

Park Notes

A newsletter of the Friends of St. Paul and Ramsey County Parks
1621 Beechwood Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55116 651- 698-4543
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Advertising in parks

Advertising comes to public parks. And it is all about short term financial needs. The Saint Paul City Council on a 4 -3 vote approved a plan to allow paid advertising, called sponsorships in the ordinance, on golf courses and certain athletic fields. Although the proposal of city park staff was supported very actively by Friends of Saint Paul Baseball, it was opposed by Scenic Saint Paul and the Friends of the Parks.

Scenic Saint Paul objected to the proliferation of advertising because it could have a negative impact on sign limitations including billboard advertising restrictions. The Friends of the Parks objected because putting large advertising signs on public property changes the nature of that public experience, could lead to a proliferation of advertising throughout Saint Paul's public spaces, there was no business plan available regarding how the Parks Division would handle the business of selling and maintaining the signs and there did not appear to be any system of accountability in place to insure that the money raised would actually go to the City.

For several years, in violation to Saint Paul's ordinance prohibiting advertising signs on park property, advertising has been sold and placed on the fences at Dunning Field. The City got none of the revenue from these signs, nor has there been an accounting of the amount of money raised, commissions, nor the way money is spent. The Friends are deeply concerned that the City's plan to let volunteers sell the advertising signs could result in the same kind of fuzzy, 'you have got to trust us' accounting system currently operating at Dunning.

The Friends of the Parks has requested from the Parks Division detailed information on how the Division will handle selling the sponsorship signs, who will receive the money, how payments will be handled, what the administrative costs will be, how much revenue is projected, and how the funds will be used.

"We feel that the City is embarking on a fundamental change and frankly we are not sure all of the ramifications are fully appreciated, said Anna Wasescha. We heard that the City would make \$200,000 from selling these ads. Later we heard it might be \$20,000. Then we heard there would not be any administrative costs because it would all be handled by volunteers. The whole nature of public space is being pressured by our current financial situation. We must make sure that the public trust is honored and the resource we turn over to the next generation is not a resource brought to you by ABC cassino or XYZ Cola."

Money money money

Money, or lack of it, dominated the legislative session as funding for everything from disease prevention to health care for the poor to higher education eroded. Parks came under the same pressure as funding was cut through reductions of local government aid and direct appropriations. The results of these funding cuts will be felt immediately as well as in the long term. When county and city budgets are finalized we will report exactly what these changes will mean. The state's budget cut 15% from operations and maintenance budgets for the regional park system and those cuts will be deeply felt.

Increased acres for regional parks

The Metropolitan Council added 1482 acres to the regional park system following the recommendation of the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission. The additions include:

- 49 acres of wildlife corridor in the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP);
- 113 acres of TCAAP property for the Rice Creek Trail Corridor;
- 1000 acres to expand the boundary of the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve;
- 320 acres which was formerly owned by Control Data for private employee recreation.

Recycling to Save Money & Help Environment

Shoreview's city-wide festival, the Slice of Shoreview, began recycling in 2002 and it achieved cost savings and environmental benefits at the same time. Now in its 14th year, the Slice of Shoreview (www.sliceofshoreview.com) the last weekend of July includes a carnival, parade, art and craft fair, food vendors, displays and demonstrations, talent show, entertainment and, of course, fireworks. The Slice takes place at Island Lake Park on Victoria Street at I-694.

Paul Gardner, Executive Director of the Recycling Association of Minnesota and a Shoreview resident, set up the recycling program for the Slice.

The National Association for PET Container Resources provided a \$500 grant to purchase green recycling bins made from recycled plastic. Waste Management provided two six cubic yard containers in the parking lot, and a local boy scout troop earned service hours collecting recycled material throughout the event.

So what is recycled at an event like this? The Slice successfully recycled six cubic yards of cardboard, mostly from the 15 food vendors. In addition, we collected five cubic yards of beverage containers sold by the food vendors. This added up to about 4,140 PET plastic bottles and 2,700 cans, or about 75 percent of all containers bought at the Slice. The Slice recycled 20 percent of the event's waste by volume!

The Slice pays for both garbage collection and recycling collection. After reviewing the event's garbage bill, we calculated that even with paying extra for recycling containers, the Slice will reduce its overall bill for waste and recycling by \$100 in 2003 because we kept so much volume of waste out of the garbage!

There were some important lessons to learn from the experience that can be used in other Ramsey County Parks.

