



**MINUTES  
PARK BOARD MEETING  
December 11, 2023**

**Meeting Location**

Long Lake City Hall Conference Room, 450 Virginia Avenue, Long Lake, MN 55356

**Present:** Chair: Donny Chillstrom; Members: Suzanne Caswell, Erika Leachman, and Thomas Joyce; Public Works Director: Sean Diercks

**Absent:** Member: Tony David (without prior notice)

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Secretary Officer Joyce at 5:34 pm.

**Approve Agenda**

*A motion was made by Leachman, seconded by Caswell, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all.*

**Consent Agenda**

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- a. Approve Minutes of October 16, 2023 Park Board Meeting

*A motion was made by Caswell, seconded by Leachman, to approve the October 16, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Ayes: all.*

**Regular Business**

**a. Review of December 8 Holiday Tree Lighting Event**

All in all, the Board agreed the event was very successful. There were around 100 to 130 people in attendance including a large contingent from Zvago, the new co-op in town, as well as new neighbors and folks that came last year. People were excited to attend on account of the warm weather.

Park Board Member Caswell mentioned that it would be helpful to keep fluidity across the sponsors and record the planned contacts and contact information for next year. With regards to treats, Caswell suggested that the Park Board should try to get more candy canes, cookies, and more North Mallow bags. She also suggested that the Park Board should ask Ace to see if they may be willing to provide more treats for folks.

Park Board Member Leachman mentioned that we ran out of hot chocolate and ended up calling Caribou to request more hot chocolate and coffee. Caribou provided this free of charge. Attendees ended up consuming 10 canteens with the large influx of people.

The Board agreed that having the Long Lake Fire Department on site with a fire truck and the Wayzata Police Department present made the event extra special. The Fire Department distributed hats and the Wayzata Police Department brought foam glow sticks to share with the kids.

With regard to the holiday tree, Public Works Director Diercks is looking at another tree that could be transplanted from another place in Holbrook Park. The reason the last one died is because the hole wasn't dug deep enough. When Public Works transplants the new tree, they will dig deeper and ensure that it is placed very deep and is well-watered and will make an effort to keep the salt off of it.

There were side games like cornhole that were available. While the Park Board doesn't have any identifying hats, the Park Board used large Long Lake stickers to identify themselves.

The Park Board unanimously agreed to host the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony next year.

**b. Discuss Researching Possible Grant Opportunities for Dexter Park Playground Equipment Replacement**

As the Park Board entered this discussion, it became clear that the opportunity to apply for and receive grants was not exclusive to Dexter Park. In addition, the Board sees a large opportunity for improvement in relation to engaging with grants and leveraging these opportunities to fund projects that would otherwise be difficult to accomplish with City funds. It is important to note that the Park Board cannot solicit funds for projects.

Chair Chillstrom mentioned that maintenance on the trails comes out of the City's general fund. There has been a desire to connect Holbrook Park to Willow Drive via a paved trail. Board Member Leachman pointed out that there are several grant programs that could be pursued to fulfill trail requirements and desires like this. For example, the "Local Trail Connections Program" from the MnDNR is a great funding opportunity that comes up in March, and can make applicants eligible for up to \$250,000 in grant funding. Other examples include the "Federal Recreational Trail Program" from the federal government. That's coming up in February, as well as the "State Park Road Account Program." Grants for everything from park equipment to roads to garbage cans exist and can be applied for as needed.

Board Member Leachman explained that the important piece to highlight when it comes to applying for grants is that the application must be very crisp/descriptive regarding ownership and must demonstrate a detailed plan for execution if the grant were accepted. Leachman has a background in writing grants and therefore has an understanding of what is required and what makes applications successful.

After much deliberation, the Park Board determined that a large focus for 2024 will be the pursuit of grants to bolster local community resources as a response to the large influx of population that the community will see in the coming year (e.g. Zvago, The Stax, etc.). To do this, Park Board members will select one or two grants that they will be responsible for pursuing in 2024. Initial steps will include: a) investigating grant requirements and applicability as related to Long Lake's needs; and b) reporting back on any limitations or gaps.

After speaking about grants for several minutes, Board member Leachman volunteered to drive the first grant application as a way to set the example for other Park Board members. She is going to go through the process and report back in February. During the February meeting, Board members will take responsibility for one or two grants where they have expressed interest.

**c. Recommendation to City Council Regarding Reappointment of Park Board Member Donny Chillstrom**

Park Board Member Donny Chillstrom expressed interest in reappointment to the Park Board. The Park Board recommends his reinstatement as a member to serve another term.

**d. Establish Next Park Board Meeting Date, Location and Agenda Business**

Park Board members agreed to reconvene at the same location (City Hall Conference Room, 450 Virginia Avenue, Long Lake, MN 55356) on February 5, 2024 at 5:30 pm. Agenda would include new position appointments within the Park Board, as well as an update on Park Board Member Leachman's progress on the grant application process.

**Adjourn**

Hearing no objection, Secretary Officer adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas Joyce, Park Board Secretary Officer

DRAFT