



**Parks Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 27, 2023
6:00 PM**

Due to the Covid-19 Virus the September 27, 2023 Parks Committee meeting will be held remotely using the Zoom video conference application and in person at the address below:

**In Person Meeting Location:
Afton Town Square Park
3418 St. Croix Trail South
Afton, MN 55001**

Instructions for Participating in the Meeting Remotely Via Zoom

Options for Joining the Zoom Meeting:

- **RECOMMENDED:** Use your computer, tablet or smart phone to join the meeting by logging on to
- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82986425711?pwd=ZGRwcXh4cGEraXhnQnNjZXF0R29JZz09>
Meeting ID: (829 8642 5711)
Passcode: 537857
Dial-in Number (to call in to the meeting)
+1 312 626 6799. When prompted, enter Meeting ID: 829 8642 5711

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. Minutes of the August 23, 2023 Parks Committee Meeting
- 5. Business**
 - A. Park Dedication Fund Balance
 - B. Tree Donation
 - C. Levee Plantings
 - D. Town Square Park
- 6. Adjournment**

City of Afton Parks Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 26, 2023

6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Grant Jensen, chair; Karen Weiss, Bob Dickie, Lori Swanson, Nicholas Livingston, liaisons, Annie Perkins, and Ken Johnson

Call to Order

Chairman Jensen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Weiss approved and Mr. Livingston seconded the approval of July minutes.

Items of Business:

A. Parks Dedication Fund

Chair Jensen presented the financials consisting of the Parks Dedication Fund balance currently at \$311,550. Mr. Jensen will ask the city office about a ledger of funds.

B. Tree Donation

Mr. Livingston suggested that a northern species redbud tree (*Cercis Canadensis* "Northern strain") be planted to the northwest of the bandstand. It would stand out nicely there with some spring color, and we know that's a location that will not interfere with future park plans. All were in favor, and Mr. Johnson will take the idea to the folks who intend to donate the tree.

C. Levee Plantings

Chair Jensen reported that the Army Corps of Engineers had confirmed with Elissa at WCD that the levee plantings would not affect the certification of the levee. In fact, the corps was interested in the project, as they intend to do more plantings like this in the future and want to watch our progression. The grant for the funds has not yet been completed. A reminder was made that the corps' certification needs to be in writing.

D. Town Square Park

- The committee reviewed Mr. Livingston's preliminary proposal for trees and shrubs to replace fencing.
- The committee decided to meet at the park next meeting to create a plan for the northeast corner. We will request approval from the city council to complete work on this corner as a pilot project for other parts of the park.

- We will discuss whether to keep and/or move the T-Ball field (led by Ms. Weiss), landscaping to replace the fencing (led by Mr. Livingston), and the possibility of a more attractive park entrance.

E. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting by Mr. Livingston. Mr. Dickie seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.



Wednesday, June 28th 2023

BEAUTIFYING THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF AFTON TOWN SQUARE PARK

Following ongoing discussions regarding the unsightly and unnecessary chain-link backstop behind the miniature T-Ball diamond at Afton Town Square Park, Horta Culture was asked by the Parks Committee to frame a basic proposal of hedging plants with estimates to consider replacing the chain-link fencing behind the T-Ball pitch with native perennial hedging. This would not only improve the curb appeal of Minnesota's oldest town square park, but provide varied seasonal interest, wildlife habitat, potential flowers for our native pollinators, and berries for our native bird populations. One thought initially to help sightlines and accessibility into the park for events and for the passersby in general was to just install hedging right behind home plate. Some concerns were raised, however, that we would still want to have as much of a barrier as the existing fence, to prevent children from chasing balls into the street. This might still be up for discussion as the park is not currently surrounded by fence at all sides but to get the process started without any further delays, we propose hedging the length of the current fencing.

HEDGE PLANT SUGGESTION

Our first choice would be the deciduous Arrowwood Viburnum for its deeply serrated green color in the growing season which shifts to oranges and burgundy in the fall. Left to bud in Autumn, it could bear white flowers come springtime and blue berried fruit in summer – more if tended as a shaggy hedge but this variety can also be shaped into a more formal border as a clipped topiary hedge which would reduce flowering and fruiting. The plants grow 20 to 50 years, and could grow 8-12' tall by 6-10' wide left to their natural habit but take to hedging nicely and could be hedged to 4' tall x 4-6' wide for a crisp, trim look.

Benefits include its natural beauty, seasonal interest, habitat, native benefits, attracts local pollinators such as butterflies and native bees if allowed to flower, can tolerate drought and flooding, is very winter hardy, has few pest issues and is deer resistant. Other options include white or purple lilac for same cost and similar maintenance. Maintenance required involves planting with compost and Espoma Bio Tone, mulching, watering the first year to get them established, weeding, trimming, fertilizing whenever hedge is trimmed – we would recommend a well-balanced organic option - Espoma Plant Tone or Bio Tone, and annual raking.

REPLACING THE T-BALL BACKSTOP

To replace the extant 135' of fence with trimmed hedge, at 4' spacing, the T-Ball backstop would require 34 plants meaning the total costs for plants would range depending on pot sizes: X 2 gal = \$748 | X 3 gal = \$986 | X 5 gal = \$1,088

TOTAL COSTS OF PLANTS, DRESSINGS, AND NEXT STEPS

Depending on pot sizes, the plant costs (pretax) for the projects range from \$748 to \$1,088. If planting were a community effort, we could plant with the help of volunteers. For the best results we suggest planting each plant with a couple shovels of compost (~\$50), fertilizing with Espoma Bio Tone (~\$110 - \$220), and dressing with hardwood mulch (\$300) – adding another \$460 - \$570 bringing the total estimated range depending on pot sizes to \$1,208 - \$1,658 (plus tax) for the plants, compost, fertilizer, and mulch – averaging to roughly \$39 to \$53 per plant, dressings included. Volunteerism might cover it but if Horta Culture was hired to plant and tend the hedges, the current rate is \$60 an hour and planting might take 12 hours and biannual maintenance might take another 8 hours for trimming and cleanup.



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