

February 23, 2009

Commissioner Joan Peters

Three Rivers Park District

3000 Xenium Lane North

Plymouth, MN 55441-1299

Dear Commissioner Peters:

We have lived at 6800 Brook Drive for 40 years. It has wetlands where wildlife such as herons, fox, owls, deer and mink live. It is secluded and quiet. To us it would be a nightmare to see this destroyed by an asphalt bike path running along the creek or on a long boardwalk over the creek (a solution described at the meeting as a way to avoid destroying the wetlands.)

We see the following issues:

**The Environment:** The Three Rivers Park District states that it has the mission of environmental stewardship, but a bike path through numerous back yards that goes through wetlands and increases the traffic in those areas will have the effect of destroying the environment and natural habitat. We believe that increased traffic will drive away the wildlife that currently lives there. While the highest area of interest expressed by the people of Edina in a Three Rivers Survey was for a bike path, we believe the second most important issue noted on their survey was concern for the environment.

**Traffic and Safety:** Mostly Edina citizens use our street, but the stated purpose of the bike path is “from Hopkins through Edina and Richfield perhaps with trails splitting off there to link with trails in Minneapolis and Bloomington.”

(<http://www.startribune.com/local/west/38757467.html?elr=KArksUUUU>). We personally would not feel safe night or day with the possibility of anyone wandering through our back yard. What we would be going from is a secluded but relatively inaccessible area to a secluded and highly accessible area by anyone in the twin cities area.

**Changing the rules:** Edina is a developed suburb. While Minneapolis has Lake Harriet with a walk around path this decision was made when development occurred. When Edina was developed and our lots were platted, I am told our developer specifically extended our lots to the center of the creek to prevent a horse or bike path going through the back yards. This was a covenant between the city and the homeowners, and I do not believe the city should now consider reneging on the agreement.(Note: while only some of us own to the center of the creek,

all the lots on the creek generally extend to where the wetlands begin, with no additional development or paths envisioned)

**The Process:** We do not understand the process for the selection of and approval of an Edina bike path. At the information session on February 11<sup>th</sup> which was held at the Edina City hall ,we received conflicting information. John Keprios, the Edina Park and Recreation Director, indicated that the Edina City Council had the final say on whether a bike path would be approved and if so, what the route would be. Also, that the city council would hold a meeting/ information session for Edina residents before deciding anything. Representatives of Three Rivers Park District who ran the information session on February 11<sup>th</sup> implied that it was their decision and that they would select the route of the path and that the Edina City Council would pretty much rubber stamp the decision. Our impression was that Three Rivers had already made up their minds and that the route would run through our back yards on Nine Mile Creek. We would like this to be an issue for the Edina City Council to decide based on a hearing with Edina residents.

**Cost and Maintenance:** We feel that the money could be used for other projects that are already in place, i.e., Edina parks, walking paths, Braemar park or other neighborhood parks. The cost to initially do the proposed project would be very high, but the maintenance, clean up and patrolling costs would be expensive and ongoing for many years. If the money were not available in the future, the path would deteriorate and be a liability for the community.

**In summary,** we strongly oppose routing a bike path along Nine Mile Creek and through our and our neighbor's back yards. It jeopardizes the environment and our safety.

We are not willing to grant an easement through our property for the proposed bike path.

Sincerely,

Kurt and Margo King