



AGENDA OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
CITY COUNCIL AND  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
May 17, 2021  
6:00 P.M.

NOTE: Due to Open Meeting Law restrictions, the City Council may be discussing agenda items for the first time. Your patience and understanding is appreciated during this process.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVE AGENDA**

**CITY BUSINESS – AGENDA**

- A. City Council & Planning Commission Work Session
  - a. Introductions
  - b. Legal Principles & Guiding Philosophies  
*Time Budget: 1 Hour*
- B. Parks Capital Improvements & Space Management\* (pp. 2-10)
  - a. Council & Commission Deliberation  
*Time Budget: 1 Hour*
- C. City Hall Improvements (Roofing & Siding/Paint)
  - a. Council Deliberation
  - b. Review & Approve Bid(s)  
*Time Budget: 5 Minutes*

**ADJOURN**

\* Denotes items that have supporting documentation provided

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

*Drafted by the Birchwood Parks and Natural Resources Committee 2/2019*

The purpose of this document is to identify and analyze capital improvements for Birchwood's parks and open spaces.

### INTRODUCTION

This document is prepared in conjunction with the Parks and Open Space Inventory and Maintenance Plan. Bullet points indicate possible improvements the city may choose to consider when planning for the long term.

### PARKS

#### Tighe-Schmitz

Tighe-Schmitz Park was originally marsh land. It was filled 60+ years ago and again in the 1980s. The land continues to sink differentially due to the underlying peat soil.

#### Capital Improvement projects

- A holistic plan should be considered before making substantial improvements. Such plan could include raising the elevation of the existing park areas to create dry ground for users as well as continuing an existing French drain.
- The playground equipment manufacturer guarantees their product for 100 years. It was installed in 1996. Additional pieces could be added to address ADA needs.
- The Hockey rink was built in 1997. When it begins to deteriorate beyond repair, the council needs to weigh the long-term viability in light of climate change and consider alternative uses for the space.

#### Bloomquist Park

- Courts: The Tennis/pickleball surface was installed in 2010. The manufacturer warrants the material for 16 years. The product lifespan beyond that time is unknown. The cost of replacement materials is approximately \$40,000. The underlying asphalt is degraded but appears to provide a sufficient base for the foreseeable future. A backboard for tennis play should be considered.
- Playground equipment: The playground equipment manufacturer guarantees their product for 100 years. It was installed in 1998. The topography does not lend itself well to being ADA accessible.
- Woodland area: Invasive buckthorn is pervasive. Proper removal technique is imperative-- a removal program 15 years ago exacerbated the problem because of regrowth from cuttings. Removal should also include the woodland area behind city hall.

### Polly's Park

This park functions as a drainage retention pond and any improvements would need to balance this dual purpose.

### Wildwood Park

A memorial to former resident Faye Wiget who was an extraordinary gardener is located at the southern end.

- Fresh plantings would be appropriate if the city chooses to re-establish the memorial.
- Evaluate further development of Wildwood Park

### Beaches/Lake Easements

Curt Feistner Preserve—This space is unusable in its current state.

- Complete review and makeover.

Ash Beach

- Repair/replace retaining wall. Current life span and replacement costs are unknown.

Birch Beach—nothing anticipated

Elm Beach

- Improve drainage runoff/treatment in a comprehensive approach with assistance from Rice Creek Watershed District

Dellwood Beach—nothing anticipated

Kay Beach—nothing anticipated

### TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

#### *From the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan*

One of the City's priorities is the preservation of the natural charm of its existing neighborhoods and the privacy of its citizens. This must be considered in terms of the collective community, and how individual property owners' desires for privacy can be balanced with opportunities to create a more complete trail system. The residents that have the potential to be most negatively affected by improvements within these unimproved right-of-way areas are those that abut easements/rights-of-way and have enjoyed these publicly owned properties as essentially an extension to their private lots. While this is understandable, it must also be noted that these areas were dedicated for public use as road rights-of-way, and that trails are a far less intense use than what was originally contemplated. Since these areas were set aside for public use, the City intends to plan for, and contemplate how the rights-of-way can serve as trail connections.

The planning process will consider how a trail could be located within the right-of-way area but will also identify and work with adjacent property owners to identify what types of mitigation may be available to protect their privacy even with a public trail located nearby. For example, in areas where there is concern that trail users may venture off the trail, vegetation and landscaping including trees may help

serve as a guide to keep users from venturing into private property. Or, for property owners concerned about trail users being able to see into adjacent homes or lots, there may be opportunities to plant more mature conifers along the trail corridor.

Birchwood Village is committed to improving trail access throughout the community because it benefits all of its residents. The City is equally committed to working with affected property owners to identify proper mitigation to help alleviate some of the concerns associated with greater trail access throughout the community.

