

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings  
Of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission  
Wednesday, August 9, 2017**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Eiden called the June 14, 2017 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Chair Kevin Sethre; Vice Chair Kathryn Bauer; Commissioners: Al Eiden, Patrick Farley, Deb Tix, Mark Freer, Joe Boehmer, and Mary Gerhardt  
Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson

**Absent:** Commissioner Willie Krech  
Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek

**3. PRESENTATIONS:**

None

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our web site at:**  
[www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org)

**B. Find us on Facebook at Inver Grove Heights Parks & Recreation**

**C. Follow us on Twitter at @IGHParks**

**D. Next Meeting: September 13, 2017. Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

**5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

**A. Approval of Agenda**

**B. Approval of Minutes of June 14, 2017**

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda by Commissioner Eiden, seconded by Vice Chair Bauer.**

**Aye: 8**

**Nay: 0      Motion carried.**

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**8. REGULAR AGENDA:**

**A. Consider Disposing of River Heights Park**

Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson wanted to clarify that the Commission is going to be discussing the possibility of disposing of River Heights Park. It's not to build a Fire Station at River Heights Park. It would be for residential purposes only; the Fire Station isn't a part of this item. This conversation that you are going to have with this Commission would have happened with or without a Fire Station. The Commission and the City Council wanted to explore the possibility of selling three different parks in the Community, one being River Heights Park. Eventually we would have had this conversation, regardless of whether the Fire Station started this process. The two are not connected.

The Commission is being asked to consider disposing of River Heights Park which is located at 8087 Inver Grove Trail. The parcel is 7.5 acres in size and the Commission is asked to consider having it split into three 2 ½ acre residential lots which would be similar in size to those surrounding the park. In 2009 the City of Inver Grove Heights disposed of Cameron Park which is located at 6501 Concord Boulevard. That parcel was 1.3 acres in size and the City disposed of that park at that time so we would be able to relocate a business, Cameron Liquor Store, to the park site due to the reconstruction of Concord Boulevard. Currently the City has 28 parks in our park system with about 608 acres of parkland, not including the 235 acres that is Inver Wood Golf Course. The southern portion of the City is guided as large lot development with minimum lot sizes of 2.5 acres. That is what is found around River Heights Park. We do have six parks in the southern portion Broadmoor, Marcott Woods, Marianna Ranch, Rich Valley, River Heights, and Southern Lakes. In the Fall of 2015 the Commission worked on a plan to right size the park system and wanted to make sure we were serving the three different parts of the Community. The Urban part, the Northwest area, and the Rural area, based on their density and development patterns. One of the concepts was the notion of potentially disposing of three parks: Marcott Woods, River Heights Park, and Dehrer Park. This evening we are at the juncture to have a conversation with the River Heights Park neighborhood to see if there is support or not for the thought of potentially selling all or portions of River Heights Park. The City Council was interested in the concept, so we investigated. We find no legal reason why the park couldn't be disposed of. Before the City would considering selling, or changing the use of the park in any way shape or form, we would want to hear from the neighborhood. We sent out more than 200 notices, which is far more than we are used to sending out as we wanted to get healthy conversation from the Community that surrounds the park regarding the future of that park. On Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup> we held an informational meeting, 12 people showed up. People in attendance liked the park the way it is. They didn't believe we should change the use. They would hate to see it sold for residential development and they believed the City has other opportunities for land acquisition for a Fire Department. Within your packets you have all of the emails that he has received, and all information from the public about the topic. Now the Commission will open the item up for public comment.

Chair Sethre wanted to state in order to respect everyone's time, if you have a point that has already been offered by a previous speaker, please consider not coming up to speak. We want to respect your time and everybody's else's time here. Please state your name and address when you come up to the podium. Please try to limit your time to three minutes per comment. If someone wishes to come up please do so.

