



AGENDA OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
FEBRUARY 18, 2025  
6:30 P.M.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**APPROVE AGENDA**

**OPEN PUBLIC FORUM**

**APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

A. January 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes\* (pages 3-5)

**COMMITTEE BUSINESS - REGULAR AGENDA**

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

- a. Tree Stewards Volunteer Program\* (pages 6-7)
- b. Discuss Ideas for Music in the Park Improvements\* (page 8)
- c. Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning
- d. Discuss adding fencing in Ash Path
- e. Policy for Hockey and Pleasure Rink\* (pages 9-12)
- f. Discussion of Committee Budget
- g. Community Project Tracker\* (pages 13-14)
- h. General Maintenance

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

**ADJOURN**

\* denotes an attachment in the agenda packet

## **ATTACHMENTS**

**PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING January 21, 2025**  
**MINUTES**

The January 21, 2025, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:33 p.m.

**Attendees:** Committee Members Zachary Michalk, Mary Sue Simmons, Amy Hullet, and Alan Mitchell. Council Member Bridget Sperl. Council Member Kathy Weier called and said she was having car trouble away from home and would miss the meeting.

**Others:** Barton Winter

**Agenda.** The agenda was approved unanimously with the addition of an item to discuss a proposed hockey rink policy.

**Public Forum.** Barton Winter addressed the Committee regarding the hockey rink. Winter said that he had emailed the City Council members around Christmas time with comments about the condition of the rink. Winter described the flooding history of the rink over late December and said that the flooding had left some soft spots on the rink because of warm weather on certain days. Winter said the temperature hit 47 degrees on Christmas day leaving the rink in poor condition for skating. Winter stated that he would like to see more ice on the rink surface before the rink is opened for skating. He thought there should be a more deliberate consideration of the ice condition before deciding whether to open the rink, and the rink should not be open when the ice was too thin for safe skating.

**Minutes.** The Committee unanimously approved the draft December Minutes with one minor change to correct the abbreviation for the Board of Water and Soil Resources to BWSR.

**Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning.** Simmons discussed an email from Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District dated January 14, 2025 that was included in the agenda packet. Simmons described the role of Tella and the WCD as the administer of the grant the City had received from the Board of Water and Soil Resources to improve Tighe-Schmitz Park. Simmons reported that Tella would be attending the Committee's February meeting to discuss tentative design plans for the intended projects at the Park (described in the December Minutes). The schedule calls for the design plans to be presented to the City Council at its March 2024 meeting for approval. Council Member Sperl mentioned that it would be

helpful to provide the full Council with the pertinent information as far in advance of the March Council meeting as possible.

**Railing for Ash Path.** The Committee recognized that it was unfortunate that Council Member Weier was unable to attend the meeting since she had the latest information about the installation of a railing along a portion of Ash Path. The Committee decided to carry this matter over to the February meeting.

The Committee did recognize that the installation of a railing or fencing along Ash Path would require the expenditure of money, and the Committee discussed that it would be advisable for the Committee to put together a list of projects that might be or could be implemented over an upcoming period of time.

**Hockey Rink Policy.** The Committee reviewed a draft hockey rink policy prepared by Mayor Jennifer Arsenault dated January 17 that was included in the agenda packet. The Mayor asked the Committee to help develop a policy regulating use of the rink. Winter pointed out that the Birchwood rink is not reserved for hockey practices by youth teams so the Committee should bear that in mind when it develops a policy proposal to recommend to the Council. The Committee decided it would review the draft policy and discuss the matter further at its February meeting. Winter stated that he would provide the Committee with his comments in writing before the February meeting.

Council Member Sperl asked whether the City should develop a broader policy to address issues affecting city park use besides just use of the hockey rink. The Committee thought that it would be appropriate to review the park restrictions in chapter 617 of the City Code and consider whether any changes might be appropriate.


**General Maintenance.** The Committee discussed the need to replace the tennis nets in Bloomquist Park to be ready for play next summer. The Committee recognized that there was a cost involved in replacing the nets, and that led to a discussion about the need for the Committee to develop and maintain a list of projects that the City might want to implement in the various city parks with estimates of the costs that might be incurred with these projects. This information would be helpful to the Council as it develops its budgets going forward. The Committee also addressed the possibility of the Council providing the Committee with a certain amount of discretionary funds that the Committee could use to implement minor improvements in the parks without returning to the Council for specific authorization for each individual action.

**Next Month's Meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in city hall. The agenda will include a presentation by Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District, and discussion of a hockey rink policy, the Ash Path railing, and future park projects and funding.

**Adjourn.** 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell  
Secretary

**From:** Jennifer Arsenault Jennifer.Arsenault@cityofbirchwood.com   
**Subject:** Fw: Tree Stewards Volunteer program  
**Date:** February 5, 2025 at 11:55 AM  
**To:** Zachary Michalk zmichalk13@gmail.com

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Hi, Zach.

I am forwarding this to you in hopes that the park's committee can help me identify projects for the Tree Stewards. Can you please put it on your February agenda since they will be here in April and time is running out.

Thank you,

*Jennifer Arsenault*

Mayor, City of Birchwood Village

Office: (651) 426-3403

email: Jennifer.Arsenault@cityofbirchwood.com

website: www.cityofbirchwood.com

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**From:** Jessica Sahu.Teli <JSahu.Teli@mnwcd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 5:28 PM  
**To:** Jennifer Arsenault <Jennifer.Arsenault@cityofbirchwood.com>  
**Subject:** Tree Stewards Volunteer program

Dear Mayor Jennifer,

My name is Jessica and I am an educator and the volunteer coordinator for Washington Conservation District. Congratulations on your new post as Mayor. I have previously been in contact with Rebecca Kellen on the matter of bringing the Tree Steward Volunteer program to your city. I believe Rebecca has already forwarded you my email but, I have also included the same information below for convenience. Are there any questions about the program that I can answer for you? I am available via email all week and phone availability below. If you are comfortable moving forward with the program, I ask that you and your council create a rough list of tree related wants and needs for the city. This may include planting, mulching, watering, staking, fertilizing, trunk protection, developmental pruning of young trees, pruning suckers and sprouts, and presence at tree related community events.

via phone

today till 5pm

Wed. : 12:30-5pm

Fri. : 11am- 6pm

Host Site Responsibilities:

1. Tree Steward Liability waivers (according to cities legal team).
2. Provide a supervisor for the Tree Stewards to receive assignments from and report to.
3. Self-identify high needs areas for Tree Steward maintenance.
4. Provide at least 25 hours of work/ community events per year for tree

stewards to complete

- a. The hope is that tree stewards will continuously serve city when needed.

WCD Responsibilities:

1. Facilitate the training of Tree Steward through the U of M Extension.
2. Match the tree stewards with a city host site.
3. Collect data on hours served and work completed by Tree Stewards (from My Impact)
4. Provide tree stewards opportunities to network and get together as a cohort.
5. Provide future continuing education opportunities.

Tree Steward Responsibilities:

1. Report to city supervisor for assignments to complete.
2. Report hours and accomplishments on My Impact.com
3. Complete 25 hours of work per year in tree care maintenance or community events

Safety Expectations of Tree Stewards:

- Wear safety vests, protective eyewear, helmet,
- Wear closed shoes
- Prune branches within arm's reach both feet on the ground
- Pruned branches 2 inches or smaller
- Don't prune branches near power lines

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Have an awesome day!

**Jessica Sahu Teli**

Water Education Senior Technician



Washington Conservation District

455 Hayward Ave. N

Oakdale, MN 55128

[Jsahu.teli@mnwcd.org](mailto:Jsahu.teli@mnwcd.org)

651.315.8927 office

**From:** ALAN MITCHELL alanshari@comcast.net  
**Subject:** Music in the Park  
**Date:** February 5, 2025 at 10:02 AM  
**To:** parks@cityofbirchwood.com

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I wanted to let you know that I have finalized next summer's Music in the Park concert series. We have all the same artists and groups we had last year. So I have all the favorites that the Birchwood audience has come to enjoy. I think Birchwood will have another fun summer of music in the Birchwood Ice Palace, a.k.a. the hockey rink, in 2025. .

I'm letting the Parks Committee know this because I'd like to solicit any ideas the Committee members might have to improve how we advertise and conduct our concerts. I think it is within the Committee's charge to look at these matters since the concerts are held in Tighe-Schmitz Park. One matter relates to how we advertise our concerts. We publish notice in the White Bear Press each week and we post the full schedule on the city webpage, but perhaps there are other things we might be doing. I'm also wondering if there might be improvements we might make in how we hold the concerts in the ice rink. I was thinking that even a small amount of outdoor carpeting might improve the aesthetics.

Zac, can you add this to the February 18 agenda and include my email in the agenda packet? Thanks. Also, this doesn't have to be done just in February. Anytime any of you have any ideas about how we hold our concerts, please let me know.

