



City of North St. Paul Parks &
Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2021

6:30 PM

The September 22, 2021 Parks & Rec Commission meeting was held at: City Hall, 2400 Margaret Street, North Saint Paul

An audio recording was done for the meeting.

I. Call to Order

Chair Lloyd Grachek called the meeting to order at 6:30

II. Roll Call

Lloyd Grachek, Chair

Laura Greenlee-Karp, Vice Chair

Larry Amsden - Absent

Heather Haas - Absent

Ingrid Koller - Zoom

Sue Springborn

Nancy Thorsen

Sarah Zahradka

Arthur Alvarez, Jr.

Council Liaison: Tim Cole

Staff: Lisa Ritchie

III. **Adopt Agenda**

On motion by Commissioner Zahradka, seconded by Commissioner Greenlee-Karp with all present voting aye, motion carried to adopt the agenda.

IV. **Approval of Minutes**

Approve the July 28, 2021 regular meeting minutes.

On motion by Commissioner Thorson, seconded by Commissioner Greenlee-Karp with all present voting aye, motion carried to approve the minutes.

V. **Meeting Open to Public**

Jim Selchow – 2590 Diane St, North St Paul – Casey Lake Renewal Project.

Jim stated “The current photo on the city website of Casey Lake does not accurately represent the current condition of the lake. It is currently 60 – 70% green and it’s not getting any better. It is not just duckweed, it is an alga of some type. Jim is here to bring the commission up to date on the Zoom meeting held on September 1st with the DNR & Watershed District to talk about a variety of topics. There were quite a few people at the meeting. Two people that do have shoreline on the lake. They are concerned about weeds, lily-pads, access to the lake for recreational purposes and what we were told at the time was that they would come out and have a meeting at the lake discuss the issues with the residence. This is sent by Rob Dodd from the DNR on Sept 5th. We will be contacting individual Lakeshore residents in regards to cattail permit applications in the next week the exact date will depend on how the interactions go.” Jim followed up as a reminder the other day as to when will those meetings take place and this is the response he got was; “Good morning, Multiple complications caused by the global pandemic are preventing me from scheduling the meeting. In the meantime, please let me know what aquatic plant questions your committee has if any of the shoreline property owners would like apply a grant...” Contact the DNR etc. So, for whatever reason, they are not coming out. Jim thinks it is a bogus thing to blame it on the pandemic. He stated, “My opinion is that both DNR and the Watershed District work with people that specialize in aquatic weed control. That’s their main focus in life is weed control and anything else they don’t want to deal with. Because in my opinion, and what has become pretty evident, there is more than a weed control issue with Casey Lake. That’s one issue. The other issue is that nobody can fish there. There are too many weeds and its green all of the time. The water level isn’t high enough so the people that want to cut the weeds, by the way it was harvested about two weeks ago, and the slight impact but not a lot. And so, we are pretty much back to where we started after the weed cutting took place. So, I just wanted to bring to bring to mind, if any of you walking occasional; once a week out at Oakdale Park, Regional Park off of Hadley. There is a lake out there called Mud Lake, which is not a whole lot shallower than Casey Lake. It’s 100% lily-pads now. And that is pretty much the way we are heading with Casey Lake. So, I guess what I’m promoting is, and I want the committees support, in doing it to make a recommendation to gain the support of the city Council and possibly a congressman, to have a study done on Casey like to find out how we can enhance it. There has been a lot of sediment that has come in, the cattails, I don’t think the weed cutter can actually take the lily-pads out, there might be some kind of law that says they can’t take lily-pads out.” Jim doesn’t know but they weren’t cut last time. So, he would like to see a study, Jim thinks we all want to see a study done. Jim stated, “What is the best way to go about this? Should some of the sediment be removed, should the lake level be raised? By the way, at one time it was a foot higher than it is right now. For some reason that early in

the 2000's it was decided to drop it a foot. But what that does now is it makes it difficult for the weed harvester to get in and out and it also doesn't make it very drought resistant. As soon as we had this minor drought, (cause the shoreline depth is only 1 to 1-1/2 ft.) it's all muck." Jim continued..." To sum it up, Jim would like the committee to make a recommendation for a study to be done to find out how to make enhance Casey Lake to make it the jewel that it's reported to be for our city. Jim then opened it up for any questions. Sue Springborn stated, "I was unable to watch that meeting, did they give any explanation for all the algae it's not from phosphates running into the lake and causing issues. It is not from lawns and all that kind of thing?" Jim's response was: "I don't remember if they gave a reason or not." Sue commented, "because is this normally the reason...People over fertilizing their lawns and allowing it to run into the water? So, where's the problem coming from then? Jim said, "Well I would just say that over time that the nutrients in there. They claim that when they do the harvesting it takes the phosphates out because it is part of the weed. I suggested we got the water level a little deeper they could maybe harvest more frequently, because right now it is like twice a year and they go back very quickly. I was told that they didn't want frequently screw up the ecology of the lake." Sue stated, "I guess I'm wondering if they did something to take care of the algae but people continue to use high level phosphates, they're not going to solve the problem." Per Jim, "it's been a law now for some time that you cannot buy fertilizer (except for a starter fertilizer) with the phosphates in it. If you go to Home Depot or Menards to buy fertilizer, there are no phosphates in it." Jim doesn't know how much is really getting run off from that. Per Jim, "There hasn't be phosphates in fertilizer for years." Sue stated, "I don't know a lot about this but do know there are other fertilizers that don't cause that problem." Laura stated, "This is a statewide issue due to climate change and the warming temperatures and because we've also experienced a significant drought throughout a large majority of the United States so I can't (in good faith) make a recommendation to put more water in the lake when we are all experiencing significant drought." Lisa Ritchie stated she thought Kari Erpenbach said it was a regulation that the water level cannot be adjusted. Tim Cole stated, "The water level is set by the state and then, my question is what is the appropriate level because it's more that it used to be." Jim stated, "If you look at the last rundown of the city's last newsletter, they actually state in there that it was 1 foot higher than 10 - 12 years ago." Sara Zahradka asked, "If this commission recommends the study go to council, who would then run the study? If the DNR and Watershed seem resistant, is it because we are not paying to look at this and we are just asking them to do this for free? Is their opinion going to change? I guess I'm just trying to understand who would do the study in this case." Jim said, "In my opinion of the watershed and the DNR and the Hydrologist. It has not been looked at yet at all. The only people that have looked at this so far, are primarily concerned with aquatic vegetation." Sarah asked Tim Cole if he was thinking, if the city goes to them to ask about this, it would be different vs. trying to hold forums that they don't seem to be proactive about attending? Tim encouraged everyone to watch the video as it is posted on our website. "You could probably tell by the tone of my voice towards the end of the meeting I got very frustrated." Sarah asked, "Is this is part of a city council meeting?" Per Laura, "This was a separate meeting." Tim said, It was August 1 at 9 AM (he corrected himself saying, September 1st) The watershed district made a very nice presentation. They took us back to 2010 as to what the water quality was like and brought us forward 11 years and in what they have done (I'm being careful to choose my words) what they have done is improve the quality of the lake water. They showed charts and graphs that represented the improvement of the clarity of the water today from where was 11 years ago." Jim interjected and stated, "The way they did that was, it was determined that there was an abundance of carp at Casey Lake. They went and lowered the level of the lake and scooped them all out and killed them." Tim added, "they froze them out". Per Jim, "The carp go on the bottom and work thru all of the weeds. So therefore, there was no vegetation in the lake because the carp were keeping it down. And this was not a surprise, they knew this would be the result of taking the carp out. When the carp came out, the weeds grew back which they think is a