Irene Jones, River Corridor Program Director with Friends of the Mississippi River, located at 101 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street in St. Paul. Friends of the Mississippi River, (FMR), is a Twin Cities based non-profit organization that works with local citizens and other stakeholders to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets of the Mississippi River and its watershed in our region. We were founded in 1993 to bring community and citizen voice and perspective to the newly established Mississippi National River and Recreational Area. It's National Park that runs right through your City. The only National Park in America that is focused on protecting and celebrating the Mississippi River itself. We have been a promoter of preserving and restoring public open space within our Park for almost 25 years. They are opposed to the sale of River Heights. FMR has been in partnership with the City of Inver Grove Heights for over a decade. We appreciate the good work of the City and this Commission to expand and enhance public parkland along the Mississippi River. We have worked with the City and volunteers in regards to Heritage Village Park and the Swing Bridge in the past. We look forward to continuing this partnership going into the future. We only take an issue with this one decision before you. We respectfully request that you oppose the proposed sale of all or part of River Heights Park. They have no opposition to the Cities need for a new Fire Station or increased revenue, they strongly believe that selling the land for the publics needs is short

sighted and not in the best interest of our National Park or of the residents of Inver Grove Heights. Although this is a small park, it is one of many key park pieces that make our National Park great. Natural open space at this location is contributing to the health and beauty of the National Park for both people and wildlife. The park not only provides residents with a trail through a natural area, it also contributes to the Mississippi River Flyway, which is an internationally migratory corridor used by birds and other wildlife. The proximity of this park to Pine Bend Bluffs is also significant because of its high value. Pine Bend bluffs is the most high-quality area of the developed Twin Cities. The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, also known as MNRA, was established in 1988 to work in partnership with local communities to protect the Natural resources within the Corridor. Since MNRA owns very little land within the corridor, they rely on local communities and regional park agencies to provide parks, trails, and other open space within the corridor to help realize the goals of the park and corridor. Inver Grove Heights has been a good steward of the river and our National Park, we strongly encourage you to recognize the significance of River Heights Park in that context and protect it from development. In doing that you would reinforce your policy from your Comprehensive Park Plan and Development Guide as well as honoring the concerns of local residents who deeply value this park and want to enjoy this special place well into the future.

Ms. Jones stated she also submitted a letter along with her contact information if you want to call or email with questions.

Director Carlson stated that a copy of that letter was emailed to the Commission this morning.

Karen and Al Meyman, 8915 River Heights Way.

Mr. Meyman stated he had an updated petition to handout to the Commission.

Ms. Meyman passed it out to the Commissioner's.

Director Carlson let the Commission know that they did receive a copy of the petition on July 25<sup>th</sup>. What you are receiving now is probably an updated petition with more signatures.

Mr. Meyman commented there are quite a few more signatures on there.

He stated the petition statement is as follows: River Heights Park is a dedicated green space when this area was developed and was part of the character of River Heights Way. We do not want any part of our neighborhood park to be sold. He would also like to read the cover letter. Included in the attached petition are 140 signatures representing 95 households that completely surround River Heights Park. This is the voice of our neighborhood. We implore you to listen to our unified voice to leave our park unchanged.

Tom Wilkins, 8959 Inver Grove Trail is asking to save the neighborhood park. To reject staff's recommendation and recommend City Council save the park in its entirety and remove it from the sell list. The sell list was approved by the City Council back in August of 2016. Councilmember Piekarski Krech told him that the sell list was created in an open manner with possibility of public input. Looking through the minutes of the Park and Recreation meetings, there are holes where we have minutes missing. In those minutes, he finds no mention of River Heights Park. Back in June of 2016 he found a comment from Chair Eiden that he had been approached by the City asking if this Commission would be willing to sell three parks. Those parks were not named. After that there was no further discussion, no motions made. Two months after that the City Council approves a working list of 125 potential properties in the City that could be sold. He made two trips to City Hall to try to get copies of the sell list. He did get a copy, there were only 10 – 12 properties on the list that had been approved for sale. One is Inver Grove Heights Park, River Heights Park, and Marcott Park. He is sure other residents have not been informed that those parks are on the sell list. He looked through the minutes and found a handout prepared by staff to benefit incoming Councilwoman Kara Perry, to get her up to speed on Parks and Recreation issues. In that handout, there was no mention that there were parks on the sell list. He continued to look and found no mention of River Heights Park at all. If you have discussed this, it was not at your regular meetings. It could have been in work sessions, with City Council, or City Staff. In the April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 minutes, he saw Commissioner Bauer commented on how informational and helpful the tour of the parks has been to see what is happening with the different parks. He would like to ask if you visited River Heights, Marcott, or Dehrer? He doesn't know how this

decision came about. He doesn't know if this Commission had any input, as he can't find it in the minutes. He came here tonight prepared to ask this group to separate the park sale issue from the Fire Station acquisition. He is glad they have done that. He would like to recommend to the City Council to keep River Heights Park as a whole and remove it from the sell list. The park is appreciated and used by the neighborhood and the fact that it lies alone in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area should have been enough to keep it off the sell list.

Director Carlson wanted to comment on some of the things that Mr. Wilkins had spoken of. If you go to the November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015 City Council Work Study Session that is when the topic of the three parks was discussed between the Commission and the City Council. He can provide a copy of the minutes if he would like them, he would be happy to pass those on.

Mark Hatfield, 8810 River Heights Way stated everyone who is close to the park loves it. It's an important part of the flyway. One of the things you can do to make the rest of the Community love the park the way they do would be to make a prairie restoration on the park as there is a clear absence of pollinator friendly plants around their area. That is what they need to migrate. He thinks everyone that is pro park would be in favor of a prairie restoration. It would be a big asset for the whole City to enjoy. You can do butterfly releases that the schools can participate in as well. It's a huge asset that you cannot replace if you eliminate it.

Steve Cook, 9250 Inver Grove Trail stated he and his wife moved to Inver Grove Heights about four years ago. The park system has really impressed them. He has enjoyed a lot of the developed parks. He discovered this undeveloped park. We know that parks are often thought of as areas of where there is a trail and picnic tables for people to use. But here, people can walk in if they want to, there are bluebird houses, and wildflowers. They have really enjoyed the site and enjoy the park that way. We have seen it as a jewel and was surprised it could be eliminated. When he thinks of three lots coming out of it, it doesn't seem like a great trade. He understands that development is important, and that others want to move here. He appreciates that staff looks at how we attract businesses and how we grow as residential, but also how we protect resources that are part of Inver Grove Heights, otherwise they may be gone someday. Now is our chance before all of that is gone, especially when this has been a designated area. He asked that if down the road do we want to be known as a City that is really protecting some of our natural beauty from development at the cost of development? We should be saving it for our own to appreciate as we go forward as well as for future generations.

Carol Nankivel, 8875 Inver Grove Trail, is a close neighbor to the park. She wanted to talk from the perspective of a long-term citizen of Inver Grove Heights. The City needs money, parks need money, we have unused properties, etc. We have a short-term need, lets address it through this park situation. We understand that dilemma, when the furnace goes out, we tap retirement, or for a car, go through kid's savings, we live through that dynamic all the time. She found a map of Inver Grove Heights from the early 1960's and she thought of how those people on the City Council knew what we are going to need. The highlights of Inver Grove in 1960's were that we had little Detroit, which was three car dealerships, a gas station, Farmers Union, a trailer park, and a nice home. That's what we had to show for Inver Grove Heights. The map doesn't extend to the south. The City Council said we will be different, it won't always be farms, fields, and trees, that we needed to come up with money for the parks. We don't have as many parks as other Communities. You are in the position of understanding the needs today, but 50 years ago, people were smart enough to set aside parks, and 50 years from now someone will thank you for keeping River Heights the way it is. We may need it. She hopes you will reject this notion to sell our existing parkland.

