



**Park and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 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
Ben Hansen, Commissioner
Ingrid Koller, Commissioner
Rachel Lucas, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Cassidy Schweer, City Council Liaison
Sara Lang, Staff Liaison

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to adopt the March 26, 2025 meeting agenda.
M/Grachek, S/Andren
Motion carried 6 0-.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Approval of Minutes from February 26, 2025 PRC Meeting

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to approve the February 26, 2025 meeting minutes.
M/Zahradka, S/Andren
Motion carried 6-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Dave Nelson at 2574 4th Ave E spoke about parking concerns near Hause Park when the park is full and previously providing information for Southwood potentially having goats to help clean up the area and wondering what happened to that information.

VI. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Recap and Goals



Chair Greenlee-Karp provided a recap of recent projects worked on by the Commission as well as future goals including projects and events. The recap included the upcoming events for the Parks including the park clean-up day on May 17. The Park and Improvement Plan will be included moving forward in this section to discuss past achievements and upcoming goals.

B. Park Clean-Up Plan

Staff Liaison Lang noted that the citywide Park Clean-Up event is May 17th from 10am-12:30pm. Bags and gloves will be provided to the Commissioners the Friday before the event to bring to their selected parks. The ask by staff is for the Commission to determine which parks they would like to focus on and what Commissioners will be present at each park as representatives.

Silver Lake will be represented by Commissioner Koller along with the Silver Lake improvement Association. Southwood Nature Preserve will be represented by Commissioner Andren. He will also drive by Hause Park to see if anyone needs bags and gloves. Casey Lake Park will be represented by Commissioner Hansen. Northwood Park will be represented by Commissioner Lucas. All other Commissioners are welcomed to attend those parks to assist.

C. Nature Preserve Maintenance Research

Staff Liaison Lang noted that at last meeting, the Commission asked staff to provide research on local nature preserves and how maintenance is completed and determined for those areas. What was found, was that most places operate in a similar fashion to North St. Paul in that there is no formal agreement with the local volunteer groups, and those volunteers will request maintenance, with the City having the ultimate say on the projects and spending.

The recommendation is that the Commission find out if the Task Force is still operating and if so, to have the park liaison bring back any recommendations from the group for the City.

Commissioner Andren mentioned that he has spoken to someone on the Task Force that is recommending wildflowers be planted where the Ash trees were removed. Staff Liaison Lang will follow-up with Public Works on this request. It was noted that in the policy provided by the City in the packet, passed in 2023, the City will be taking over the maintenance of the Southwood Nature Preserve.

D. Commissioner Discussion

Chair Greenlee-Karp asked the Commissioners to use this time to bring up discussing points, other than updates on the parks they are liaisons for in the City.

Chair Greenlee-Karp would like to focus on Northwood moving forward as it is important to meet ADA standard and has a lot of potential.

Vice-Chair Zahradka suggested that a wind barrier be installed around the court at Hause Park and the purchasing of Gaga ball equipment for either Hause Park or Colby Hills Park. Another idea is to add signage and picnic tables to the Urban Ecology Center for easy access off of the trail. Another topic was ADA accessibility to the playground at Northwood and if that can be corrected moving forward. The final idea was for Colby Hills to add a climbing element or something to enhance the park for older children.

Commissioner Andren noted \$100,000 is mentioned in the CIP in future years for the Urban Ecology Center to go towards upgrades and would like to see picnic tables and signage rather than a playground.



Commissioner Grachek asked about the tree replacement at Southwood and where the funding comes from. Staff Liaison Lang mentioned that she will follow up on the funding sources. He also noted support of exercise equipment at Casey Lake Park.

Commissioner Hansen had no discussion topics.

Commissioner Koller supported a simple natural play structure at the Urban Ecology Center. She noted that Southwood has many different plant species that Public Works doesn't know about and doesn't want to lose the years of knowledge of hard work from the past volunteers.

Commissioner Lucas suggested flyers at each park for the Park and Rec Commission with feedback opportunities or a flyer in the utility bill once or twice a year with all of the upcoming events and feedback opportunities. She noted that she would like to move forward with a park passport idea, taking selfies and coming in for a prize once a person has visited every park. She will come to the next meeting with more concrete ideas.

Commissioner Koller mentioned that the exercise equipment at the Oakdale Nature Preserve is rarely used. Commissioner Zahradka brought up the idea of a ninja park at Casey Lake Park. Commissioner Lucas mentioned the need for adult and older youth playground areas.

Commissioner Zahradka mentioned adding some climbing features or Gaga ball equipment as spreading the love to other parks.

Polar park was discussed by the Commission and that they are ready to work on that park and move forward with bidding and continue with Northwood in future CIP discussions.

VII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

A. Budget Update

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.

B. HGA Update

Staff Liaison Lang noted that she spoke with the City Manager and that there are current conversations by leadership regarding the current and future costs of the developments, grant opportunities and the potential of having a City Council workshop to discuss further.

C. Park and Open Space Master Plan

The Park and Open Space Master Plan was scheduled to go to the last City Council meeting; however, it was pulled as it should go to the Planning Commission for approval first as it is an amendment to a City Plan. Commissioners are needed for the meeting and they will be contacted via email and asked to attend. The plan after the Planning Commission approval would be to go back to Council for formal approval.

D. Other

Staff Liaison Lang also mentioned that there was a prescribed burn at the Silver Lake retention pond today. The pickleball netting/posts at Hause Park will be addressed, however it is warranty work so it will



take some time for the repair. This summer, part of the North trail, near the small parking lot will be closed for water work and the pond will be redone. Ball field rentals have been coming in, so far North High, both softball and baseball have booked at McKnight, a league in the North St. Paul Youth Baseball Association has booked days at Casey and currently working with two other leagues for McKnight.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & PARK LIAISONS

Chair Greenlee-Karp had no further updates.

Vice-Chair Zahradka had no further updates

Commissioner Andren noted that the dead Ash trees are now removed from Southwood and that a member of the Southwood Task Force recommended wildflowers be planted there in its place. Staff Liaison Lang will bring that back to Public Works.

Commissioner Grachek had no further updates.

Commissioner Hansen asked when the signs with park hours will be reinstalled at Casey Lake Park. Staff Liaison Lang said she will follow-up with Public Works.

Commissioner Koller noted the beach at Silver Lake has invasive species taking up beachfront. Staff Liaison Lang said she will follow-up with Public Works.

Commissioner Lucas asked if there will be replacement trees at Casey and other parks for the ones removed. Staff Liaison Lang said she will follow-up with Public Works.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Greenlee-Karp asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 PM.

M/Andren, S/Grachek

Motion carried 7-0.

The next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Commission Meeting will be on April 23, 2025.