



**Minutes  
Minnetonka Park Board  
Wednesday, April 6, 2022**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

Park board members present: Korey Beyersdorf, James Durbin, Chris Gabler, David Ingraham, Ben Jacobs, Katie Semersky, Isabelle Stroh and Chris Walick.

Staff members in attendance: Kathy Kline, Matt Kumka, Kelly O'Dea, Christine Petersen, Sara Woeste and Leslie Yetka.

Gabler called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**3. Reports from Staff**

Recreation Director Kelly O'Dea introduced Park and Trail Project Manager Matt Kumka, and Natural Resources Program and Outreach Coordinator Christine Petersen. Also, O'Dea informed the board that in the upcoming meeting agenda, e-bikes at Lone Lake Park was listed as a business item. Staff decided they needed to do more research on e-bikes. It will likely be coming back as a business item at the June or August park board meeting.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 2, 2022 as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

**5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda**

There were none.

**6. Special Matters**

There were none.

**7. Business Items**

**A. Parks, Open Spaces and Trails (POST) System Plan Approval**

Assistant Recreation Director Sara Woeste gave the report.

Walick thought it was incredible.

Ingraham complimented the amount of public input. He thought it was a great document and that the executive summary was pretty comprehensive.

Semersky asked if the city council has seen it yet.

Woeste replied that they haven't officially seen it but it will be presented to the council after the park board recommends it to move forward.

Semersky confirmed that park board saw it first and then it goes to council.

Woeste answered that is correct.

Semersky was very supportive of the whole initiative. She thanked staff for adding the executive summary. It was very helpful for certain audiences to get that section.

Durbin thought it was fantastic.

Jacobs commented that staff has done a lot of great work and it turned out really nice.

Durbin thanked them for the executive summary. It will be helpful especially for a new park board member.

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve sending the POST Plan to the city council. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

#### **B. Natural Resources Education and Outreach Plan**

Petersen gave the report.

Ingraham liked the presentation and asked how many have signed up for tomorrow's resilience program.

Petersen responded that their limit is 40 and they were about halfway to that. However, she hasn't had an update on registrations from Blue Thumb recently. They were about halfway full before *The Memo* went out and before an email blast from Natural Resources went out on the first of the month. Peterson stated that if it doesn't fill, staff will find additional ways to reach out to people. A possibility would be to reach out to people who took the Planting for Pollinators workshop last year. They didn't have as much engagement on the cost-share grant that was part of that program possibly due to last year's drought; she is hoping they can offer that opportunity to some other folks.

### **8. Park Board Member Reports**

Stroh commented that the park board talked about getting information on the tennis court usage in parks. She spoke to Tennis Program Manager Felicia Raschiatore at the Williston Fitness Center. Raschiatore described how she and other coaches during lockdown surveyed most of the city's parks and looked at their usage. She sent Stroh a few reports that pertained to the tennis courts and there were about 10 parks that might be of interest. Meadow, Gro Tonka and Lone Lake parks all have high-usage. All of those parks, along with Woodgate Park, are used for the Junior Tennis in the Parks program that the city offers.

- Meadow Park has two tennis courts and houses are quite a distance from them. The courts are very popular and there is good parking.

- Gro Tonka Park has three tennis courts, houses are close to the park with good parking.
- Junction and Linner parks have two courts, houses are close to the courts and they are in poor shape with a small amount of parking.
- Covington Park has two courts that are used sparingly, they are very close to the houses with minimal parking.
- Oberlin Park has two courts, average condition, lots of parking, only houses on one side and there is a basketball court there.
- Wilson has two tennis courts, very close to the houses with ample parking.
- Spring Hill has two tennis courts used sparingly, very close to houses with minimal parking.
- Woodgate has two tennis courts used often, very close to houses with ample parking.

Most of these parks have two courts and Stroh thinks they could be used for pickleball.

Gabler asked if she got any information back on pickleball.

Stroh responded that she didn't.

Gabler replied that they are packed and he frequently hears that we need more courts.

Semersky was in Eden Prairie two weeks ago for a meeting at the Civic Center. She got there early and noticed the Round Lake Skate Park that is right across the street. It was 37 degrees outside and 10 kids were there around 6 p.m.; half of them were teenagers and half of them were younger. About half of the kids had scooters and the other half had skateboards. It's located on the north side of Eden Prairie which is pretty close to Minnetonka. It got her attention as an observation that kids were out there even in the cold weather.

Durbin commented that the request for proposal went out for the skate board park feasibility and questioned when it is expected to come in.

Kumka thought he should receive them next Friday. They went out to a variety of consultants who do recreation style planning. He thought they went out to six consultants in total. Staff will receive the proposals from them and assess whether or not they are qualified. They are looking to get the study done this year.

## **9. Information Items**

O'Dea responded to Stroh and Semersky's comments from the park board member reports. O'Dea stated that during COVID, some of our facilities were closed and staff members were available to do assessments at the parks. That is where the information came from on how busy the courts were. It was good information to have because there are 30 or more tennis

courts. As far as the skate park, staff is looking into visiting a skate park in a different city on the tour next month. Eden Prairie is close and could be similar to something we would like.

