

Tuesday, May 07, 2024, 5:30 PM
CITY OF MINNETONKA BEACH
PARK COMMISSION AMENDED MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Kim Petersen, Vice Chair Laura Paine
Commissioners: Dave Christiansen, Jolynn Gamble, Curt Holt, and Lucian Panait
Absent: Patty Rezabek and Jane Burgess, City Clerk
Staff Present: Public Works Superintendent Jason Hilgers and City Administrator Heidi Honey
Council Liaison: Tracey Breazeale
Guests:

Petersen opened the meeting at 5:31 pm.

1. Minnetonka Beach Business

- 1.1. Approve Agenda – May 7, 2024

Panait motion, Paine second to approve the May 7, 2024, meeting agenda. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

- 1.2. Approve Minutes – April 2, 2024

Paine motion, Panait second to approve the April 2, 2024 meeting minutes. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

2. Administration

2.1. Calendar Review – LAP

In reviewing the Administrative Calendar, Paine asked for confirmation of commissioners who can attend the Green Asset Inspections on Friday, May 10th. Paine, Gamble, Christiansen can attend. Breazeale stated Civic is meeting soon and then events can be updated on the calendar. Thursday Fundays will still be referred to Monday Fundays or Summer Fundays. They begin 6/20 and go through 8/29 on Thursday afternoons at Swim Beach Park. Petersen asked Panait if Soccer Nights will continue. He said the first one (June) of two was more well attended (than July) each of the two years there were held. They discussed National Night Out, the summer picnic, and the idea of Civic taking over soccer nights which will be discussed at the next Civic meeting.

2.2. CIP (Capital Improvement Program Requests) – KP

Petersen stated that there are no Parks items that meet the minimum CIP requirement. They discussed how nice the flagpole will be in front of City Hall when it is installed. She added that she will be meeting with Honey to go over the 2025 budget in a few weeks so if commissioners have things to include, they should share their ideas now. This is in conjunction with the 5 Year Plan Petersen added and things have come up such as continued maintenance of the pollinator garden, forest restoration. Paine stated that resident Susan Breon on Woodbridge Rd has a shared driveway on both Arcola and Woodbridge. She told her that she is concerned about the strip along the trail where people put yard waste in that area, and it is county or railroad property according to Hilgers. They put leaves, brush and other things there they are not supposed to include piles of garlic mustard. Petersen asked if something can be done there to eliminate the unsightliness of the site. Hilgers mows it but Honey added that vehicles park on side pulling off the road and wreck the turf. Hilgers said the homeowners around there are killing it by dumping there.

Petersen asked if a resident could donate to a pickleball court. She said it is a council decision and Planning Commission public hearings – the process would have to be followed like it was for the playground donation. Maintenance expenses would have to be covered, a spot selected which if it is in a park then the public can use it.

2.3. Budget Requests for 2025

None were given.

3. Operations

3.1. Operations Calendar Review – KP

Petersen stated that the commission is doing all the May calendar items, contracts are in place and work being completed. She asked if anything should be added to let her know. Sand will be installed by Hilgers soon.

3.2. Green Asset Inspections on Friday, May 10th at 8am

The inspection sheets will be ready to go by Petersen and the group will do their inspections.

3.3. SPOC Updates

Hard Assets

- Inspection Results – LP

Panait stated that everything is in pretty good shape. Hilgers did not have any additions. Petersen asked if the warming house window will be replaced. They discussed if the border of Half Moon Park could be curbed or posts installed, or boulders to keep cars from driving on the turf. Hilgers stated that the posts residents have installed to protect their property along the road from tire damage etc. will have to be removed. They are in the City Right of Way, which is generally 10 feet from the road, and this is a safety issue. If a vehicle needed to go around something say to swerve in an emergency, they would be unable to. Letters will be sent to those property owners instructing them to remove the “posts” by July 1st.

Commissioners and Hilgers discussed ideas to solve the water problem at Lafayette Rd and Woodbridge Rd. Hilgers stated that he will move the bench by Lafayette Rd and Woodbridge Rd. to the Dahl Library next to the existing bench. They discussed that the bench there gets used a lot so another one will be nice.