- Evaluate creation of new walking trails

#### OTHER PUBLIC SPACES

Hall's Marsh—There will probably be a need in the future to remove the sediment and pollutants that have been deposited over the last fifty years by the Priebe Lake Outfall Pipe project. This will be an extremely expensive project that will require the assistance of regional and/or state agencies.

Lakewood Rearrangement Outlot—See Trails and Walkways *supra*.

#### ADDITIONAL GOALS:

- Ensure every park and trail has identification signage, access points and addresses ADA needs, when possible
- Create, distribute and post an easy-to-use city map of parks and trails
- Re-survey residents from time to time for additional input
- Continue deer management plan

#### CONCLUSION

The city is well positioned to continue to improve its unique and important natural resource assets for years to come. Recurring Dock Association fees are collected and set aside in a “Special Projects” fund for such improvements. The city council will need to prioritize its goals and needs and continue the dialog with its residents to determine the best approach going forward.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE INVENTORY AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

*Drafted by the Birchwood Parks and Natural Resources Committee 2/2019*

The purpose of this document is to inventory assets and outline maintenance needs for Birchwood's parks and open spaces.

### INTRODUCTION

There is a total of 13.8 acres of park and public open space land within the boundaries of Birchwood Village. The City's park system contains four dedicated municipal parks (Tighe-Schmitz, Bloomquist Field, Wildwood Park and Polly's Park), six lake easements (Kay, Dellwood, Elm, Birch, Ash and Curt Feistner Reserve) providing access to White Bear Lake; and local trails (Jay, Ash, Bloomquist, Polly's, Birch and Grotto) and a multi-city trail (Lake Links).

### GENERAL MANAGEMENT GOALS

The following are natural resource management concerns that affect many public spaces and need to be addressed:

- Buckthorn removal
- Diseased tree treatment and/or removal
- Other invasive species or diseases that affect our natural resources

### PARKS

#### Tighe-Schmitz

Named for the first female mayor Lucy Tighe and long-time volunteer treasurer Clara Schmitz, Tighe-Schmitz Park (2.50 Acres) is located on the northeastern edge of the City. The park provides a hockey rink, open skating rink, football and soccer practice areas. The multi-purpose hockey rink provides for year-round use including in-line skating and basketball in the off-season. Adjacent to the skating rinks is a warming house. Children's playground equipment, and a picnic shelter complete the area. Adjacent to the picnic area, is a rain garden. Originally, Tighe-Schmitz Park was a wetland and purchased by the city for a wildlife refuge. To make it useable as a park, it has been filled at least twice. In past years, spring thaw and heavy rains caused portions of the park to be underwater and largely unusable for extended periods of time. Recent work done in Hall's Marsh two years ago has helped alleviate that some of the problem.

#### Amenities:

- Signage
- Playground equipment (built 1996)
- Swings (4)
- Benches
- Picnic Shelter
- Grills
- Picnic tables
- Soccer field
- Hockey arena
  - Rink (built 1997)
  - LED lights installed 2019
  - Parking lot paved 2020

- Warming house built 2013
- Pleasure skating rink
- Basketball backboards Installed 2018
- Port-a-potty
- Drinking fountain
- Dog waste bag station

Maintenance

Spring/fall

- Clean and inspect playground equipment
- Turn on/off drinking fountain (John Manship does)
- Clean benches

Monthly

- Weed/rake playground

As needed

- Paint port-a-potty surround
- Repair/paint tables, benches, signs
- Trim trees (including the evergreens that grow over the ice rink)
- Repair/paint hockey boards
- Add sand/pea gravel to playground
- Replace soccer/basketball nets
- Reroof shelter
- Fill waste bag station

Bloomquist Park

Bloomquist Park (1.50 Acres) is located at the intersection of Cedar Street and Birchwood Avenue. It was sold to the city by School District 78 when it abandoned a plan to build a school on the site. Al Bloomquist was our constable of 24 years. He also drove a school bus for a generation of village kids. Fittingly, the park is named after him. Double tennis/pickleball courts are located here, as well as playground equipment and benches.

Amenities:

- Signage
- Playground equipment (built 1996)
- Tennis/Pickleball Courts (2) (build 2010)
- Drinking fountain
- Dog waste bag station
- Fill waste bag station

Maintenance

Spring/fall

- Clean and inspect playground equipment
- Turn on/off drinking fountain (J Manship does)
- Clean benches
- Clear leaves off courts

Monthly

- Weed/rake playground

As needed

- Repair/Paint sign, benches
- Trim trees around court fencing
- Add sand/pea gravel to playground
- Replace tennis nets

Polly's Park

Polly Shank was the driving force behind our beloved community treasure-- the Fourth of July Parade. Polly was also a fixture in the greater White Bear Lake community, including the White Bear Center for the Arts. The park (1.3 acres) is a wooded area which has some walking paths and serves as a temporary ponding area as part of the Priebe Lake Outfall Pipe system.