good thing.” Tim Cole stated, “There is a balance that needs to be found between the lake quality and the appearance. During the presentation, they had done a great job explaining the lake quality, but what we are here to discuss is the aesthetics of the lake. Tim then confirmed that Jim Selchow was right in that they were supposed to have a meeting within two weeks with a hydrologist and Rob Dott to walk the lake and that didn’t happen and added, “The only other comment that I’ve heard back was from Kari, was that referencing cattails and permits to cut cattails. They said that the homeowners may be surprised that the cattails they want to remove are not theirs.” Sarah asked Tim, “Where does he feel comfortable, from your opinion after attending that meeting, to help bridge towards a solution?” Tim stated. “I would try...my recommendations would be to bring it to workshop. Do a council workshop. First and third Wednesdays first Tuesdays of the month at 6:00 here.” Sarah asked if a park board recommendation was actually, needed? As a park commission, we can’t dictate the water.” Tim stated, “There are things that need to be done before we can approve anything.” Tim is also working with the Silver Lake Improvement Association and their studies that they’re asking for are approx. \$13,000. They are looking to a sampling just to see how much sediment there is and what is in the sediment. Tim said, “They have a lot of problems from when construction was done over there in the heavy rains that happened and drainage. Their culverts shortly that they showed in pictures are ½ full of mud.” Sarah said, “Before we do anything here, it needs to go to Council. So, we can’t do anything about it today.” Tim said, “My guidance is to bring it over to workshop.” Lisa questioned if the watershed was still going to work on it but they can’t because of current COVID issues. She added, “I think that’s understandable because there are number of cases and maybe Rob has COVID, maybe one of his coworkers does so I wouldn’t discount it at this point. I think we could keep on top of that meeting with Rob as he proposed.” Sarah stated, “I think in regards to the money at point, I think the only thing I would say is I think as a park board, we need to have park plan approved before we start giving money to other things. I don’t think it would be fair for council to approve us spending money to treat a lake, we can even spend any of our thousands of dollars to fix our parks. So, put pressure on the city and you know that I’m not opposed to understanding that as it is an asset to our city but before we start spending money, we need to get our ducks in a row.” Jim stated that he did not envision the city paying for this, “Can’t we somehow get the DNR or the Watershed to pay for this?” Tim said, “It doesn’t hurt to ask, the only thing I heard from the watershed district was they have done everything that they are going to do. It might not be fair to paraphrase it that way but that’s what I heard when I left.” Jim Selchow concurred. Tim Cole thanked Jim for reaching out to Senator Wiger and Representative Lilly. Sarah inquired, “Is there is a way to bundle the studies on Casey Lake and Silver Lake together?” Tim said, “So the only other thing that I have here ... Silver Lake identified the growth, vegetation as purple blue stripe as currently growing on Silver Lake. They were concerned and wanted to get out & spray Silver Lake now because it was just starting to bloom. I know what it looks like.” Jim said, “All I know is that it wasn’t duckweed on that surface. I got pretty close so I could examine it and found it appeared as granular seeds but no more than 1/16th of an inch in diameter. There are like billions of them and that is why lake is about 60 – 70% green.” Tim Cole said, “The Silver Lake Improvement Association was going to spray all their areas. They need a permit or permission from the city to the city’s public areas. I did talk to Brian about a couple weeks ago so I’m assuming somethings done that I don’t know from the Silver Lake standpoint. I also know we (Park & Rec) has paid to spray areas both at Silver Lake and Casey. I don’t remember what we spray for or when it was, so that might be something to looking well. What did we spray for?” Sarah stated, “Part of that cost was split with the Silver Lake Park Association. I think we covered the beach and couple of docks or something. The Parks & Rec paid for all of Casey as there is no Lake Association.” Sarah stated, “So we need to get this on a Council workshop.” Per Tim Cole, that is the next step.” Lloyd stated, “In the interest of other our other gentleman, are there any other questions for Jim?”

There wasn’t any further question. The commissioners thanked Jim for coming.

Lloyd asked the next guest to state his name right. Rahul Faizer introduced himself as a high schooler at Roseville area high school and a boy scout in Little Canada, Troop 462.

