



MINUTES

Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission

August 4, 2021 City Hall

Council Chambers 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Spooner.

II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Commissioners Ahmed Abdiwahed, Pauline Alfors, Gary Bank, Kristin Hicks, Amelia Kuiper, Julia O'Rourke, Michael Spooner, and Charles Warner.

Members Absent: Chair Matt Johnson

Also Present: Director Jennifer Fink and Council Member Emily Dunsworth.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Warner, seconded by O'Rourke to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Alfors, seconded by Bank to approve the June 2, 2021 minutes as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

V. Business Items

A. Home Energy Audits – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated the mission of the Center for Energy and Environment is to "discover and deploy the most effective energy solutions that strengthen the economy and improve the environment." In order to accomplish that, one of the services that the Center for Energy and Environment offers is a Home Energy Audit. After experiencing this first hand, staff reached out to CEE. A number of cities "buy down" the cost of these audits for residents. Staff showed an example report and described an energy planner visit, along with providing information about the process to gain feedback and a possible recommendation for staff and Council about the program.

Discussion included:

- The Commission supported the Council offering Home Energy Audits to homeowners.
- The Commission encouraged staff to consider how these audits would be advertised to the community.
- It was noted the funding for this type of program would be considered and determined by the City Council.
- The Commission encouraged staff to consider how to offer this program to multi-family rental units.

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Hicks to recommended the City Council pursue a Home Energy Audit program for New Brighton residents. Motion carried 8-0.

B. Midtown Village Playground Name Discussion - Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated City staff engaged the public in a solicitation of names for the Midtown Village playground. Those names are included, along with staff recommendations for ones that adhere to the Park and Facility Naming policy. Staff facilitated a discussion on the options provided and requested feedback from the Commission on how to proceed.

Discussion included:

- The Commission shared their top two or three favorite names from the list of qualified park name suggestions.
- The history of rhubarb in the community was discussed.
- Midtown Peace Park, Rhubarb Park and Brightside Park were the three favorite names based on the Commission's discussion.
- Staff cautioned the Commission from pursuing the Peace Park name because there would not be elements of meditation or art within this park.
- Councilmember Dunsworth explained she supported the Schoolhouse Park name also being considered given the history of the site.
- The Commission suggested interpretive signage be posted in the park in order to define or assist in explaining the park name.
- The final three names that would be brought to the Council for consideration was Schoolhouse Park, Rhubarb Park and Brightside Park.
- The Commission recommended the three names have an accurate description before being brought to the public for further consideration.

VI. Announcements

A. City Council Report – Council Member Emily Dunsworth

Councilmember Dunsworth provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She explained the local state of emergency ended on June 22. She commented the Council recently approved \$9.78 million in tax abatement bonds for the Parks Master Plan. She discussed the numbers from National Night Out and thanked all who contributed to the local food shelf through food, school supply and monetary donations. She explained a

member of the City Council and staff was available for comments or questions at the farmer's market every Wednesday. She indicated the *Star Tribune* would be writing an article on the City's Parks Master Plan. She commented beginning August 9, 2021 masks would be required again in all New Brighton buildings for individuals ages 3 and up. She provided the Commissioners with an update on the DEI Commission.

B. PREC Vice Chair Updates – Michael Spooner

Vice Chair Spooner stated he had no update at this time.

C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff

Director Fink stated Brightwood Hills had the busiest month in history in July. She thanked Ken Manthis and Anne Wigdahl for all of their efforts at Brightwood Hills. She discussed the success of the City's summer and fall sports programming. She commented beginning August 9, 2021 masks would be required again in all New Brighton buildings for individuals ages 3 and up and encouraged Commission members to spread the word that the City was following CDC guidelines. She discussed the new Civic Plus program with the Commission and noted the Eagle's Nest has been busier in the past few weeks. She indicated the City would be removing 450 Ash trees and noted these trees would be replaced through grant funding the City received.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Bank, seconded by Warner to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. Motion carried 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jennifer Fink
Director of Parks and Recreation