



**AGENDA OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
OCTOBER 20, 2026
6:30 P.M.**

Committee Members

Zach Michalk, Chair
Alan Mitchell, Secretary
Amy Hulett, Member
Bridget Sperl, Council Liaison
Kathy Weier, Council Liaison
Margaret Ford, Member
Mary Sue Simmons, Member

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVE AGENDA

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

A. September 29, 2026 Meeting Minutes* (pages 2-5)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS - MEETING AGENDA

A. Regular Agenda Items

A. 2027 Action Plan Development and Updates

A. Table 1 - Action Plan* (pages 6-8)

B. Table 2 - Budget Summary* (pages 9-10)

C. Table 3 - Ongoing Projects* (page 11)

B. Fall Clean Up Day Planning

B. Confirm next month's meeting and identify agenda topics

ATTACHMENTS

ADJOURN

* denotes an attachment in the agenda packet

**PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING SEPTEMBER 29, 2026
MINUTES**

The September 29, 2026, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 7:04 p.m. by Chair Zac Michalk

Attendees: Committee Members Zac Michalk, Mary Sue Simmons, Amy Hulett, and Alan Mitchell. Council Member Kathy Weier and Mayor Jennifer Arsenault. Also present were Birchwood residents Bryan McGinnis, Paul Drews, and Ashley Belisle.

Agenda. The draft agenda was approved unanimously. Mitchell stated that he would raise a question about the Parks Special Revenue Fund as part of the discussion of next year's Action Plan.

Public Forum. Nobody requested an opportunity to speak.

Minutes. The draft August 18 Minutes were approved unanimously.

Elm Beach and Polly's Park Grants. Simmons summarized the work that had been done to seek a grant just for work on Elm Beach. She reviewed the preparation of a concept plan by the Washington Conservation District and the discussions that had occurred with the neighbors to Elm Beach. She reported that the Rice Creek Watershed District had decided that the problems with runoff to Elm Beach were broader than just Elm Beach and required addressing runoff from a broader area. Simmons said she learned that the Washington Conservation District did not have money available to continue to help with developing a plan for Elm Beach but that it would continue to work with Birchwood if the City would pay them. The other option, she said, was for the city engineer to do that work.

The Committee discussed whether there was anything the City could do just on Elm Beach to help make the beach more accessible. Two options were identified – installing a filtration basin near the street and having the homeowners next to the beach undertake some actions to reduce runoff from their property – but the consensus was that these options were not practicable until the broader issues had been addressed as well. The Committee requested that Simmons contact the Washington Conservation District and inquire whether they had any ideas for a smaller project the City could undertake at Elm Beach.

The Mayor advised that any large scale work in Birchwood would have to wait until such time as a dispute over how to resolve a flooding issue on Birchwood

Avenue had been resolved because that issue is holding up the effort to repave the street. The Mayor said the City has to develop a feasibility plan by November.

The Committee agreed that nothing would proceed on pursuing a large grant for a project near Elm Beach until the Birchwood Avenue dispute had been resolved. The Committee recognized the importance of resolving the issue because the City needed to consult with the Washington Conservation District about grant funding by November 14.

Birch Beach Swale Clean Out Update. Bryan McGinnis provided the Committee with a history of the rain garden (swale) on Birch Beach. He indicated that for a period of years he advocated for pumping out the catch basin and cleaning the rain garden on a regular basis, but that very little had been done over the years to maintain the rain garden. Simmons stated that she had received a proposal from the Washington Conservation District to clean out the rain garden at Birch Beach before the end of 2026 for a cost of \$1240. (A copy of the proposal was included in the agenda packet.) It was discussed that this was a one-time contract for cleaning out the swale, and a new contract would be required for future cleanouts. A **Motion** was made and seconded to accept the Contract from the Washington Conservation District and **the Motion passed unanimously**. The Mayor indicated that she would notify the city administrator of the Committee's decision.

Update on Tighe-Schmitz Park Project. The Committee was advised that the work in Tighe-Schmitz should be completed by the end of September. Weier mentioned that there was a concern about some new birch trees that had been planted on Dellwood Beach near the dock, that the trees might restrict access to the dock as they continued to grow. Ford said she was planning to meet with city engineer Marcus Johnson this week and would ask him that question. A second question was raised whether the city should mow the grass in the area by the hockey rink where new grass was planted as part of the project. Ford said she would ask Johnson that question as well.

Action Plan. The Committee addressed the question of whether the City intended to take the Dock Association fees out of the Parks Special Revenue Fund and create an entirely different fund for that money. Mitchell stated that since there was already a statute (chapter 804 of the City Code) that created the Fund and established various restrictions on the use of that money, that it would be better to keep the Dock Association fees in that Fund. The Mayor and Councilwoman Weier indicated that they would take this matter to the full Council for resolution.

The Committee then went through the 2026 Action Plan project by project. Here is a summary of what the Committee decided regarding an Action Plan for next year.