His project is on wood duck houses in North St Paul. Rahul proceeded with his power point presentation. He has a house plan that he was given by David Nelson, who has built several wood duck houses, and will be guiding Rahul. There will be 5 houses at Casey Lake and one replacement at Southwood Park. Rahul's presentation included a project plan, map of the locations, the placement spacing, ongoing maintenance (which will be done by the boy scouts) and what he is looking for from the Parks and Rec commission. From the Park & Rec Commission, he would like help getting signage and education out to the public. Rahul estimated the cost of materials for the 6 wood duck houses to be approximately \$300 to \$400. The houses will be built out of recycled wood pallets. They are not treated so they won't be harmful to the environment. The cost is incurred with the metal pipe and the cement. They are estimated to last approximately 10 years. The plan is to have the project complete before the frost comes in. The biggest issue Rahul faces is getting approval from the boy scouts and the city. Sarah asked if it would be ok if the signs were not available until next spring? Rahul didn't think that would be a problem. Tim Cole commented, "This was one of the best presentations I've has seen." Ron Ritchie has been assigned as the beneficiary to oversee the project and contact person to answer questions. Tim also stated that Rahul is looking mostly for support in education. Sarah asked, "Does the commission need to help create the content for the signs and if so, the master naturalist would be the person for that." Laura stated, "There may be an option for temporary signage if needed." Lloyd asked if there were any other questions. Lisa asked Rahul if he had already gone to city council for this? Rahul stated that he will be going on October 5th. Lloyd made a motion that Rahul proceeds forward with the project as noted. Sarah Zahradka seconded the motion with all present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried.

VI. Public Hearings - None

VII. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

A. Review/Approve Park Policy Revisions

Lisa stated it was in the packet and that she had previously handed out printed copies of the park policy that had been redlined with proposed changes which Kari Erpenbach had created. Kari is looking for the commissioner's approval. The commissioners recalled they had previously agreed on new rates. Lisa confirmed it is the Park Policy that is redlined and needs to be reviewed. Lloyd mentioned as a side note, there were 2 people tell him today that there was a celebration of life yesterday for the 2 kids that were killed in a recent accident. Lloyd indicated there were complaints that the kids were running around and smells of...he eluded to marijuana.

Lloyd let the party that submitted the complaint know that he would pass that information on to the park commission. Lisa asked if she needed to do anything more than make a note. Lloyd said it should just be on record and he had also let the person who submitted the complaint know they should not intervein but should call the police department. If they just want to have it recorded, they should let the liaison know or city council know.

The commission briefly discussed a few other recent incidents that happened during the park facility rentals.

Next, the commission reviewed and discussed the park policy. There was some conversation that went back and forth on the appropriate wording for the deposit.

Laura asked if the recommended changes were broad sweeping, whether or not the Park & Rec commissioners had to approve it all or deny it all? Or could they say, "Approved with additional..." Lisa said it was up to the commission to decide. Lloyd stated the commission should just make their recommendation and let them review it from there. Nancy Thorsen thought the commission needed to be more specific about needing to physically come into city hall to pay cash for deposit. Tim Cole, read what the redlined policy stated. Tim asked for confirmation that the rental could be paid online with a credit card. Lisa confirmed. Tim's guidance to clean it up, was if rental payments are paid online, check or cash needs to be delivered to the city within "X" number of days. Sarah stated that five days (five business days).

Laura stated, "A comment could be added to say, "You will not be issued keys until we have received a damage deposit." The commission worked towards coming up with the appropriate wording that would be suitable to the applicant as well as protecting the city. They want to ensure that if deposit is not received, the reservation would be cancelled so someone else may have the opportunity to reserve it.

Sue Springborn stated that she wonders what other communities do? Sarah stated, "A lot of cities take deposit by credit card and then refund the damage deposit after. The city of North St Paul has always worked with cash or check for payments." She added, "That is going to be dated at some point as some people don't have checkbooks. People are using Venmo or Pay Pal". She suggests the city look into eventually, alternate payment structure. Laura explained a bit on how those processes work. Tim stated the city would still issue a check for a refund.

Lisa stated, "Maybe they could start by having it all done online and if it becomes a problem, then change it to a cash only process."

Ingrid asked if "Damage" was clearly defined in case someone to question that they really damaged the property. Tim Cole confirmed is it in the current contract. Sarah affirmed that we haven't has any problems in the past.

