



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE
CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2026
6:00 P.M.**

Committee Members Present

Jamie Eisele, Chair
Nan Drews, Secretary
Ashley Belisle, Member
Shelley Ross, Member
Jennifer Arsenault, Council Liaison

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion: Shelley; Seconded by Nan. Agenda approved by unanimous vote.

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

Therese Bellinger, deputy clerk of the city of Birchwood, was unable to attend the public forum but delivered a letter to the committee requesting funding for materials to display artwork.

Motion: Nan Drews made a motion to send the budget request to the City Council for review and approval. Seconded by Shelley Ross.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion: Nan, Seconded by Ashley. Minutes approved by unanimous vote.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS - REGULAR AGENDA

1. Strava Group

Nan Drews created a Birchwood Village Connections Club on Strava, a popular fitness-tracking and social networking app designed primarily for runners, cyclists, and hikers. The group is open to anyone to join.

The idea behind the club is that area residents (Birchwood and surrounding communities) who enjoy fitness activities in and around Birchwood Village use the Strava group as a place to connect with each other. In the future the club can be used to promote fitness-related events and activities in Birchwood Village.

There is no cost to the city for creating and administering the group on the app. Nan is currently the owner of the club and will make any Birchwood Village residents who wish to be added as club administrators.

To encourage city residents to join the Strava club, Nan will create promotional blurbs for the Birchwood Village print newsletter, e-newsletter and social media platforms and share with city admin for publishing. Nan will also reach out to the Lake Links association to ask them to promote the club in their communications.

Motion: Jamie Eisele motioned to have Nan spearhead the promotion of BVCC Strava club. Seconded by Ashley Belisle.

2. Community Food Shelf

Nan visited with Carol Anibas, Volunteer Coordinator for the White Bear Area Food Shelf. There are many opportunities for individual or groups of Birchwood Village residents to support the organization.

Food drive: Need for donations is greatest not during the Christmas holidays but in January – April. Nan recommended organizing a food drive benefitting the food shelf in January or February 2027, potentially timed around a committee event.

Volunteering: Need for volunteers is year-round, with both daytime and evening shifts available. Nan will put together a call for residents interested in volunteering to share their contact information and the best times/days for them to volunteer. Once we have this information Nan will work with the food shelf to schedule a group volunteering activity.

Motion: Ashley Belisle moved that the committee take steps to develop a BVCC volunteering group at White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf. Seconded by Nan Drews.

3. Fall Festival: Committee discussed budget, timing, activities and promotion of fall event.

- Timing: Flannel Fest will be held Sunday Oct. 25, 4-6 pm in the parking lot of the Village Hall.
- Food: Ashley Belisle secured the El Pariente food truck and they agreed to waive their minimum sales requirement for this event. The committee decided to also offer an activity to make your own s'mores. The event will be promoted as "Bring Your Own Beverage", but the committee will provide drinking water and cups.
- Craft activity: The committee agreed to host a pumpkin decorating activity, along with the opportunity to sign your name on a large painted rock that will be displayed in the city.
- Games: Shelley Ross to secure supplies and prizes for cakewalk, pumpkin ring toss and candy corn in a jar guessing game.
- Music: Nan Drews created tab on the planning spreadsheet with suggested playlist for the DJ, a local resident who is donating his services.
- Promotion: Ashley Belisle to work with city staff to design and procure lawn signs promoting the event.
- Additional planning meeting: The committee agreed to the need for an additional planning meeting on September 28 at 6 pm. The committee also agreed to move its October meeting from Oct. 12 to Oct. 13 because there can be no activities on the Indigenous People's Day holiday on Oct. 12.

Motion: Ashley Belisle moved that Jennifer Arsenault call a special city council meeting to secure approval of the Flannel Fest event budget. Seconded by Nan Drews.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

ADJOURN

Motion: Nan Drews; Second: Shelley Ross. The meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Next meeting: September 28 at 6 pm

Minutes submitted by Nan Drews, secretary, Birchwood Village Connections committee