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

CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
AUGUST 19, 2025
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

ROLL CALL

APPROVE AGENDA

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

A. July 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes* (pages 2-5)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS - MEETING AGENDA

A. New Agenda Items
    A. Updates on Tighe-Schmitz Park Projects from Lori Tella and Marcus Johnson
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 July 15, 2025
MINUTES

The July 15, 2025, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:30 p.m.

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

Others: Mayor Jennifer Arsenault and Barton Winter.

Agenda. The draft agenda was approved unanimously with the addition of the following three items: Donation of a free library by Debbie Harrod, discussion of the Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve, and a Tighe-Schmitz project update.

Public Forum. Barton Winter explained to the Committee the work that was being done at the hockey rink. He discussed the manner in which a part of the rink will be painted and gave a cost estimate of approximately $400 for the paint. Winter went on to describe the removal of several deteriorating posts. He said the old rotted posts had been removed relatively easily and that he didn't expect any problems installing the new posts. He thought post replacement could be done within about thirty days. Weier asked if there were any temperature restrictions regarding putting down a sealant after painting and Winter said there shouldn't be any limitations if the work was done by September. Weier reminded that work should not be done until after the Music in the Park concerts in the hockey rink were completed in late August.

Minutes. The draft June Minutes were approved unanimously with one minor change – the soil sample described in the Tighe-Schmitz Park Update matter was taken at 608 Wildwood Ave. in Birchwood and not at Tighe-Schmitz Park as was initially stated.

Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve. Mayor Arsenault reported that she had been investigating various options with regard to the Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve. She presented a memo to the Committee in which she described a three- phase process. Step 1 – construction of an observation deck and a bench and placard at the beach site. Step 2 – seek assistance from the Rice Creek Watershed District in cleaning up the drainage area and the beach. Step 3 -explore the possibility of providing access the lakeshore at the beach. A copy of the Mayor's memo is

attached to these Minutes. Mayor Arsenault also stated that she has been exploring the possibility of the White Bear VFW and/or the American Legion Post sponsoring such improvement of the Preserve. She also informed the Committee that she was willing to take the lead in pursing these efforts. **Simmons moved, seconded by Ford, that the Committee approve and support the Mayor's request to pursue various options for improving the Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve. The motion passed unanimously.**

Hullet added that Bruce Feistner, brother to Curt Feistner, was coming to town this week and intended to inspect the Curt Feistner Memorial Preserve beach site and the plaque on Wildwood Park and to pass along any suggestions or preferences he might have for the Memorial Preserve.

Tighe-Schmitz Park Update. The Committee discussed an email from Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District dated July 14, 2025 regarding the timeline for securing the grant from the Rice Creek Watershed District. A copy of the email is attached to the Minutes. The Committee recognized that Tella and city engineer Marcus Johnson should work together to complete the project plans and finalize the grant application and obtain approval from the City Council as soon as possible. The Committee recognized that the City Council might have to hold a special council meeting if necessary to meet upcoming deadlines. Council member Sperl advised that once work on the Park project can proceed, the City needs to take into account the possibility that road work and work on the Lake Links Trail near Tighe-Schmitz Park might be scheduled for the same time and adjustments might be required. Simmons volunteered to advise Tella of the Committee's desire to proceed expeditiously in finalizing the grant.

Little Library. The Committee discussed a proposal from resident Debbie Harrod to donate a Little Library to the City. Harrod hoped that the library would be installed at Tighe-Schmitz Park or Kay Beach. Harrod said the Harrods would install the library and keep it stocked. The Committee discussed that the proposed donation would have to be accepted by the City Council. **Simmons moved, seconded by Ford, that the Committee recommend that the City accept the donation of the Little Library from the Harrods and that it be installed either on Kay Beach or in Tighe-Schmitz Park near Kay Beach. The motion carried unanimously.**

Committee Budget. The Committee discussed the development of a proposed budget for work the Committee envisioned in calendar year 2026. Michalk

presented a spreadsheet showing possible projects that might be undertaken going forward, which he had updated from the list he provided at the Committee's June meeting. A copy of the spreadsheet is attached to these Minutes. The Committee noted that some projects on the list were actually underway in 2025, like painting the hockey rink and installing protective netting on one end, and some potential projects were still under consideration, like lighting on the tennis courts, and for many projects there were no reliable cost estimates.

The Committee recognized that while identifying possible future projects was important, it was also necessary to take into account the fact that maintenance of both existing facilities and any new projects would be required in the future. The Committee was of the view that it was likely that the City would have to rely on outside professional help to perform some maintenance activities, that city staff and volunteers would not be adequate for some projects and facilities. The Committee also concluded that it would be helpful to prioritize any list of projects that was developed.

The Committee reviewed the Resolution adopted by the Council in April, 2025 (Resolution 2025-38), directing the Committee to prepare a proposed budget and action plan each year and to submit periodic progress reports. The Committee recognized that while it was crucial to advise the Council of proposed projects, including cost estimates, that might require financing through the annual levy, many park projects could be funded by the Special Revenue Fund, or to a large extent perhaps through grants, such that identifying possible projects and prioritizing them was more significant and urgent than developing rough cost estimates. The Committee confirmed from the June 30, 2025, Treasurer's Report that there was over $31,000 in the special revenue fund. Mitchell advised the Committee that he had spoken to officers in the Birchwood Dock Association and asked them what priorities they might have for park projects. The result was that erosion at Elm Beach was the top priority, followed by access concerns at Ash Beach.

After more discussion of possible projects and how to obtain cost estimates, the Committee concluded that the Committee would prepare a memo providing the best information available on possible projects that Committee might like to pursue in 2026. The memo could also serve as a quarterly report. The Committee intends to submit the report in time for the August Council meeting.

Facilities Inspection. It was raining at 6:30 so the Committee canceled a planned inspection of certain park facilities. The Committee decided to hold an inspection on Wednesday July 23 at 6:30. Member Ford said she couldn't attend the inspection at that time but would conduct her own inspection of the tennis courts in Bloomquist Park.

Next Meeting. August 19, 2025

Adjourn. 7:40

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary