

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING December 16, 2024
MINUTES

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

Others: Barton Winter

Agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Public Forum. Barton Winter addressed the Committee regarding the hockey rink. Winter traced the flooding that had occurred since Thanksgiving and stated that all that ice had since melted. Winter said that flooding began again on December 11 but given the warm weather, the rink was not ready for skating. Winter then described the work he had done to replace some boards at the rink. The Committee thanked Winter for his work on the rink.

Councilwoman Weier then summarized the requests Winter had submitted to the City for reimbursement regarding expenses he had incurred in purchasing boards and supplies for the rink. Weier said that next year the Council should approve the work and the reimbursement before Winter incurs any expenses. Weier also said that over the summer the city should determine what work should be done on the rink. Weier said she would confirm the amount of reimbursement requested by Winter to date and would bring that matter to the Council for approval in January.

Arsenault advised the Committee that at a work shop the night before, the incoming Council members discussed their intent to develop a policy for maintaining the hockey rink.

Minutes. The Committee unanimously approved the draft October 15 Minutes. With regard to the November Minutes, the Committee unanimously approved the draft Minutes with one amendment requested by Winter in the Public Forum item to clarify that the Committee would raise with the City Council Winter's concern about flooding the rink.

Netting on the Hockey Rink. Michalk said that he had nothing new to report regarding the bid he had received by email from a company called Town & Country Fence on December 2 for approximately \$5000. The Committee reviewed

the estimate provided by city staff that it would take \$1340 for supplies plus about 48 hours of work to install the netting. The Committee then discussed whether it was going to be possible or even advisable to install netting this year, given the potential cost and the warm weather limiting the keeping of ice on the rink.

Mitchell moved, seconded by Simmons, that the Committee recommend to the City Council that it authorize up to \$2500 for the installation of netting this season; the motion carried unanimously. Simmons agreed to contact the neighbors of the Committee's action to advise them of the Committee's decision and ask whether they were still agreeable to covering half of the cost. Michalk agreed to contact Town & Country Fence to learn whether there would be additional cold-weather charges now that we were into December.

Tighe-Schmitz Future Planning. Simmons reported that she had advised Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District that the Committee's top two choices for work in Tighe-Schmitz Park were the following:

Choice 1: Plant areas in the soggy area near the hockey rink.

Choice 2: Add plantings to the shoreline. This choice is followed closely by enhancing areas by the new basins.

Simmons stated that this work would be funded under a grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for \$10,000, called a HELP grant (Habitat Enhancement Landscape Project). Simmons also mentioned that the City had received a second grant for \$75,000 from BWSR for other work in Tighe-Schmitz Park.

Simmons emphasized that under the grants, the City would be expected to maintain any projects that are pursued. The Committee discussed various ways in which this maintenance might be implemented, such as relying on volunteers and city staff and hiring private contractors. The Committee determined that the City will need help carrying out these grant-funded projects, with design, implementation, and maintenance. The Committee will meet with Lori Tella at its February 2025 meeting.

Weier mentioned that there was also an issue with runoff down Century Avenue to the Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve and that this issue will need to be addressed ultimately. Weier added that runoff into Polly's Park is another issue needing attention.

General Maintenance. The Committee decided to include the matter of the repair of the tennis nets in Bloomquist Park on the February agenda. It was reported that the anchor on one net is pulling up.

The Committee stated that Winter's issues with the condition of the hockey rink had to be addressed by the City Council and couldn't be resolved by the Parks Committee.

The Committee discussed the fact that a couple red benches had been placed near the tennis courts, and that while benches might be a good idea, such action should not occur without first obtaining city approval to do so. The Committee will attempt to track down who owns the benches and placed them at the tennis courts.

The Committee discussed the status of Ash Path where some maintenance and cleanup have occurred. Weier stated that the barbed wire on one side of a portion of the path should be replaced.

Weier advised the Committee that the City would be developing its 2050 Comp Plan. McCarthy described a possible new path from Polly's Park along White Pine Court and continuing on into Mahtomedi.

Next Month's Meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in city hall.

Adjourn. 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary