

**PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING NOVEMBER 18, 2025
MINUTES**

The November 18, 2025, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:34 p.m.

Attendees: Committee Members Zachary Michalk, Mary Sue Simmons, Amy Hulett, Margaret Ford, and Alan Mitchell. Council Members Kathy Weier and Bridget Sperl. Others: Barton Winter.

Agenda. Simmons asked to add two items to the agenda: (1) an update of the Priebe Lake situation, and (2) a discussion of the adopt-a-park issue. Mitchell asked that the agenda include a discussion of the proposed amendments to chapter 804 of the City Code. A motion to approved the agenda with the addition of the above three issues was approved unanimously.

Public Forum. Winter addressed the Committee regarding the netting and other work at the hockey rink. He stated that were eight posts that needed caps and that he was willing to obtain and install the caps. He also mentioned that it might be good to shorten some of the posts along the new netting to decrease the stress on the netting. Weier stated that the City intended to monitor the performance of the netting over the upcoming skating season to determine whether the netting was high enough to prevent the pucks from sailing outside the rink. She indicated that the City Council had approved the installation of the caps on the posts. Winter will be meeting with the mayor to determine how to proceed

Simmons reported that the Carlsons, residents across the street from the rink, had provided a \$500 check as a donation to defray a portion of the costs of the netting. Simmons added that the Carlsons were happy with the work that was done during the fall cleanup day to improve drainage on Dellwood Beach and that the Carlsons expected that the kids also will be happy with the addition of the netting because it saves them the task of finding the pucks that get shot out of the rink.

Minutes. The draft October Minutes were approved unanimously.

Adopt-a-Park Initiative. Simmons reported that she had found some information about the White Bear Lake program on that city's webpage. White Bear provides information on how the program is run, about safety, who is eligible to adopt a park, and about what kind of tasks are expected of volunteers. The Committee discussed that an announcement about the adopt-a-park program should be

included in the winter Newsletter, which will come out early in December, and residents should be invited to indicate if they are interested in participating.

Priebe Lake. Weier provided an update on the status of the agreement with the Rice Creek Watershed District to clean out Priebe Lake. She informed the Committee that she and Councilman Ryan Hankins had attended the Rice Creek meeting on November 10 to discuss the situation. Weier said that there are still negotiations ongoing between the parties regarding the standards to be applied to Hall's Marsh and at the moment there is no agreement. She stated that a Memorandum of Agreement will be finalized when the parties resolve their differences. Weier said that the City has filed an objection with the Department of Natural Resources and at the moment, no work is underway or planned,

804 Amendments. Mitchell said that he presented the matter of proposed amendments to Chapter 804 of the City Code, regarding the Special Revenue Fund, at the Council's November 14 meeting. Weier responded that the Council decided to go ahead with the proposed amendments and will hold a public hearing at its next meeting in December. Mitchell volunteered to prepare Resolutions to implement a decision to adopt the amendments and to provide those to the Council.

Budget Discussion. The Committee focused its discussion on a proposed 2026 Budget and Action Plan table and a separate 2026 Budget table, which Mitchell had prepared. Both tables are attached to these Minutes. The Committee was generally in agreement that the projects listed were the ones that the Committee thought should be pursued in 2026. Mitchell added that the projects were also listed in generally a priority fashion, with the higher priority projects listed first.

Weier stated that the Polly's Park tree removal and planting project should be divided into two separate projects – one project involving removal of large trees and one project dealing with the smaller trees but not involving any planting of new trees. She stated that \$20,000 of road repair money might become available for a purpose such as removing large diseased or dead trees from Polly's Park.

After discussing the specific projects in the tables, the Committee decided that it was better to prepare three separate tables, one for each of the revenue sources – the Special Revenue Fund, grant funding, and funding from the general city budget. The Committee recognized that some projects would appear in more than one table since funding was expected from more than one revenue source, such as grant funding and Special Revenue Fund funding.

Winter inquired whether the City had considered removing dead trees that are located on city property along the right-of-way. Weier responded that there was no money budgeted specifically for that purpose at the moment. The Committee discussed whether it should include the development of a Tree Plan as a project for next year. The consensus was that the Committee should do that and focus on what trees might be removed and how removal might be funded.

The Committee discussed funding for Music in the Park. The proposed funding considers two additional Sundays of music in 2026 and a corresponding increase in the funding from past years when only ten concerts were held. The Committee discussed whether it would be worthwhile to conduct a survey to learn how residents felt about the concert series and whether there was interest in additional services such as food trucks at the concerts. Weier added that the Community Club had discussed ways to provide more services and events for the public utilizing facilities like the hockey rink and city hall.

The Committee discussed putting \$2,500 into the budget to allow for one tree removal next year of a tree that the City determined it is responsible for removing. The Committee decided to consider inviting residents to suggest a tree the City is responsible for that they would like to have removed.

The Committee determined that Mitchell would revise the 2026 Budget Table in accordance with the preferences expressed during the discussion and that Michalk would prepare a table of completed projects and ongoing projects. These tables need to be prepared in time to submit them to the Council for their December 9 meeting. The Committee determined that a report regarding how the funds in the Special Revenue Fund were spent during 2025 would be difficult to ascertain and not of much help and that such reporting would begin in 2026. The Committee did recognize that there is over \$31,000 in the Fund right now and that the number could increase to over \$40,000 when the 2026 Dock Fees are paid next spring.

As a final discussion point, Sperl reminded the Committee that if there was any information or requests to pass along to the community, that she should be contacted to have them posted on the city Facebook page.

Next Meeting. December 16 2025

Adjourn. 7:47

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary