



# Agenda

## Minnetonka Park Board

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center - Council Chambers

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1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

\_\_\_\_ Student Member

\_\_\_\_ David Ingraham

\_\_\_\_ Korey Beyersdorf

\_\_\_\_ Ben Jacobs

\_\_\_\_ Ella DiLorenzo

\_\_\_\_ Katie Semersky

\_\_\_\_ Anne Hanley

\_\_\_\_ Chris Walick

3. Reports from Staff

4. Approval of Minutes

A) January 3, 2024

5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

6. Special Matters

7. Business Items

A) Purgatory Park Master Plan - Preliminary

Strategies Regarding Dogs

8. Park Board Member Reports

9. Information Items

10. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

11. Adjournment

### Board Vision:

An inclusive city with outstanding parks and recreational opportunities within a healthy and biodiverse natural environment.

### Board Mission:

To proactively advise the city council, in ways that will:

- Conserve and enhance Minnetonka's natural environment
- Promote quality and inclusive recreation opportunities, natural amenities and facilities to meet the needs of all
- Provide a forum for public engagement regarding parks, trails, athletic facilities and natural resources
- Adhere to the goals and strategies of the Natural Resources Master Plan and the Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan



**Minutes  
Minnetonka Park Board  
Wednesday, January 3, 2024**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

Park board members present: Korey Beyersdorf, Ella DiLorenzo, Anne Hanley, David Ingraham and Chris Walick. Excused: Ben Jacobs and Katie Semersky.

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

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

**3. Reports from Staff**

Recreation Director Kelly O'Dea mentioned that there was an addendum.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Hanley moved, Beyersdorf seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 6, 2023. 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. Purgatory Park Master Plan – Preliminary Strategies Regarding Dogs**

Park and Trail Project Manager Matt Kumka gave the report.

Street and Park Operations Manager Darin Ellingson reviewed some of the high points in the park ordinance related to dogs. The ordinance is related to animals, but the focus is primarily on dogs.

Hanley suggested under recommendations for discussion – short-term, for it to say other places because they've talked about how it could be on city property such as outlots.

Kumka said certainly.

Walick opened the floor to public comment.

Eric Moreira, 5554 Nantucket Place, Minnetonka. His property backs up to Purgatory Park and he walks his dog on a leash there almost every day. He has interacted with off-leash dogs on many occasions and believes that the park leash regulations need to be changed. At the February 2023 park board meeting, Deann Bloom explained how difficult it was to enforce these things. The lack of enforcement leads people to feel like they don't need to follow the rules. There are a lot of people who do follow the rules, but there have been plenty of times where he has dealt with off-leash dogs. He has reviewed the ordinances of many surrounding cities and found that they all require dogs to be on a leash except in designated off-leash areas by the city. If there is not a border, he feels like it is going to lead to the same issues that we currently have. If there are signs that display where the borders are but there is no physical borders, he thinks a judge could still throw that out because someone could say, "I don't know where the border is." The most important thing to do when designing this is to make sure there is a regulation that can be enforced by a community service officer.

Pamela Layton, 5538 Nantucket Place, Minnetonka. Her property abuts the park and she has lived there for 34 years. She has seen a lot of changes in the park and one is the excellent restoration work that is going on, but another change is the increase in incidents with dogs. When they moved there, one of the things she loved was all the wildlife they saw but that has disappeared. It's not due to the usage from people but from dogs roaming throughout the park. She has dogs in her backyard, which is not fenced, multiple times per week because they are chasing rabbits and they are never under voice control. She has been known to take dogs by their collar back to the path and call for the owners. She agrees with Moreira that whatever they do has to be enforceable and there should be a fence. Dogs are communal animals so if they are wandering in that designated area and there is a dog walking on the path, there is nothing to stop them from going and visiting their friend. She loves that park but she believes we have a long way to go of bringing it back to the point where it fulfills the needs. She is a bird watcher and likes going off the trail a little bit where she has encountered plenty of dogs. The owners that give nasty responses when you try to tell them that their dog is supposed to be on a leash on the path are the problem, not the dogs. The nicest response is someone saying, "I know", but there are much more negative responses. Someone mentioned at the last park board meeting that the dogs have more rights in the park than they do. She agrees with that and hopes that we can use Purgatory Park as an example on how we can manage this problem going forward.

