



AGENDA OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023
6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVE AGENDA

APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

A. August 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes* (p. 3-7)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS - REGULAR AGENDA

B. New Discussion Items

- a. Tour of Bloomquist Park
- b. Update on Vacant Committee Seat

C. Discussion Items Carried Over from Previous Meeting(s)

- a. Planning for Tighe-Schmitz Park
- b. City Code Review
- c. Update on Owl Street Handrail
- d. Public Signs on City Beaches
- e. Playground Maintenance
- f. Update on Hall's Marsh MOA

D. Confirm Next Month's Meeting and Identify Agenda Topics

ADJOURN

* denotes an attachment in the agenda packet

ATTACHMENTS

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING August 17, 2023
MINUTES

The August 17, 2023, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources began at 6:30 with an inspection of the Craig Feistner Memorial Preserve. Present were Council Member Justin McCarthy, Council Member Kathy Weier, Committee Members Zachary Michalk, Mary Sue Simmons, Jennifer Arsenault, and Alan Mitchell. Committee Member Noel Hegedus was out of town and absent.

The purpose of the inspection was to determine what would be an appropriate place to post a sign with information about the dedication of the Preserve in the memory of Craig Feistner, a Birchwood resident and an Air Force Academy graduate who was killed in Afghanistan.

The group then traveled to Tighe-Schmitz Park to inspect the playground equipment and the hockey rink.

Upon reconvening in the city hall, Chair Michalk called the meeting to order around 7:30. The meeting began with a review of the two inspections.

Craig Feistner Memorial Preserve. All members viewed the Preserve from the sidewalk. McCarthy and Arsenault worked their way down to the lake through the brush and over rocks. All agreed that the beach area is difficult to access and much work would be required to make a safe walkway from the sidewalk to the beach and there is no money available for such work at the moment. They also agreed that there is not a readily identifiable location for the sign near the Preserve and recommended instead that another location be found for the sign. Two possibilities for the sign that were discussed were the warming house near the hockey rink and city hall. The Committee thought it appropriate to simply keep the sign in storage until next spring when the matter could be revisited.

Tighe-Schmitz Park. The group inspected the playground equipment at the Park and used a safety checklist that Arsenault had found on the Game Time webpage (Game Time is a manufacturer of playground equipment). The group identified a number of maintenance issues with the equipment, including a few rusty metal surfaces, a landscape timber that is rotted and needs to be replaced, a single swing that could use new chains, a sharp point on one of the steps, and a corroded seat on one of the children's toys. The group also determined that the grill near the picnic shelter should be replaced and that there is a crack in the concrete pad. The

Committee thought the three picnic tables could use a sanding and a new paint job. Also, a nearby faucet was leaking and needs attention. The Committee thought that the old backstop in the field should be removed.

The group also inspected the hockey rink and discussed some issues that have been raised like ice conditions and safety measures from falling snow and ice on the warming house. The Committee made no recommendations for any immediate changes in the rink itself.

Agenda. The draft Agenda was approved unanimously with two additional topics added. One was to discuss the possibility of allowing residents to store their kayaks and canoes on the racks at the beaches over the winter. The second was to discuss the email from Noel Hegedus announcing her resignation from the Committee. Both of these items were added at the beginning of the agenda.

Kayak/Canoe Storage. Weier and McCarthy reported that the City has received requests to allow residents to store their kayaks and canoes on the beaches over the winter. The Committee discussed whether such storage created any liability concerns for the City and what the appropriate fee should be for the extended storage. Committee members wondered why owners would want to let their kayaks and canoes sit on the racks exposed over the winter. The Committee thought that at least for the upcoming winter, the City should require the owners to remove their equipment from the racks by November 1, as presently required, and a motion to that effect passed unanimously.

Noel Hegedus Resignation. The Committee received an email from Noel Hegedus saying that due to an extensive travel calendar she was resigning from the Committee effective immediately. McCarthy and Weier said they would advise the City Administrator of the resignation and ask her to begin the process to seek applications from other interested residents so the position can be filled by the City Council.

Planning for Tighe-Schmitz Park The Committee was of the view that this matter had already been discussed. The Committee decided that at next month's meeting, the Committee would inspect Bloomquist Park. Mitchell mentioned that one of the Resolutions the Council passed in January 2023, (Resolution 2023-13), directed the Parks Committee to review the utilization of Tighe-Schmitz Park, gather ideas, hold a public forum, and present ideas to the City Council. The Committee decided that it would be appropriate to hold another public forum in the spring, but that the Committee should have some specific ideas or suggestions to

present to the public for reactions and comments. Mitchell volunteered to prepare a memo summarizing the comments the Committee received at the July 20 public forum and submit it to the full Council in response to the Resolution.

