



**City of North St. Paul
Parks & Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes**

**June 23, 2021
6:30 PM**

The June 23, 2021 Parks & Rec Commission meeting was held at: Casey Lake Park, 2089 17th Ave, North St Paul, MN.

The planned Zoom recording did not work in the park due to technical difficulties.

There was a "meet & greet" for the public with the Park & Rec Commissioners from 6:00PM- 6:30PM. This was well attended by neighboring residents. Most were there to voice their concerns of the recent Casey Lake Park facility rentals. Over the recent months, the facility had been abused by the renters with excessive partying, loud music and literally "trashing" the place. Many hours have been spent cleaning up after the parties by hired cleaners, North St. Paul public works employees and also local residents. It was recommended by many to reinstate a required damage deposit and also change the policy to allow only North St. Paul residents rent the park facilities. Other areas of concern that were voiced are the need for repairing/replacing the boards on the bridge, growing tree roots under the path and motorized vehicles driving on the trail.

I. Call to Order

Chair Lloyd Grachek called the meeting to order at 6:39

II. Roll Call

Lloyd Grachek, Chair
Laura Greenlee-Karp, Vice Chair – Absent - Excused
Larry Amsden
Heather Haas
Ingrid Koller
Sue Springborn
Nancy Thorsen
Sarah Zahradka
Arthur Alvarez, Jr.

Council Liaison: Tim Cole
Staff: Lisa Ritchie

III. Adopt Agenda

On motion by Commissioner Zahradka, seconded by Commissioner Koller with all present voting aye, motion carried to adopt the agenda.

IV. **Approval of Minutes**

Approve the April 28, 2021 regular meeting minutes.

On motion by Commissioner Thorsen, seconded by Commissioner Haas with all present voting aye, motion carried to approve the minutes.

V. **Meeting Open to Public**

Mario Gonzalez Mitchell, Casey Lake resident, asked Lisa if she had been in contact with Paige Alborg whom he had referred her to at the last Park & Rec Commission Meeting. Lisa stated that she had spoken with Paige. Per her conversation with Paige it was stated that there is not currently anything in the works for cleaning up the lake. There is a program thru the Watershed District that offers grants for native plantings. The Watershed district partners with homeowners in a 50/50 split of the cost. Mario inquired of what the cost entailed and Lisa said she would follow up with him on that info.

Mario indicated that he has been cleaning up the lake as much as he can. He also voiced concerns of inappropriate music during the park facility rentals as well as shopping carts and people camping out at the lake. It was noted that Heather, Larry and Sarah are the Casey Lake liaisons so he can reach out to those individuals to address specific issues.

VI. **Public Hearings**

There were no public hearings.

VII. **New Business**

Sue Springborn suggested a neighborhood gathering for the Police Department to come and interact with the community. Mario stated that the St. Paul Police Department hosts a Safe Summer Night event where free food and entertainment is available to the public as a way to “humanize” the police and encourage a positive interaction between the police and the community. Lloyd Grachek volunteered to coordinate this with the Police Chief.

VIII. **Old Business**

- A. **Music in the Parks** - Great turnout and well received by all. This was the first performance since COVID restrictions were implemented. Upcoming performances are Matt & Laurel on July 15th and MT Pockets on August 12th. Heather agreed to possibly add additional Music in the Parks nights next year and adding Hause Park as a potential location. It was also discussed to bring Food Trucks back to these events.
- B. **Air Force Jr ROTC Volunteer Hours** – Tim Cole indicated they are looking to adopt a park and volunteer hours to maintain it. Sue Springborn stated they were previously assigned to take care of the gardens at VETS Park but didn’t think they are still doing so. It was agreed by all that there is definitely a need for volunteers.
- C. **Update on Sponsor for old PCU park** – Lloyd Grachek indicated the park is not cleaned but been cleaned by residents. The process for getting a sponsor for this park was previously done by soliciting bids. Sue Springborn questioned whether or not this really should even be considered a park as it is a retention pond. She would liked to see the sponsorship/sign removed all together. Sarah Zahradka stated part of the sponsorship included volunteers from the sponsor to maintain this but felt it is not necessary for a business to sponsor/adopt this and that it would be a good project to ROTC. Lloyd stated that he would talk to Ideal Credit Union regarding the issue. Sarah stated that City Council should advise on whether or not this is even considered a park and if so, decide whether or not it should be kept a park.

- D. **Update on Park Improvement Plan** – Lisa gave an update on the status of the park improvement plan. She has received pictures from Ingrid and Lloyd for a few of the parks and is still working on the actual book. She hasn't been able to allocate a great deal of time to this project due to conflicting priorities.
 - E. **Signs in the Parks** – Lisa is working with a local vendor for pricing on double sided park signs. She is also looking into whether or not the Wayfinding plan that had been presented to council in 2016 had been approved or not. Joe Miller is requesting a sign at Rotary Park and we need to confirm it coordinates with the new signage for the city.
- IX. **Reports from Staff** – Lisa indicated that she had submitted in the Council Packet the request for a fence around the water tower at Northwood Park per the recent request at the previous commission meeting but Scott Duddeck pulled it out. Scott stated that there isn't enough information for this to go to council yet. It would be the responsibility the cell phone companies that are leasing the space under the tower to install a fence. The fence would need to meet zoning requirements.
- X. **Reports from Commissioners & Park Liaisons** – Tim Cole asked Lisa for a timeframe in which the Park Improvement Plan would be complete. Lisa stated that she is not able to provide an estimate as her responsibilities many and there are a number of other priorities which have prevented her from spending the necessary time to make any headway on the project.

Commissioner Haas stated that she had a request from a resident that lives close to Casey Lake to remove (or trim) a Cottonwood tree from the park due to the mess it makes. Lisa said she would put in a work order for the city arborist to look at it.

Adjournment

On motion by Commissioner Haas, seconded by Commissioner Alvarez Jr. with all present voting aye, motion carried to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM

The next regularly scheduled Parks & Recreation Commission meeting is July 28, 2021 at McKnight Fields.