Angela Moreira, 5554 Nantucket Place, Minnetonka. She likes that we are considering an area that will hopefully be defined for off-leash dog use. As it stands now, it creates the entire park as sort of an off-leash dog area so she thinks that would be really helpful. She doesn't agree with everyone who says that if we don't define the border with a fence or something physical that the dogs will somehow magically stay in that area. She lives in that neighborhood where dogs frequently roam and thinks it probably won't work very well to have another sign. Nobody seems to pay attention to the current sign and the majority of the off-leash dog walkers are regulars so they should know the rules. She suggested instituting a leash regulation. She's aware that you can't change the ordinance but suggested flipping the language of the leash regulation at Purgatory Park to say, "All dogs must be on a leash except for in a certain area". It would be helpful to be clear and concise. There would be no question if you tell somebody that their dog needs to be on a leash in that area. It would eliminate the back and forth on whether or not their dog is on voice command. She also thought a fence is very critical and it needs

to define the off-leash area very clearly. It will also prevent those dogs from charging out onto the maintained trail. One of the most important things with this plan is that she doesn't want this to turn into a permanent solution. It has to be temporary because she doesn't want paving or infrastructure except for that temporary fence. If you start adding onto this, it will start turning into a permanent solution. She thinks a temporary solution of one to two years as the maximum would be great. That would give you enough time to analyze a new suitable location. She requested that staff and the park board try to edit the current ordinance and send it to the city council to look at the language.

Heather Holm, 15327 Lake Shore Avenue, Minnetonka. She supports the idea of a temporary plan to define a specific area where off-leash dogs can be within the park. Her email in the addendum illustrated why this plan needs to be a short-term plan. The plan does not adhere to the Natural Resources Master Plan (NRMP) and part of the park board's mission is to adhere to the goals and strategies of the NRMP. The first way it doesn't adhere is because the area proposed for the temporary solution is in an area that the NRMP identified as both high quality and high priority for restoration. This is a restored tallgrass prairie that was installed in the 1990's by former staff members. Residents have watched it decline and degrade over time with its overuse and use of space that is not managed. She supports this plan if it is temporary. She echoes what others have said and she really likes the idea of the buffers for both the wetland and part of the prairie. She agreed that we need some sort of physical boundary, especially on the east side for this temporary solution.

Holm is a restoration volunteer and they've been taking some drone imagery of some of the areas that they work in to show positive change over the time. She included some imagery from the proposed area with the proposed fence representing that buffer. That fence would stop a lot of the dogs that are running into adjoining neighborhoods. It would also create that physical line or barrier for community service officers to enforce the ordinance. It would also limit the conflicts that have been occurring of dogs running into the maintained trail and disturbing other park users. Most importantly, it would allow this high-quality prairie to rest and recover from so much use and abuse. Having part of it fenced off from this proposed short-term, off-leash area would really allow that to happen. She isn't speaking on behalf of anyone else but it would make a lot of people happy who really value the high-quality natural resources. It would help them feel the fulfillment they get from volunteering in the park. As Ellingson mentioned, we've sort of changed how we think about unimproved and unmaintained areas from what they were 30 years ago. The proposed area for off-leash dogs has been identified in the NRMP as a maintained area. She included a map that shows you all of the areas that are currently being actively restored by staff, volunteers and contractors. She thinks some of them are willing to put up with further degradation of that prairie for now but we need to find a long-term solution for off-leash dogs that is not in the middle section of the prairie.

