



AGENDA OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
DECEMBER 17, 2024
6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVE AGENDA

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- A. October 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes* (3-5)
- B. November 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes* (p. 6-8)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS - REGULAR AGENDA

- C. Public Forum
- D. Discussion Items Carried Over from Previous Meeting(s)
 - a. Discussion on Adding Netting to the North End of Hockey Rink
 - a. Ron/Jim proposal of approximately \$1,340 (supplies) plus 48 hours of labor.
 - b. Town & Country Fence proposal of \$4,500 to \$4,945
 - b. Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning
 - c. General Maintenance
- E. Confirm Next Month's Meeting and Identify Agenda Topics

ADJOURN

* denotes an attachment in the agenda packet

ATTACHMENTS

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING October 15, 2024
MINUTES

The October 15, 2024, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:32 p.m.

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

Approve Agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Public Forum. No person was present to comment.

Minutes. The draft Minutes of the September 17, 2024, meeting were approved unanimously. The draft Minutes of the October 1, 2024, special meeting were approved unanimously.

New Discussion Items. The Committee discussed the fact that discarded compostable waste items, like food scraps, could now be deposited in residents' trash containers for regular pickup with other garbage, provided the compostable waste is put into a separate bag designed for these types of wastes. These bags will be provided by the waste hauler free of charge upon request. After collection, these compostable waste items will be separated from other garbage and composted.

Tennis Courts at Bloomquist Park. The Committee will continue to look into the matter of repairing the tennis net that has come loose, including seeking cost estimates, and to arrange for the net to be fixed by next spring.

Netting at the Hockey Rink. The Committee discussed the matter of installing a net at the north end of the hockey rink behind the goal. The Committee understands that the resident across the street who brought the matter to the attention of the City has offered to pay for the netting. Chair Michalk reminded the Committee that he had looked on the web for costs of netting and thought that a 15 foot high by 30 foot wide net would cost \$300 to \$500. The Committee discussed how a net like that might be installed at the Birchwood rink, including what kind of poles or other structures might be required to support the netting. The Committee decided to contact the City Administrator and ask her to contact city employees and see what they might be able to do. The Committee recognized that the netting

should be installed soon so it would be up before the rink is flooded and the skating begins.

Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning. The Committee focused on an email dated October 15, 2024, from Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District that summarized the present status of projects in Tighe-Schmitz Park that will be funded in large part by the \$75,000 grant the City recently received from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BOWSR). Council members McCarthy and Weier reported that the Council had authorized the city engineer to review plans for the projects and consult with Tella. Tella said she would be starting some soil infiltration tests in the next few weeks and could use some help pouring small amounts of water into the test sites a couple of times to help her determine the infiltration rate. Members Hullett and Simmons agreed to provide that assistance. The Committee also discussed Tella's comment that she would look into whether restoration of drain tile in the Park could be included in the grant-funded projects. The Committee expects to receive a report from Tella and will discuss this matter further.

Tella also advised in her email that the Committee should identify somebody to take the lead on the HELP grant (Habitat Enhancement Landscape Project) the City was awarded and start identifying possible restoration sites. Simmons agreed to take the lead, at least at this moment. Tella indicated that there was no immediate rush and that identifying a project next spring would be just fine.

The subject of drainage issues on Oakridge Drive and in Polly's Park came up, and Councilmember Weier said she would talk to the city engineer about those issues.

Finally, the Committee briefly discussed the possibility of seeking a grant from the Rice Creek Watershed District for a larger stormwater project in Birchwood. Tella informed the Committee about the grant in her email and provided information about how to apply. The deadline for submitting an application is mid-December, and the Committee was of the view that a project of such magnitude could not be identified in such a short time

Since the Committee was focusing on Tighe-Schmitz Park, the Committee briefly discussed the question of whether the Mahtomedi Soccer Association should be permitted to rent the Park for soccer practice. Council members McCarthy and Weier stated that the Council had determined at its October meeting that it would be fine to rent out the Park to the Association for soccer. The Committee recognized that the Association should be made aware that there will be work done

in the Park and Chair Michalk said that he would be meeting with representatives from the Association in the near future.