Lloyd summed it up by saying, "So if the average person signs up January 1, puts their credit card down for the reservation, it goes to the cycle probably paid to the city, right? And then at the same time, we are saying they have to pay within seven days of reservation. That would mean this whole cycle payment through several months before they actually used the place. The chasing down may not be as hard as we think. Because the claim was a fraudulent charge well if I signed up for June and I get charged in January or February, why am I sitting on it for a few months and then claiming fraud?" Laura said, "It is also way less work for the city to have to manage a bunch of people coming in to drop off the checks if we do it online." Tim said he thinks the city supports the check. "That's why we got away from the check, because the current software that was in the city at the time was on a different process from the new software that we have now. Sarah commented, "For now we need to edit the language that you guys said and I would say moving forward as a goal state is, I do think the city should encourage the city to look at other means of payment methods like Zelle, which is a bank safe like money transfer. Because we are going to die with the times if we don't keep up with them." Tim stated, "So the question is, are we having trouble renting this?" Several people replied: "No". Sarah added, "But there is no deposit right now." Tim stated, "if we are not having a problem renting it and the issue is we are having this damage, seemed to be a recurring theme then if it is a little harder, isn't that Okay?" Sarah replied, "yeah." Tim continued, "I get the Venmo thing, I love using Venmo because it is super convenient for me. But, if the objective of this whole thing is we are getting

damage and we are not getting compensated for it, maybe it's okay to make it a little more difficult." Sarah stated, "I think we are not going to solve that part right now so I think we just need to edit the language. My suggestion moving forward is, as we continue to rent buildings and we update things, the park, then they get more rental. We can't control it, as a park board we don't control the city payment system." Lisa agreed and stated, "And there might be some regulations." Sarah said she literally have two bank accounts where I have no place go to deposit cash." The commission all agreed that times are changing and everything is moving to online. Lloyd asked, "Who inspects the facility after they have been rented?" per the policy, it is stated it needs to be left in the same condition it was when they got there. Tim stated, "The cleaning crew comes in that night." Lloyd moved the conversation back to what they are looking at for changes then. Lisa stated, "I'm going to backtrack just a minute here. Here is an answer to what other cities are doing, from the last, when this out in the packet so if you want to just a quick minute to look at that. Otherwise, it would be on page 10 if the 7/28 meeting minutes. so that's what you find that. As far as the redline, there are something to consider. We already re-evaluated the park rental fees, here is the current policy and proposed changes." The commission reviewed the policy. Laura said, "I think we were talking about a couple of specific changes around the deposit."

Lisa asked the commission to approve the first part of the redlined copy on the policy. Lloyd asked if everybody was ok with the proposed changes and they were.

Everyone agreed they were ok with it.

Laura said, "We are changing it to: Damage deposits are due at the time of application. Keys will not be..." there was back and forth conversation in coming up with the appropriate wording. Sarah then said, "I would just say, damage deposits are due within 5 days of the application. At the city offices" Laura stated, "It's important to say, keys (or code) will not be issued until after the deposit has been received." Laura added she is fine with everything else. Lloyd asked if everyone was fine with everything else. All agreed. Tim asked if the commission needs to make a recommendation for it to go to council? On motion by Commissioner Greenlee-Karp, seconded by Commissioner Thorsen with all present voting aye (7-0), motion carried.

B. Southwood Park Budget

Lisa stated, "There was a comment made that Kathy Troendle hadn't requested any money for the park fund and knowing that there had been some spraying done there was question as to where that money came from. Kathy was told by Scott Duddeck that her budget was the same as last year's and she sent that information so that's included in the packet as well, and I know Tim said, "We need to do it the right way and have it go through counsel, keep them in the loop on it and so we'll get that." Lloyd asked, "So, she knows we are backing up a bit?" Lisa replied, "Yes. Yes, she knows that." Lloyd stated it was his understanding that she should come to the Park & Rec commission meeting to present at some point." Tim stated that Kathy is unable to due to COVID so Kathy sent an email. He continued, during COVID, there was some misguidance provided and for two years Scott basically just approved whatever the prior year was. It was either \$6000 or \$6500. She hasn't spent anywhere near that. I think it was \$3500 a year ago and she is maybe at \$1500 this year with one more spring left." Lisa said, "Right, we'll have to check. It is my understanding that some of her funds were paid from the public works funds when they should have been coming out her budget so we are looking into that. And the wood chips are a lot more than what they had been last year so is also that dispute

