

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

**Members Present:** Chair Kim Petersen, Vice Chair Laura Paine  
Commissioners: Dave Christiansen, Curt Holt, Lucian Panait, and Patty Rezabek  
**Absent:** none  
**Staff Present:** City Clerk Jane Burgess, Public Works Superintendent Jason Hilgers  
**Council Liaison:** Tracey Breazeale  
**Guests:** Nik Fredriksson

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

**1. Minnetonka Beach Business**

1.1. Approve Agenda – September 5, 2023

Add Oath of Office Lucian Panait to Park Commission until 2026

1.1.1 Oath of Office – Panait

Clerk Burgess administered the Oath of Office to Park Commissioner Lucian Panait renewing his term until August 31, 2026.

**Rezabek motion, Paine second to approve the September 5, 2023, meeting agenda as amended. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.**

1.2. Approve Minutes – August 1, 2023

**Panait motion, Rezabek second to approve the August 1, 2023 meeting minutes. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.**

**2. Administration**

2.1. Administrative Calendar– KP

Commissioners reviewed the calendar. Petersen stated she will be presenting an update on the 2025 – 2030 Parks Five Year Plan at the October City Council meeting. The Civic Committee will be selecting the date for the Spooky Walk & Halloween Party at their next meeting. the Progressive Dinner is on September 30<sup>th</sup> and the next Park Commission meeting is November 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30. There were no questions regarding the Administrative Calendar. She added that they would review the 2024 Preliminary Budget later at this meeting.

They discussed a possible fall cleanup date of 10/28 from 9:30 – 11 am, and a need for a SPOC for this event. Breazeale stated that she would talk about this at the Civic meeting on 9/13. Hilgers stated that the cleanup should focus on trails and ice rink cleanup and prep for winter activities. Petersen requested that all receipts be turned in to Burgess by December 4<sup>th</sup>.

2.2. 2023 Budget Audit – KP

Petersen asked Hilgers to explain where he is at regarding drought contingency money. He said that he and Honey decided that it will be rolled over until next year as the City needs a safety net as it may take three years to recover from the three-year drought and dry trees. They discussed moving Turf Restoration with AJ's into one category so it will be less confusing. Burgess stated that they have only received one invoice so far this year for arborist work and that was from Manual of Heritage. More are yet to come it is expected. Hilgers stated he will be painting and doing repairs at the warming house.

Holt explained that this was Gardens by Lynn's first year with our City and they are working through budget vs actual. At this time, Parks is \$942 over budget in gardening. Lynn and crew spent 35 hours for spring cleanup and

of those 20 hours was spent removing two years of accumulated leaves from around the shrubs and by the building. The previous gardener's notes may have been off as she only spent four hours removing leaves so four hours was budgeted this year. Petersen stated that the number of hours Gardens by Lynn spent removing leaves this spring needs to be reduced and Holt stated that when he meets with her, he will discuss this with her. Hilgers stated that if she lets him know when they will start in spring, he will make sure leaves are removed. Also, they will be directed to plant less flowers in the Abdo Garden next year which will save some money. Lynn and her team will be installing fall flowers soon at City Hall and in the library window boxes. There was discussion that their weeding needs to improve. Petersen expressed thanks to Kyle Zinn and Kyle Lewis for the mulching of City Hall gardens, which had not been done in a long time and that will help with weeds. Aggressive perennials were thinned out at the library such as Lily of the Valley by Gardens by Lynn and that uncovered rose shrubs there. Holt added that they are working on the Snow on the Mountain as well that has taken over the back of City Hall. Petersen said they are doing a really good job, but it is taking more time than was budgeted. Hilgers and Petersen stated that the gardener from the Lafayette Club transplanted plants she had divided and planted them at the library. Petersen reported that the cornmeal worked on the Peonies to prevent white powdery mildew, and Holt added that spraying Neem oil on peonies in spring works too. Petersen suggested to Holt that he negotiate Lynn's bill where she and her team spent so much time removing leaves as now, they are over budget. Money can be used from the Misc. category to put towards the gardener.

Hilgers stated that Shane and a new person from Hennepin County will be here on 9/12 to discuss forest maintenance, health of the woods, and give pointers. Hilgers and Rezabek will go over to see where all the Buckthorn is. Rezabek asked if they should have a consultation with Shane about the sustainability and health of our forest as the City does a great job with boulevards etc. but not the woods. Burgess will ask Biff's to remove the biff at Swim Beach and Ray Peters and bring one back to Ray Peters when the rink opens. They discussed the Hennepin County water testing program done at the beach during the summer. There is a possibility that the testing of the water was not always done correctly, which could have affected the high E. coli levels. Hilgers saw improper testing done there once where the tester got her sample at the shoreline where geese had just been sitting. Hilgers, Burgess and Honey met with Leah the county environmentalist who showed them how proper testing should be done and assured them that better training for their interns will take place for next year's testing.

They discussed weed removal and how much was paid to Kohlton and Vidalia. The budget is under as Kohlton did not work the hours scheduled and budgeted. Panait recommended doing the same 6-time program with Waterfront Restoration next year. Hilgers said his daughter, Vidalia, can help clean the beach next year. They discussed the automatic weed removers that some people have in the water and the negatives were stronger than the positives of this kind of system. Breazeale explained what a bad experience they are having at their home with a neighboring automatic in the water weed remover. They create a mess for neighbors and are destroying the shoreline and fish nesting ecosystem. The commissioners discussed not putting the rope and buoys back at the swim beach as they liked not having them there this summer. Petersen then suggested that additional caution buoys be installed to protect the swimmers, and not put the rope back.

Petersen stated that Natural Shores Technology did their work today for their last visit of four visits and the area looks great. There were a few bare spots, so they planted some plantings there at no charge and they weeded. They discussed carrying over the EWF mulch budget and project to 2024. They discussed possibly expanding the treating of Buckthorn in areas beyond Ray Peters Park, the trail and around Arcola Woods.

### 2.3. 2024 Draft Budget Approval – KP

Petersen explained that Honey, Burgess, Paine, Hilgers and herself worked on this draft budget and simplified and combined some of the categories so it is easier to read, follow and manage. Hilgers answered Rezabek's question about a tree replacement plan asking if Parks is pre-planning where and what they want. He said that some live Ash should be taken down each year, so the City doesn't get hit with a \$50,000 tree removal project when they die due to EAB. Petersen added that there will be 10 Ash trees coming down along the Dakota Trail. Petersen added that when the trees are taken down on the trail and boulevard, this money can be used to upgrade to larger size replacement trees because the ones they plant may be very small or bareroot.

Hilgers stated that the drought is going to cause trees to need removal too, so the replacement plan will be used hopefully one for one.

After discussing the entire gardening season, they decided to increase the Gardens by Lynn budget to \$5,000 for 2024, of which \$1050 is allocated for all annuals. Of that amount, \$750 is for summer and fall plants. Gardens by Lynn won't remove leaves. The miscellaneous fund was reduced to \$1250 from \$2,000. The total recommended 2024 Park Commission budget is proposed at \$19,800.

**Holt motion, Panait second to approve the 2024 Park Commission Amended Budget at 19,800. All ayes, the motion carried.**

#### **2.4. Parks 2025-2029 Five Year Plan**

##### Introduction

Each commissioner has a packet that former Park Chair now Mayor Pagano put together for a Five-Year Plan going forward meeting held with Petersen, Paine, Honey, and Burgess. She explained that the first Five-Year Plan was created by Pagano and Gerry Boschwitz and has been used as a template ever since. The current Parks Five Year Plan goes through 2024 and it is time to start the 2025 – 2029 plan. She added that she will present an outline for the next plan at the October 10<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. She directed the commissioners to read Chapter 3 in the Comprehensive Plan which will give a really good view of what and how the parks will be maintained going forward and the vision for them. She added that they need to determine what the guiding principles will be. Petersen would like commissioners' input and she, Paine and Breazeale will work on the final documents. There are financial constraints in the City due to the new water treatment plant that needs to be constructed and the expenses with that. The things that the commission has learned that would help with direction are very valuable and she asked that anyone's thoughts should be emailed to her or stated at this meeting. Input will be gathered at the November meeting as well.

In response to Panait's request, Burgess will email the 2020 – 2024 Five Year Plan for their review. Petersen stated that the purpose of the plan, according to Pagano, was to lay out the nuts and bolts and framework in place. The Green Asset and Hard Asset Inspection sheets, and budgeting were created to help bring things in the parks back to the condition they used to be in. going forward the focus will most likely be on maintenance in each park, trails, and open spaces, including dock access areas which need restoration. She encouraged commissioners to walk through all those areas and see what they think. She stated that even though each park has a clear direction for what kind of a park it should be. Breazeale stated that each park can be looked at by the commission to see if any enhancements or modifications could be made for use. Grant money could maybe be obtained to help with improvements, she added. Petersen stated that they will look at how much the baseball area is used, for example.

Rezabek pointed out that although the Park Commission has space limitations and has constraints to stay within the Comprehensive Plan guidelines. She added that so many residents have moved to Minnetonka Beach over the last ten years, and it would be nice to get new residents' feedback as well for park and open space use.

Petersen and Paine will update the Hard Asset and Green Asset spreadsheets which will help going forward. It will document what vendors did the work, where and what color was used for a particular item.

Breazeale stated that the Parks Five Year Plan is very helpful for council in understanding, reviewing, and approving CIP projects and that budget.

#### **2. Commissioner and Liaison Comments**

Holt stated that the pollinator garden (600 sq ft) has not been seeded yet. He and Vicki are donating the seeds, but they are waiting for rain. He added that if all goes well, perhaps this garden can be expanded later.

#### **3. Closing Comments and Adjournment: Co-Chairs**

**Holt motion, Panait second to adjourn the September 5, 2023 Park Commission meeting. With all members voting in favor, motion carried.**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.**

**Public in attendance: Nik Fredriksson**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Jane Burgess, City Clerk**