City Code Review. The Committee discussed a number of sections of the proposed ordinance revisions that have been the subject of review for several meetings. The following is a list of chapter 607 sections that were discussed (in numerical order and not necessarily in the order they arose).

607.120.A. Definition of City Park System. The reference to the Curt Feistner Beach should be the Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve.

607.201.A. Hours. Access to a Public Lake Tract after hours should be limited to persons who want access to a boat that is docked on the beach.

607.201.C. Child Supervision. The Committee decided that the provision limiting the age of children who can access the parks without adult supervision should be limited to children under the age of ten who want to swim at any of the beaches. (Note: Since this provision relates to swimming at the Public Lake Tracts, the language has been moved to section 607.400.C.

601.207.A. Fires. Since the City does not provide receptacles for depositing ashes and residues from fires, the Committee decided to support language prohibiting fires in all parks except in areas designated for fires, so no private grills would be allowed.

607.208.B. Waste and Litter. The Committee decided that the language should specifically mention cigarette butts.

607.211.A. Loitering. The Committee decided to delete paragraph A. regarding access to toilet facilities because there are no separate restrooms in Birchwood.

607.217. Dogs. The Committee decided to limit the provisions in this section to dogs only, and not regulate other pet animals under this section.

607.xxx. Signs. The Committee discussed whether chapter 607 should have a provision prohibiting or regulating the posting of private signs anywhere in the City Park System, signs like mosquito control ads or for political campaigns. The Committee determined to not address this issue in the ordinance but to let state law control the issue.

607.303.B. and C. Ice Skating Areas. The Committee determined that subsection A (restricting hockey playing) was unnecessary and subsection B. (prohibiting smoking in the warming house) was unnecessary because at its August 8, 2023 meeting, the Council just adopted a new ordinance prohibiting smoking of tobacco and other products in city parks and other public spaces. (City Code section 610.045).

600.400.C. Swimming. The Committee decided to eliminate the sentence addressing proper garb for swimming since it was vague and confusing.

607.400.E(5). Small Craft Storage. The Committee decided to amend this language to clarify that the City must attempt to notify the owner of a small craft (like a canoe or kayak) stored on a rack on one of the Public Lake Tracts and not properly permitted, before seeking to have the small craft removed.

607.400.F. Structures Prohibited. The Committee decided to move this provision to a different section of the chapter because the prohibition on placing structures on one of the Public Lake Tracts should apply to the entire City Park System.

607.500. Park Use Permit. The Committee discussed whether the City Council should authorize the City Administrator or the Parks and Natural Resources Committee to make the initial decision on whether to issue a Park Use Permit. The Committee recognized that the Council could decide to authorize another person or body to make the initial decision but was not in favor of giving that authority to the Committee. Also, the Committee discussed that some sort of appeal process should be established if the Council did decide to do that, and that such a process was included in an earlier draft of these amendments.

Mitchell moved, seconded by Simmons, to approve all the changes discussed and to transmit the final version to the Council for its consideration. Motion passed unanimously.

Update on Owl Street Handrail. Arsenault stated that the person who built the handrail at the Grotto Street trail was willing to build a similar one at Owl Street. Michalk and Arsenault volunteered to work with the builder to build the Owl Street handrail, and that they should get a bid first, the cost is limited to \$5,000, and that the builder should take into account that the hill is used for sliding in the winter.

Public Signs on City Beaches. The Committee decided that since what is included on the signs depends on what the city code requires and imposes, that

further work on what the signs should say should wait until the Council decides on the final code amendments in chapter 607.

Playground Maintenance. No further discussion occurred on this item since it was covered earlier after the inspection.

Update on Hall's Marsh. McCarthy provided an outline of a possible Memorandum of Agreement between Birchwood, White Bear Lake, Mahtomedi, and the Rice Creek Watershed District to address the cleanup of Priebe Lake in White Bear. Mitchell commented that the outline should be developed into a full Memorandum of Agreement and that he was willing to work with McCarthy in developing such a document.

Next Meeting September 26. Several members had a conflict with the third Thursday in September so the Committee decided to postpone the September meeting until Tuesday, September 26, 2023. The Committee will conduct an inspection of Bloomquist Park at the next meeting.

Adjourn. 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary