



MINUTES
Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission
December 7, 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 (attending remotely), Julia O'Rourke (Chair), Lara Sokol-Kraft, Michael Spooner, and Randall Wyatt.

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Director Jennifer Fink and Council Member Emily Dunsworth (attending remotely).

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Bank, seconded by Alfors to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 9-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by McEathron, seconded by Bank to approve the November 2, 2022 minutes as presented. Motion carried 8-0-1 (Commissioner Wyatt abstained).

V. Business Items

A. Forestry Update – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink provided the Commission with an update on the City's forestry efforts and described how emerald ash borer (EAB) has impacted the community. She commented on the City's buckthorn removal and tree trimming efforts. She reported New Brighton has been a Tree City USA for the past 40 years. She discussed the numerous benefits of having tree cover and commented on how the City celebrates Arbor Day each year. The benefits of having a Missouri gravel bed nursery were reviewed, along with the benefits of having a strong urban forest.

Discussion included:

- The Commission expressed concern with the number of ash trees that will be lost in the community.
- The Commission thanked staff for the update on the City's forestry efforts.

- The Commission supported the City pursuing grants that would assist residents with EAB treatments. Councilmember Dunsworth explained the Council has spoken with local legislators regarding this matter.
- The Commission supported the City helping residents treat their EAB trees versus having to have them removed.
- The Commission suggested the City assist with administering the scheduling of EAB treatments.
- The Commission recommended the City diversify its tree stock when replanting lost ash trees. Director Fink commented on how the City was working to diversify its tree stock when replanting.
- The Commission encouraged the City to host buckthorn education and cleanup events within the City's parks. Director Fink stated staff could look into hosting one or two buckthorn events this next year.

B. Splash Pad Design Update - Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated WSB created an online engagement tool that allowed the City to solicit feedback on the type of splash pad elements that were of interest to the community. What people seemed to be drawn to were the natural elements. However it was noted that the splash pad should pay attention to including elements that were attractive and fun looking for children. WSB created three concepts that were shared with staff. Those concepts were refined down based on operational considerations. The final design was reviewed with the Commission and staff requested feedback.

Discussion included:

- The Commission believed the splash pad would be a great addition to the community.
- The Commission appreciated how portions of the splash pad would be accessible to those in wheel chairs.

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 held a Truth in Taxation meeting on Tuesday, December 6 and noted the Council would be approving the 2023 budget and tax levy on Tuesday, December 13. She noted the Council recently completed a review of the City Manager and believed he was doing a great job on behalf of the City. She commented on the recent election and noted the Council honored all of the election judges and City staff who assist with elections each year.

B. PREC Chair Updates – Julia O'Rourke

Chair O'Rourke stated she had nothing to report.

C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff

Director Fink stated staff was working on summer programming already. She noted registration for summer programs would begin in March. She explained staff would be visiting three senior housing facilities to pass along holiday cheer. She reported the golf course had a great year. She indicated attendance at the Community Center has been tremendous this year. She stated ice castles would be returning to New Brighton this year and tickets were now on sale. She explained the City would be working on a climate action plan in 2023. She discussed the holiday hours that would be followed for the coming weeks.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Bank, seconded by Sokol-Kraft to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. Motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Fink
Director of Parks and Recreation