



**Park and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 25, 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-absent
Sara Lang, Staff Liaison

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Grachek called for a motion to adopt the September 25, 2024 meeting agenda.
M/Andren, S/Springborn
Motion carried 7-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes from August 28, 2024 PRC Meeting

Chair Grachek called for a motion to approve the August 28, 2024 meeting minutes.
M/Zahradka, S/Andren
Motion carried 7-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Dave Nelson spoke about Southwood Nature Preserve and the great work that was volunteered for cleanup however that is becoming more difficult. He is against using poison for the invasive species and would like the City to explore other options to help including goats. He is asking for the Commission to recommend more money to be allocated for Southwood Nature Preserve.

VI. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

A. HGA Updates with Tryg Hansen

HGA was unable to make the meeting.

B. Code of Conduct Review

Community Development Director Riley Grams presented the Code of Conduct for Commissioners to follow as a refresher. It is important to be mindful and respectful of all valuable experiences and thoughts. The plan will be to review this each year.

C. CIP Discussion

Community Development Director Riley Grams led the discussion of CIP recommendations for the parks. Pages 97 and 99 of the packet show current spending and proposals that come from the 2022 Park Improvement Plan, as well as Public Works and the previous Community Development Director.

Commissioner Andren asked if spending \$500,000 for upgrading the McKnight parking lots can be postponed as it may be effected by the plans HGA will be proposing. It was noted that the phase 2 costs of the park planning project will be included in the CIP when rough numbers are available.

Commissioner Koller recommended that the Silver Lake playground equipment be replaced in the next 8-10 years due to age. The Commission agreed and recommended keeping the \$941,000 number that was suggested for that park in the 2022 Park Improvement Plan. Commissioner Koller also noted that the shoreline is seeing invasive species and the west side of the beach is also be encroached on y invasive species. Community Development Director Grams notes that those items would be more maintenance budget related.

Commissioner Andren recommended for Southwood that the metal bridge over the creek needs to be replaced in the next 5-10 years due to age and that the observation deck has some weathering issues and will also need to be replaced in the next 5-10 years. It was recommended that \$45,000 be dedicated to Southwood for those projects. Commissioner Andren noted that the Southwood Task Force has no immediate or major plans for the preserve.

Commissioner Springborn noted that all of the cities playgrounds are for younger children and asked if the Commission can prioritize creating playgrounds that are inclusive of ages. The Commission agreed but noted that the costs for those playgrounds are quite a bit higher. Commissioner Springborn also asked if the Northwood hockey rink is used for roller blading in the summer and if it is worth keeping.

Chair Grachek noted that he is the liaison for the same parks as Commissioner Dave and that he likes the recommendations that Dave mentioned.

Vice-Chair Greenlee-Karp recommended an upgrade to Northwood, sharing an experience at a new park in Shoreview that includes 5 mini parks in one large space that each addressed different needs including a small skate park, water feature and others. A discussion to reimagine the entire park including removing the hockey rink, moving the playground to make it more accessible, building upgrades and additions of other park features occurred and was agreed upon. The Commission recommended keeping the \$1.43 million as the amount requested in the CIP that was listed in the 2022 Park Improvement Plan.



Commissioner Zahradka recommended that the Urban Ecology Center add nature play and picnic tables as it is along the Gateway Trail and would be a nice spot to stop for families and for rest. She also noted that she strongly agrees with making Northwood more accessible and that it is in need of upgrades.

Commissioner Hansen recommended that field 3 at Casey Lake Park be removed due to underutilization and to make the space more usable by possibly creating green space or a soccer field. He noted it may be necessary to also remove field 4 for the same reason. He recommended this happen in the next 5-10 years. The discussion continued with talks of adding a ninja course to the east side of the park and completing renovations to the hockey rink. The Commission felt that \$500,000 was enough for that park over the next 10 years. Commissioner Zahradka noted that in the winter, the path near the hockey rink gets very muddy from the Public Works trucks and it may be worth adding a small service road. This would keep the path accessible.

Commissioner Zahradka noted that Polar Park has the oldest playground in North St. Paul and the Commission recommended \$90,000 for those repairs in the short term.

Commissioner Zahradka noted that Colby Hills is small and has an unused grass lot that could use a simple enhancement to create an opportunity for sports. The Commission recommended spending \$25,000 on that park.

The next steps will be Community Development Director Grams adding these recommendations to the CIP for 2025 and beyond.

D. Park Hours Discussion and Recommendation

Based on recommendation from Staff Liaison Lang, this will be added to next month's agenda to discuss with Council Liaison Schweer.

E. Park Policy Updates

The Commission recommending adding this to the October agenda as it will require further discussion.

VII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

A. Public Works Updates

Staff Liaison Lang noted that Public Works has completed their park inventory which included one of their staff members mapping each park and noting all benches, picnic tables, grills, bleachers and signs. It is in the process of being documented electronically.

B. HGA Open Houses

Staff Liaison Lang handed out flyers to the Commission for the members to hand out to the community promoting the upcoming HGA open houses at Casey Lake Park on October 9 and 10.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & PARK LIAISONS

Commissioner Hansen had no update.



Commissioner Zahradka had no update.

Vice-Chair Greenlee-Karp had no update.

Chair Grachek had no update.

Commissioner Springborn announced she will be leaving the Commission at the end of 2024.

Commissioner Andren had no additional update.

Commissioner Koller had no update.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Grachek asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 PM.

M/Andren, S/Zahradka

Motion carried 7-0.

The next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Commission Meeting is Wednesday, October 23rd, 2024 at 6:30 PM.