

**ANDOVER COMMISSION INTERVIEWS – JANUARY 21, 2016
MINUTES**

The Andover Commission Interviews were called to order by Mayor Julie Trude, January 21, 2016, 6:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Councilmembers present: Mayor Trude, Councilmembers Mike Knight, Sheri Bukkila
Valerie Holthus and James Goodrich

Councilmember absent: None

Also present: Community Development Director, Dave Carlberg

INTERVIEWS

Scott Hudson – Planning & Zoning Commission

Mr. Hudson reviewed his background having moved to Andover from Coon Rapids in June of 2015. He is employed at a local bank. As to why he wanted to be on the Commission, he stated that he thought it was a good opportunity to be part of the City he calls home and to use his skills and experiences for the betterment of the City.

Mayor Trude asked what Mr. Hudson knew about the work of the Commission and asked if he had attended a meeting or read the minutes. Mr. Hudson said that he had not attended a meeting and that his understanding of the work of the Commission is to help design the layout of the City including industry and neighborhood and have input that sets those things forth.

Councilmember Bukkila asked what business experience Mr. Hudson had that he could bring to the Commission. He replied that in his work as a commercial lender for a bank he has had experience helping customers with buying and selling of property. He has run across real estate plats, zoning codes, and master development plans in day-to-day operations.

Councilmember Goodrich inquired about Mr. Hudson's experience buying and selling properties. He replied by saying that he helps customers with financing. Legal experts typically help with platting and re-zoning.

Councilmembers Knight and Holthus described the work of the Planning & Zoning Commission in detail. Mr. Hudson confirmed that he works on financing for commercial properties and with commercial developers. Mayor Trude followed up by asking whether or not he may have a conflict of interest. Mr. Hudson stated that he is not aware of any potential customers or developments in the City that would create a potential conflict of interest.

Councilmember Bukkila asked about where Mr. Hudson “sat” on property rights and whether he had a line or a limit on restrictions made by the City versus the rights of the property owner. Mr. Hudson replied by stating that he believes that people decide to call Andover home because it has options for raising animals, etc. He also commented that he cannot have garbage cans in front of his house and having covenants was something that he was looking forward to in the move to the City.

Mayor Trude described some of the decisions that need to be considered by the Planning & Zoning Commission, specifically the review of “practical difficulties.” Mr. Hudson commented that it sounded a lot like a community bank where you can be “rigid and firm by the book or use the book as the very solid guide.” He concluded by saying that it is good to have a guide but also be able to be flexible.

Mayor Trude asked what Mr. Hudson felt had been planned well in the City or not planned well. Mr. Hudson replied that the new commercial park by Andover Station is fantastic with good access and good use of space. A dislike would be the high line wires along Hanson Boulevard and that there was a lot of potential for growth within the City community.

Councilmember Knight asked if there is anything specific that Mr. Hudson wanted to see in Andover. Mr. Hudson would like to see more commercial/retail, acknowledging that it will take some time. He likes the small town feel of Andover and that is one of the reasons they were attracted to the area.

Councilmember Holthus commented that a lot of interested residents come to give input to the Planning & Zoning Commission and asked how Mr. Hudson would deal with it. He stated that he would take the comments as valid concerns, but at the end of the day, the Planning & Zoning Commission is charged with doing what is best for the whole.

Richard Edison – Planning & Zoning Commission

Mr. Edison shared the history of the cities he had lived in and his years of service on the Planning & Zoning Commission as well as the Charter Commission in Blaine. During his time on those commissions there were a lot of new businesses, and restaurants that changed hands and wanted to redevelop.

Councilmember Goodrich asked for further clarification of what work was done on the commission during that time. Mr. Edison stated that he served from 2010 – 2012 during a time of significant expansion. He continued by saying that the Blaine Charter Commission met once a month and had a pretty full schedule and went through reapportionment and mapping during that time.

Councilmember Bukkila asked if he had any experience with real estate or brokering. Mr. Edison stated he had a real estate license a couple of times 10-15 years ago but he was not really active and used it when flipping houses with a business partner.

Councilmember Goodrich asked if Mr. Edison had thoughts on changing from rural to higher density. He replied by stating that if lots are too small, he believed that was undesirable and if lots are bigger, and houses are bigger, as a result there are fewer neighbors.

Mayor Trude asked about Mr. Edison's thoughts related to lot development in Blaine. He stated that The Lakes had already been developed at the time he was on the commission and that what came forward were tack-on projects, with some requests being approved, and even after approval some builders did not go forward. The Blaine Commission also dealt with requests to split larger lots. He continued by saying that requests for Wi-Fi towers were a challenge and that placement requested was right by houses or alternatively in parks which had its own concerns. Mr. Edison also gave examples of the types of questions he would ask in the case of a new business coming to the City, i.e. how many staff would be employed, how would they be a good neighbor. Mayor Trude inquired as to whether Mr. Edison drove out to sites that were under discussion. He stated that he did and cited the example of installing concrete walls in the backyards on Radisson Road and how residents would be compensated.

Shane Stenzel – Park & Recreation Commission

Mayor Trude thanked Mr. Stenzel for applying again and for challenging the City Council on issues.

Councilmember Bukkila asked what happened with the maintenance budget -- what went right and what went wrong. Mr. Stenzel stated that it was a good exercise for the members to go out and look at the parks and that he challenged others to go out and look since some did not even know where the parks are located. Concerns came up related to the maintenance of the parks. He stated that there had been some confusion and he wished that he had asked more questions and communicated with staff earlier and that it had been a learning experience for him as chair. He continued by saying that in the end there was a good result and there is now a starting place for ongoing maintenance of the parks. He also pointed out the need to address the overuse of playing fields.

Mayor Trude discussed weighing needs during budgeting and gave roads and parks as an example. Mr. Stenzel stated that the Commission's role is to advise and vote and it is the Council that makes the decisions "at the end of the day." He would like to get the members more engaged beyond approving athletic permits and to make a difference in the community. He stated that there was definitely a learning curve involved in being the chair.

Councilmember Holthus stated that she appreciated Mr. Stenzel's passion and the challenges of being the chair of this Commission. She asked what he had learned from his first year as chair and what goals he wants to focus on next. Mr. Stenzel replied that he would like to look at the overall park's comprehensive plan and see where the current parks are at now and not to focus on one specific project. He would like to consider how we are meeting the needs of all of the residents of the City and look at the demographics. Mr. Stenzel continued by describing how he

talks to residents about the tax base that is needed to support a facility like a practice dome and the importance to look ahead, 12 years down the road, to future needs. His belief is that more athletic fields do not need to be built but the current inventory needs to be made more useable by adding irrigation, for instance. He expressed his concern about increasing taxes to fund youth athletics. He would like to consider how the City should revitalize its parks.

Councilmember Holthus inquired if he wanted to focus more on regional parks and less on tot lots. He replied by stating his preference would be to focus on regional parks and trails. There are a lot of tot lots, but many of them are new so they do not have a lot of maintenance needs at this time.

Councilmember Knight described the newer phenomena where parents are reluctant to send their children down the street without adults accompanying them. Mr. Stenzel said that the rural parks have less use and families tend to have their own playgrounds in their backyard.

Mayor Trude talked about the importance of matching up the building of playgrounds with the demographics of the housing development and the importance of large public spaces to build community and referred to the park dedication study and using it as a roadmap.

Mark Miskowiec – Park & Recreation Commission

Mayor Trude asked why Mr. Miskowiec is interested in another term. He replied that parks elicit all kinds of responses and that people hold them close. On the Commission they strive to help as many as they can and that it can be a challenge and there needs to be give-and-take.

Mayor Trude continued by asking how Mr. Miskowiec prepares for meetings. He replied by stating that the Commission's role is to field calls and concerns so that the Council does not have to, and to get through the details at the Commission level.

Mr. Miskowiec confirmed that he has been on the Commission for 7 years, (a 1 year term plus 2 full terms).

Mayor Trude inquired about the playground equipment at Forest Meadows where there had previously been playground equipment. Mr. Miskowiec clarified that the request would actually be for replacement equipment so the Commission will have some input on that and there have been some postcards and letters sent to the neighborhood. Due to the turnover in the neighborhood there is now a desire to have playground equipment again, although previously the neighborhood wanted it quieter. They would be investigating what equipment is desired and discussion about parking concerns. Mayor Trude asked if he had gone to look at the park and he replied he had not. As to the Timber Rivers Park, Mr. Miskowiec said there had not been any public input and he had not visited the park.

