

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING August 20, 2024
MINUTES

The August 20, 2024, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:32 p.m.

Attendees: Committee Members Zachary Michalk, Mary Sue Simmons, Jennifer Arsenault, Amy Hullett, and Alan Mitchell. Council members Justin McCarthy and Kathy Weier.

Agenda. The draft agenda was approved unanimously.

Public Forum. No person was present to comment.

Minutes. The draft July 2024 Minutes were approved unanimously.

Picnic Tables at Kay Beach. The Committee discussed an email from resident Mike McKenzie raising the issue of whether the picnic tables at Kay Beach could be unlocked. At the moment there are two picnic tables at the beach, and one is locked and one is unlocked; the unlocked one has been moved around the beach area depending on whether the person wanted to be in the sun or not. The Committee discussed that locking the picnic tables had been a concern in the past because beach visitors had moved the tables to nearby Tighe-Schmitz Park. It was moved and seconded that the Committee recommend that both picnic tables at Kay Beach be unlocked and see how it goes. Chair Michalk will advise City Administrator Rebecca Kellen of the Committee's recommendation.

The Committee also discussed whether the three picnic tables at Tighe-Schmitz was the appropriate number but no decision was made. Council member McCarthy mentioned that there is a brush pile along the road at Tighe-Schmitz and that people seem to be adding more stuff to the pile. The Committee decided that Chair Michalk should point this out when he contacts the City Administrator and indicate that it should be removed promptly before it continues to grow.

Conditions at Ash Beach. The City Administrator had reported that on July 25 she was contacted by a resident who raised a concern about the condition of Ash Beach. Chair Michalk said that he had recently inspected the beach and found that some of the foliage had become overgrown and that there was some trash on the beach and that there was no trash can available. The Committee recognized that some work on the path to the beach had been completed over the summer. The

Committee decided that perhaps a Fall Cleanup Day should be scheduled to clean up all the beaches. The Committee picked Saturday October 26 for the cleanup day, from 10:00 to noon, and that notice of the cleanup day should appear in the City's Fall Newsletter. (Note that later in the meeting, after contacting Mayor Ford by email, the date was changed to October 12 at the Mayor's request.)

Netting at the North End of Hockey Rink. Chair Michalk stated that he had done some internet research on the cost of netting and learned that a 15 foot high by 30 foot length of netting itself would run \$300 to \$500. The Committee was unsure about how the netting would be installed or what installation costs were. The Committee was also aware that the neighbors across the street from the rink had offered to help defray the cost of the netting. The Committee discussed the fact that the cedar trees along the end of the rink near the street had died. The Committee discussed that it had been reported that when the trees were pruned earlier this year, the trees had been improperly trimmed and this led to the death of the trees. The Committee decided that the trees should be removed before the netting is installed. The Committee asked Chair Michalk to advise the City Administrator of the Committee's request to have the trees removed promptly and to be disposed of along with the brush pile in Tighe-Schmitz Park.

Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning and Follow-up to July 31 Special City Council Meeting. Member Simmons advised the Committee that she had just received an email from Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District advising that the City's grant application, which the City Council at its special meeting decided to apply for, had been approved, although the amount of the grant was not mentioned. (Note: In a subsequent email the following day, the amount was determined to be \$75,000.) The Committee thought that the award of the grant should be announced in the upcoming Fall Newsletter.

Commemorative T-Shirts. There was nothing new to report and this matter will be dropped from the Committee's agenda.

Polly' Park and Tree Planting. The Committee discussed that there are still a significant number of trees to be planted in Polly's Park but the City is still waiting to hear from the Department of Natural Resources regarding a pending grant application. The matter of Ash path and whether the path needed more chips was brought up and discussed. The Committee decided to look into the issue. The Committee also decided to check into whether there were bags of mulch that were left over from the earlier tree planting.

Elm Beach Maintenance. There was nothing new to report. Work will depend on the availability of grant funding. Council Member McCarthy mentioned that the rain garden at Birch Beach was in need of attention. The Committee decided that Administrator Kellen should be advised of the situation.

Rice Creek Watershed District Grant Opportunities. There was nothing new to report on the status of Hall’s Marsh. The Committee decided to ask Rice Creek about the status of a wetland renewal grant request.

Trimming Trees Near Stop Signs at Intersections. The Committee was concerned about trees obscuring the stop sign at the intersection of Iris and Wildwood and decided that the Administrator should be requested to address this matter city-wide.

The Committee then discussed maintenance activities in general throughout the city and the importance of undertaking such activities on a regular basis. The Committee discussed whether Sentence-to-Serve, a program whereby persons serving misdemeanor sentences could complete community service obligations, might be called upon to undertake various maintenance requirements, as has been done in the city in the past. It was mentioned that Jay Path has vegetation needing trimming along the path, particularly near Wildwood Avenue. The Committee thought that these various maintenance needs might be addressed as part of the Fall Cleanup Day that will be held in October. Council Member Weier reported that there was nothing new to report regarding maintenance of the Lift Station on Wildwood since the City was still waiting to hear from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about what was required. The work will require that the ground in the area be dug up. The Committee also discussed that the City webpage needed to be updated to incorporate the volunteer spreadsheet that has been used for several months and that volunteers needed to sign a release form before undertaking any volunteer maintenance activities.

Confirm Next Month’s Meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in city hall. No specific agenda topics were discussed beyond what was identified during the course of the meeting.

Council Member Weier added that she had just been advised by email from Mayor Ford that the mayor wasn’t available on October 26 for a Fall Cleanup Day so the Committee decided to change the date to October 12.

Adjourn. 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary