



**MINUTES**  
**Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission**  
**November 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. by Chair O'Rourke.

**II. Roll Call:**

Members Present: Commissioners Pauline Alfors, Gary Bank, Maren Hawkins, Kristin Hicks, Abe McEathron, Julia O'Rourke (Chair), Lara Sokol-Kraft, and Michael Spooner (attending remotely).

Members Absent: Commissioner Randell Wyatt.

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

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Bank, seconded by Alfors to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Bank, seconded by McEathron to approve the August 3, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

**V. Business Items**

**A. Resident Survey Results – Jennifer Fink, Director**

Director Fink reviewed the results of the resident survey with the Commission. She explained the resident survey was completed by Polco and the National Research Center. It was noted the role of the survey was to monitor trends in resident opinion, measure government performance, inform budget, land use and strategic planning decisions and to assist with benchmarking to other communities. She reported 2,700 households were sampled and 573 responded. Comparisons to national and peer community benchmarks were further discussed, along with the key findings.

Discussion included:

- The Commission asked if neighboring communities complete a similar survey and if the data is shared. Director Fink reported most cities complete similar surveys, but she was uncertain if they completed a survey in 2022.
- Staff discussed the numerous ways the City worked to engage with the public about the future park improvements.

- Councilmember Dunsworth reported the public was excited about the proposed park improvements.

**B. Update on Partners in Energy and Climate Action Plan – Jennifer Fink, Director**

Director Fink commented on the City's current efforts to bring the Partners in Energy and Climate Action Plan together. She explained New Brighton had been accepted into the Partners in Energy program with Xcel Energy. She discussed how the City would be working to create an energy action team as well as a climate task force with members from the community and current Commissioners. She encouraged the Commission members to consider which way they may be interested in serving and if they know of any members of the community that should be involved.

Discussion included:

- The Commission supported the City having solar panels on all City buildings. Staff reviewed the buildings that already have solar panels installed.
- The Commission thanked staff for their work on this plan.

**VI. Announcements**

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

Councilmember Dunsworth provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She discussed the work the Council has been doing to draft a residential rental housing ordinance. She explained the Council has spent a lot of time discussing the 2023 budget, utility rates and tax levy. She reported the Truth In Taxation Hearing would be held on Tuesday, December 6. She commented on the upcoming election, which would be held on Tuesday, November 8 and stated the City was still seeking election judges.

**B. PREC Chair Updates – Julia O'Rourke**

Chair O'Rourke discussed the crosswalk in front of Innsbruck Park and noted the new change was working well. She reported she attended the Pumpkin Walk and had a wonderful time with her family. She indicated she was looking forward to attending the Gnomes-Giving event.

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

Director Fink stated October was a busy month for Parks and Recreation, which included the ThriveExpo, Tails on the Trails, a carving party, pumpkin walk and trick or treating at the NBCC. She thanked her staff for all of their hard work on these great community events. She explained staff was working on the next Parks brochure. She commented on a recent national conference that she attended. She reported she was recently notified the Lions would be giving the Parks and Recreation Department \$5,000 to sponsor a concert series. She thanked the Lions for their tremendous generosity to the community. She indicated the golf course had a great year and revenues were up. She reviewed photos showing the improvements that have occurred at Sunny Square Park. Lastly, she noted the ice castles would return again this winter to New Brighton.

**VII. Adjournment**

Motion by Bank, seconded by Hicks to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Motion carried 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fink". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Jennifer Fink  
Director of Parks and Recreation