

**PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING September 17, 2024**  
**MINUTES**

The September 17, 2024, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:32 p.m.

**Attendees:** Committee Members Jennifer Arsenault, Mary Sue Simmons, Amy Hullett, and Alan Mitchell. Council members Justin McCarthy and Kathy Weier. Committee Chair Zac Michalk was absent and Arsenault presided at the meeting.

**Agenda.** The draft agenda was approved unanimously.

**Public Forum.** No person was present to comment.

**Minutes.** The draft August 2024 Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Status of Tennis Courts at Bloomquist Park.** The Committee had been advised by email from resident Mary Cahill that one of the tennis courts at Bloomquist Park was in need of repair, that the anchor securing the strap holding down the net had pulled up from the ground. The Committee reviewed a photograph that was attached to the email showing the net. Council Member Weier left the meeting to inspect the situation, and upon her return, confirmed that a big chunk of the concrete anchor holding the strap had pulled out of the ground and was indeed in need of repair. The consensus of the Committee was to ask City Administrator Rebecca Kellen to have the City's maintenance staff determine what needs to be done to repair the net.

**Netting at the North End of Hockey Rink.** Simmons reported that she had a conversation with the neighbors across the street from the hockey rink about the situation and the neighbors confirmed that they were willing to cover the cost of the netting. It remains to be determined how much the netting would cost and how it would be installed.

**Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning.** The Committee reviewed an email from Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District regarding upcoming tasks that needed to be addressed as part of the \$75,000 grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BOWSR) that had been recently approved. Simmons said she would attempt to set up a meeting with Lori Tella for October 1 to go through the upcoming steps that need to be completed. (Note: It was confirmed the next day that the meeting will occur on October 1.) Simmons informed the Committee that

BOWSR had also awarded the City a \$10,000 HELP Grant (Habitat Enhancement Landscape Project) to fund additional work affecting Tighe-Schmitz Park and runoff to the lake.

As part of this agenda item, the Committee also discussed the need to clean out some of the storm drains near the Park and whether that might be accomplished at the Fall Cleanup Day scheduled for October 12. The Committee also discussed the status of the Special Revenue Fund, which is intended to be used for certain expenses related to the city parks. The present balance is about \$21,000, according to the information in the September City Council agenda packet. The Committee discussed that since much of this money comes from the dock and lift fees paid by Birchwood Dock Association members, it would be a good idea going forward to contact the Association and solicit their suggestions and ideas regarding use of the money.

**T-shirt Ideas.** Nothing new to report and this idea will not be pursued at this time.

**Path Improvements through Polly's Park and Tree Planting.** Weier reported that the City would apply for a Releaf Grant from the Department of Natural Resources to help cover the cost of planting more trees in the city once the application process is opened. Weier said that 101 trees have been identified in Polly's Park that need to be removed, many because of disease, before new trees are planted. The Committee discussed a September 13 email from resident Maureen Seibert inquiring about whether a boardwalk might be under consideration for Polly's Park and expressing concerns about such a proposal. Arsenault volunteered to respond to the email on behalf of the Committee and inform Seibert that the Committee is presently focusing on removing dead and diseased trees but will be considering improvements to the pathways, including the possibility of a boardwalk in some sections, once the trees are removed, and there will be opportunities for the public to participate in the process.

**Rice Creek Watershed District Grant Opportunities.** The Committee discussed that there might be additional opportunities for grant funding from the Watershed District for more projects once the projects for Tighe-Schmitz Park covered by the BOWSR grant get underway next year. One example of a possible grant would be for planting wild flowers in areas around the park. The Committee also discussed whether it might be possible to establish an exercise path along an existing walking path in Birchwood with specific signs setting out various exercises; the Committee

looked at some webpage material illustrating the kind of signs and exercises that have been used elsewhere.

**General Maintenance.** The Parks Committee was advised by the City Administrator in an email to the Chair dated September 9, 2024, of the completion of various maintenance tasks that the Committee had identified at the August meeting, including removing the brush pile at Tighe-Schmitz Park, clearing certain stop signs, and unlocking the picnic table at Kay Beach.

The Committee discussed that a list of tasks should be available at the Fall Cleanup Day on October 12, including specific tasks that might be undertaken at the beaches. McCarthy advised the Committee that there is a report in the September City Council agenda packet about a survey the City had done about identifying dead and diseased trees in the city. The report indicates that there are several trees in Birchwood suffering from Oak Wilt.

**Confirm Next Month's Meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 15, 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.

**Adjourn.** 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell  
Secretary