



**Park and Recreation Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
August 27, 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, excused  
Lloyd Grachek, Commissioner, excused  
Ben Hansen, Commissioner  
Ingrid Koller, Commissioner  
Rachel Lucas, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Cassidy Schweer, City Council Liaison  
Sara Lang-Noyola, Staff Liaison  
Ron Ritchie, Public Works Director

**III. ADOPT AGENDA**

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to adopt the August 27, 2025 meeting agenda.  
M/Zahradka, S/Koller  
Motion carried 5-0.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Approval of Minutes from July 23, 2025 PRC Meeting

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to approve the July 23, 2025 meeting minutes.  
M/Lucas, 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. Southwood Nature Preserve Maintenance Plan

The City Horticulturalist has developed a plan for maintenance at the Southwood Nature Preserve for the coming years. Ron Ritchie, Public Works Director, presented the plan to the Commission. The maintenance plan includes invasive species removal, dead tree removal, prescribed burns and future improvements along with an estimated budget and a proposed implementation timeline. The process of creating the maintenance plan included researching previous maps and information provided by the Southwood Nature Preserve Task Force and several walks of the area. It has been identified that the buckthorn needs to be addressed first due to the overgrowth.

Commissioner Andren called Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola prior to the meeting to ask questions of the maintenance plan, including if Public Works has an estimate from Prairie Restorations, how quickly will the dead and dangerous trees be removed from Southwood and if a notification can be sent to nearby residents when a prescribed burn occurs? Public Works Director Ron Ritchie addressed those questions by stating that he and the City Horticulturalist will meet with Prairie Restoration and MN Native Landscapes to go over costs and timelines. It was also noted that the trees will be removed this fall/winter, and notifications can certainly be mailed to residents in the area prior to any prescribed burns.

Council Member Schweer asked if this plan needs to be brought to City Council for the maintenance expenditures however since the funding is currently a line item in the CIP, it should not need to go to Council.

#### B. McKnight Athletic Complex Survey Information

Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola presented the proposed contract to hire E.G. Rud & Sons, Inc. to develop a certificate of survey for the McKnight Athletic Complex. The estimated total cost of the survey is \$27,700.00. This survey would include topological information as well as establishing boundaries and highlighting utilities. The Commission has been asked by staff to develop a formal recommendation for City Council action.

Commissioner Andren called Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola prior to the meeting to state his recommendation that the contract go to the City Council.

Chair Greenlee-Karp called for a motion to recommend the McKnight Athletic Complex Survey contract from E.G. Rud & Sons, Inc. to the City Council.  
M/Zahradka, S/Lucas  
Motion carried 5-0.

## **VII. REPORTS FROM STAFF**

#### A. E-Bike and Motorized Foot Scooter Ordinance Language

Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola presented language from a proposed ordinance in regard to E-Bikes and Motorized Foot Scooters. The section of the proposed ordinance that the Commission is asked to review is regulating the use of these devices in parks and on other City property. Lang-Noyola asked for recommendations from the Commission to bring back to City staff.

Vice-Chair Zahradka asked if there will be additional language about bikes and e-bikes on sidewalks in the full ordinance. Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola mentioned that the full ordinance will include language about riding on sidewalks and focuses on the downtown area.



The Commission had no further questions or suggestions and believes the language provided in comprehensive.

B. Other

Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola noted that the Park Passport Program is now running and is available online, there have so far been 3 participants. Vice-Chair Zahradka asked if a QR code to the program can be provided on a bookmark at the Fall Roundup Parade. Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola stated she would ask the City's Communications Coordinator if that can be possible.

Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola read a message from City Manager Brian Frandle.

