

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 5:30 PM  
CITY OF MINNETONKA BEACH  
PARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Chair Kim Petersen; Commissioners: Curt Holt, Laura Paine, Patty Rezabek, and Chip Zawislak  
**Special Volunteer:**  
**Absent:** Lucian Panait  
**Staff Present:** City Clerk Jane Burgess, Public Works Superintendent Jason Hilgers  
**Council Liaison:** Tracey Breazeale  
**Guests:** Rita Conroy

**Petersen opened the meeting at 5:30 pm**

**1. Administration**

- 1.1. Approve Agenda – January 24, 2023

**Rezabek motion, Holt second to approve the January 24, 2023, meeting agenda. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.**

- 1.2. Approve Minutes – November 1, 2022

Rezabek stated that the author’s name was wrong for the book given to Chair Pagano. The book’s illustrator’s name was listed. Burgess will change it to Aldo Leopold.

**Rezabek motion, Holt second to approve the November 1, 2022, amended meeting minutes. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.**

- 1.3. Chair Welcoming Comments

Petersen welcomed two new commissioners Zawislak and Paine to the Park Commission. She stated that 2023 will be a year to stay the course with an even keel and no huge projects to do but lots of work to do this year. Petersen stated that she is excited that Commissioner Paine would like to be vice chair of the Park Commission, which is a great way to learn the workings of the commission and more about parks. She told the other commissioners to step in and help as much as they want to. There is a lot to do, and time is precious.

- 1.4. Election of Officers: Chair and Vice Chair

**Zawislak motion, Holt second to approve the election of Laura Paine as vice chair of Park Commission. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.**

**Rezabek motion, Paine second for Kim Petersen to move from Park Commissioner co-chair to chair. All ayes the motion carried.**

**2. Administration**

- 2.1 Power Point – Caring for the Park System – KP

Petersen stated that Pagano originally created the Caring for the Park System presentation format, and it was very successful so Parks will continue to use it. She added that the Park Commission is about people, purpose and process and highlighted the key points of the presentation including:

- Drivers of Progress
- Scare Resources
- Parks Process Cycle
- Cornerstone Process
- And the Big “Aha”

She added that time is precious, and she appreciates everyone donating their time to the Park Commission. She also noted that capital is precious as well and is thankful for the multiple ways Parks is funded. Petersen stated that at this meeting they will focus on the Planning Part of the Parks Process Cycle. Spring and summer are execution time, so planning is getting citizen input, defining and prioritizing the work and then assigning and funding the work. SPOC assignments will lay all this out. Commissioners are IN the parks, evaluating what has been done and identifying what needs to be done. Inspection of Assets will occur early in the year she added.

Petersen reviewed the presentation for group explaining Green Assets and Hard Assets' function. Those commissioners will identify what needs help and repair, safety, functionality, make recommendations to the City and council for repairs, elimination, etc. and help set priorities. She stated that funding comes from the Parks budget CIP money approved by council, grants and donations. Petersen stated that the commission will clarify roles and responsibilities today and lay it out. She added that newly elected council members Breazeale and Dovolis, along with Mayor Pagano are great additions and resources to the city along with Honey, Burgess and Hilgers in public works – they all help along the way.

Holt asked for clarification on Petersen's comment that the Commission has "exceeded our capacity." She explained that this was one of Pagano's big concerns so the commission will try to keep things simpler this year. She stated that the Hennepin County Tree Canopy Grant provided the City with new trees, but their care exceeded time limits. Rezabek added that as an example, the work and watering of the trees was much more than anticipated.

Breazeale stated that inspections show more than that can actually be done, so prioritizing is important to determine what can be done in a given year and what can wait until the following year.

Petersen stated that Parks is in year four of the five-year plan.

## 2.2 Review of 2023 Administrative Calendar - KP

Petersen presented the updated Administrative Calendar which lays out the meetings for the year. A meeting was added for March 7<sup>th</sup> as there would be nearly two months between meetings. Civic events are included and Hilgers stated that the rink will be in great shape for the skating party. The Hard Asset inspections team will do a walk through the City this spring, weather dependent, and determine where things are at from that. She added that contracts need to be approved at the April meeting including a new gardening vendor. She asked that commissioners mark the Civic events, so they know when parks need to be ready for them.

## 2.3 CIP Spreadsheet – KP

Petersen stated that CIP budgeted projects include resetting pavers at the swim beach and rip rap projects at City docks on Crystal Bay due to erosion.

## 2.4 SPOC Assignments

### i. Hard Assets

Petersen stated that the SPOC System for Hard Assets works very well and allows commissioners to gather information to make recommendations on specific topics. Zawislak, Panait and Hilgers are on the Hard Asset team working with an annual Punch List, so they know what their jobs. Planned projects include a rip rap project at City Dock 2 and if budgeting allows, erosion work at City Docks 5-7A at the Arcola Bridge in early spring or late fall. Petersen asked for volunteers to work on that with Jason and Zawislak stated that he would. Petersen told them to get bids to be approved by City Council. Petersen stated that Panait has shown interest in the Swim Beach so she hopes he will want to continue with that.