Harold Parsons, 8840 River Heights Way, stated the back of their lot abuts the park. He recommends that you reject the sale of the park. There is wide support for the park from the neighborhood, it's used by residents in the area a lot. People are walking the park with their dogs all the time. Most importantly, it's used by wildlife. There is a lot of that there. It's full of deer. When he moved there in 1984, you would rarely see a fox there. Now we have a lot of that there, and part of that is because they have habitat now. It's great to see this as a part of our

National Park Heritage and to keep that available for the City and the other residents around Minnesota. He's asking that you reject this.

Kerry Hofner, 8715 River Heights Way. He has lived there for 30 years. He built there, saw the map of lots and plats, and it said park. He's never really complained about paying taxes, for supporting other parks, the Golf Course, supporting when the City Council spent money on the Swing Bridge project, etc. Those projects are more visible for Inver Grove Heights. This is why he views this as our Community park. You want to split this up, take it away, put homes there, so it's a money issue. Where would the money go for this? Would it go 100% to the parks, or to the Fire Station? He did speak to the Fire Chief, it was a great conversation. There isn't a park sign, so someone driving by can't see there is a park there. He requests to say no, investigate other ways to create funding. When you know there is going to be new development, or you know you need a Fire Station, that should be a part of long range planning so that you know how you are going to come up with those dollars.

Mr. Wilkins, 8959 Inver Grove Trail, additionally commented that this meeting should have been held over a year ago, before the park was placed on the sell list. You should have sought out neighborhood input at that time.

Mike McDonald, 8304 Delaney Circle, commented his folks have a home at 8875 River Heights Way. He used to live up by Skyview Park, when he drives by that, unless there were ballgames and things going on, it was a vast wasteland. Every time he goes to his parent's home, he sees someone walking through. There is a car parked nearby, there is a lot more people that use the park the way that it is then people realize. It is a nice park for that. You can enjoy the peace and wildlife that is around.

Chair Sethre stated this isn't an issue about maintenance or dollars spent maintaining it.

Mr. Hofner, 8715 River Heights Way, mentioned that you say it isn't about maintenance, but the park department doesn't have as much money as it would like to have to update parks. To him this is about money. If there was enough money, why would you want to sell it.

Chair Sethre responded that they spend a lot of manpower and resources out there. It's not that we are trying to eliminate a significant item from our budget, it is more a reprioritization of City property.

Mr. Hofner felt that you would technically like the money that the sale of these lots would generate to do other things with.

Commissioner Tix stated they don't know where the money would be going. They can make a recommendation based on what would happen and on what we decide to do. But they don't know where that money would go.

Mr. Hofner responded that under that indication, then you should all vote no. You would be selling something that the neighbors all want, and money isn't the issue. Then it should be the City Council that decides on some method for creating funds.

Commissioner Farley commented he didn't think money is the issue. Public safety is the issue. We have a conflict in that a Fire Station protects lives, property value, etc., and a park. Both are worthy things. In this frame of reference when we speak about the Fire Station needing land and how it's positioned, etc., we have not been a part of that conversation. These are the specs that that department has come up with what they need. They found that elsewhere. That person has found something else in exchange for that land and this is the option. There are two issues here. The sale of the park, and the installation of the Fire Department. It's not about the money, that is a byproduct, that's not the main motivation.

Mr. Hofner commented that your Commission is about the parks. The Fire Station is a separate issue, but someone wants that property. Should their community park be the people who finance the land for the Fire Station? That is the City of Inver Grove's issue, not our communities issue.

Mr. Meyman, 8915 River Heights Way, stated the Fire Station keeps coming back into this. It is part of this even though it has been said it's not. The process to get us to this point was done in the wrong order and inappropriate. The City put our park on the list to be sold without consulting the neighborhood that would be directly affected by that sale. The City floated the idea of using one of the lots in the park as an incentive of another lot in the City that is wanted by the Fire Station. The neighborhood still wasn't aware of this. The seller of the lot for the Fire Station said he wanted that park land on Inver Grove Trail. Another thing people should know is that the lot wanted for the Fire Station has a brother on the Parks Commission, Mr. Krech, and also a relative on the City Council. The City comes to our Community for input on this. This should have done if they were considering selling parkland. The City should contact all people that are affected by their decision to sell their park. If the neighborhood doesn't want that park anymore, the property should be rezoned. The land can be sold because it is zoned to be sold. The Fire Station should not even be in the conversation if the correct process had been followed. By following the bad process, the Community input has been obtained last instead of first as it should be. Under the table deals done without public knowledge are just plain wrong.

Chair Sethre stated has heard comments about under the tables deals. He is not privy to all discussions, some of these things take a while to ruminate. A letter was sent out to everyone last month offering a public meeting and then this meeting. He doesn't quite follow the under the table activity or the suggestion. Sometimes these things get proposed, they go through due process and then they show up in the light of day. He doesn't appreciate accusations to this group that is was done under the table in any fashion.

Mr. Parsons stated this was a decision about whether this was a worthy park to keep, whether it is being utilized enough to have it continue to be a park, or do we sell it to have three homes and do away with the park. The idea that the park is being traded, or sold to another department for them to build a Fire Station. This feels more like why are we even here, is anything we say going to make a difference? The Fire Chief is stating they want the land that is being proposed, they want part of this park, it seems like a deal. It doesn't feel like an under the table deal so much that we have been left out if it. We felt like our input would make some difference, maybe minds might be still open to thinking of this park as a valuable piece of the park system to have in Inver Grove. He doesn't feel that is the case anymore as this feels like a done deal. He hopes you will reconsider that. There has to be another way that a Fire Station could have other possibilities. We can't go back and make this park again. We can't make these kinds of parks going forward.

Director Carlson stated in his opening remarks that he reminded the Commission and the audience that this isn't about the Fire Station. As he stated earlier, the Parks Commission and the City Council put parks on a list and said let's decide whether this adds value to the Community or not. The City Council said, let's explore that, so we invited the neighborhood in to get your reaction to that concept. This is your chance to say we value our park. If it gets to the City Council, you can show up to that meeting and say similar things. Someone may be thinking about purchasing those lots, but this has nothing to do with a Fire Station. This has to do with the fact of trying to find out if this park has value to the Community, is it valuable to the neighborhood, does this Commission think it's valuable, does the City Council think it's valuable, and if they do they will keep it, if they don't they won't. This has nothing to do with the Fire Station. It just so happens that someone who may buy a lot if the City doesn't value it as a park, is a part of the transaction of the City trying to create or build a Fire Station. They are not connected. It has everything to do with knowing if the park is valuable to the City or not. It's for the City Council to decide on that fact. You are giving your input to the Commission who will then give a recommendation to the City Council. It really has nothing to do with the Fire Department. The Fire Station issue forced us to have this conversation.

Mr. Wilkins appreciated Director Carlson's comments and appreciated the fact that at the beginning of the meeting it was separate issues. Since Commissioner Farley has brought it up, nobody here is against the construction of a new Fire Station or a need for one. He came here this evening hoping that we could separate the two issues. In a conversation with Mayor Tourville a few weeks back he stated the City had the funds outright to purchase the desired Fire Station site. He said that they would sell bonds for the construction and equipping for the station. The sale of this park was not a done deal. He spoke to Councilman Hark, he assured him that the sell

list was created months before the owners of the proposed Fire Station site were ever contacted. He also told him that it was not a done deal.

Chair Sethre stated this is not a done deal. He is hoping nobody has the impression that is a done deal. It is a part of due process.

Commissioner Freer stated they have talked about parks, more than these three, over the last three or four years in regards to the value of the Community. Are they being used? One was this park, and that was years ago. This isn't new. We have spoken about a lot of different parks, a lot that we wouldn't sell. The Fire Station thing forced the issue today. These types of conversations will go on into the future, it doesn't mean we are going to sell them, we need to have conversations about the parks, what to do with them, what not, what amenities are being used, what are not. This wasn't developed for the Fire Station. He will say the comments have been very good this evening. We form an opinion before you show up, the comments that have been made here are very persuasive. Don't get frustrated with the process. You've been positive, have shown good reasons why the park is there, the usage, etc. He himself has been over there before, has taken his dog, and while he hasn't seen anyone there while he has visited, he knows the value of that park. The positives of what you are telling is going over well in his mind.

Vice Chair Bauer stated that all she knew about this before the last few weeks is what was on paper. She needed to see for herself the park and the neighborhood. She visited this week. She felt her visit was worthwhile and informative. She's lived in Inver Grove Heights for 27 years and has never visited this park. Mr. Wilkins, this was not on their tour, and she's been on several tours over her last three years on this Commission. She found this park to be a hidden gem. There is a lot there for residents who do not know it is there. Inver Grove Heights values it's unique neighborhoods, we have charm, character, and that's why people choose to live here. Our parks of the future may look a lot like this open park area. Unpaved, natural trails, no equipment, minimal maintenance, greenspace, areas for kids to run, dogs to explore, and family and friends to be together. She is listening, you are articulate in your arguments and she appreciates what you have to say. She thanks you for your petitions and the time it took to put it together. Your time was not wasted. You found out where you are at with those in your Community. She doesn't think the City should come up with a solution in a vacuum. Let's go back and review what is on the table. She is in favor of a solution that listens to everyone's needs. This doesn't look like that. If there is a motion to approve the disposal, she will vote no. Once it's gone it's gone. It's a valuable park and your comments and presence here, as well as her own visit there, have proven that to her.

Chair Sethre asked if anyone wanted to approve a motion to close the public comment period.

**Motion made by Commissioner Farley, seconded by Commissioner Tix.**

**Motion carried.**

Commissioner Freer stated that Carol made a nice comment, as she always does when she attends these meetings. She's a long-time resident that always brings up some nice issues. He is surprised at the amount of people that say they use the park. He thinks it's a pleasure that this many people came out. Thank you to everyone for showing up and speaking.

Commissioner Eiden stated he has been on this Commission for several years. If you want to be angry with someone he brought up the issue of selling this property among others several years ago. He looks at Inver Grove Heights as a total Community. We are now at 35,000 and growing to 50,000 people. There are things we have to do with parks. We have financial challenges with the parks and there are some that are not in the best interest of the City and this happens to be one of them simply because of you residents in the neighborhood. He also recalls three times at least when we tried to do something with that park and there was adamant objections to the point of lawsuits. With the area, you have there and the lot sizes, you don't want any development, just want open space, and that's wonderful. He is skeptical of the fly zone, he has wild animals in the back of his home too. He has to

look at this in terms of the challenges of the City and the City in its entirety. This neighborhood could do very well without that vacant piece of that property whereas the City could make better use of that property, as well as the other two properties. He also needs to remind those that when the process the City uses to do things, they make plans first, as we do, and it's always open to public meetings for the people that will be affected by the decision. We have had to make decisions for other neighborhoods for the good of this City. He thinks this neighborhood is wonderful, he has been there. He is not against you having something in your neighborhood, but in perspective, this City has changed, it was far different than it was 50 years ago. We have an obligation to look for the general good of the City and what is happening and how detrimental is anything that ceases to exist in its present home. He appreciates and sympathizes with you for your adamant desire to maintain the property. In this particular case, he thinks it would be good to make some change.

Commissioner Freer stated the item is to sell all three lots at one time. We should discuss whether or not selling one lot or all three makes more sense.

Commissioner Tix wanted to note that we are not the City Council. We have different goals than the City Council. If she was on the City Council she may have a different decision. They have to look at all the different departments when thinking of these items. We are just talking about parks and the usage of the parks. You are showing us the usage of the parks by being here tonight.

Commissioner Gerhardt stated she actually lives near this park and didn't even know it existed. She is the newest member to the Advisory Commission, so she has made an effort to get to know the various parks around the City that she has never been to. There is no sign here, she didn't even know it existed. She visited a few times over the last few weeks. You may be seeing her there more often. She thinks it's a great park for this neighborhood and for the lot size in the area they live in. She understands the need for this in the Community. She understands people came here thinking we already made our decision. She has been out there a few times and has not seen anyone there. Seeing you all come out here and give testimony and speaking, having a petition, saying this park is important to you, she appreciates them taking the time to come out here and making the effort to come here this evening.

