

**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 two instances of flooding over late December when there were some soft spots on the rink because of warm weather. 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