Holt asked about rain gardens at the Swim Beach Park which he stated could help control geese droppings and E.coli, but must be installed properly taking the pavers into consideration. Hilgers expressed his concerns as to location of rain gardens as the park has volleyball there and determine maintenance requirements for rain gardens. He would like to shrink things a bit and make everything look better. They discussed the Swim Beach Park and why geese were absent and thought it could be due to part-time public works' employee Kohlton Beck's efforts in

cleaning the beach every day. Rezabek stated that last summer there wasn't a problem with geese at the Swim Beach and Holt stated that it was exceptionally dry which helped. Hilgers stated that geese travel by nature, and Mallards were at the beach last year.

Holt stated that he will look to see if the City has elevation maps for Swim Beach Park to see where the natural swails are. Zawislak stated that wetter it is there the geese will want to come to it.

Petersen stated that Hilgers, Panait and Holt will work on that project. Hilgers likes working with Norlings he stated.

Breazeale requested that commissioners try to get three bids from vendors looking for the best value and service.

Petersen explained the history and rotation of skateboard park equipment which is in a state of disrepair at Public Works and not useful. She added that residents need to be contacted to see if they want a skate park. If they do, then a permanent home needs to be determined. She added that it no longer can be moved back and forth from two locations as was done in the past. She added that loitering and after-hours usage was a problem.

Hilgers stated that it is expensive to buy new equipment and it needs a home. If the skate park is at City Hall playground, then residents can't play basketball. If it is at Ray Peters Park then basketball can't be played there. He recommended expanding the parking lot towards the ice rink and it would be under the lights and could be used for additional parking in the winter at the rinks.

Holt recommended placing it at the old swing set site at Ray Peters Park.

Rezabek recommended consideration of a Hennepin County Sports Grant if the community thinks a skate park is important. She is concerned that the current equipment is unsafe. She added that residents are concerned about graffiti at the ice rinks.

Zawislak and Hilgers stated that new equipment would be fun and bolted down.

Petersen stated that the skate park should be well lit. She added that nearby residents of Ray Peters Park should be consulted if that is a location to consider.

Hilgers stated that beer and pizza get left behind at the ice rinks and he can ask the Orono Police to patrol Ray Peters Park more often. He added that there has not been any vandalism at the ice rinks in the last year and there is no code or lock for the warming house to answer Breazeale's question if there was.

Breazeale stated there is concern that there may be things going on by residents or non-residents at the warming house which is not locked. She recommended that fake surveillance cameras be installed there.

Zawislak stated that trail cameras could be installed that take pictures upon motion.

They discussed volunteers for the skate park investigation project to determine if the City should move forward with it and determine best placement of it. Paine asked what the best way is to reach residents for their opinion on the future of a skate park. Burgess stated that the City's utility bill reaches 100% of residents so a survey could be included as an insert piece in the Q1 2023 billing that will be mailed the first week of April. Paine stated that she would write the survey and Burgess stated that she will help her at City Hall. Breazeale stated that maybe some Civic members will help Paine as they may have kids who would use the skate park. She suggested that first residents be told that the current equipment is not safe and usable. Also, the equipment needs a permanent home, before determining if there is sufficient interest in it.

Holt stated that a skate park in a 20-foot section may take away from the green space at Ray Peters, but no trees would have to be removed and grass doesn't grow well there anyway. Petersen stated that a City skate park is in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Rezabek stated that she will work on the grants for sports projects.

ii. Green Assets

Petersen stated that the commission should review and update the Green Asset Inspection list. She and Paine will be updating all spreadsheets. Holt stated that Garden Gate is not going to service Minnetonka Beach anymore due to scaling back their number of customers, and they sent a letter to Administrator Honey. Holt stated that he would contact possible gardeners, and Hilgers said he would as well. They clarified that Petersen does the City's window boxes and planters, but not at the warming house as the window boxes are rotting. Burgess waters the pots of annuals at City Hall. Holt stated that he and his wife can help Petersen with window boxes and planters. Rezabek waters at the swim beach and Petersen waters the library, but Dovolis' drip watering system there is amazing although the squirrels dig in the dirt which can clog the PVC piping, she added.

Petersen stated that she wants to keep working on the Restore the Shore planting projects for all the City dock locations to restore the shore around the City. She will continue to seek possible grants with Hennepin County. She wrote one grant already.

Native Restoration adds native pollinators and there is a big push nationwide to get cities to create more pollinator and native gardens. Rezabek and Holt offered to help with that too.

Holt praised Rezabek for watering late last summer when the drought was the worst stating that she went above and beyond in watering especially the birch. She would like to continue as SPOC for Tree Planting and Seasonal Tree Care

For the SPOC assignment for Turf Maintenance and Restoration, Holt stated that it wasn't a good idea to go from 100% chemical to 100% organic. Petersen agreed and stated that the drought did not help. He stated that he will bring in limited amount of chemical control agents.

Hilgers stated that he has been working with AJ's and told Holt that he will need to work with him. Holt stated that first a pre-emergent chemical will be put down in the Lafayette Ridge circle in spring. Hilgers stated that he is doing the grass in the City, and he does not want Parks to help.

Petersen suggested that Hilgers and Holt focus on AJ's as a vendor as they have a relationship with them, but they should get bids.

Petersen stated that it is part of Parks to recommend what best management practices should be for turf. She asked if he is willing to work with Holt on this as he has great expertise and experience in this area. Hilgers stated that he would. She added that they need to be mindful of and they have to start somewhere in that City turf has been neglected for so many years and part of the long term plan is consideration of environmental health and safety. Petersen stated that she values Hilgers expertise and willingness to restore the turf because it was in such disrepair.

Hilgers agreed stated that they will get there, but doesn't want to make more work he wants to eliminate more work, but have it look awesome.

Zawislak asked if the City has considered using a hardy grass such as crabgrass used in Florida, or clover, both which keep growing during a drought and are hardy.

Petersen stated that this is why best management practice is needed due to costs and Parks budget. A monoculture is the most expensive thing to maintain, and the City budget is not large enough to allow to have a golf course type of look here. She added that everyone should keep environmental health and safety in mind for kids, dogs, people in parks. Native gardens or other options may be more cost effective. Turf is the biggest crop in the country, and the most expensive thing to maintain. She added that she would like all commissioners to be on the SPOC assignment for Environmental Health & Safety.

Rezabek stated that she has been working with Prairie Restoration and will continue to do so. They do the City's Buckthorn and Garlic Mustard removal, assessing in late spring to determine what is needed, and complete the work before frost in late fall. Petersen said that should be in the forest annual maintenance care category.

iii. Administrative & Financial Oversight

Petersen stated that grants for a specific project, such as the skate park, the Park Commission will write a grant for it. Rezabek stated that she will help with grant writing but will need help with execution. Paine and Petersen will work together on the financial oversight and administration of it. She added that she and Paine will be the SPOC for Budget Process and Monitoring, and she will update the calendars and spreadsheet.

3.0 FYI's including Monarch Pledge and Park Commission Update to City Council

3.1 Tree Grant Summary finale – PR

Rezabek provided the commission with background information when in 2009 there was identification of EAB in Ohio and Michigan and there was a lot of talk about what to do as it was destroying Ash trees. When she moved here there were tons of elm trees arched over the streets, but Dutch Elm took them. Cities were given money to move and replace trees, so the City planted Ash trees. Parks did the planning and struggled to get commissioners to agree how to move forward. She added that she promoted a tree inventory to the City and got it 2011 and it was done by a forester.

Rezabek stated that once Ash trees contact EAB they last about six years. If ignored they are dangerous as they become brittle and are a liability. She added that she and the City has been connected to Bartlett Trees and Erik Paulsen since 2015 gaining valuable experience. When they walked the City looking at tree inventory, they found major gaps and determined which trees were valued. They began treating for EAB every other year and 2023 is a year to treat for it. Six to eight Ash trees were removed before the 52 new grant money trees were planted.

3.2 Homework for commissioners:

- Petersen suggested that all commissioners read the Comp Plan Ch. 3, pages 36-51;
- Petersen will take care of Mayor Pagano signing the Monarch Pledge.
- 5YP Plan link: hard copies in packet. Petersen asked commissioners to read the plan as there is good information in it that they should know.

4.0 Commissioner and Liaison Comments TB

Rezabek stated that the MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee has forums on ZOOM. Petersen stated that this is great education for your own yard.

Zawislak stated that the reason the grass is dead at Half Moon Park is due to the water from up above coming down and killing the grass. It is too wet and washes away especially when there is a deluge of rain and he has photos showing the amount of water that goes there in big rainstorms. He recommended building a grass berm to guide water away after big storms. Petersen agreed that this is a great idea to consider. Holt stated that it is too shady there so grass will struggle to grow. They discussed the terrible rainwater problems in that whole area including at Zawislak's and Rezabek's house.

Breazeale thanked Petersen for doing such a nice job at this meeting, thanked the new commissioners, and hopes that guest Rita Conway considers joining the Park Commission.

5.0 Closing Comments and Adjournment – KP

**Holt motion, Paine second to adjourn the meeting. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.**

**Public in attendance: Rita Conroy**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Jane Burgess, City Clerk**