Commissioner Boehmer stated it's great that everyone that wants the park. Once it's gone it's gone. He can't see selling the whole park. He has been there too, he has seen Turkey and Deer. It's amazing how many people you have that signed this and support this.

Commissioner Freer stated it was the betterment of the communities is where these resources would go. We are struggling to maintain the parks we have. If some of this funding could go to the 402 Fund to help maintain these parks, it would be very helpful. We don't have the money we need to maintain what we have and right now we are looking at what we can eliminate in our parks. We can't fix them all or buy new stuff for everything because the budget isn't there. The equipment in some areas is getting old enough, maybe we don't need it in the park anymore, maybe we don't need that many tennis courts. The part of selling this for the betterment of the Community, it would come to the parks, or maybe even the Fire Station if it needed it. The balancing of this is very tough. It's true, once it's gone its gone. 50 years from now he would like his Grandchildren to enjoy open space too. It's a hard decision.

Chair Sethre commented that we are all citizens and tax payers in Inver Grove Heights. Difficult proposals are brought forward. Nobody says it's easy or fun, but sometimes we have to deal with certain things that are less than desirable. Hard decisions and issues pop up. We really appreciate you being here and being very civil. We do appreciate the input.

**Motion by Commissioner Eiden to accept the issue as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Freer.**

Chair Sethre stated we have a request here for action in disposing of River Heights Park.

**Aye: 2 (Sethre, Eiden)**  
**Nay: 5 Motion fails.**

**Motion by Commissioner Farley to ask the City Council that they may consider selling one of the lots and that they maintain the other two lots. No second.**

**Motion fails.**

Commissioner Eiden stated if we are in this position, then there is no recommendation going to the City Council.

Commissioner Tix asked if we can put out a recommendation that we do not sell the property?

Chair Sethre felt that is pretty much what we decided.

**Motion by Vice Chair Bauer that we remove this park from a list under consideration to be sold, and that we affirm the value of this park, of the open space, for not only the people in that area, but the entire City and the wildlife. Seconded by Commissioner Boehmer.**

**Aye: 4 (Bauer, Tix, Gerhardt, Boehmer)**  
**Nay: 2 (Eiden, Sethre)**  
**Abstain: 2 (Freer, Farley) Motion carried.**

Chair Sethre wanted to let those know that every spring the City Council is looking to fill various Commission positions. Planning, Environmental, Parks, etc. If you get an Insights flyer in the mail, please look at that and see the various positions. It's a very enlightening experience. It's all a part of civic duty. Please keep that in mind.

Director Carlson stated this item is still an item that the Planning Commission will take up on September 5<sup>th</sup>. The recommendation from here is to stay as is. They will weigh in on the technical aspects of it. If you are still interested in this, please attend that meeting as well.

Commissioner Eiden stated the motion was to take that property off the list for sale. It's not to leave it as is. It's to take it off the list.

Director Carlson responded in essence you are leaving it as it is.

Commissioner Eiden stated we have taken an extra step to take it off the list of properties that are listed for possible sale.

Director Carlson wanted to verify that the park will stay as is and it's not on the list for sale anymore.

Commissioner Eiden stated in his mind that was two different things. Keeping it as it is means we don't sell that property. Her motion is that we take it off of the list of properties for sale. In perpetuity that is not viable for the City Council in our recommendation to consider for sale.

## **9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:**

### **A. Department Happenings**

Director Carlson will stand by and answer any questions in regards to what is in the report.

Vice Chair Bauer asked if the open house information for Heritage Village Dog Park included in here? She is on the sub-committee and they had a meeting and they will be having an open house. People with dogs please pay attention to that, everyone is invited. Dogs are welcome on a leash.