going on." Tim read from Kathy's email, "During the pandemic, I haven't been able to spend the entire \$6500. 2020 \$3633.09. This year so far, we've spent \$1460.66 with another Prairie treatment from Minnesota landscape and buckthorn removal from the Minnesota conservation corp. still planned. Some of the trails need wood chips, especially the trail off Margaret Street that got destroyed with the removal of the trees and the drainage reconstruction. I was told it would be wood chips when the work was done but this is never happened. I contacted Ron about possible woodchips on the trail and having public works do it. Ron said the chips for the just trail would require 500 yards at \$20 a yard. Way out of our budget she says. Lisa added she thinks it is because Kathy is requesting a specific kind. Tim said he thought they need to be a certain kind. There was some discussion on whether or not they actually need to be what she is requesting. Laura stated, "they did need to be as one time some chips were put down that weren't ground fine enough basically. Kathy said they dumped them and it was 2/3 wood chips and random twigs and plastic." Lloyd stated that it was probably an invasive issue too. Per Kathy's email, in 2018 Keith found woodchips thousand dollars for 100 yards. Ron said Keith's records cannot be found." Lloyd stated, "2020 was approved." Lisa stated, 2021 was approved as well by Scott for \$6500 is my understanding. I can't quote how much she has spent so far because they need to investigate and find out how much was spent out of the public works budget for the spraying that was done." Laura stated, "Like a line item got allocated to the wrong place?" Lisa replied, "Yes." Tim stated, "What she has provided me she is, she spent \$3633.09. This year she spent \$1460.66. So, where we apply those bills when they came in would have to be discussed with Dan. But per her budgeting that's what she has spent." Nancy stated, "\$5093." Tim added, "That was for two years." Lloyd stated, "So we get back on track for 2022." Tim said, "So she has, and I don't know if I was assuming it was in the package, she provided me with the 2022 budget proposal, which is at \$6500 which is consistent with what is been. Within \$500, I don't think it's ever moved. Professional buckthorn removal \$2500, professional invasive plant treatment, prairie restoration areas \$3200. Supplies flagging chemicals forming agent bags and gloves \$200. Earth day clean up, garlic mustard plus wood \$300 and seed plants \$300 so it totals \$6500. What I am going to do is I am going to forward the email."

Lloyd stated in the interest of time, do we want to put this on the agenda for October?" Sarah asked if they could even approve anything as their budget is on hold. Tim stated, "We can make a recommendation to be approved." Laura stated her biggest question is, "Does she feel pressed to have the wood chips before winter?" Lloyd stated, "As of now, it sounds like Scott has already approved her budget for this year. Are we going retroactive back to approve it?" Tim said, "No, it has been approved by Scott." Laura said "It's been approved but she is asking to exceed her budget." Tim disagreed. He stated the quote she received was unacceptable. Tim added, "It needs to be wood chipped and that is the conversation this group needs to have and based on the cost of wood chips, I would suggest, is what does it look like to blacktop some of those trails?" There was some discussion on how expensive that would be. Lloyd recommended the conversation be tabled until next month when they could have a longer conversation about it. Laura thought there was a sense of urgency on this?" Tim said there was a sense of urgency on Kathy's part as she realizes there may not have been approved that it should have been." Tim's first intent was to just bring everyone up to speed on the situation.

Sarah said, she is in support of bringing Southwood up to date and is in favor of blacktop at least the main loop." Tim said Kathy is looking only asking for a maintenance budget approval at this point. Lloyd said the commission usually does her annual budget in October or November. Sarah suggested lumping the Southwood Park Fee for Service item that is next on the agenda together with the Southwood Park Budget conversation and table them for next month. There was some back and forth on the discussion and it was ultimately decided to table VII B and VII C for next month's meeting.

Tim excused himself from the meeting at that point as he has another commitment.

He stated he hopes to see everyone at the parade tomorrow night.