Councilmember Goodrich stated that he had watched the meetings and feels that he is qualified and engaged and then asked how he is feeling about the switch in funding. Mr. Miskowiec

stated that he felt they should have asked the Council for more information on funding. Councilmember Goodrich continued by asking how he viewed his role i.e., advocating for funding versus decisions on what gets replaced and decisions on the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Miskowiec replied by saying that the Council defines what they want the Commission to do and to give the Council a budget and the Commission will work within those boundaries. He feels that the Commission now has a greater understanding. He felt that things were unclear, but now things are much clearer and the equipment needing repair will have attention and there is a plan.

Councilmember Holthus asked what is Mr. Miskowiec's favorite park. Mr. Miskowiec stated that his neighborhood park, Hidden Creek East, is his favorite. Kelsey Round Lake Park would be his favorite drive-to park for some purposes like bike riding or to see the lake and that he also likes Sunshine Park for soccer.

Mayor Trude asked what the Commission's next big thing is. Mr. Miskowiec replied that there is a lot to wrap up.

Joy Faherty – Open Space Commission

Mayor Trude clarified that on the Open Space Commission there was one person resigning and one person reapplying.

Mayor Trude continued by asking why the applicant is interested in being on the Commission. Ms. Faherty stated that she had researched it on the City's web site and had not known about it previously. She said that she is proud of the City and that the work of the Commission fills more than one goal or interest for her. Her three interests are Minnesota ecology, preserving natural areas, and conservancy of land. She expressed a desire to become more involved in the community and City now that her children are older and she has more free time. She is interested in an opportunity for personal growth and new challenges.

Mayor Trude shared background information on the Open Space Commission initiatives and that the goal of this Commission will be to figure out how to manage the land that we have and how it will be used by residents and children. Ms. Faherty responded by saying that the process would begin by evaluating what is there, rejuvenating or protecting the natural parts of what currently exists, adding trails or considering ways to add quality of life, and bringing joy to this community by allowing opportunities to walk in it and enjoying the open space. She shared that she had done some research about Theodore Wirth and how he set aside space for the City of Minneapolis 100 years ago. His goal was to have a park within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile for every child. She appreciated his foresight and that is what she thinks is needed for the future of the Commission. Councilmember Knight described two schools of thought related to open space, a more passive approach where the community goes in and wanders around and enjoys it, or to put up picnic tables and other structures to create enjoyment.

Councilmember Holthus said that there was a debate at the time about keeping the land pristine and wanting no trails at all or to keep it perfect and not have any footprint of human beings in the

space or the other option is to add picnic tables and trails. She asked where Ms. Faherty landed on these two theories. Ms. Faherty replied by saying that there should be a balance and ability to have both in the open spaces that exist, a trail to guide in some places might be better because if people are left to make their own trails, they might damage what is already there so in that sense a trail might be better. She goes to Rum River Central Park and that piece of property was originally farmed by her husband's grandfather or great grandfather. She appreciates that generations can go to the original property and walk the trails. From the trails she can look at the natural spaces and they will not be damaged. There are more benches being placed with names in commemoration so it feels like it is becoming more of a park now. Ms. Faherty has lived in Andover for 30 years.

Councilmember Bukkila acknowledged that she had done a lot of research. Ms. Faherty stated that she works as a project manager and does a lot of research in her work and has a background in graphic design.

Mayor Trude indicated that the Boy Scouts have provided a couple of kiosks at the entrance to the park, but that there are water leakage issues where the maps are kept. Ms. Faherty said that she had experience marketing with graphics and offered to volunteer.

Mayor Trude suggested that there might be ways to work with a photographer to communicate about the City's open space.

The meeting recessed at 7:15 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:25 p.m.

Sharon Cramer – Planning & Zoning Commission and Open Space Commission

Mayor Trude noted that the applicant had applied previously. Ms. Cramer noted that she is interested in the Park & Recreation Commission, as well.