- Punch List – JH

Hilgers explained that he works off the Punch List and he also has his own list. As time allows, he completes items on Parks’ Punch List. Also, he is replacing the tetherball at City Hall as it broke, and he has a new pump for it that he keeps with him for pumping it up as needed.

Green Assets

- Gardens and Planters – CH

Holt said Parks budgeted 75 hours of labor for Gardens by Lynn for 2024, and a 4-person crew was here last weekend working 14.5 hours, which is a big improvement from this time last year when they had logged 30 hours or so for cleanup. Holt thanked Hilgers for completing the leaf removal at City Hall as it helped the gardening crew. A gardener summary report included that the crew did not remove all the little Maple seedlings. The yard waste generated filling two carts plus five bags need to be placed curbside for Friday pickup by Republic. The crew took six bags of yard waste with them. Holt discovered that at City Hall and the library there is a huge amount of Snow on the Mountain which is taking over and choking out some perennials. Chemical herbicides are the only way to eradicate this aggressive plant. A licensed person can do this. Honey said that plants came from the transferring of plants by the previous gardening company. Holt stated that the Hosta can be moved and then kill off the Snow on the Mountain. At the library, the Peonies which have Snow on the Mountain surrounding them do not like to be moved, so this is not an

option for them. If the Peonies were covered by a trash can, then spray could be applied to kill the snow on the Mountain. They discussed other options using a vendor with an herbicide license and where the money could come from. Petersen stated that there is contingency money in the Miscellaneous account available that perhaps could be used. They discussed contacting AJ's, Norlings, and the Lafayette Club gardener to see if they can do it and other options.

They discussed the next annual installation as May 22nd, so the water tank needs to be at the Welcome Sign for that work. Hilgers will do that. They will plant in the pots at City Hall too. Pots were donated by Holt's.

- Restore the Shore & Native Plantings – KP/CH
Natural Shore completed work Monday of this week and it went well removing weeds especially addressing Thistle.

Holt stated that Burgess would like to do a full-page article in the Beachcomber about the Pollinator Garden. Basically, all that needs to be done for the next two to three years is mow it when it gets to 8-10 inches, it should be mowed to 4-5 inches. He provided an instructional flyer of how to treat a pollinator garden after the first year. Everything is growing according to plan as this is year two. Next year there should be a lot of blooming. Holt requested that Hilgers install the education sign there and he placed a stake where it should go. Hilgers stated that Pagano requested that the sign be placed so people on the path can read it without getting off the path to do so. The commissioners thanked Holt for all the efforts he and Vicki made to create this pollinator garden. He will work on this garden until they move out of state. Additional signs would be nice later as well. He hopes that this garden will inspire residents to plant pollinator plants in their yards.

- Tree Plantings and Care – PR
Rezabek absent. Petersen stated that the trees look great and are leafing out nicely. Holt said that the lake is 2.5 inches above normal at this time.
- Forest Restoration – DC
Christiansen stated that he referred to the detailed 2006 plan, reviewing comprehensive, year-round strategies. He does not believe that anything was put in place other than Buckthorn. He asked if Prairie Restoration treated the Buckthorn, and it was confirmed that they did. They discussed the \$1,000 allocation for Buckthorn in the 2024 budget, and Petersen stated that Parks needs to designate where they want that to occur. He asked if the large, fruit-bearing Buckthorn have been identified and Rezabek can answer that. He recommended that a licensed person spray Buckthorn once locations are identified and do so over a long period of time. They will evaluate this on Friday when they walk the woods. They discussed Ash trees as part of forest restoration and replanting strategies need to be established. Christiansen stated that when he was on the Parks Commission ten or so years ago, no one wanted to discuss Buckthorn as a tree needing removal as they were unaware of how noxious it is, and it was still being used for hedges. Holt said deal with the female Buckthorn first as they bear fruit and seeds. Holt stated that he has had great success using an herbicide called Triclopyr Ester with a brush applied to the cut stump.

