



City of North St. Paul
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Agenda

March 26, 2025
6:30 PM

The Park and Recreation Commission Meeting will be conducted on **March 26, 2025** at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, located at 2400 Margaret St., North St. Paul.

You can watch the meeting on our YouTube channel here: [tinyurl.com/NSPYouTube](https://www.youtube.com/NSPYouTube)

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Laura Greenlee-Karp, Chair
Sarah Zahradka, Vice Chair
Lloyd Grachek
David Andren
Ben Hansen
Ingrid Koller
Rachel Lucas
Cassidy Schweer, Council Liaison

STAFF

Sara Lang

III. Adopt Agenda

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of Minutes from February 26, 2025 PRC meeting

V. Meeting Open to Public

This Open Forum is an opportunity for persons to address the Parks and Recreation Commission on items not on the agenda. A completed public comment form should be presented to the staff liaison prior to the meeting. Comments will be limited to 3 minutes per person. While the Commission may ask clarifying questions of the speaker, no formal action by the Commission or discussion will be held on these items.

VI. Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

- A. Recap and Goals
- B. Park Clean-Up Plan
- C. Nature Preserve Maintenance Research
- D. Commissioner Discussion

VII. Reports from Staff

- A. Budget Recap

VIII. Reports from Commissioners & Park Liaisons

IX. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled Parks & Recreation Commission meeting is April 23rd, 2025.



To	Date
Parks & Recreation Commissioners	March 26, 2025

Agenda Placement # IV.A

Approval of Minutes

Subject

Approval of Minutes from February 26, 2025 PRC meeting

Background/Facts

Recommended Action

Approve the meeting minutes from February 26, 2025.

Attachments

1. PRC Minutes 2.26.25

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Lang, Community Development Administrative Assistant



**Park and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2025
6:30 PM**

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Greenlee-Karp called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Laura Greenlee-Karp, Chair
Sarah Zahradka, Vice-Chair
David Andren, Commissioner
Lloyd Grachek, Commissioner; excused absent
Ben Hansen, Commissioner, excused absent
Ingrid Koller, Commissioner
Rachel Lucas, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Cassidy Schweer, City Council Liaison; excused absent
Sara Lang, Staff Liaison

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to adopt the February 26, 2025 meeting agenda.
M/Andren, S/Zahradka
Motion carried 5-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2025 PRC Meeting

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to approve the January 22, 2025 meeting minutes.
M/Andren, S/Zahradka
Motion carried 5-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

No members of the public were in attendance.

VI. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. HGA Final Document Approval

Staff Liaison Lang noted that HGA has provided their final report for the park planning project. The ask by staff is for the Park and Recreation Commission to approve the recommendation of the document to be presented to City Council. The document will go to the March 4th City Council meeting, at 6:30pm. Commissioners are encouraged to attend the presentation.

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to approve the recommendation of the HGA Final Report to go to Council.

M/Zahradka ,S/Koller
Motion carried 5-0.

B. Overview of the Park and Recreation Commission

Chair Greenlee-Karp noted that she would like to add a project recap to the beginning of each meeting as well as stating Commission goals moving forward and would like to see that as a part of the packet for each upcoming meeting. This will allow clarity and consistency for the Commission moving forward. The Commission agreed to the idea and directed Staff Liaison Lang to add the section to the packets.

C. Review of Park Assignments

Staff Liaison Lang presented the current list of the Park and Recreation Commission liaisons for each park. A discussion occurred on whether Commissioners would like to keep their currently assigned parks or if any changes are requested. The Commission assigned Commissioner Lucas to Tower, Casey and Northwood parks moving forward. Chair Greenlee-Karp also wanted to be added to Northwood park.

Commissioner Andren asked for direction in regard to the Southwood Nature Preserve Task Force and how to make recommendations for Southwood. Vice-Chair Zahradka recommended the development of a plan moving forward for the City and Public Works if the Task Force no longer meets. Chair Greenlee-Karp suggested meeting with the active members to develop a formal understanding moving forward. Staff Liaison Lang will research what other nature preserves do for maintenance and recommendations and will bring the information to the March Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

D. Discussion on Park and Recreation Commission Meetings in Parks

Staff Liaison Lang noted that in last month's meeting, a request by various Commissioners was made to bring back meetings in the parks. She mentioned speaking with City Manager Frandle that meetings in the parks are allowed. Public comment on moving meetings to the parks was shared with the Commission via email today which included information on accessibility to Commission meetings, including physical and audio options. A response to the concern was drafted including providing accommodations if requested. Staff Liaison Lang will look into auditory aids for these meetings.

Commissioners Andren and Koller expressed interest in informal meetings, such as groups of 2 from the Commission go to each park to speak with the public there. Another idea was for Commissioners to go to the parks during peak use hours to speak with park users.

Direction from the Commission was to book Hause Park for the June meeting and Casey Lake Park for the July meeting.

E. Discussion on posting an opening for a Student Commissioner position

Staff Liaison Lang noted that in last month's meeting a question came up about the potential of adding a Student Commissioner to the Park and Recreation Commission. She mentioned that the Commission can



direct staff to create an application and advertise for an opening. With direction from the Commission, an opening can be posted within the week. Rules that apply for candidates include that they must live within North St. Paul and go to a North St. Paul secondary school and the term is one year. She noted that the Chair or Vice-Chair would need to be present in interviews along with staff.

Direction from the Commission was to post two openings for student Commissioners. Staff Liaison Lang will work with Ava Griemert, the City's Communications Coordinator, to create the posting and promote it as well.

Commissioner Lucas loved the idea of receiving feedback and input from younger people. Commissioner Koller loves feedback from daycare providers and children, as they are large users of the parks.

VII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

A. Budget Update

Staff Liaison Lang noted that the Chair Greenlee-Karp requested that the updated budget be included in the packets moving forward. Any questions about the budget will require Staff Liaison Lang to reach out to the Finance Director and will report back.

March will make recommendations for moving forward

Staff Liaison Lang also mentioned that the park cleanup day will be May 17th, to go along with other citywide cleaning events in May. The event will be from 10am-12:30pm. Public Works will pick up bags afterwards that day. The ask is to determine the parks that will be focused on that day.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & PARK LIAISONS

Chair Greenlee-Karp suggested that moving forward we add a separate section to the agendas for discussion so the reports from commissioners and park liaisons stay about the persons assigned parks. She also had no update on her parks.

Vice-Chair Zahradka inquired about the Hause pickleball courts and when the nets will be put out for the year. Staff Liaison Lang stated she would follow-up with Public Works and report back. Vice-Chair Zahradka also mentioned that there was not enough notice of the Fire and Ice event for the Commissioners to really promote the event. She had no updates on her assigned parks.

Commissioner Andren noted that Public Works was out removing Ash trees in Southwood and there is still some brush to remove. There is a large pile of Ash trees at McKnight to be removed as well.

Commissioner Koller mentioned that she had sent some event feedback to Ava. She also had no updates on her assigned parks.

Commissioner Lucas noticed drainage issues with both Northwood and Tower park including some standing water issues at both locations. She also recommended promoting park events better. She mentioned the idea of mirroring a program called the MN State Parks Hiking Club where a person hikes to get a badge and can fill a park passport. Chair Greenlee-Karp noted that Community Education is going to be doing a similar program for youth this summer and suggested talking more offline.

IX. ADJOURNMENT



Chair Greenlee-Karp asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM.
M/Zahradka, S/Andren
Motion carried 5-0.

The next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Commission Meeting will be on March 26, 2025.



To	Date
Parks & Recreation Commissioners	March 26, 2025

Agenda Placement # VI.A

Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

Subject

Recap and Goals

Background/Facts

The Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission will recap what has been recently worked on and the upcoming goals of the Commission.

Recommended Action

Attachments

None

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Lang, Community Development Administrative Assistant



To	Date
Parks & Recreation Commissioners	March 26, 2025

Agenda Placement # VI.B

Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

Subject

Park Clean-Up Plan

Background/Facts

On the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation, the City will host a Citywide Parks Clean-Up Day on May 17th from 10am-12:30pm. The Friday before, bags and gloves will be available for Commissioners to pick up from City Hall. The ask from Staff is for the Commission to develop a plan including which parks will be targeted and which Commissioners will represent at each park.

Recommended Action

The ask from Staff is for the Commission to develop a plan including which parks will be targeted and which Commissioners will represent at each park.

Attachments

None

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Lang, Community Development Administrative Assistant



To	Date
Parks & Recreation Commissioners	March 26, 2025

Agenda Placement # VI.C

Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

Subject

Nature Preserve Maintenance Research

Background/Facts

The Commission directed staff to research other local nature preserves to see how they maintain the area, whether it's local groups or the City.

