



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

February 23rd, 2022

6:30 PM

The February 23rd, 2022 Parks & Rec Commission meeting was held in the Sandberg Room of North St. Paul City Hall, 2400 Margaret Street, North St. Paul MN 55109

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call

Lloyd Grachek, Chair - present

Laura Greenlee-Karp, Vice Chair - present

Larry Amsden - present

Heather Haas –present

Ingrid Koller - present

Sue Springborn – absent (excused)

Nancy Thorsen - present

Sarah Zahradka – present

Arthur Alvarez, Jr - present

Council Liaison: Tim Cole -absent (excused)

Staff: Jill Officer – present

III. Adopt Agenda

On motion to adopt the agenda by Commissioner Sarah Zahradka, seconded by Commissioner Heather Haas with all present voting aye (8-0), motion carried to adopt the agenda.

IV. Approval of Minutes

On motion to approve the January 26th, 2022 meeting minutes by Commissioner Nancy Thorsen, seconded by Commissioner Ingrid Koller, with all present voting aye (8-0), motion carried to approve the minutes.

V. Meeting Open to Public –

Carey Nadeau and Tom Sonnek from the Art and Culture Commission were present to discuss collaborating with the Park and Recreation Commission on reintroducing the Craft Wagon. Both Commissions were excited about the idea and having it at the Music in the Park series. The PRC gave several ideas of how to manage crowds, possible volunteer contacts, sponsorships, school group contacts and branding.

Cathy Troendle from Southwood Nature Preserve presented an overview of accomplishments from 2021, the needs for 2022 and the budget to complete these items. Attachments (3) included.

VI. Public Hearings - None

VII. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

On motion by Commissioner Sarah Zahradka to approve \$7,000 for Southwood Nature Preserve budget, seconded by Commissioner Heather Haas, with all present voting aye (8-0), motion carries to approve funding for Southwood.

- A. Discussion of paving Southwood trails- Reasons discussed for paving included the yearly cost of wood chips, maintenance, volunteer availability in years to come, and an increase of usability and accessibility. Reasons brought up to not pave the trails include the natural aspect of the trails, the setback requirements when paving by watershed areas, the cost of paving is significantly more than the woodchips and the current volunteers/clientele do not want paved trails. Discussion will continue on possibly paving some trails or possibly putting in sidewalks along the south and west sides will happen at the Community Meeting at Southwood in June.
- B. Review of 2022 calendar- removing April event, adding Food Truck night, adding a walking meeting of 7th Ave in August and the other locations of the community meetings. Commissioner Thorsen is checking into Star Watch. Several ideas of retitling/revamping Trick or Treat Trail in October.

On motion by Commissioner Laura Greenlee-Karp to spend no more than \$500 for plastic cover/coiled copies of the final, approved Park Improvement Plan for all active PRC commissioners, liaisons and related staff, seconded by Commissioner Sarah Zahradka, with all present voting aye (8-0), motion carries to approve Park Improvement Plan booklets.



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VIII. Reports from Staff

Reiterated Open Meeting Laws –in person, online in public place and noted on agenda, or online as guest.

Staff member Jill Officer requested one to two commissioners to be present at the workshop and council meeting to present and answer questions about the Park Improvement plan.

IX. Reports from Commissioners & Park Liaisons

Next month's meeting topics: Discuss October event, go through Park Improvement Plan

X. Adjournment

On motion by Commissioner Sarah Zahradka, seconded by Commissioner Nancy Thorsen with all present voting aye (8-0), motion carried to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM

Next Park and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for March 23rd, 2022 at city hall in the Sandberg Room; 2400 Margaret St, North St Paul, MN 55109

Park and Recreation Commission 2020-2021 Report

Three of our task force members retired because they have moved out of the area: Jay Kuechenmeister, Deb Armstrong, and Meggie Royer. We thank them for their service to Southwood Nature Preserve.

Fire Department staffing numbers were limited due to the pandemic in 2020, so they were unable to perform a prescribed burn. Unfortunately the 2021 prescribed burn was canceled due to rain.

Public Works removed trees that fell directly on the trails. EAB is now in Southwood Nature Preserve as well as in neighborhood trees. In October 2021, the crew planted 10 bare-root hackberry trees (Margaret Street Trail) that were donated by a Water Steward who owns a nursery.

Public works mowed the Mesic Prairie in the early spring to reduce seed production from non-native invasive plants. The Public Works crew kept the North Field and the boulevard around Southwood Nature Preserve mowed during the summer.

A contractor removed trees along the creek at the Margaret Street location of the preserve due to lightning damage. A new culvert system was installed. The area was seeded with a native seed mix. The boulevard was seeded with turf grass which survives road salt better.

Some of Southwood's trails were in need of woodchips. Woodchips were last spread on some of the trails December 2018 (100 yards). Public Works spread 100 yards of woodchips December 2021. An area in need of woodchips was the trail off Margaret Street where the trail was damaged by the construction vehicles when the trees were removed and the culvert rebuilt. The trail was not repaired after the work was completed. We were able to do this because of a discounted rate from Ramsey County Corrections.

In 2020 and 2021 Minnesota Native Landscapes continued treating the invasive plants in Southwood Nature Preserve's prairies, coming out 3 times each year.