Mayor Trude asked the applicant what value she could bring to the Commissions, in general. Ms. Cramer stated that she has a lot of energy, drive, commitment, organizational, and management skills to bring to the work along with project management skills she has practiced in her career. She enjoys planning, incorporating everyone's ideas, scheduling work, and driving it to a conclusion. In addition, she stated she has budgeting skills and experience which may apply to the Open Space Commission work. The applicant confirmed her interest in all three Commissions and clarified that she does not have the capacity to participate in all three. Ms. Cramer stated that she is most intrigued by the Planning & Zoning Commission, but less qualified for that Commission. She said that she has not watched a meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission, but had read the minutes. She sees the work as a blueprint for City growth with a road map for how that plays out year after year; and zoning is defined land use and organized development, so development occurs where you want it to, leading to expectations so that in residential areas there are not windmills or bookstores right next to homes.

Councilmember Knight stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission is a filter before issues get to the Council.

Ms. Cramer said that she has been an election judge.

Councilmember Bukkila asked about differences in what is allowed in the more rural areas (i.e. parking recreational vehicles, chickens, and kennels for dogs) as opposed to other areas where there are more restrictions and total curb appeal is valued. Ms. Cramer replied that she understood people have different needs and that they keep each other's values up in their neighborhood. She said she recognizes that people like to have their recreational vehicles and if they do not block the neighbor's view, then that is acceptable. She acknowledged that roosters can be noisy. Ms. Cramer said that a commissioner should not just "run" with their own agenda, but she personally likes a neat and orderly appearance.

Councilmember Holthus asked what the applicant knew about the Park and Recreation Commission. Ms. Cramer replied that she had read about Kelsey Round Lake Park and about a 20-year plan and the uplifting of other parks to get usage. She saw challenges of capacity planning for these parks as important, along with maximizing use and management of use and keeping up with what people want in the City's parks. Ms. Cramer noted that the playgrounds need an uplift in equipment and that there is a desire for trails so residents can get all of their steps in and stay healthy and wondered if the City might add trails for snowshoeing and biking. She suggested that there might be some synergy with open space in some of these areas. She noted that the new parks that are coming in with the new housing developments are smaller and more dedicated to the area immediately around them. She said her favorite park close to home is Pine Hills Park. Mayor Trude stated that park was part of the master plan too.

Ms. Cramer said that she has tried to get a map of Andover's parks for parking and walking.

Councilmember Holthus asked about Ms. Cramer's philosophy of keeping open space pure and pristine versus making trails and building picnic shelters and amenities. She replied by saying that she could see both sides, letting the creatures enjoy their space and letting the people use the land that they have contributed to preserving. She concluded by saying if residents cannot enjoy the open space, it is hard for them to be committed to or to take ownership of them.

Anna Dirkswager – Open Space Commission

Mayor Trude asked Ms. Dirkswager if she had visited any of the open spaces. She replied that she is an avid outdoor enthusiast and had visited some of the spaces with her spouse and has explored and read about the plans for development and has been following the land the City has been buying. She enjoys skiing, hiking and works for the DNR in forestry.

Mayor Trude asked about how the City is doing with balancing nature versus access. Ms. Dirkswager said that it is good right now and that she is not convinced it is one or the other but that it is important to keep both on the table when it comes to planning. She pointed out that access and outreach are vital and knowing where they connect, and what is the closest access to Andover residents is important. Some residents may not know what is right behind them and what the potential is for use.

Councilmember Knight posed the question of passive use of open space versus the addition of trails and picnic tables. Ms. Dirkswager said that she believes it takes a balanced approach and would not have one over the other. She would consider what is nearby and what the space is used for. She continued by saying that not all natural spaces should be natural and not all playgrounds should be equipped for toddlers. Some should be set aside and some should be more user friendly and less rugged and then there should be connections with the open spaces by trails. Ms. Dirkswager listed some of the open spaces she had visited.

Councilmember Knight confirmed that all of the money had been spent for the open spaces.

Mayor Trude asked what kind of skills she could bring to the Commission. Ms. Dirkswager stated that she had a lot of experience working with challenging stakeholders, management of public spaces with conflicting values, recreational value versus conservation and economic value, a different way of looking at a plan with multiple sets of eyes, strong communication skills, experience with boards, the legislative process and grants, and the best use of legislative opportunities.

Mayor Trude described some of the grants the City had utilized in the past. Ms. Dirkswager shared some of her experience with grant writing and her experience in working with folks in rural communities for community good.