Jerrold Gershone, 131111 April Lane, Minnetonka is on the opposite side closer to Meadow Park, which is his preferred park. His dog is close to 16 years old so he doesn't quite walk as far anymore. It is a very different culture at Meadow Park; the layout is different but there are signs on both Plymouth Road and Oakland Road that say, "Dogs must be on a leash." He doesn't quite understand why it is different in other parks. He walks in a lot of the parks and it seems like this issues is more particular to Purgatory Park and the culture that has developed there. He went on the City of Minnetonka's website and it says the designation is Purgatory Community Preserve. One other person mentioned that they used to see a lot of animals there that you don't see anymore. To

him, that isn't really keeping up with the mission of a preserve. He thinks the idea of a dog park actually came from more of the restoration community and how they can make both of these work. It would be a compromise so he does support how staff are moving in this area to get more definition and to hopefully get a dog park; that way it's clear where dogs can run around. He also understands it has to be a phased approach.

Carl Nelson, 5541 Nantucket Place, Minnetonka which is right next to the park. He wanted to endorse everything that Holm said because he read her letter and it makes a lot of sense. A well-defined barrier or boundary is something that makes a great deal of sense because otherwise it's just too fluid. A 50 foot buffer zone doesn't make sense because who is going to get out there with a tape measure. A fence is something you can point to and perhaps it will finally cause some type of enforcement to be put in place. Every time he goes out there, he sees the sign that says, "Due to the recent increase in animal related incidents, leash ordinances will be strictly enforced." It's been up there for 10-15 years and it is kind of a joke. Let's get serious and put something in place that really defines where the dogs can be. As Holm said, it's a temporary solution because of the conflict between the restored areas or the natural resources stewardship goals that the city has articulated in their plan; along with the intensive effects of an abundance of dogs in the park. There is a basic conflict there that has to be resolved. He has confidence that the city will find a good solution.

Sam Rush, 12625 Sherwood Place, Minnetonka. His parents live at 5717 Scenic Heights Drive, which is across the street from Scenic Heights Elementary, which is on the front end of the park. He's used Purgatory Park quite a bit with his dogs, just as himself running or walking, and just using the park in general. He echoes and supports all the people who talked about the fence and everything like that. He came tonight to share an example of a situation he had with a dog in Purgatory Park. He was running with his dog on the gravel limestone trail and a dog came up to them that was on a retractable leash who got away from its owner. The dog came up and sniffed and then a kid who was like 10-12 years old came and got the dog. They started running again and as they rounded the corner going up the hill towards the Nantucket area, the dog came back and chased after them and bit his dog on the leg and would not let go. The dog was on a retractable leash around 16 feet long. He doesn't think retractable leashes are ok because once you get past six feet you have lost control of your dog. He thinks enforcing a six foot leash is also important. He called the police after the incident and they went to his house to talk to him but by the time the police went to the park, the kids were gone. He wanted to share that story because the dog was on a leash but it still bit his dog. Besides that, his dog has been harassed by other dogs. Even if the dog has a collar and you do voice command, the dog rarely responds on the first command. He takes his dog to Three Rivers Park District's dog parks and sees some of the same stuff there. He suggests if you do a dog park, he likes the idea of having a park pass and using that money to provide a community service officer for that area so they can actually enforce the rules.

Cindy Eyden, 16824 Excelsior Boulevard, Minnetonka. She thinks we are taking some steps forward in terms of confining where the dogs are going to be and defining that. Personally, she would like it to be a little bit smaller of a space for the good of wildlife. She thinks the area down towards the bridge is an area that wildlife likes to make use of as well as birders. The fence would really be helpful for a number of reasons, even if it is just along the east side. People who want to work and help start cleaning up the park more do go back in there. If we know the dogs are not going to be trampling through there, they can go ahead and get started with further restoration efforts in there. This last

year, there were 430 volunteer hours put in and around 50 events. There is a lot of public interest in taking care of that park and a lot of hours being put in. She would like that to be a consideration if we are thinking about putting in some sort of fence along that area. We could actually start seeing some improvement in that area.

Walick closed the public comment.