The Conservation Corps was unable to remove buckthorn in 2020 as they had a difficult recruitment season. They were did come out this year (October 11, 2021 and October 12, 2021) but their crew was limited to 2 crew members instead of 5. They did try to come out for additional days (November 10, 2021 and November 11, 2021), but rain limited what they were able to complete this year.

Robbie Seville was interested in completing an Eagle Scout Project for Southwood Nature Preserve. We discussed the possibility of building a chimney swift tower, looked at some plans developed by the Audubon Society and check out possible locations. His scout leader and grandfather both have building skills, so he discussed the project with them and decided he would like to build the chimney swift tower. He and his troop members finished installing the tower September 11, 2021.

The pandemic has also affected the ability of our volunteers to perform service projects in the preserve. In the past, North High JROTC cadets have assisted us with large projects during the spring and fall, but small school attendance impacted the ability to work with the students. Hopefully next spring they'll be able to come out again. We did have smaller groups and individuals volunteer in 2021.

In May, Meggie Royer and Patrick Krasky removed garlic mustard since our past GAP volunteer group could not due to covid. Meggie Royer removed invasive Dame's rocket from the North end of the preserve (June 11, 2021) before she left for graduate school in Michigan (August 16, 2021).

Christine Meyer contacted Cathy Troendle, July 23, 2021, regarding a hawk that was acting strangely. Cathy went out and caught the juvenile Cooper's Hawk and took it to The Raptor Center. Unfortunately the raptor did not survive and was suspected of being infected with West Nile Disease.

Students from the AIM program at Lionsgate Academy in North Saint Paul came out to the preserve this summer to remove burdock, curly dock and buckthorn (July 20, 2021 and July 27, 2021).

Five members from Saint Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church worked with task force members Darrell Meyer and Tiffany Brian to remove buckthorn during their annual "Gods Work Our Hands " day of service (September 12, 2021).

John Lampe has continued his volunteer work, treating the Japanese Knotweed in the preserve. This fall (November 23, 2021) he is used a new technique by directly treating the live underground corms.

Vick Fickling, David and Donna Nelson continued work in the Oak Savanna.

Cathy Troendle continued monitoring the bluebird and duck boxes; removed burdock plants/seeds, garlic mustard, curly dock, dame's rocket, buckthorn and honeysuckle; planted dogwood trees; created posts for Friends of Southwood Nature Preserve Facebook Page; updated the pamphlet box on the kiosk with the Southwood Nature Preserve Map, Oakdale Bark Park Map, and Southwood Preserve Bird List; repaired plant signs; spread native prairie seeds; implemented new activities:

Monitored Southwood's Creek for Winter Salt Watch (11/25/2020 91 ppm, 3/9/2021 203 ppm, 5/28/2021 172 ppm, 10/5/2021 46 ppm – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – concentrations of 230 ppm or greater are dangerous to aquatic life);

Wrote a grant for a native bee nesting box (Sponsor-A-Hive) and installed in the Upland Prairie

Developed a 2021 winter trail activity to Identify Trees in winter

Developed a 2021 Spring and Fall BINGO activity available to visitors to pick up from the kiosk

Family Nature Walk, for ISD 622 Early Childhood and Family Programs, with 82 participants in September 22, 2020 and 121 participants in October 7, 2021. In 2020 we took precautions by not having activities where people would congregate (crafts, touch table or stations). Instead we had a 5 senses BINGO Hike and families move clock wise around the pond. This year we had a story book trail and included hands-on activities: making binoculars, mammal fur touch table, and making animal tracks in sand.

2021 Southwood Nature Preserve Quarterly Expense Report - \$6,500 approved by city council

January - March 2021

Home Depot	Stake Materials for Educational Signage	\$ 72.54
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April - June 2021

Minnesota Native Landscapes (May 12, 2021)	Prairie Treatment	\$ 600.00
Displays2go	Brochure Rack for Kiosk	\$ 53.62

July - September 2021

Minnesota Native Landscapes (July 2, 2021)	Prairie Treatment	\$ 687.50
Sam's Club	Snacks for volunteer group	\$ 47.00
Minnesota Native Landscapes (Sept 16, 2021)	Prairie Treatment	\$ 1,050.00

October - December 2021

Conservation Corps (10/11-12, 11/10-11)	Buckthorn - rain cancel 1/2 day 10/12; full day 11/11	\$ 1,500.00
Woodchips from Corrections	100 yrds/\$9 yrd plus delivery of 8 loads \$25/ load	\$ 1,100.00

Total Expense		\$ 5,110.66
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Total Budget	\$6,500	
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Remaining Budget		\$ 1,389.34
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2022 Budget Proposal

1. Professional Buckthorn Removal	\$ 2,500.00
2. Professional Prairie Maintenance (Mesic Prairie, Emergent Shoreline Restoration, Upland Prairie, Oak Savanna, North Oak Savanna, North Mesic Prairie)	\$ 3,000.00
3. Earth Day Cleanup, Garlic Mustard Pull, Fall Work Day	\$ 300.00
4. Woodchips	\$ 1,200.00
TOTAL	\$ 7,000.00