Mayor Trude indicated that conservation easements or legacy grants could be worked on as part of the work of the Open Space Commission.

Councilmember Holthus stated that the Commission talks about challenges that are going on in the open space such as invasive species, repairs, accessibility, and safety concerns. Mayor Trude outlined issues around decisions as to where to put trails so that there can be a safe walking path when there is a lot of fallen timber and other challenges such as unique species of plants to avoid. There may need to be some mapping done as it relates to the use of the land. Ms. Dirkswager said that she is very eager to serve in the community.

Blair Buccicone – Planning & Zoning Commission and Park & Recreation Commission

Mayor Trude asked if the applicant had enough extra time in his life for another volunteer commitment. Mr. Buccicone confirmed his availability.

Mayor Trude asked if there was one thing that the applicant would change about the parks, what would it be. Mr. Buccicone stated that the lack of connections of the trails is one of his frustrations. This last fall he described taking off a week and went to two different parks every day for a week. They enjoyed the splash pad in Blaine but the upkeep of installing one would make him pause. His favorite park in Andover is Purple Park.

Mayor Trude asked if Mr. Buccicone had watched any of the meetings or read the minutes. Mr. Buccicone responded that he had read the plan and watched a few meetings on public access. He understands that it is about public service and being involved in the community and giving back. Mayor Trude asked if Mr. Buccicone had a certain way he would lean, by the rule or big picture. Mr. Buccicone responded by saying that he has to make snap decisions, but recognizes that there is a rule, but that decisions are really important to even one individual. He went on by saying that there are shades of gray to everything that one does and that he strives to do the right thing, if he can justify a reason for it, in his work in the Anoka County Attorney's Office.

Councilmember Goodrich inquired if he had any particular initiatives in mind. Mr. Buccicone said that he is working on the Heart Safe initiative and that the Fire Chief is on board with it. Mayor Trude said that she thought it was a great idea and that he could be involved whether he was appointed to the Commission or not. He also mentioned his enjoyment of swimming and how the City might partner with other entities because of the expense involved in building and maintaining pool facilities. He concluded by saying he is most passionate about support of Veterans.

Councilmember Holthus asked how long Mr. Buccicone had been with the hockey association. He replied that he had been involved for six months.

Mayor Trude asked which Commission would be his preference. He stated Park and Recreation Commission would be his preference.

Mayor Trude asked about the City's comprehensive plan and what the applicant would see that could be improved upon. Mr. Buccicone stated that his two frustrations were the lack of restaurants and the unsightliness of the storage facility on Hanson Boulevard. He also expressed his concern about seeing people running on the roads.

Council Discussion:

There was discussion about the differences in the City Code for the different Commissions and when absences would constitute a resignation.

Councilmember Holthus asked about appointing the chairs of the Commissions and her desire to be uniform.

Mayor Trude asked that these City Code questions be added to a future workshop meeting.

Mr. Carlberg stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission elects their own chair and that the Council ratifies it.

Councilmember Knight asked if the Council would ever overrule the decision of a Commission.

Mr. Carlberg noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission Chair term is for two years.

Mayor Trude stated that she believes that there is merit to having some oversight in the selection.

Councilmember Holthus reiterated her belief that the Commissions should have the right to choose their own leader.

The Council reviewed their notes and recommended appointing the following people to the Commissions.

Open Space Commission:

1. Kim Kovich
 2. Joy Faherty
- Alternate: Anna Dirkswager

Motion by Bukkila, Seconded by Holthus, to recommend appointment of the above people to the Open Space Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Trude stated that staff might consider sending a packet to Ms. Dirkswager as the alternate.

Park & Recreation Commission:

1. Ted Butler
 2. Shane Stenzel
 3. Mark Miskowiec
- Alternate: John Angell

Motion by Bukkila, Seconded by Goodrich, to recommend appointment of the above people to the Park & Recreation Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

Planning & Zoning Commission:

1. Bert Koehler IV
2. Scott Hudson

Motion by Bukkila, Seconded by Holthus, to recommend appointment of Bert Koehler and Scott Hudson to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Bukkila, Seconded by Councilmember Holthus, Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene White, Recording Secretary
TimeSaver OffSite Secretarial, Inc.