Petersen said there is a two-year seed bank, so a plan is needed. They discussed planting native trees and shrubs as a successful option and diligence over time.

Turf – JH

Hilgers stated that's the grass is growing well because it has rained so much. AJ's has to wait to do their work until it dries out more. He mowed around the Daffodils which will make a better plant next year.

- **Swim Beach and Docks – LP**
Hilgers explained that for Swim Beach dock installation the City Dock slip renters did a great job in getting their dock parts to the beach, but then the installer, Lake country Barge/Thomas Pivec did not regularly do the installation, so it is taking much longer than expected. Panait suggested that if the project was led by the City instead of the residents the process would go better. Christiansen said that dock installers in general do what they want when they want. They discussed the Kayak/canoe rack being first come first serve and open to all residents.
- **Environmental**
Covered already

Administration & Financial

- **Budget – KP**
Petersen asked for suggestions for the 2025 budget if any. The CIP has a \$5,000 minimum and it has to be a depreciating item to be included. They discussed future tree work that should be done at some point including Cedar thicket.
- **Grants – PR**
Petersen provided grant update and Gamble is going to help with the package for submission for Crystal Bay shoreline including rip rap and shoreline restoration. There will be minimal maintenance needed for these areas along Crystal Bay.
- **Volunteerism: Spring Clean Up – JG**
Gamble reported that the Junior Civic/Parks/Resident Spring Cleanup of Swim Beach Park went very well on April 28th despite the pouring rain. It was a hard call to move forward or cancel, but in the end the commitment demonstrated by the small group who helped was huge and the beach was cleaned well. Lund's generously donated treats, fruit, water, Koozies, bags, and a Lund's gift card. They gave the extra treats including the gift card to the Westonka Food Shelf, WeCAN, election judges, and a Civic Mother/daughter self-defense event. She said everyone had fun and she is looking forward to the fall cleanup.
- **Resident Survey – LP**
Paine made the changes to the draft survey on park usage and input that were discussed. The QR Code seems very complicated, but she is open to assistance. They discussed open ended versus closed ended questioning. She asked for input and the commissioners stated they liked it. Paine will add more space for answers and reduce font so it is one page. They will show Civic the copy at the next meeting. Paine asked if council needs to approve the survey and Breazeale stated that she didn't think that it does as it is a Park Commission survey. Hilgers recalled that this was directed by council. Petersen stated they should wait and discuss with Honey and Burgess before giving it to Civic.

4. FYI's

4.1. 2024 State of the Parks – Three Rivers Park District Highlights

Petersen stated that she and Paine attended the Three Rivers Park District 2024 State of the Parks on April 25th. The focus was on their mission and their tagline was: You Belong Here, Parks Matter, and Lead by Example, which she feels is the City's Park Commissioners mission as well. They

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have planted almost 60,000 trees in their park system, with 6,000 large trees planted last year to deal with EAB and forest management. They also planted 52,500 seedlings, restored 2,000 acres of prairie, and harvesting prairie seed each year and can volunteer to help with this. They have grown most of the trees at their own nursery. Park District includes 27,000 acres of water, many of which has been removed from the impaired waters list. She stated that Carver Park has a Monarch Single-Track Mountain Bike Park, a landmark in the Midwest. They also have an extensive program for people on assistance as well.

4.2. Mayor's Monarch Pledge

Petersen stated that Mayor Pagano signed the 2024 pledge reaffirming his commitment to saving Monarchs.

4.3. New Hennepin County Forester – Jack Lucas

Petersen stated that Jack Lucas is the new forester for Hennepin County.

4.4. Tree Trust Opportunities

Petersen said the Tree Trust would like to partner with Minnetonka Beach to provide mature trees at a discounted rate to residents. They also have volunteer planters and a landscaping division.

5. Commissioner and Liaison Comments

none

6. Closing Comments and Adjournment

none

Holt motion, Panait second to adjourn the May 7, 2024 Park Commission meeting. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Public in attendance:

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Burgess, City Clerk