Amenities:

- Signage

Maintenance

As needed

- Trim trees
- Add pea gravel to path
- Clean catch basin netting

Wildwood Park

Wildwood Avenue Park (0.60 Acres) is located west of the midpoint of Wildwood Avenue. It is a wide open grassy area between the driving lanes of Wildwood Avenue. The City uses the park for its Fourth of July celebration.

Amenities:

- Signage
- Flag pole
- Bench
- Picnic table
- Faye Wiget memorial

Maintenance

As needed

- Trim trees
- Paint benches/tables
- Replace flag

Beaches/Lake Easements

Lake Easements (1.2 Acres total) were originally created to provide water access for firefighting. The six easements subsequently became public parks and beaches. Kay beach is the city's only designated swimming beach, while the remaining easements (Ash, Birch, Elm, Dellwood) have boat slip rentals available by residents. Kurt Feistner Preserve easement is not developed. The easements are evenly spaced along Wildwood and Lake Avenue and are City owned and governed.

Amenities:

Curt Feistner Preserve  
Signage

Ash Beach  
Signage  
Kayak racks  
Adirondack chairs (2), bench

Birch Beach  
Signage  
Kayak racks  
Rain garden  
Swimming beach  
Dog waste bag station  
Bench, picnic table

Elm Beach  
Signage  
Kayak racks  
Bench

Dellwood Beach  
Signage  
Kayak racks  
Bench, picnic tables  
Sandy beach

Kay Beach  
Signage  
Kayak racks  
Swimming beach  
Chairs, picnic tables

Maintenance

As needed  
Repair/paint tables, benches, signs  
Trim trees/brush  
Add sand (Kay Beach)  
Clean out rain garden (every five to ten years)  
Clean up lake debris  
Fill waste bag station  
Birch rain garden--clean out silt every 5-10 years, last cleaned 2019

TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

Birchwood has several walkways located throughout the village (Ash, Birch, Grotto, Jay, and through Polly's and Bloomquist Parks).



The Lake Links trail, which borders White Bear Lake, runs through Birchwood Village as well. At this time the City is considering an alternative route. In the future, improvements may be needed to ensure the trail is safe for use. Future trail improvements should be considered with Lake Links in mind (ex. We would not want the lake Links trail to run along one side of the road, while a City trail runs along the other side). The trail is currently signed.

Amenities:

Ash Walkway

Signage

Woodchip path

Birch Walkway

Asphalt path

Grotto

Signage

Stairs/railing

Jay Path

Signage

Boundary fencing

Small bridge over drainage ditch

Bloomquist Path

Natural/ and class 5 tread pathway

Polly's Park path

Pea gravel path

Maintenance

Winter: clear snow off pathways

As needed

Replace pathway material

Clean up debris

Trim trees

OTHER PUBLIC SPACES

Village Hall Lot

This lot was purchased by the village for construction of a village hall. It was purchased from treasurer Lee Hall for \$661.40 in 1927. The hall was completed in 1932. The lot also houses a bell tower that memorializes the village's civil defense system during World War II. The back half of the lot, which contains part of the old street car right-of-way, is undisturbed and heavily wooded.

Amenities:

Village Hall

Bell tower

Drainage Collection Area behind hall

Maintenance:

Remove buckthorn

Monitor runoff to ensure erosion does not undermine the city hall foundation

### Hall's Marsh

Hall's Marsh (6.6 Acres) is named for one-time village president and treasurer Lee Hall. It is a dedicated nature preserve and is currently unimproved, although the Priebe Lake Outfall pipe discharges into it on the western end. Jay Path is located adjacent to the marsh on the southwestern edge. The area is generally open space and provides ponding, stormwater management and wildlife habitat.

Amenities: None

Maintenance:

Remove invasive species (Buckthorn, Wild Garlic Mustard, Yellow Iris)

### Lakewood Rearrangement Outlot

Lakewood Rearrangement, Out Lot A (0.2 Acres) is a 20-foot wide strip of land off White Pine Lane. It is the residual of the Birchwood Avenue right of way that was replatted when the current housing area was developed. It is unused and undeveloped at this time.

### CONCLUSION

To be good stewards of both the land and taxpayer money, we should emphasize taking care of the spaces and amenities we have. Residents agree. When asked through surveying, the number one concern among residents was maintenance of our parks, trails, and beaches. To maintain our existing parks, trails, and open spaces to the level the community expects, funding levels for maintenance need to be reviewed and evaluated from time to time.