Polly's Park and Tree Planting. There was nothing new to discuss.

Rice Creek Watershed District Grant Opportunities. There was nothing more to discuss about Rice Creek grant opportunities.

General Maintenance. The Committee discussed the good work that volunteers had completed as part of the fall Clean Up day on Saturday, October 12. All Committee members and Council members McCarthy and Weier, and also Mayor Ford and Council member Hankins, had all participated in the cleanup, along with about a dozen other volunteers and city maintenance staff. The Committee expressed appreciation for everybody pitching in to help with the effort and noted that several trailer loads of brush and leaves were raked up and hauled away.

Next Month's Meeting. The Committee decided that at its next meeting in November, it would discuss possible restoration projects within the city that could improve Hall's Marsh. The next Committee meeting will be Tuesday, November 19, at 6:30 in city hall.

Adjourn. 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING November 19, 2024
MINUTES

The November 19, 2024, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:34 p.m.

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

Others: Barton Winter and Shelly Ross (at 6:52)

Agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Public Forum. Barton Winter addressed the Committee regarding several items about the hockey rink that he had identified in an earlier email to the Committee. The first issue had to do with the condition of some of the boards. Winter said there were a number of boards that needed replacement, that he had replaced six boards last year, and that he was willing to pay ½ the cost of replacing several additional boards this year and that he would do the installation. Winter also asked that a group of birch trees near the warming house be removed because they interfered with the dumping of snow and ice from the rink during the winter. Finally, Winter said he was displeased with some of the flooding that has occurred in the past and that he would like to be involved in the flooding.

Council Member McCarthy said that it seems the City has to replace some boards every year and wondered if there was a better, longer-lasting option instead of wooden boards. The consensus was that other options were probably more expensive and would take longer to install. Winter also said he would like a concrete surface or even some kind of plastic liner. Simmons stated that she supported replacement of the rotten boards but would not agree that the birch trees should be removed. Winter said he would do some research to explore other options for the wooden boards. McCarthy mentioned that last year the Council had passed a resolution accepting Winter's offer to cover the cost of new boards that he would install. Mitchell moved and Arsenault seconded that the Committee recommend to the Council that the City accept Winter's offer to pay ½ the cost of replacing a number of boards and that Winter be authorized to do the installation, provided Winter signed a waiver of liability. Winter agreed to the conditions and the motion passed unanimously. The Committee did not support removing the trees or authorizing Winter to participate in flooding the rink, but indicated that the City would raise the flooding issue with city employees involved in the flooding.

Shelly Ross then addressed the Committee and requested that the City install lights at Bloomquist Park so people could play pickleball and tennis after dark. The Committee raised two issues: (1) cost, and (2) how would lights be installed. The Committee felt that more information was required regarding the cost and invited Ross to look into that issue with the other pickleball players. The Committee also discussed various issues related to installing lighting, like how late at night could the lights be on and how would the lights be installed and operated. The Committee decided to contact the City Administrator and ask her to look into these issues. The Committee urged Ross to let her pickleball group know of the Committee's action and to solicit their input.

Minutes. The Committee failed to act on the draft October 15 Minutes so this matter will be taken up at the December meeting.

Lighting at the Tennis Courts. The Committee determined that there was nothing further to discuss under this issue since it was covered during the public forum.

Restoration of Hall's Marsh. Council member Weier stated that before a discussion about restoring Hall's Marsh would be meaningful, it would be necessary to resolve the Priebe Lake draining issue first. Weier provided an update on negotiations with the Rice Creek Watershed District about draining Priebe Lake, stating that there were lots of terms still under discussion, including the possibility of grant opportunities for work on Hall's Marsh. The Committee discussed briefly that the City of Mahtomedi was also looking into issues related to lowering the water level in ponds near the Mahtomedi/Birchwood border by Lost Lake. No action was taken.

Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning. The Committee discussed an email from Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District dated November 19, 2024, in which Tella described work at Tighe-Schmitz Park to determine infiltration rates. Committee members Arsenault, Simmons, Hullett, and Mitchell had all helped with that work – digging test holes in various areas around the park, filling them with water, and checking on the filtration at periodic intervals. Tella expressed appreciation in her email for our help and indicated that she would now be looking into options to address drainage issues in the park. Tella also stated that she had taken some soil samples in the park and would be analyzing the samples for pH and texture.

Tella also suggested in her email that the Committee should begin to look at options for using the \$10,000 HELP grant (Habitat Enhancement Landscape Project) the City had obtained to fund a project to improve Tighe-Schmitz Park. Tella laid out the following options and asked the Committee to suggest its preferences:

We can use this to enhance the areas by the new basins

Plant the area by the ice rink that is soggy

Seed the edges of the park with the sedge meadow mix

Improve the forest area along the park to remove weeds and add in native see mix and shrubs.

Target areas for buckthorn removal

Add plantings to the shoreline

Look at Halls Marsh for opportunities

Committee members agreed to look at Tella's email and select one or two preferences by December 1 so the matter could be discussed by the Committee at the December meeting.

Simmons suggested that a notice be included in the upcoming city Newsletter explaining that the City was doing work at Tighe-Schmitz Park and residents might notice some activity in the park from time to time

Council member Weier advised the Committee that the City Council had authorized the Mahtomedi Soccer Club to use Tighe-Schmitz Park for soccer practice in the spring and that the Club had agreed not to interfere with the City's work in the park. The Club also agreed to mow the grass in the park and to bring their own soccer nets and install any chalk lines they might want and to only use the park for practice, not games.

Simmons mentioned that residents who attended the public forum the Committee held last May about Tighe-Schmitz Park expressed an interest in establishing exercise stations around the community. The Committee discussed the possibility of creating such stations at various locations, including the city beaches and parks.

Netting at Hockey Rink. The Committee was informed that City staff had prepared an estimate for installing netting at the hockey rink, and it was \$1340 plus labor charges. Council members McCarthy and Weier stated that the City could not afford to incur this expense this year. Chair Michalk informed the Committee that he had had a discussion with a representative from a company called Town & Country Fence and that the representative said his company could install a barrier along the end of the hockey rink before the end of this calendar year and that he would put a cost estimate together within a few days. Michalk agreed to provide the estimate to the City Administrator and have the matter placed on the Council agenda for its December meeting. Simmons agreed to advise the neighbors of the status of this matter and inform them that the City would be very appreciate of any donation they would make to cover the cost of the netting.

Polly's Park. Weier advised the Committee that the possibility of a grant to cover the cost of new trees was not feasible this year since the grant application period was not yet open. Weier also stated that there are still over 100 trees needing removal in the park because they are diseased or rotten. The Committee decided it was best not to plant any saplings until the older diseased trees were removed.

State of Tennis Courts. The Committee was advised that the loose tennis net at the park had been repaired.

General Maintenance. The Committee was advised that a fence along a portion of the Ash Walkway had been installed but that another short stretch on the other side of the path still needed installation. It was also reported that the wall along the Ash Beach Easement has been installed. The Committee discussed the importance of keeping the Birchwood Dock Association advised of the work of the Parks Committee and was aware that the Committee appreciated its input on matters affecting the beaches.

As a last item, the Committee discussed topics for the upcoming City Newsletter, which will go out in early December. Chair Michalk will submit items to Weier in time for inclusion in the Newsletter. Simmons added that the Newsletter should remind residents about minimizing their use of salt over the winter.

Next Month's Meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 17, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in city hall.

Adjourn. 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary