned for such a position. Allan noted however that the process used in Minnetonka has worked well.

Allan reported that there are currently 93 active pickleball players in the Minnetonka Program. The group uses the courts at Meadow Park as described by Johnson, as well as courts provided at Williston Center in the winter months. He noted that other area cities including Chanhassen and Eden Prairie have recently added new state of the art courts within their park system. Allan commented that he felt the tennis courts at Meadow have aged and are deteriorating and in need of resurfacing. He made the
request that the park board consider removing the option for tennis and make the courts dedicated for pickleball play. In addition, Allan suggested that the board review the possibility of expanding the surface space to allow for 6 courts instead of the four that currently are provided. Lastly, Allan requested that new net standards be used on the four courts provided on the existing paved hockey rink, along with the addition of benches and other amenities that benefit the social side of the sport.

Raarup asked if staff had any idea of the amount of opposition the tennis community would have to this request. Johnson noted that there were only two residents who expressed concern back in 2011, adding that staff’s response was that Meadow Park was being designated as the pickleball location due to several factors including the fact that it is a community park, has adequate parking, and is not in close proximity to residential properties. Johnson noted that there are 11 other locations for tennis in city parks with a total of 24 courts that would not be impacted.

Evenrud followed up on Raarup’s question asking if there are any grass roots tennis organizations in the community that staff was aware of. Johnson indicated that he knew of none other than the city’s program at Williston.

Perry Vetter, Assistant City Manager, noted that the city has made an effort to make athletic fields dedicated for a specific sport (i.e. soccer, baseball, softball) and felt that the same logic applies for tennis and pickleball courts. He noted that varying times that are dedicated to each sport can make availability confusing to users.

Allan mentioned that the existing courts at Meadow Park were well constructed in the 1970’s but have started to structurally deteriorate and are in need of reconstruction so the timing is right to convert to pickleball.

Vetter noted that the Meadow Park courts are built in a low area adjacent to a wetland and thus require more attention than courts in other parks.

The board discussed the possibility of building the courts in another area of Meadow Park and Raarup asked staff if expanded pickleball would impact activities currently provided by the city. Sara Woeste, Programs and Special Events Manager, commented that she is considering moving the morning summer playground program at Meadow Park to an afternoon program to avoid the heavy pickleball use during the morning hours. She added that the two areas adjacent to the tennis/pickleball courts are used, one for informal play and the other in the winter as the general skating rink.

Hearing no further comments, Kvam moved and Evenrud seconded a motion to direct staff to explore the feasibility and develop cost estimates to expand the existing two tennis courts / four pickleball courts to a dedicated pickleball facility with six courts and report back to the park board with their findings. All voted “Yes”. Motion carried.
B. Preparation for the 2015 Volunteer Recognition event

Johnson introduced the item and reported that prior to 2014, the park board would annually recognize Eagle Scouts for projects they completed for the city of Minnetonka’s Natural Resources Division. This recognition would take place in conjunction with the annual joint meeting of the park board and city council. In 2015, the park board initiated a new process for recognizing all volunteers involved in supporting the areas of parks, recreation and natural resources. Johnson explained that the event included formal invitations, prepared certificates for each volunteer, recognition from the park board and Mayor, and a reception that followed the ceremony with friends and family members invited as well. As a result of the park board’s planning efforts, the event was conducted on November 5, 2014, following the annual joint meeting of the park board and city council. Invitations were sent to 785 volunteers who contributed over 9,700 hour of their time to the city in 2015. In all, 67 volunteers attended the event, with an additional 95 guests.

Johnson noted that volunteers recognized assisted in the areas of:

- Outdoor Ice Rink
- Youth Coaching
- Adopt-A-Park Sign
- Junior Playground Leaders
- Be A Buddy Youth Leaders
- Special Event Assistance
- Senior Services (special interest groups, special event assistance, special services, advisory board members and Landing Shop board and crafters
- Natural Resource volunteers
  - Water resources initiatives
  - Restoration
  - Event support
  - Community Engagement and Preparedness Inventory
  - Significant Contributions

Johnson reminded the board that each park board member contributed to the event by reading a summary of their assigned volunteer area and read the names of those volunteers in attendance.
Johnson noted that staff is suggesting that a similar recognition to last year’s event be held during the November 4, 2015 meeting even though the joint meeting with the city council has been moved to December 2, 2015. Staff is suggesting the meeting be held in the Council Chambers and broadcast live on the city’s cable channel.

Johnson asked for park board member questions or feedback. General comments from the board were supportive of the 2014 volunteer recognition program and the board did not make any changes in planning for the 2015 program.

5. Park Board Member Reports

Evenrud noted that he attended the Music in the Park event held on July 21, and reported the event was well attended and that the band was great.

Kvam provided an update on the Minnetonka Community Education’s recent Tour de Tonka event.

Raarup noted that she had recently attended Shady Oak Beach and was amazed at the amount of positive teen activity at the facility. She suggested that the park board consider a reduced cost to season pass holders who rent the water equipment such as kayaks and paddleboards. She also noted that there is a general demand for ping-pong and wondered if it could be incorporated into Shady Oak Beach or another park location that is staffed.

6. Information Items

No additional items were reported on.

7. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Johnson noted that a new request for a neighborhood park had been submitted to staff and would likely be on the September agenda.

8. Adjournment

Raarup adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.