Recommended Action

Attachments

1. Southwood Nature Preserve
2. Nature Preserve Research

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Lang, Community Development Administrative Assistant

CITY OF NORTH ST. PAUL

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-046

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF POLICY
FOR SOUTHWOOD NATURE PRESERVE**

WHEREAS, the City owns and operates Southwood Nature Preserve (the “preserve”) as a public park with a diverse ecosystem and habitat for native plants and wildlife that is available for the enjoyment of the community; and

WHEREAS, the preserve requires regular maintenance work, including the removal of dead and dangerous trees, the control and removal of invasive species, the planting and maintaining of native species, the installation and maintenance of habitat for native wildlife, and the maintenance and repair of trails and other infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the City budgets public funding each year through its annual budgetary process to undertake the necessary maintenance work at the preserve; and

WHEREAS, the City has also undertaken to support volunteer and community events at the preserve, which events further the public interest by improving the public parks, educating members of the public, and performing necessary maintenance work that would otherwise need to be completed by City employees; and

WHEREAS, volunteers have undertaken maintenance work at the preserve since at least 2015, including removal of invasive species such as buckthorn and garlic mustard, the identification of dangerous trees, trail repair, and organizing volunteer events; and

WHEREAS, many volunteers have valuable knowledge and expertise, including Minnesota Master Naturalists, which expertise, and knowledge of the specific conditions at the preserve, provides these volunteers insight into which maintenance tasks at the preserve are most necessary, how to undertake these tasks most effectively, and how to most efficiently target the use of maintenance funding; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to continue the maintenance and improvement of the preserve, and support the work done by volunteers for the improvement of the preserve, while ensuring that all public funds are accounted for and spent pursuant to State law and City policy;

WHEREAS, the City has established the attached Southwood Nature Preserve Statement of Policy in order to provide for the most effective and transparent use of public funds to support the City’s public parks, and the preserve in particular;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of North St. Paul hereby adopts the guiding priorities as detailed in the attached Southwood Nature Preserve Statement of Policy.

ADOPTED this 3rd day of October, 2023.


Motion by Council Member Schweer
Second by Council Member Nordby

Voting: Ayes: Council Member Cole
Council Member Schweer
Council Member Wong
Council Member Nordby
Mayor Monge

Nays: None


Absent: None

Abstain: None



John Monge, Mayor

ATTEST:



Brian Frandle, City Manager/Clerk



SOUTHWOOD NATURE PRESERVE STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy document has been created by the City of North St. Paul to provide guidance for the expenditure of public funds to support the City's public parks program at Southwood Nature Preserve. This document is intended to aid in managing the City's parks and coordinate with volunteer and citizen groups to ensure the most efficient use of City funds. This document is intended to provide guidelines, and does not constitute a commitment by the City to undertake any action or commit to any use of public funds. All expenditures of public money must be pursuant to the City's annual budget and Purchasing Policy.

BACKGROUND:

- A. The City owns and operates Southwood Nature Preserve (the "preserve") as a public park with a diverse ecosystem and habitat for native plants and wildlife that is available for the enjoyment of the community;
- B. The preserve requires regular maintenance work, including the removal of dead and dangerous trees, the control and removal of invasive species, the planting and maintaining of native species, the installation and maintenance of habitat for native wildlife, and the maintenance and repair of trails and other infrastructure;
- C. The City budgets public funding each year through its annual budgetary process to undertake the necessary maintenance work at the preserve. City-funded maintenance work has included:
 - 1. Public Works projects including mowing
 - 2. Spraying and pulling of noxious weeds and invasive species
 - 3. Hiring professional landscapers to remove buckthorn and treat for invasive species
 - 4. Woodchipping of trails and pathways
 - 5. Controlled burns conducted by the Fire Department
 - 6. Installation of native species habitat, including bluebird, duck, and bat boxes
 - 7. Removal of dead and downed trees
- D. The City has also undertaken to support volunteer and community events at the preserve. These events further the public interest by improving the public parks, educating members of the public, and performing necessary maintenance work that would otherwise need to be completed by City employees;
- E. Volunteers have undertaken maintenance work at the preserve since at least 2015, including removal of invasive species such as buckthorn and garlic mustard, the identification of dangerous trees, trail repair, and organizing additional volunteer events including invasive garlic mustard pulls and an Earth Day cleanup event;
- F. Many volunteers have valuable knowledge and expertise, including Minnesota Master Naturalists. This expertise, and knowledge of the specific conditions at the preserve, provides these volunteers insight into which maintenance tasks at the preserve are most necessary, how to undertake these tasks most effectively, and how to most efficiently target the use of maintenance funding;

- G. The City is authorized under Minn. Stat. § 412.491 to expend public funds to “improve, ornament, maintain, and manage” its parks; and
- H. The City wishes to continue the maintenance and improvement of the preserve, and support the work done by volunteers for the improvement of the preserve, while ensuring that all public funds are accounted for and spent pursuant to State law and City policy.

FUNDING POLICY:

In order to provide for the most effective and transparent use of public funds to support the City’s public parks, and the preserve in particular, the City establishes the following guiding priorities. All expenditure of public money must be authorized by law and by City Council, and must be pursuant to the City’s purchasing policy.

MAINTENANCE WORK. In order to best maintain the preserve, the City will undertake maintenance work as provided for in the City’s annual budget. The City will prioritize and direct work on the preserve in the following order, subject to the individual needs of the preserve as they may change from time to time:

1. The preservation of public safety within the park, including the removal of dangerous or unstable trees.
2. Maintenance of public facilities at the preserve, including trails and public access points.
2. Prevention and removal of invasive species and noxious weeds within the preserve, including by hiring certified professionals to apply pesticides or herbicides or to otherwise treat for the presence of invasive species or noxious weeds.
4. Restoration of native habitats within the preserve, including seeding native species and establishing habitat for native species of wildlife.
5. Supporting public engagement through hosting City-run educational and volunteer events.

COMMUNITY COORDINATION. To ensure the most effective and efficient use of public funding to improve the preserve, the City will accept advice from community members who have personal expertise or knowledge of the preserve. The City particularly desires community assistance in identifying possible safety concerns and with determining which areas of the preserve require priority attention. The City understands that community members may be more familiar with the conditions in the Preserve than City staff, and desires to work with the community to identify the best projects for any given year. However, the preserve is a piece of City property managed for the benefit of the public at large. To ensure no conflicting projects or inadvertent damage to the preserve occurs, no volunteer improvements or maintenance work may occur at the preserve without the approval of City staff whether or not any given project requires the expenditure of public funds.

Project proposals must be submitted to the City in advance of work beginning, and will be evaluated for consistency with this Policy. City staff will ensure that the proposed work will improve the preserve and will not be conflicting with other work already planned. City staff will also evaluate whether the proposed project is realistic and likely to be completed in a thorough manner.

If the project requires the expenditure of public funds, City staff will further evaluate the proposal to ensure that the proposed work is necessary, that the proposal contains all necessary information to undertake the work, that it will be beneficial for the preserve and the public interest,

that there is sufficient funding budgeted to allow for the work, and that the project is consistent with the priorities of this Policy.

No proposal will obligate the City to take or allow any action or to expend any public funds. The City may undertake a proposed project only with the direct and prior approval of City staff pursuant to City policies. Although the City will endeavor to coordinate with the project proposer with respect to which contractors and materials will best support any project, all contractors will be chosen and hired directly by the City and all materials will be purchased directly by the City pursuant to the City's Purchasing Policy.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT. The City wishes to support projects by dedicated volunteers to improve the preserve. These projects are an important source of public engagement with the City's parks and improve the preserve for all public users. Volunteer work further supports the public interest by reducing the cost of completing necessary maintenance projects at the preserve, allowing the City to perform more improvements without needing to raise additional revenue.

Where a volunteer proposes to complete a project with volunteer labor, it is in the public interest for the City to support these projects to the extent possible. The City will therefore evaluate the proposed volunteer project to determine if it is a project that the City would otherwise undertake itself. Where a volunteer proposal meets the criteria for a city-run project, the City may purchase supplies and materials for the project as though the City were undertaking the project itself, and allow the volunteers free use of those supplies and materials. All supplies and materials thus supplied will be purchased directly by the City pursuant to the City's Purchasing Policy. Although the City shall endeavor to coordinate with the volunteers on the types of material purchased and when and where the material shall be delivered, City Staff shall make all final purchasing decisions and all contracts must be signed by the City.

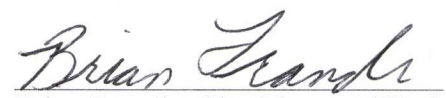
NO JOINT VENTURE. Nothing in this Policy shall be deemed to constitute a partnership, joint venture, or agency relationship between the City and any other person. This Policy provides guidance to City staff but shall not obligate the City to take any action. Nor does this Policy create any rights in any third party.

ADOPTED this 3rd day of October, 2023.

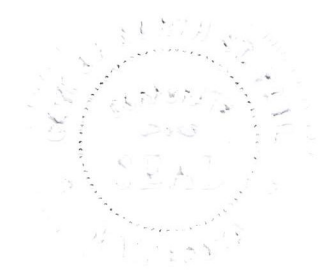


John Monge, Mayor

ATTEST:



Brian Frandle, City Manager/Clerk



City	Nature Preserve Name	Size	Trail Details
Oakdale	Oakdale Nature Preserve	200 acre	paved for hiking and biking, boardwalk
Richfield	Wood Lake Nature Center	150 acre	blacktop, boardwalk, crushed limestone
White Bear Township	Tamarack Nature Center	320 acre	wood chips, paved, boardwalk
Roseville	Harriet Alexander Nature Center	52 acre	boardwalk, wood chips
St. Paul	Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary	27 acre	woodchips, dirt
St. Paul	Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary	42 acre	boardwalk, crushed limestone,
Woodbury	Tamarack Nature Preserve	169 acre	paved, wood chips
Maplewood	Maplewood Nature Center	40 acre	boardwalk
White Bear Lake	Rotary Nature Preserve	40 acre	paved, wood chips, boardwalk
Maplewood	Priory Neighborhood Preserve	46 acre	boardwalk, mowed trails
Maplewood	Fish Creek Natural Area	70 acre	asphalt
West St. Paul/Mendota Heights/Cottage Grove	Dodge Nature Center	460 acre	boardwalk, wood chips, gravel, asphalt
Fridley	Springbrook Nature Center	127 acre	boardwalk, wood chips, paved

Water Details	Recreational Features	Other Notes	Landscape
28 acre lake	basketball, tennis, fitness, playground	picnic areas	prairie, mature trees, forest garden
lake	nature play, amphitheaters	picnic areas	cattail marsh, mixed lowland forest, restored prairie
lake and pond	nature play	picnic areas	prairie, gardens
marsh	N/A	N/A	marsh, restored prairie, woodland
ponds	N/A	N/A	floodplain forest, prairie, oak savana
ponds, stream	N/A	picnic areas	oak savana, oak woodland, prairie, forest, marsh
swamp	playground	picnic areas	wetland surrounded by woodland
N/A	nature play, amphitheater	picnic areas	restored prairie, oak savana, oak woodland
pond	N/A	picnic areas	prairie, woodland
ponds	N/A	N/A	prairie, oak savana, oak woodland
N/A	N/A	N/A	restored prairie, woodlands
creek, pond	amphitheater	picnic areas	restored prairie, woodland, wetland, gardens, crops, forest
pond, stream	nature play	picnic areas	oak forest, aspen forest, prairies, wetlands

Maintenance Notes
Public Works (Parks and Forestry), PW budget; 2 foresters on staff, seek professional opinions from U of MN
Technical Advisory Committee created to work with City on advisement
St. Paul, Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi (native led environmental stewards)
Adpot-A-Park stewards, Woodbury, Ramsey-Washington Watershed District; periodic volunteer service activities
PAC and EAC help determine priorities; volunteer help events; PW does most work and decision making
Maplewood Public Works, volunteers
Maintenance and expenditure decisions are shared between city departments



To	Date
Parks & Recreation Commissioners	March 26, 2025

Agenda Placement # VI.D

Commission Business, Action Items & Recommendations

Subject

Commissioner Discussion

Background/Facts

This section is to allow each Commissioner to bring up discussion topics not already on the agenda.

Recommended Action

Attachments

None

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Lang, Community Development Administrative Assistant



To	Date
Parks & Recreation Commissioners	March 26, 2025

Agenda Placement # VII.A

Reports from Staff

Subject

Budget Recap

Background/Facts

There is no budget update to share this month. Next month, the City Finance Director, Dan Winek, will attend to go over the updated budgets.

Recommended Action

Attachments

None

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Lang, Community Development Administrative Assistant