

**CITY OF EAGLE LAKE
PARK BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021**

Call to Order: Chairperson Larson called meeting to order at 6:48 a.m.

Members Present: Bridget Larson, Beth Rohrich, Ryan Short, Jeremy Horkey, Tim Auringer, Andrew Hartman

Not Present: Joan Back and Ryan Wersal

Treasurer's Report

- Treasurer's report was presented.

Business

1. Guest Speaker: Vien Nguyen, Community Forestry Member for Eagle Lake. Vien will be providing an update on buckthorn removal and an ongoing maintenance plan for Lake Eagle Park. She will also be available as a resource for landscaping and tree suggestions at the new Eagle Heights Park.
 - Vien Nguyen is with AmeriCorps and is helping the city with tree inventory for emerald bore, tree mapping and working with Public Works to address buckthorn.
 - Vien Nguyen reported that most of the ash trees in Lake Eagle Park are in the playground area.
 - Buckthorn is an issue on the trail the Eagle Scout recently developed and it is spreading and encroaching into the main portion of park. Ms. Nguyen has developed a three-year removal plan for the buckthorn which includes treating the buckthorn with herbicide in the spring and fall once they are cut down. Buckthorn is an invasive species and can kill birds if they eat the berries. The location of the buckthorn along the creek is worrisome because it could result in creek erosion.
 - She will be working with the Public Works department this month and anticipates removal to begin in March. Buckthorn has started to choke out other vegetation in the park.
 - Mayor Auringer asked if there will be a plan to replace trees once the buckthorn is removed? The replacement plan will be implemented once all buckthorn plants are visibly gone which will take about one and a half years. He also indicated that buckthorn is a storm water issue for the city.
 - Replacement tree options were presented with both pros and cons. They included: Autumn blaze which is a variety of a maple tree. Deep red color, most planted maple tree in MN. Short life span. Issue is that maple trees are on list of endangered trees. Trees could be at risk within 20-25 years. Prone to bark sunburn. Honey Locus trees have a 120-year life span and is good for wildlife. The University of Minnesota is a big fan of this one. The cost of a honey locus tree is \$30 for a sapling and a 5-6 feet tree would cost \$120-\$140 per tree. They grow 1-2 feet per year. The Kentucky Poppy Tree is a native to MN. It is a low maintenance tree and has a life span of 150 years.
 - Ms. Nguyen will work on a tree education program for the public and is planning a spring walk in the park.
2. Next Steps for Phase II Planning and Fundraising
 - Grading work for the Eagle Heights park will be scheduled for this spring. The 2021 park board budget was discussed as well as discussion as to how to proceed with completing phase one and when to begin work on phase two.
 - The installer of the playground equipment will install the equipment once the grading is completed, hopefully in mid-April. Installation of all equipment will take four days. Base material for the playground was discussed. Wood chips were the material of choice upon learning that rubber chips are classified as hazardous. The city could check with Mankato to see if we can join in on their order for a volume pricing of wood chips. The city will be responsible for the laying the base material.
 - Brainstorming on phase II should begin now to allow for design options of the pavilion. Fundraising will need to continue.

- Public education of future plans will be important.
 - A request for proposals could be obtained for design proposals. This could be a yearlong process with the need for Council consideration in the budgeting process.
3. Review Note from Park Board Member Ryan Wersal about Availability Changes
 - Due to work demands Mr. Wersal is not available to attend Park Board meetings. His term ends December 2021. He is fine with either staying on the Board or have the City fill his position. Discussion included having the City advertise for an open position and also check with Mr. Wersal to see if he would be interested in being available in an informal way to share his expertise in ponds issues.
 4. Brief Rundown of Upcoming Outdoor February 20th Winter Activities Event at Lake Eagle Park
 - Event has been rescheduled for February 20th and Community Education is working on this event.
 5. Ice Rink and Sledding Hill Notes
 - LED lights have been approved for ice rink and will be installed soon.
 - Two sledding hill flood lights will be installed on pole by Xcel.
 - Consensus was to keep the warming house closed the rest of this season due to Covid-19.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 a.m.