



MINUTES

Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission

June 1, 2022 City Hall

Council Chambers 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call:

Members PresentCommissioners Gary Bank, Maren Hawkings, Kristin Hicks, Matt Johnson, Abe McEathron, Lara Sokol-Kraft, and Michael Spooner (attending remotely). Also present was Student Commissioner Zoey Tenenbaum.

Members AbsentCommissioners Pauline Alfors and Julia O'Rourke

Also Present.....Director Jennifer Fink; Assistant Director Jason Hicks; and Council Member Emily Dunsworth

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Bank, seconded by McEathron to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Hicks, seconded by Sokol-Kraft to approve the April 6, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

V. Business Items

A. No Mow May Reviews – Jennifer Fink – Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated No Mow May is a conservation initiative first popularized by Plantlife, an organization based in the United Kingdom, but which is gaining traction across North America. The goal of No Mow May is to allow grass to grow unmown for the month of May, creating habitat and forage for early season pollinators. This is particularly important in urban areas where floral resources are often limited. The PREC Commission and Council authorized the

City to go forward with this initiative at their April 2022 meetings. She commented on the benefits of protecting pollinators and was pleased to report a total of 405 homes participated in No Mow May.

Discussion included:

- The Commission asked if staff hours were saved due to No Mow May. Director Fink explained she was uncertain if there was a savings in staff hours because staff still had to mow all ballfields.
- It was noted the City would carry this initiative forward to 2023 and staff was pleased with the positive feedback they had received from the public.
- The Commission recommended the City do more education regarding No Mow May in 2023.

B. Strategic Priorities - Jennifer Fink – Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink shared a document with the Commission that outlined the Strategic Priorities set by the Council for 2022, 2023 and 2024. She commented on how the priorities align with the PREC work plan.

Discussion included:

- Further discussion ensued regarding the City's work to address racial equity and inclusion.
- The future plans for the Silver Lake Road corridor were discussed.
- The work being completed in the City's parks in 2022 and 2023 was reviewed with the Commission.

C. Update on the Buckthorn Removal Project at Creekview Park - Jennifer Fink – Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated staff applied for a Minnesota Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Grant. The City was awarded \$5,000 to use goats to remove buckthorn at Creekview Park. She explained goats were brought to Creekview Park from April 21 through May 26 to assist with clearing 10 acres of buckthorn. She thanked the public for their tremendous support of this project and noted the City would be pursuing this grant again in 2023.

Discussion included:

- Further discussion ensued regarding the need for buckthorn removal in other City parks.

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 farmers market began today and would be held every Wednesday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. She noted the farmers market was in need of volunteers to help with set up and take down. She explained the City Council welcomed Paddle North and Vandalay Industries to the community. She provided the group with an update on the plans for Stockyard Days, noting the Lions Club would now be hosting this event.

B. PREC Chair Updates

Vice Chair Spooner encouraged the public to take advantage of the great summer programming being offered by the City of New Brighton.

C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff

Director Fink stated the Chalk Walk would be held June 24 through June 26. She reported an intern recently started with the Parks and Recreation Department. She noted the summer programs were starting out strong. She explained the plans for Sunny Square Park were approved by the City Council. She stated staff has begun work on the 2023 budget.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Bank, seconded by Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Fink
Director of Parks and Recreation