Priority Projects.

1. Tighe-Schmitz Project. Rice Creek Watershed District will pay for the cost of putting up construction zone signs during the construction. This project is essentially completed.
2. Elm Beach. Remains in the Action Plan.
3. Ash Beach. This will be a 2027 priority project.
4. Music in the Park. There will be concerts again next summer.
5. Birch Beach Rain Garden. This project will be renamed to just Rain Gardens so the city can address regular maintenance at all rain gardens in the community.

Secondary Projects.

- 2.01 Curt Feistner. The Committee discussed that the intent was still to improve the area at the lake with an observation platform overlooking the lake. The Committee discussed whether there might be some Lake Links grant money available for this project since the site is right on the Trail. The Mayor added that she will talk with the city engineer about the costs of such work.
- 2.02 Hockey Rink Painting. This project will continue next year.
- 2.03 Lake Links Trail Amenities. Most of this work has been completed.
- 2.04 Lift Station. Weier will check with the Scouts about undertaking this work.
- 2.05 Village Hall Landscaping. Much work was done this summer. More landscaping will happen next year.
- 2.06 Swim Buoy at Kay Beach. This buoy wasn't available this year because the supplier was unable to provide one. There will be one next summer.
- 2.07 Tighe-Schmitz Pavilion. The City bought a grill but it is in storage for the winter. It will be installed next year.
- 2.08 Playground Equipment. The Committee discussed that such equipment is very expensive and without a grant or a sponsor, new play equipment is unlikely.

2.09 More Rain Gardens. Simmons said she would pursue this matter and gather information about possible new gardens.

The Committee discussed whether there might be new projects identified for next year. Two possibilities were suggested. One was whether something might be undertaken to improve Hall's Marsh. The other was the possibility of installing some kind of fencing in Polly's Park.

Chair Michalk said he would incorporate the changes discussed with each project and prepare an Action Plan for 2027 in time for the matter to come before the Council in October. The 2027 Action Plan will involve the same kind of tables that were in the 2026 Plan. Mitchell added that when the Committee submits the 2027 Action Plan to the Council, it will include a new Resolution the Committee proposes the Council adopt to clarify the Committee's responsibilities regarding monitoring the Parks Special Revenue Fund and reporting to the Council. A draft of the Resolution was included in the agenda packet.)

Fall Work Day. The Committee discussed whether there should be a Fall Work Day as there has been in past year. The Committee was advised by Belisle, a member of the Birchwood Connections Committee, that a community event day was scheduled for Sunday, October 25. The Committee decided to schedule a work day for Saturday October 24.

Committee Member Terms. The Committee discussed that two members of the Committee – Mitchell and Simmons – would have their terms expire in February 2027, and that was an issue that should be addressed in the near future.

Next Meeting. October 20, 2026.

Adjourn. 8:47

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary

Table 1: Draft 2027 Parks Committee Action Plan

Item	Project	Description	Status (Last Updated October 2026)	Contact Person
Tier 1 – Priority Projects				
26.1.02	Elm Beach Erosion Control	Improvements to Beach Area	On hold.	City Staff
26.1.03	Ash Beach Access and Safety	Improve the access area to Ash Beach	Scope to be developed.	Margaret Ford
26.1.04	Music in the Park	Summer concert series at hockey rink	Twelve Sunday evenings June – August.	Alan Mitchell
26.1.05	City Rain Garden Annual Maintenance	Contractor required for proper cleanup of all rain gardens in the city	Birch Beach Swale Cleanout approved and contract to be executed with the Washington Conservation District (WCD). Committee to seek bids from WCD and others for annual cleanout of all rain gardens in 2027.	City Staff
27.1.06	Landscape North End of Hockey Rink	Replace landscaping between hockey rink and sidewalk/street	Dead Arborvitae and other vegetation removed in 2026.	TBD
27.1.07	Wildwood Park Runoff Control	Reduce runoff to White Bear Lake from the neighborhood	Seeking grant opportunities.	TBD
27.1.08	Landscape at new Birchwood Village City Signs	New city signs will be installed in 2027. Landscape and annual maintenance around signs	Coordinate with city staff on timing and location of new signs.	TBD
27.1.09	Replace Metal Fencing at Beach Easements	Install new split-rail fencing at beach easements to match other fencing around city. Maintain access restriction to the lake	Scope to be developed.	Zach Michalk

Item	Project	Description	Status (Last Updated October 2026)	Contact Person
Tier 2 – Secondary Projects				
26.2.01	Improvements to Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve	Considering options at the lake site	No grant funding identified.	Amy Hulett
26.2.02	Hockey Rink Painting	Center portion of the rink requires painting	Barton Winter to paint test area. Committee will review how the test area held up after the winter season.	TBD
26.2.04	Landscaping at Lift Station	Plantings around the lift station on Wildwood Avenue – perhaps painting of facility	Kathy to see interest from local boy and girl scout troops.	Kathy Weier
26.2.05	Village Hall Improvements	Planting around Village Hall to improve aesthetics. Construct fencing to hide trash cans.	Ongoing project.	TBD
26.2.06	Swim Buoy at Kay Beach	Additional swim buoy for safety purposes	Coordinate with city staff to purchase in spring 2027.	Zach Michalk
26.2.07	Improvements at Tighe-Schmitz Pavilion	New picnic tables for pavilion and area beaches. Other improvements	Ongoing project	Zach Michalk
26.2.08	Upgrade playground equipment at Tighe-Schmitz Park and Bloomquist Park	Annual maintenance (Table 3) and possibility of acquiring new equipment	Ongoing every year.	City Staff
26.2.09	Additional rain gardens around playground at Tighe-Schmitz Park	More water control to minimize discharges to lake	Planning in progress.	Mary Sue Simmons
Tier 3 – Projects on Hold				

Item	Project	Description	Status (Last Updated October 2026)	Contact Person
27.3.01	Polly's Park Improvements	Begin planning for park improvements once drainage is fixed and dead trees are removed.	Planning in progress	TBD
Projects Complete				
26.1.01	Tighe-Schmitz Water Management Projects	Various water control projects in and around Tighe-Schmitz Park	Construction complete in summer 2026.	City Staff
26.2.03	Lake Links Trail Amenities	Benches and exercise equipment along Lake Links bike trail, along with other non-park work on the bike trail	Construction complete in summer/fall 2026	Bridget Sperl

Table 2: Proposed 2027 Budget

Item	Project	Total Estimated Cost	Special Revenue Fund	Grant Funding	City Funding	Contact Person
Tier 1 – Priority Projects						
26.1.02	Elm Beach Erosion Control	\$8,000	\$800	\$7,200		City Staff
26.1.03	Ash Beach Access and Safety	\$3,000	\$300	\$2,700		Margaret Ford
26.1.04	Music in the Park	\$4,320	\$3,600		\$720	Alan Mitchell
26.1.05	City Rain Garden Annual Maintenance	\$5,000	\$5,000			City Staff
27.1.06	Landscape North End of Hockey Rink	\$500	\$500			TBD
27.1.07	Wildwood Park Runoff Control	\$100,000	\$10,000	\$90,000		TBD
27.1.08	Landscape at new Birchwood Village City Signs	\$500	\$500			TBD
27.1.09	Replace Metal Fencing at Beach Easements	\$2,000	\$2,000			Zach Michalk
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>\$123,320</i>	<i>\$22,700</i>	<i>\$99,900</i>	<i>\$720</i>	
Tier 2 – Secondary Projects						
26.2.01	Improvements to Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve	\$1,000	\$1,000			Amy Hulett
26.2.02	Hockey Rink Painting	\$1,000	\$1,000			TBD
26.2.04	Landscaping at Lift Station	\$500	\$500			Kathy Weier
26.2.05	Village Hall Improvements	\$500	\$500			TBD
26.2.06	Swim Buoy at Kay Beach	\$250	\$250			Zach Michalk
26.2.07	Improvements at Tighe-Schmitz Pavilion	\$1,000	\$1,000			Zach Michalk
26.2.08	Upgrade playground equipment at Tighe-Schmitz Park and Bloomquist Park	\$500	\$500			City Staff

Item	Project	Total Estimated Cost	Special Revenue Fund	Grant Funding	City Funding	Contact Person
26.2.09	Additional rain gardens around playground at Tighe-Schmitz Park	\$2,000	\$2,000			Mary Sue Simmons
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>\$6,750</i>	<i>\$6,750</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	
Tier 3 – Projects on Hold						
27.3.01	Polly's Park Improvements	\$5,000	\$5,000			TBD
<i>Subtotal</i>		<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	
Total		\$135,070	\$34,450	\$99,900	\$720	

Table 3: Parks Committee One-Time Projects

Item	Project	Description	Status (as of October 2026)
Playground at Tighe-Schmitz Park			
26.1	Replace plastic around the steps of the jungle gym	Plastic showing signs of tearing with sharp edges	Carried over to 2027
26.2	Remove balance beam		Carried over to 2027
26.3	Replace rotten landscape timbers behind the swing set		Carried over to 2027
26.4	New chains and s-hooks for swing set	One swing should be lowered for smaller children	Carried over to 2027
26.5	New seat on digger toy		Carried over to 2027
26.6	Refill sand next to slide		Carried over to 2027
26.7	Sand and paint picnic tables	Evaluate all city picnic tables for sanding and painting	Carried over to 2027
26.8	Fill crack in concrete under pavilion		Carried over to 2027
Other City Parks and Open Spaces			
26.12	Remove buckthorn and treat stumps at Elm Beach		Carried over to 2027
26.13	Remove buckthorn and treat stumps at Birch Beach		Carried over to 2027