C. South Park Fee-For-Service work order between Southwood Nature Preserve and Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa

Tabled for next month

D. Rotary Park Signs

Lisa said, "It is still on hold as far as she knows. She has not heard back from the manufacture on that." Lloyd stated "That was due to a COVID issue" and Lisa confirmed. She added there had been a debate on whether or not Joe Miller from the Rotary was going to use a North St. Paul branded sign. "At the last meeting, the Rotary Club discussed two signs now. One being a city park sign which would have our branding and match all of the other city parks and they are also proposing a kiosk." Lisa didn't know if the commission needs to decide how the \$4000 will be allocated. Lloyd suggested waiting until we get something going with the sign company. Sarah stated, "That was the debate as I am pretty strong on if we are spending money on a park sign, then it needs to be branded North Saint Paul and their strong feeling was they didn't want it and they were blaming it on the DNR but then we discovered it can be North Saint Paul. Sarah stated she thinks they don't want us to take credit for their signs but they want us to pay for it. Lloyd said we could just table it.

VIII. Reports from Staff

A. Update on quorums

Lisa stated that she found out there was conflicting information on the numbers for the quorums. Per the League of MN Cities, it is ½ (or more) of commissioners. Sarah said, "I think the attendance has been way worse since we have not been able to do anything with our park money. Because it used to be that we would come to these meetings, we would make decisions and would spend money and we would improve the parks and now we have spent 2 years doing nothing. Because even myself, I am like, it's hard to want to come to a place when you can't do anything. Her question is, "What is the rule around attendance?" I am speaking out of like I understand why it is hard to want to come to something when you can't make progress, however, there are a lot of people who on and off can't make to meetings and so at what point are we saying, "X" amount of times you miss park meetings, because we only have like 11 a year. At what point is there a rule that says, if you miss 5 of these, it is going affect all of us. And I feel bad because I missed last month but it was the only one I missed besides like 8 months ago and so at some point, I feel like we have to have some rule. Lisa and Nancy both said there are rules listed in the by-laws. Nancy said "You can go to the website, then you can go to government." Sarah stated she would like to have a refresher on the next month's agenda.

Lisa asked Sarah if she wants to have an agenda item added to a council workshop to see if the commission can move forward with spending from their budget without the completion of the Park Improvement Plan? Sarah thinks it would be good to bring it up, stating "Hey, your park commission is stuck between a rock and a hard place and we're going to start losing members." Lisa

stated the absences have been for COVID or family issues. Sarah told Lisa, "That is what people are telling you." Laura stated, "It's an issue for me." Lisa said, "We can certainly ask. I know that WSB is looking at a draft by early November and taken to Council in December. So yes, we can definitely get it on a workshop agenda." Nancy Thorsen stated, "We don't meet in December." Sarah said, "It might be ok at that point but I would say maybe if we don't get this thing up and approved by December, then we need to revisit." Lisa asked if they would be doing anything in the winter? Sarah said, "No, we wouldn't be doing anything in the winter but usually November, we start out what we are doing next year." Lisa stated the commission had already done that with the prioritizing of the of the list sent to finance for next year. There was some back and forth so clarify, it was the 2021 plan that had not been executed. Laura stated, "The short answer is yes, we want to go to council and say this is really difficult and we need to start moving on stuff because it is making us look like we aren't doing anything." Sarah said, "It makes us feel like we aren't doing anything. After 4 or 5 years of making progress it's really hard to sit here and talk in circles." Lloyd said, "Why don't you make a recommendation?" Sue Springborn stated she was having a really hard time to catch up on what is happening here. "Who made that rule?" Laura stated, "City Council." Lloyd said, "Way back when we didn't have our park improvement plan. Back in 2020 or so, they said, you need to get your park improvement plan because we had a park improvement plan and it didn't go and then it did go and then it got lost in the shuffle and they said, you cannot move forward with programming until you have a park improvement plan done." Sarah stated, "It was a practical request. We just went every November and we said, you know what, next year Dorothy Park needs a new playground, and then we would say...that's like..., we would do the research ahead of time so then we would say, Ok, Dorothy Park is going to be \$40,000, we also want a new tennis court at Silver. We would go with our list and say, here is our \$90,000 we are going to spend. That would go to council, get approved so that we could start ordering the equipment over the winter to get it in. The problem with that is that there was no plan so the city council was saying, well, how do we know what you want to do with Dorothy Park? We don't know what the full long-term plan is. Which is a reasonable request, the problem is, then they let go a lot of the staff that probably would have worked on such plan. And so ever since that staff has been let go, in my opinion, we have had nobody working on it. I can't say nobody has worked on it, what I am saying is that Lisa has 14 jobs and she can't do it all. So, then we hired it out and so what has happened is, year 2, almost 2 years it feels like, they said, we don't want you spending, we don't want you building a playground, we don't want you fixing a shelter, we don't want you putting a sidewalk." Sue asked, "So this is not a long-term policy, is it?" Lloyd replied, "Basically Sue, in a nut shell, we had to get our homework done before we could celebrate." Sarah said, "Yes, but none of us could do the homework, the city has to do it and the city is understaffed so they can't do it." Arthur asked, "So what do we need to do? Do we need to ask, can we start moving forward?" Sarah said, "Yes, based on the plan that we already wrote, that hasn't been fully approved, we want to use that as our guide and start ticking off things on that list for 2022." The commission agreed that they would like to move forward. Sarah stated, "I would like to make a recommendation to go to council and ask to start budget spending for 2022 based on the plan that we created that has not been approved yet." Lloyd asked for someone second to the motion. Sue seconded the motion. Sarah stated she is starting to feel a big frustration and Laura concurred that she has been feeling it for a long time. Sarah used to love coming to the park meeting and now she dreads it. Lloyd asked if there was any more discussion on the issue. There was not. All present voting aye (7-0). Motion carried.