### **Summer Registration**

O'Dea gave the report.

### **Cullen Smith Property Update**

Kumka gave the report.

Ingraham said it was impressive. He hasn't gone into the property but from either Essex Road or maybe Stone Road you get a pretty good view.

O'Dea said the Cullen Smith property is another site staff is looking at visiting on the tour.

Gabler went back to the tennis courts evaluation discussion and thought it would be interesting to go back now on a non-COVID year and see if that was just a one-off because nothing else was open or if the tennis courts are still being used. He wasn't sure if it would be possible to do that this year, but he thought it would be interesting to compare.

### **Natural Resources Annual Update**

Natural Resources Manager Leslie Yetka gave the report.

Ingraham asked if the gravel bed nursery is going in behind the water treatment plant.

Yetka replied that there are tennis courts, an open area and then the water treatment. She believed it is going in that open area.

Ingraham commented that there is a good milkweed patch there so it is a tradeoff.

Yetka said they will make sure they are watching the milkweed and that they aren't disturbing it too much.

Gabler said every time a restriction or ordinance gets put in place, he always questions if we foresee any unintended consequences. We kind of target the big developers but what happens if a homeowner wants to improve their property. He questioned if there are any unintended consequences if they start taking down trees or what should they do before.

Yetka responded that it's not too much of a change for single family homeowners, except there is some protection now. Before, the tree protection ordinance did not apply to single family housing but it does now. One discussion with the planning committee was to make sure this ordinance wasn't depressing any development in our city. As applications come in, staff has been looking at the old ordinance and how it gets applied differs from the new ordinance. We haven't had a situation yet where a development hasn't gone through because of the tree protection ordinance. She thinks part of that is because there is quite a bit of flexibility that's in the ordinance to actually allow staff to work with a developer and they can work with the landowner in making sure that they are protecting the right trees in the right places. Then during the whole development process, there are some checks and balances where developers can just work with staff much more than they could in the past. It

is more restrictive but we also have more flexibility. It sounds counterintuitive but overall it has been working well.

Gabler asked when looking at the life cycle of a tree, when it is planted, how do you know when it is time to replace it?

Yetka said it depends on the tree species because some are longer lived than others. One thing staff has talked about and is in the Natural Resource Master Plan, is this idea of offering tree audits. This would be another incentive where either a forester or a contractor that we contract with can talk to a landowner and give them an inventory of the trees that they have on their property. They could also give landowners advice on what trees are nearing their life cycle so they can consider replacing them. If a tree is diseased, they could give advice on how to handle it and also how to protect their trees. It is hard for staff to answer those questions without knowing what people have, however, they do want to offer that service because a lot of people have those kinds of questions.

Gabler thought that if you stick that right next to a restriction on taking down trees that people will look at it first. He thought that would be awesome because he knows of a few places just in his neighborhood and nobody knows.

Semersky thought it would be really nice if the city recommended a few contractors. She added that a lot of forestry places will go to your house but you don't know if they are giving you a good recommendation. Some might tell you to take everything down so they can make money.

Yetka and Petersen replied that there is a list of tree companies that they have approved on the website and that is done every year. We don't certify or license them and staff can't recommend one company over another but we can provide a list of those that are doing business already in the city. She suggested to tell people they should be hiring certified contractors.

Petersen added that for each contractor, staff asks them what services they provide. She doesn't believe they have ever asked if they do assessments of that kind but she thinks it would be worthwhile. She also added that this is kind of an opportunity to expand their volunteer program. Similar to Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners, there are existing tree care advisors who are certified, who as volunteers could provide some of that service. Staff does education through the tree sale about buckthorn replacement, ash replacement and focusing on the idea of the right tree in the right place.

### **Winter Farmer's Market Summary**

O'Dea gave the report.

Semersky asked if the vendors were pleased and if there was enough business to make it worth their while.

O'Dea thought for most of them, it was worth their while. Staff heard from some of the vendors that it was a little slower than past years. In the past, especially in November and December when people were shopping for gifts, they would see about 500 people. He thought 325 was still a decent amount of people.

Durbin asked if we still have a full-time farmers market coordinator.

O'Dea replied that we do and Bonnie Hanna-Powers is still the farmers market manager. He mentioned that he found out some good news today. Hanna-Powers applied for a grant and she received the grant. It was kind of related to COVID so we have dollars that we can spend next year. It was more of an equity grant to make sure people had access to farmers markets.

Beyersdorf asked why we are doing the summer markets on Tuesdays opposed to having them on the weekend.

O'Dea responded that staff looks at other cities and what they are doing.

Woeste added that we are typically spreading the vendors out.

Beyersdorf said she does craft fairs so she was wondering.

O'Dea mentioned that at times last year, the attendance was 700 – 1,000 people, so he thought for most of the vendors it was worth their while.

### **Winter Rinks Summary**

O'Dea gave the report.

Beyersdorf asked if we have signs at the warming houses.

Woeste didn't think signs were at every park. The information was listed on the website and in the brochure.

## **10. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items**

O'Dea gave the report.

## **11. Adjournment**

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Kline*

Kathy Kline  
Recreation Administrative Coordinator