"We just finished up our last student-built house at 2007 6<sup>th</sup> St. with our open house scheduled for Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup> from 4pm to 6:30pm. This program has been great for our community; it improves housing stock and adds value to the surrounding neighborhood. The City has done about 15 student-built projects with District 916. As we moved into the planning stage for the next student-built home for the upcoming 2025/2026 school year, we still had not secured property for the project. The only buildable property the City owned was the property located at 2357 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. In speaking individually with the City Council, most of the members wanted to move ahead with this property for a student-built home. I understood it had been brought up a time or two at the Parks Commission that this was a possibility, but I wanted to shed some light on how we came to this decision.

I know one of the renderings for this lot that HGA had put together had a plan showing a community garden. Though the garden could do well there, I think that the student-built house could spark the neighboring homeowners into doing the home improvements they may be thinking of as well.

Thank you for the work you do for our Parks and our City!"

Staff Liaison Lang-Noyola noted that if there are any questions or comments, please contact Lang-Noyola or the City Manager.

Vice-Chair Zahradka expressed frustration about giving up park land without the consent of the Parks and Recreation Commission, that it is wrong and that the homeowners will not benefit from this one-time action. The residents would benefit for a longer time from a park in the area. Chair Greenlee-Karp inquired if the rest of the proposed 3<sup>rd</sup> St park is surveyed, would that stake claim to the property. There were concerns about the land continuously being taken for future City builds. Council Member Schweer encouraged the Commissioners to talk to City Manager Brian Frandle, and she too is frustrated with the decision being made without the Parks and Recreation Commission's consent. Vice-Chair Zahradka brought up safety issues due to cars at that intersection and thinks building a home there puts the buyers in potential danger. Commissioner Lucas likes the student-build program but is not pleased with the location and being blindsided by the decision.

Public Works Director Ron Ritchie also reported that the 2025 park projects are moving along with the Polar Park playground being ordered with a 10-12 week delivery timeline, the pieces for Gaga ball pit at Northwood Park have been ordered and will be built shortly, the windscreens for Hause Park have been ordered and will try to be installed in 2025, a picnic table was installed at the Urban Ecology Center and Casey Lake Park is an ongoing project with the ballfields being continuously being filled with dirt with new irrigation installed below. Casey Lake Park had a cottonwood tree removed due to splitting, which was near the ballfields and a replacement will be planted in the park.

## VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & PARK LIAISONS



Chair Greenlee-Karp noted attending the Cowern school meeting addressing the upcoming renovation and there was a lot of talk about South and Margaret St N intersection and the dangers with drivers constantly running the stop signs. Chair Greenlee-Karp, along with Council Member Schweer noted that the City Council chose to decline moving forward with the Community Center and there is a possibility of reallocating the funding to a different project but would still need to go through an approval process with the State. Chair Greenlee-Karp expressed support for the idea to use some or all of the reallocated funds for the McKnight Athletic Complex.

Vice-Chair Zahradka has noticed a group using Colby Hills Park shelter and dancing frequently. It was also noted that the weeds have been cut at the Urban Ecology Center, which has been an improvement. The movie in the park has been rescheduled for tomorrow August 28<sup>th</sup> at Hause Park.

Commissioner Koller mentioned that she met with Public Works Director Ron Ritchie and the City Horticulturalist about the Silver Lake invasives and the plan is to trim back invasives and some Willows will grow to be bigger trees. Commissioner Koller also mentioned a concern about the crossing of the Gateway Trail on South Ave near the Urban Ecology Center and after speaking with Public Works Director Ron Ritchie, learned involves the DNR, and Ramsey County. There are stop signs for the trail, something printed on the road and the County added a reflective pole on each side for headlights to reflect. However, there is still a blind spot for the trail users when looking for oncoming vehicles. Flashing signs or state law signs are a couple of ideas for installation by the DNR or the County.

Commissioner Lucas went to Yoga in the Park last week and it was a great turnout, and it was a lovely time. Commissioner Lucas also completed the passport program and was excited to see many people at all of the parks and is loving to see the work at Casey Lake Park.

Commissioner Hansen has noticed the progression at Casey with both the ball fields and the road construction.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Greenlee-Karp asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM.

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

**The next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Commission Meeting will be on September 24, 2025.**