AI



**CITY OF BIRCHWOOD**  
**OUTDOOR ICE SKATING RINK RULES**

The City of Birchwood maintains an outdoor hockey rink and an outdoor pleasure skating rink, both located in Tighe-Schmitz Park. These rules apply to all persons using either of the city rinks.

**I. Skating.**

- All persons on the ice at any time do so at their own risk.
- All persons on the ice are encouraged to wear skates.
- All users are encouraged to wear appropriate protective gear, including helmets, to reduce the risk of injury.
- Skate training aids, chairs, or buckets are allowed on the ice.
- Sleds, bicycles, and other such devices are not allowed on the ice.

**II. Conduct.**

- No smoking, chewing tobacco, or use of drugs/alcohol is permitted in the skating area.
- No roughhousing such as fighting, throwing snowballs, etc. or dangerous games are allowed in the skating area.
- No foul or abusive language or bullying is allowed in the skating area.
- Users are expected to treat each other with respect and courtesy at all times.
- No dogs or other animals are permitted at any time in the skating area.
- Park vehicles only in designated parking areas.

**III. Warming House.**

- No person shall loiter in the warming house.

- No person shall deface any part of the warming house or any structure in the warming house, such as carving initials in any woodwork or damaging any chairs or other structures.
- No person shall enter the warming house if the door is locked.

#### **IV. Flooding.**

- Only persons authorized by the City shall be permitted to conduct flooding of the ice rinks.
- The City shall determine the appropriate times to flood and the manner of flooding.

#### **V. Hockey Rink.**

- Recreational skaters shall not skate on the hockey rink when hockey players are present.
- Hockey sticks and pucks are not permitted on the pleasure rink.
- Hockey players shall not deliberately shoot the puck over the boards so the puck flies outside the rink.
- Share the rink during busy times.
- The hockey rink may not be reserved for private use.

#### **VI. Maintenance.**

- The City shall be responsible for clearing the rinks after flooding or a snowfall.
- Volunteers may assist with the clearing of snow off the ice or with other minor maintenance issues. Volunteers must first register at city hall as a volunteer and must first have filled out a Release of Liability Form and filed that with the City Administrator. Such forms are available at City Hall.

#### **VII. Open Hours.**

- The rinks shall be open during daylight hours and until 9:00 p.m. if the lights are on.
- Each skater must exercise discretion in determining whether the ice is suitable for skating.
- The City may close the rinks if the ice is unsuitable for skating.

### **VIII. Complaints.**

- All complaints regarding the rink, including maintenance issues, safety concerns, or incidents of misconduct, shall be directed to the City Administrator.

### **IX. Emergencies.**

- In case of an emergency, the person should immediately call 911.
- At the earliest convenience, any person incurring an emergency shall notify the City.

### **X. Additional Restrictions.**

- All other restrictions in the City Code that apply to the City Park System, particularly those in chapter 607 of the Code, shall apply to the ice rinks and to Tighe-Schmitz Park.

### **XI. Enforcement.**

- The City may enforce any of these provisions through the imposition of appropriate and available sanctions.

### **XII. Amendment**

- These Rules may be amended or modified by the Birchwood City Council at any time.

Language for a sign in the warming house, or outside the warming house, probably just a printed page in some kind of a protective wrap.

## **RINK RULES**

### **CITY OF BIRCHWOOD**

All persons on the ice at any time do so at their own risk.

No smoking, No loitering, No foul language, No bullying,

Rink hours: 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. if the lights are on.

No hockey on the pleasure rink.

Be courteous of users and neighbors.

Additional rules can be found on the city webpage.

Questions? Complaints? Contact city hall.

Exercise stations 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Native plants + educational resources 🍷

Revert portion to natural state 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Concrete platform in place of pleasure rink 🍷

MOVE HOCKEY RINK TO LAKE 🍷🍷🍷

~~EXERCISE STATIONS ON PATH~~

# Ideas

New picnic tables 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Volleyball court 🍷🍷

New Swings/playground equip 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Community garden

Status quo 🍷

Prairie plant garden + path on soccer field 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Disc golf 🍷🍷🍷

Rain gardens 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Remove baseball field 🍷

Maintain picnic shelter 🍷🍷🍷

Bandshell 🍷🍷🍷

Swimming pool 🍷

Horseshoe pit 🍷

More trees/community tree farm 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Resurface hockey rink 🍷

New soccer nets 🍷🍷🍷

Outdoor movie nights 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Hire maintenance crew 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Enhanced water management infrastructure 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