Director Carlson stated that is Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Heritage Village Park. He will be down there to meet with people, we will have some boards to show our plans, it will also be on the City Website as well as on Social Media.

Commissioner Farley stated Inver Wood Golf Course had customer appreciation days. It was an event that went beyond expectations. They kept running out of food and they had to keep getting more. All those that attended were great.

Inver Wood is the site of a program called Youth on Course, that is for any junior golfer can play golf for \$5.00. The difference between what they pay, the \$5.00, is made up by a foundation which is the genesis of the Youth on Course. They are looking for other candidates. They are the only course in the State of Minnesota that is participating in this program. It is picking up a lot of speed quicker than they anticipated. All the renovations have been made, and there are a lot of happy golfers and friends of golfers that are reporting positive experiences at the course.

Cahir Sethre asked what the age threshold was for a junior?

Commissioner Farley stated it's 19 or younger.

## **B. Park Planning Process Associated with the Comprehensive Plan – Pilot North/South Valley Park(s)**

Director Carlson stated this next item is to consider the approval of a Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Inver Grove Heights and Dakota County. We are the recipients of a \$15,000 Grant from Dakota County. Dakota County Public Health Department and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership to provide the City with an opportunity to develop a pilot park planning process where we engage the Community with our efforts and use that park planning process in all of our park planning whether it be in an existing park, or in the northwest area. The goals for this would be to encourage active living and access to healthy food options, ensure our park design meets the change in demographics, and develop strategies to engage Community members who may not participate in our park planning processes. We would suggest using North and South Valley Park as our pilot site. This will create a park plan that will meet the future needs of the neighborhood that surround the parks, those two parks, and the community at large. Lessons learned would be reused and replicated in other park planning, specifically in the northwest area. At the end of the project we will have received feedback through the Community engagement process. There would be a summary and site analysis of North and South Valley Parks. We would have some schematic designs that would help to create a Master Plan for those two parks. Phasing and implementation strategies can be used for other park planning purposes. We recommend that we develop a work group and that group would consist of Chair Sethre, and Commissioner's Bauer and Gerhardt, as well as our Parks Superintendent, Recreation Superintendent, and himself. We are doing this in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan, and would be replicated in other park planning processes. We have received this \$15,000 Grant from Dakota County and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership. The Cities commitment to it would be staff time which can be counted as an expense. If we don't have enough staff time expenses we may have to include some cash, but we have to show roughly \$5,000 of investment on the Cities part to match the investment that we have received from the Grant.

Chair Sethre asked if this expires at all? Is this a one-time event? This is new.

Director Carlson responded it is a one-time Grant. We would have to complete our end of the project by the end of October 2017. We want to try some new Community engagement events to see which one's work and don't work. How to modify ones that don't work, etc. We want to get the Community engaged in our parks system much like we did this evening.

**Motion by Commissioner Freer that we accept the Grant money partnership. Seconded by Commissioner Farley.**

**Aye: 6**

**Nay: 0**

**Abstain: 2 (Eiden, Sethre) Motion carried.**

**10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

Vice Chair Bauer stated in the next month we will be having Inver Grove Heights Days. She lives on Cahill Avenue, and hopes for a good turnout. There looks like there are a lot of great activities. We are all looking forward to Fall and all the exciting things that go on in our Community. It's a great time to be together. She encourages everyone to start a new activity if you haven't done it before. Hope to see you all there.

Commissioner Tix had no comment.

Commissioner Eiden had no comment.

Commissioner Gerhardt had no comment.

Commissioner Boehmer had no comment.

Commissioner Farley would like to observe that the petitions and the emails and the passion that the people showed tonight was very encouraging, very educational, and it gives him a warm feeling that this is democracy in its best. He thanks the people for being very civil. Nothing was said out of haste. It was a very inspiring discussion.

Commissioner Freer had no comment.

**11. ADJOURN**

**Motion by Commissioner Eiden, seconded by Commissioner Freer to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.**

**Aye: 8**

**Nay: 0 Motion carried.**