

Neighborhood Priority Plan for Linden Hills

Linden Hills is home to seven cherished parks and open green spaces. Linden Hills Park, Waveland Park, Linden Hills Boulevard and Parkway, Beard's Plaisance, Lake Calhoun Park, William Berry Parkway and Park, and Lake Harriet Park all reside within the boundaries of the Linden Hills neighborhood. The Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) would like to work with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) to make improvements to neighborhood parkland through the Neighborhood Priority Plan (NPP) process. LHiNC has budgeted \$1,305 for its 2012-13 NPP.

Linden Hills is closely associated with its lakes and parkland, and the neighborhood has a history of providing support to ensure the ongoing vitality of our urban forest. One of the NRP Phase II Action Plan goals is to "enhance the natural environment in Linden Hills through environmental action and education, as well as transportation and streetscape improvements that will make Linden Hills an even more environmentally friendly, safe, and livable place for residents, businesses and visitors." \$52,525 of NRP Phase II funds were allocated for the improvement of the health and diversity of the natural environment throughout the neighborhood.

LHiNC has shown an ongoing commitment to our urban forest. LHiNC has for many years offered rebates to homeowners who chose to treat their elm trees against Dutch elm disease. At the February, 2014, Sustainability Forum offered by the LHiNC Environment and Sustainability Committee, educational topics focused on environmental issues, including the threat posed by the Emerald Ash Borer and strategies for dealing with the threat. In 2012, a LHiNC Environment Committee project was initiated to preserve and protect the stand of mature oak trees on the south end of Linden Hills Park. LHiNC has had ongoing discussions with the MPRB regarding replacement of trees at Linden Hills Park that were removed to make way for the renovation of the tennis and athletic courts.

LHiNC is interested in making improvements to Linden Hills Park. This park is the heart of the neighborhood, and is used by residents throughout the year. In September of 2012, LHiNC made a survey available to neighborhood residents, in which participants were asked to rank areas of importance to the neighborhood. Parks and green spaces were consistently ranked at the top of the list. Specifically in response to the inquiry regarding ideas for what the neighborhood should do with \$1,000, the responses skewed heavily towards spending the funds on parks, and more trees and gardens. Likewise, in response to the survey inquiry regarding ideas for what the neighborhood might spend \$10,000 towards, parks ranked first.

LHiNC has made contact with Ralph Sievert and Philip Potyondy, of the MPRB Forestry Department to notify the department about LHiNC's interest in pursuing a project to increase and enhance the urban forest at Linden Hills Park. LHiNC looks forward to engaging further with the MPRB on this project and receiving input and guidance about how to maximize our efforts and achieve the most desirable results for the neighborhood.

Priority Setting Process

In September, 2013, LHiNC introduced a survey for determining neighborhood priorities. The survey was advertised to residents of the Linden Hills neighborhood in the Linden Hills Line newsletter, in our monthly e-newsletter, and on our website. The survey asked questions such as, "What top 3 priorities would you like to see the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council consider in the coming year?" and "If LHiNC had \$1,000 to spend on a specific project to benefit the neighborhood, how should the money be spent?"

The survey was available for three weeks. At the end of the three weeks, the survey was closed and the data was analyzed. Following discussion of the survey data, the LHiNC NPP subcommittee made the determination to pursue parkland improvements and tree planting, as these areas were clear priorities for the survey participants. A combined total of 46% of survey participants selected parks, more trees/gardens, environment and landscaping as being of primary importance, if given the opportunity to spend funds in the \$1,000 range on a neighborhood project.