

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