Hanley liked the idea of a temporary solution. She understands we can't snap our fingers and solve all of this all at once. She supports the idea of having a temporary solution, and she supports the idea of making the temporary solution pretty short unless there is a reason not to. She would like to direct city staff to start working on the northwest corner now so that it is ready in two years. She liked the idea of a fence at least on the east and maybe the south side if she was going to volunteer in the park and be crawling around on her hands and knees. She would want a fence between her and the dogs. She was reading the Three Rivers Park District comments about how to use their dog parks and they suggest not having your dog on a leash when they enter the dog park because it puts them at a disadvantage versus the loose dogs; they can't run away if they feel threatened. She found it interesting that Meadow Park has signs that say dogs have to be on a leash and she wants some of those at Purgatory Park.

Ingraham thought the same sign was at Purgatory Park, but the difference is that there are no unmaintained areas in Meadow Park.

Hanley said there are unmaintained areas.

Ingraham replied that it is unmaintained if you go off into the wetlands but most of the trail is maintained.

Ellingson doesn't recall the sign saying, "Must be on a leash" but it certainly could be there.

Ingraham said the culture is very different.

DiLorenzo echoed what some people said about clarity because that is going to be really important. Even looking at this, it's a little wordy and not very clear. It says, "Dogs must be on a leash except for" if it gets too wordy and small print, nobody is going to look at it. Distinct, clear signage would be a good way to make sure it's actually enforceable and citizens can point to it and tell people, "This is what it clearly says" and feel empowered. As a park board, they need to figure out what things are realistic within this because they can hopefully move it up; at a temporary level it at least creates some action.

Beyersdorf asked Kumka why a fence wasn't mentioned in the new draft.

Kumka answered that the least expensive option was presented and what could easily be implemented short-term. A fence is feasible from a construction standpoint but there are also costing, bidding and construction time periods involved in that. The figure shown was just to spark conversation, but the reason he didn't include it was because of how long it would take to implement it.

Walick commented that an official dog park designation would be a bigger project than this plan. He questioned if a potential fence would be a bigger project than this plan.

Kumka answered yes, we would need to figure out how to pay for it in the short-term.

Hanley suggested using money for a fence as a dog park amenity from a different pot of money than the restoration money.

Beyersdorf said she heard the public comments talking about having some sort of temporary border. She questioned what happens after the temporary border is taken down. Do the dogs not come back? She was in favor of a fence but she doesn't understand why it would be temporary. Even if we create a dog park somewhere else, that doesn't stop people from coming back to Purgatory Park and going through that area once the fence is down. How can you truly have a temporary solution in a park of this nature where eventually it all disappears?

Hanley asked Beyersdorf if she was saying that people will continue to use Purgatory Park even if a dog park was built somewhere else.

Beyersdorf answered yes, there is nothing to stop them from doing it if you take the fence down. The ordinance would have to be enforced.

Hanley said unless we change the laws and have somebody out there.

Beyersdorf added that you also have to think about how it would be funded, who would be enforcing it, how the ordinances getting created, and how long it would take. She agrees with having a short-term solution, but it needs to be really well defined and you have to think about what would happen next.

Ingraham agreed with this approach and the comments that were submitted. Holm's comment in the addendum had a lot of good definition. He's been an active user of Purgatory Park for over 25 years. About 20 years ago, he spoke at a city council meeting in support of maintaining the current off-leash dog ordinance because he was an active off-leash dog person. At that time, the area was probably three and a half or four feet wide and the prairie was there, but there was probably a handful of dog users continually and not a massive number. The change of amount of use and the mentality of some owners have made it to the point where we really do have to take action. The community feedback from the POST Plan and the 47 percent in this study show people are uncomfortable with off-leash dogs and that includes dog owners. He has experienced similar circumstances as Sam Rush and has had similar comments like Pamela Layton mentioned. One of the comments in the addendum was really interesting because they were a dog owner that was supportive of a fenced area, but they still wanted to walk their dog off-leash in the center. He thought a fence was a good idea especially in the eastern perimeter. It's particularly valuable in the bottom third because the trail is really close together. The Nantucket Place issues are in the top third so clearly there is an issue along the whole area. Unless the regulation changes where you can't have a dog off-leash and can enforce it, the fence will always be needed because you are going to have to protect people on the primary path. An alternative is to fence the entire area and have it off-leash because you are trying to preserve the prairie. One thing to think about is whether there is a fence on the eastern perimeter and if it is truly temporary or if it is something you are going to need in any event. A fence would indicate that we are getting serious, the city is taking notice, and they are trying to take some steps to mitigate the issues.

