PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING May 20, 2025
MINUTES

The May 20, 2025, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:31 p.m.

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

Others: Barton Winter and Sue Hambly.

Agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously

Public Forum.

Sue Hambly, a White Bear Lake resident who addressed the Committee at the April meeting about the condition of Curt Feistner Beach, said she came to this meeting to say thank you for the City installing the Curt Feistner Beach sign in Wildwood Park. She said the Feistner family was grateful for the City's action and that she would be available to help maintain the Curt Feistner area in the future.

Barton Winter stated that he had submitted some material in writing to the Chair earlier that evening about replacing posts at the hockey rink. He briefly described his proposal. Chair Michalk stated that the matter would be discussed further under a specific agenda item regarding replacing structures at the hockey rink.

Minutes. The Committee unanimously approved the draft April Minutes.

Design Standards for City Benches. The Committee discussed the resolution the City Council passed at its May 13 meeting (Resolution 2025-43) establishing the requirement that all city benches should be consistent with the design of the bench in front of city hall. After a short discussion, Mitchell moved, seconded by Ford, that the Committee support the intent of the Resolution to require all city benches to be similar and of sound design like the bench at city hall. **The Motion passed unanimously**

Landscape Improvements at City Hall. Councilmember Sperl described the need for improvements of the grounds in front of city hall. She said that such work would involve planting native plants and the removal of buckthorn. Sperl volunteered to take the lead in completing the work and was looking to do the work this September. Sperl stated that the work would not involve any expenditures from the city. The Committee discussed whether a grant from the

Rick Creek Watershed District might be possible to cover any costs that might be incurred and Sperl and Ford agreed to look into the possibility of a grant. A motion was made by Hullet, seconded by Ford, that the Committee support the effort to undertake the work and explore the possibility of a grant. **The Motion passed unanimously.**

Recommendations for Bench Locations to the Lake Links Task Force. The Committee discussed the recommendation of the Lake Links Task Force to install some benches along the Lake Links Trail using money made available to the City by the Legislature. After discussing various options and locations, Mitchell moved, seconded by Ford, that the Committee make the following recommendation to the Lake Links Task Force.

> Moved that the Lake Links Task Force install
> 1 bench at Tighe-Schmitz Park near Kay Beach;
> 2 benches in Wildwood Park
>
> And seek funding and approval to install
> 2 picnic tables near the pavilion in Tighe-Schmitz Park
> 1 bench near County Line Road and Birchwood Avenue
> 1 bike repair station along the trail in Birchwood
> exercise stations at each of the city-owned beaches along the trail
>
> And that all benches comply with the City standard for benches.

The Motion carried unanimously.

Barton Winter Proposal for Hockey Rink. Barton Winter described the proposal he had put in writing to Councilmember Weier regarding replacing some of the existing posts at the hockey rink. Various techniques for removing the old posts were discussed, and Winter said he is still gathering information regarding how the posts might be removed. Winter stated that he is prepared to pay for the cost of completing the work described in his proposal and was willing to do the actual work, along with other volunteers. The Committee suggested that it would be a good idea to consider whether the installation of netting along the street-side of the rink might also be completed during the replacement of the old posts. Michalk agreed to check with construction firms he contacted in the past and obtain estimates for construction in warm weather. The Committee discussed the necessity of having the City Council specifically accept Winter's proposal, including paying for the work, and to have the city attorney draft proper documentation addressing liability issues and establishing the precise terms of the agreement, before any work commenced. The Committee thought that if the City

Council can complete these actions by the June council meeting, the work could proceed in June. Weier also advised the Committee that the center part of the rink would likely be painted after Music in the Park finishes its season. Simmons moved, seconded by Ford, that the Committee recommend to the Council that it accept the Winter proposal for work at the hockey rink, provided that no work begin and no costs be incurred before final approval from the Council and that Winter enters into an agreement with the City setting forth terms and conditions acceptable to the City, including stopping the work if removal of the posts becomes more difficult than expected. **The Motion carried unanimously.**

Tighe-Schmitz Park Update. Simmons summarized the status of the work that has been done by Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District since the April meeting. The Committee reviewed the written material, including maps and drawings and a memo from Tella dated 5/06/25, that were provided to the City Council at its May 13 meeting. Simmons reported that a Public Forum is scheduled for Saturday, May 31, to give residents an opportunity to learn more about the project. The Forum will be held at Tighe-Schmitz Park, or in city hall if the weather is inclement. The Committee discussed the efforts that will be made to notify residents of the upcoming meeting, including direct mailings, emails, social media postings, and door knocking for those residents who are adjacent to the park. Committee members also divvied up various tasks for the Public Forum.

Committee Budget. Michalk reminded members of the August timeline for completing a proposed Parks Committee budget for 2026. He asked members to come to the June meeting with suggestions for various projects that might be part of the 2026 proposed budget. The Committee briefly discussed projects that it knew already should be part of the upcoming budget. One project identified for 2026 was improvements to the Curt Feistner Park (Note: The official name is Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve under ordinance section 607.120(A)(2)). The Committee discussed various options for dealing with the Curt Feistner designation. One option was to create a small sitting area near the lake at the present site; another option was to move the designated area to one of the other designated parks in the city, perhaps Wildwood Park where the Feistner sign is now posted. Hullet agreed to contact the Feistner family and describe the various options that the Committee discussed. Weier mentioned that the Lift Station repair on Wildwood would be completed in June or July and that damage to the area around the site would have to be repaired. Mitchell handed out proposed draft budgets from a former Parks Committee for years 2011, 2012 and 2013 with entries for such costs as porta-potties and warming house attendants. Hullet suggested that the City might want to create an “Adopt-a-Garden” program where

volunteers could take over responsibility for maintaining certain areas. No decisions regarding 2026 projects was made.

Next Meeting. June 17, 2026

Adjourn. 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary