



## MINUTES

### Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission

February 2, 2022 City Hall

Council Chambers 6:30 p.m.

#### I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held virtually.

#### II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Commissioners Pauline Alfors, Gary Bank, Kristin Hicks, Amelia Kuiper, Julia O'Rourke, Laura Sokol-Kraft, and Charles Warner.

Members Absent: Commissioners Matt Johnson (Chair) and Michael Spooner (Vice Chair)

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

#### III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Bank, seconded by O'Rourke to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

#### IV. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Sokol-Kraft indicated her name was misspelled and asked that this be corrected in the minutes.

Motion by Bank, seconded by O'Rourke to approve the January 5, 2022 minutes as amended. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 6-0-1 (Commissioner Kuiper abstained).

#### V. Business Items

##### A. Update on Park Projects – Jennifer Fink, Director

Director Fink stated the City authorized funding in 2021 for the upgrade and renovation of five parks. This was the recommended action after the completion of the Comprehensive Park System Plan which was completed in 2020. She then discussed the plans the City had for Hansen East, Sunny Square, Lions Park, Totem Pole Park and Creekview in 2022.

Discussion included:

- The cost of using goats and the process that would be followed to remove Buckthorn in Creekview Park.

**B. Presentation on Partners in Energy Program, Jennifer Fink, Director**

Director Fink shared a brief overview about the Partners in Energy Program through Xcel Energy. Xcel Energy Partners in Energy provides communities in Colorado, Minnesota, and Wisconsin services to develop an energy plan and assistance with implementing that plan. Each community has its own unique energy needs and priorities, and Partners in Energy tailors its services to complement each community's vision. Applications are open and have two deadlines per year. The next is in July. The service is free. But the goal is to create a plan for energy use reduction for both the City and its residents and businesses. Staff commented further on the communities that have participated in this program and requested feedback from the Commission on how to proceed.

Discussion included:

- Potential goals for the City were discussed.
- The Commission believed this was an exciting, valuable, and cost saving program the City should consider.

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Alfors to recommend the City Council consider applying for the Partners in Energy Program through Xcel Energy. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

**VI. Announcements**

**A. City Council Report – Council Member Emily Dunsworth**

Councilmember Dunsworth provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She reported the Council approved an electric vehicle charging station plan for the City. She explained on January 25 the Council received a presentation from Public Safety Director Paetznick on crime trends in the community. She indicated there has been an increase in crime, specifically theft and auto thefts, and the City was working to address this concern. She commented on February 1 the Council discussed allowing ADU's (accessory dwelling units) in New Brighton and indicated the City would begin investigating this use further.

**B. PREC Chair Updates – Matt Johnson**

None.

**C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff**

Director Fink discussed the luminary walk that was held at Hansen Park noting this was a hugely successful community event. She reported the City was recruiting Commissioners at this time and noted PREC had two open seats. She explained interviews would be held in March and new appointees would begin with the PREC Commission in April. She discussed the work her staff was doing to schedule weddings and other special events at the Community Center. She commented on the Black History Month events that were occurring within the City's park system. It was noted the City would be holding its meetings virtually through the end of February.

**VII. Adjournment**

Motion by Bank, seconded by Kuiper to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fink". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Jennifer Fink  
Director of Parks and Recreation