Talk to the food vendors to encourage them to use single-serve cans and bottles rather than foam or paper cups that go in the garbage. Also ask them to recycle their cardboard in the appropriate container. Volunteers like Scouts, ask them to pick up the cardboard directly at the vendor booths. (A golf cart works wonders for this job!)

Buckthorn...still out there

Never put a recycling bin by itself—always put it next to a garbage can. Otherwise people will put garbage in the recycling bin.

Use existing publicity to help educate event participants and organizers. And be quirky and innovative. I rode my bike with a cart in the parade with a recycling bin sitting in the cart. People “pulled me over” to recycle their cans and bottles

These are just a few of the variables that make a successful recycling program at a special event. If you’re interested in setting up recycling at your event, contact Paul Gardner for even more helpful ideas. ramrecycle@attbi.com (651) 641-4560. This article was submitted by Paul Gardner Chair, Shoreview Environmental Quality Committee.

Yea, summer is here! The park trails are filled with bikers, walkers and roller bladers taking in the beauty of nature. However, on many trails a bully is lurking. Who’s the thug? Common buckthorn.

Although the Friends completed the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources grant in June 2002 we are still continuing the battle of backyard buckthorn. The Friends funded a two year project to continue the work. Five communities in Ramsey County are working with the Friends in educating their residents about common buckthorn. The communities of Falcon Heights, Gem Lake, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, and White Bear Township have joined forces to spread the word about buckthorn in their communities. The project started this spring with articles appearing in the White Bear Press, Shoreview Press and the Roseville Review. Anyone wanting a free buckthorn identification and removal brochure can pick one up at the city halls in Falcon Heights, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, and White Bear Township.

In September the Friends will host a buckthorn identification and removal demonstrations in the project communities. Watch for announcements in community newsletters and local newspapers as well as the Friends web site.

We will explore funding possibilities and next year will expand by adding other Ramsey County communities to the project.

Friends fund two environmental projects

Mowry Garden

Improving the health and the visual environment are part the mission of the Friends. In a first time effort the Friends are funding two projects which we believe will make a positive contribution to the community but which could not have happened without a little financial push.

The Friends of Swede Hollow will restore the Mowry Garden Site. This is a highly visible opportunity which most would call a gardeners nightmare. It is a strip of steeply sloping land approximately 5 to 10 yards wide and 1 block long. It is located on the south side of the upper section of Swede Hollow Park, adjacent to Mowry street. It is now untended with a canopy of cottonwood, elm, hackberry and ash trees. A shrub layer is primarily tartarian honeysuckle and common buckthorn. The soil is thin with sparse herbaceous cover and batches of bare sandy soil and fill. Put a spade in here and you could as easily hit an old bottle or a chunk of concrete.

The Friends of Swede Hollow plan to restore this piece of park to a more natural

Peace Poles

condition with plants representative of the vegetation that might have naturally occur at the site. Plant will include a canopy of white, burr and red oaks, a sub-canopy of black cherry and red maple, a shrub layer of American hazelnut, gray dogwood, chokecherry, geranium, big leaved aster, bedstraw, bellwort, Solomon's seal, false Solomon's seal and graminoids such as Pennsylvania sedge.

During the first year the buckthorn and honeysuckle will be removed and native trees and shrubs will be planted and the soil stabilized and improved. The focus in subsequent years will be continued eradication of buckthorn, non-native weeds, work on soil improvements and planting native perennial wild flowers.

A very different type of garden is planned in the Thomas-Dale area in Saint Paul. This area includes the neighborhood of Mt. Airy, Capitol Heights, Lower Rice Street, Frogtown and East Midwaw. Within these boundaries, three Saint Paul Parks have permanently planted Peace Poles: West Minnehaha Community center; Scheffer Recreation Center; and Ryan Park. The District 7 planning Council will design, plant and maintain perennial plantings around each of the Peace Poles.

The Council is partnering with the Dale Street Greenhouse and the Ramsey County Master Gardeners Program. The Council will employ two youth organizing teams over the spring and summer of 2003. These teams will be responsible for carrying out the project under the supervision and mentoring of the Community Organizing staff.

Each garden will be unique but will be a circular garden around the base of each Peace Pole. There will be a mix of perennials, annuals and shrubs.

Funds for these projects are made possible by the Friends' tree sale. We hope to be able to continue to fund community based projects such as these in the future. Watch the Friends' website for photos of these projects as they get underway.

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in Saint Paul & Ramsey County
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**CHANGE SERVICE
REQUESTED**