



**Park and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 28, 2024
6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Lloyd Grachek, Chair
Laura Greenlee-Karp, Vice-Chair
David Andren, Commissioner
Ben Hansen, Commissioner
Ingrid Koller, Commissioner
Sue Springborn, Commissioner
Sarah Zahradka, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Cassidy Schweer, City Council Liaison
Sara Lang, Staff Liaison

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Grachek called for a motion to adopt the August 28, 2024 meeting agenda.
M/Hansen, S/Koller
Motion carried 7-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes from June 26, 2024 PRC Meeting

Chair Grachek called for a motion to approve the June 26, 2024 meeting minutes.
M/Andren, S/Springborn
Motion carried 7-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Sara Bosely submitted a written statement that was read by Chair Grachek. Ms. Bosely is concerned with the number of turtles she is coming across dead on Holloway Ave near Southwood Nature Preserve and is asking the City to explore options to make drivers aware.

Commissioner Koller has expressed interest in temporary signage during the mating season.

VI. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. HGA Updates with Tryg Hansen

Tryg Hansen and Noah Exum from HGA presented to the Commission the current state of the park planning project.

The park planning project includes proposals on McKnight Fields, a passive park (along 3rd St N beginning at 2357 7th Ave, towards the Gateway Trail) and a pocket park (corner of 7th Ave and North St. Paul Dr).

HGA highlighted that the community engagement piece will be at the forefront of this process. Events including the Autumn Arts Festival and the Fall Roundup Parade will be targeted as opportunities to reach the community. It is important to understand current usage and current stakeholders in the community to help make data-driven decisions for future success. HGA noted gaps in representation currently that maybe great as liaisons for a community advisory board including local renters, first generation immigrants and more.

The next steps will be to have conceptual designs that are discussed with local stakeholders and community liaisons and also discussed pop-up events to encourage community engagement.

Commissioner Koller asked about how people are notified for open houses. HGA mentioned that key stakeholders have been identified and will be invited as well as general publicity.

Council Liaison Schweer asked for more information on who the key stakeholders are for the project. HGA noted that some include renters who may be very effected but have quiet voices.

Commissioner Hansen noted that older adults in care facilities are underrepresented. HGA noted that some facilities have been included as stakeholders that are near the proposed parks.

B. Budget Discussion

Daniel Winek, the City of North St. Paul's Finance Director, presented on the current state of the various park related budgets as well as CIP plans for 2025 and beyond.

An overview of spending was discussed including that all expenditures must be for public purpose, made by a City employee, approved by a department head, follow the City's purchasing policy from an approved budget that is approved by the City Council.

The proposed 2025 tax levy is currently at 9.88% for everything. The proposed increase to the overall levy for parks is 0.55% and 0.44% for facility maintenance.

The park operating costs come from the General Fund that include a parks budget and a recreation budget and the Building Maintenance Fund which includes labor, day to day maintenance, and janitorial services.

The General Fund increase for parks remain pretty stagnant with an estimated 1% increase coming from personnel costs, supplies, contractual services, capital costs. The Building Maintenance Fund has a proposed 15% increase due to age of facilities.

Vice-Chair Greenlee-Karp asked what budget that any improvements made to the parks based on HGA's recommendation will be funded by and Finance Director Winek noted that anything from HGA in terms of



conceptual designs will be funded by the CIP. If other expenses come up, they can go in front of City Council as the year goes on, if needed.

Chair Grachek asked what fund the original bond for the Casey Lake Park pavilion is paid from. Finance Director Winek noted that local aid, in the amount of \$100,000 is provided to the parks, in which \$65,000 of that goes towards paying the bond.

Finance Director Winek noted that the Park Dedication Fund is strictly used for development of new parks and acquisitions of new park land. No expenditures have been made from this fund and no expenditures are planned in the current CIP. The current balance is about \$352,000. At the August 20, 2024 City Council Meeting, the missing Park Dedication Fund payment for the Sentinel Apartment building was discussed and it was determined that there is money left over from the bond issuance on that project to help cover some of those missing funds. An official amendment will be made for Council to approve the fund reallocation.

The current CIP is outlined for 2024-2033 which included some park projects, mostly studies to be conducted, however many have been postponed due to turnover in staff. The goal with the new Community Development Director is to get back on track with the CIP plans. Finance Director Winek encouraged Commissioners to make recommendations for the CIP including estimates of costs for each project. It was recommended that when working in the next few upcoming years, to try to be pretty close on costs estimates, being somewhere within 10-20%.

Commissioner Andren asked about Southwood Nature Preserve and how the decision was made to not include maintenance or improvements in the CIP. Finance Director Winek noted that previous decisions to the CIP were made by the previous Community Development Director and Public Works and he will follow-up with how decisions were made and report back to the Commission.

The next steps will be for the Commissioners to do some research and come back to the September Commission meeting with proposals for the CIP. Community Development Director Riley Grams will be asked to be present to help facilitate the requests by the Commission.

C. Park and Open Space Master Plan Approval

Staff Liaison Lang stated that this vote is for the Commission to formally recommend the Park and Open Space Master Plan to be presented to City Council for approval.

Chair Grachek asked for a motion to approve the recommendation of the approval of the Park and Open Space Master Plan.

M/Zahradka, S/Greenlee-Karp

Motion carried 7-0.

VII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

A. Public Works Updates

Staff Liaison Lang noted that Public Works has been mowing a lot from the rain the area has seen. At Casey Lak Park, the doors have been fixed and a new picnic table will be installed near the playground from a formal donation.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & PARK LIAISONS



Chair Grachek asked about the ash trees in Southwood and what the plan is to remove them. Staff Liaison Lang stated that she will reach out to Public Works and report back to the Commission.

Commissioner Springborn said she has noticed no kids at Tower Park when driving by at different times. She noted that Northwood seems to have sporadic attendance. She asked if the ball field at Northwood is used and Staff Liaison Lang noted that it is used by one league for practices during the summer. Commissioner Springborn also noted that she attended the Hause Park ribbon cutting and the movie in the park, both fantastic events.

Commissioner Andren noted storm damage in Southwood with trees down across the path. Staff Liaison Lang stated that she would follow-up with Public Works.

Commissioner Koller stated that Silver Lake looks good but is wondering why there was a change to the park hours. Council Liaison Schweer noted that she would speak on that during her updates.

Commissioner Hansen asked about Casey lake ballfield use and what fields were used most. Staff Liaison Lang noted that fields 1 and 2 are used the most with not much use on 3 and 4. Commissioner Hansen also noted that he attended the Hause Park ribbon cutting event and that it was great.

Commissioner Zahradka had no updates.

Vice-Chair Greenlee-Karp had no updates.

City Council Liaison Schweer addressed the change in the park hours, noting that Council will still be discussing them moving forward, for a permanent solution. She asked to have a park hour's discussion added to the next Commission agenda.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Grachek asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM.

M/Andren, S/Springborn

Motion carried 7-0.

The next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Commission Meeting is Wednesday, September 25th, 2024 at 6:30 PM.