B. Update on Park Improvement Plan

As discussed in previous conversation.

- C. Silver Lake Fall Clean Up Sept 18th - 25th. See article in city website:
<https://www.northstpaul.org/calendar.aspx?eid=1918>

Sarah stated, "It's on the article, we can read it."

- D. Update on Casey Lake

Jim Selchow provided an update on Casey Lake in the beginning of the meeting.

IX. Reports from Commissioners & Park Liaisons

Nancy Thorsen announced Star Watch 2021 has been cancelled. She stated, "After talking to Mike, he thought it was better for everyone involved."

Laura said to Lloyd, "So you wanted me to go over the budget?" Lloyd said, "Here is where all of this came up, Tim asked me to remind all of us that we used to have a budget going and again, things got in the shuffle with COVID and so forth, so we are just kind of bringing it back around so we know what is going on with the budget every month." Lisa stated, "It is in a different format because we are on a different software system." Laura reviewed the budget. Lloyd asked Laura to pass it so Nancy could take a look at it. Laura said, "So if you remember, the park dedication fund is the money we are getting from the ongoing building projects. That is required to be paid to us for dedicated green space to accompany the incoming buildings. The park fund is the money that we've grown over time through building rentals." Lloyd said, "And part of the Casey Lake \$69,000 a year I believe." Sarah corrected him stating it is \$65,000. Sarah said we get \$100,000 per year currently from the city through multiple funds, taxes, legacy money, whatever. \$65,000 goes to help pay for the Casey Lake building and the rest we get to keep to use for improvements." Laura stated, "The dedication fund has specific requirements about how we can use it." Sarah stated, "It has to be new development, no maintenance, no replacing existing things. It's has to be new." Laura said, "You Lisa were going to bring some more information to us on how that park dedication fund can be used. I believe we talked about that last time." Lisa stated she would ask Dan to attend a meeting and he can explain the financials."

Lloyd asked, "Anything else?" Nobody had anything else to say.

X. Adjournment

Sarah made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Alvarez.

Lloyd apologized and asked Nancy if she wanted to say something about the budget? Nancy said, "No, I would like clarification on that Market Value adjustment...exactly what that is." Laura said, "Yeah, is it interest?" Nancy said it could be. Laura noted it is in both which makes her thing it is like a small interest." Lisa reaffirmed she would ask Dan to attend a meeting to explain the financials.

Lloyd summed up the adjournment, motion by Sarah, seconded by Artie with all present voting aye, motion carried to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:57PM