Ingraham thought the bottom third of the map was a good off-leash area because it is a large area and it is all trails so you don't have the same kind of issues. He liked the informal trail closures that were proposed, with one exception on a little piece where you come up from the cul-de-sac on Stadola Road. There is one straight shot of about 10 feet that is full of erosion and he would probably try to close off that straight shot. He likes how staff is trying to approach this and does support the commentary for the need of a barrier. Staff should think hard about this probably being a permanent barrier. He echoes the points about the language of our park regulation as well as the city's animal control that was added to the addendum. The wording is pretty convoluted but he thinks someone referenced once that you can walk through the city with your dog off-leash as long as they are by your side and under voice control. That's pretty unusual in the western suburbs.

Hanley asked Ingraham if he said he approves of closing the informal trails. She asked him to clarify if he thought the bottom third of the park would be a good dog park too.

Ingraham clarified that it isn't a dog park. His point was that there are a lot of off-leash dogs there and it seems like there doesn't seem to be the same level of conflict. The pink area on the map is a problem because it is under restoration, it's a prime area and receives the heaviest use, and you have the most aggressive play. There are packs of dogs running and chasing balls and having a great time. When you go down into the woods, people are walking with their dog's off-leash on a trail.

Hanley questioned if it is quieter.

Ingraham answered that there isn't the pack mentality of running wild there and people kind of expect seeing off-leash dogs. If he is on the main trail, he is protected by a sign that says he shouldn't expect to have a dog come up and attack him. His dog is leash-aggressive and he is more worried about someone else's dog approaching his dog. The owner could yell to him that their dog is friendly but his dog might not be.

Hanley asked if he was suggesting that the lower third could continue to be open in this temporary concept with a specified off-leash dog area.

Ingraham asked Kumka if he was intending that.

Kumka said no, the remainder of the park would be open to off-leash dogs.

Ingraham questioned if he had a dog in the green area on the map that was off the maintained trail, he can have it off-leashed there.

Kumka said yes, according to our current ordinance.

Walick said he hears Ingraham questioning whether or not that is the best area for it.

Ingraham said the reason that pink area has a barrier is because it is where you get the most activity and the highest concentration of dogs. There will have to be a lot of signs put up down in the green area.

Hanley added that there is some work to be done to change the culture.



Ingraham commented that he didn't quite read the park ordinance the same until he heard Ellingson read it. It is very clear that if it is an unmaintained area, you can have your dog off-leash unless it is signed. If you want every part of the park that is not in the pink area to be off-leash, you are going to need signs at every intersection of any informal trail to the main trail. He was just bringing up the point that there doesn't seem to be much conflict once you are over the ridge.

Pamela Layton didn't agree with Ingraham. From where she lives on Nantucket Place, she goes across the bridge and up and down the hill and there is a major trail. She doesn't think it is maintained but a lot of people bring their dogs into the open area. Dogs are never on leashes and she has been accosted by dogs with some of them jumping on her.

Ingraham asked Layton if she is on the main trail.

Layton said she is on the main trail but people don't put their dogs on leashes to cross it because it is such a short distance. There are a lot of problems there.

Ingraham replied that he didn't understand it that way. The regulations would have to change or every one of the informal crossings would have to be signed.

Kumka suggested that some of the signage could be a map showcasing the area. There would be signage at the particular intersections when you are entering the off-leash area that clearly states that everywhere outside of that is not for off-leashed dogs.

Ingraham commented that a better sign would be located at the parking lots and cul-de-sac saying dogs could only be off-leash in the center area where there will hopefully be a fence.

DiLorenzo thought saying "all dogs must be leashed except" would be good instead of saying the word "not". The expectation is there, "leash except for" and she feels it would set up a totally different dynamic that was brought up earlier.

Walick suggested eliminating the unmaintained/maintained concept because the average person doesn't understand what areas are maintained and unmaintained if there are no signs designating that. We talked about changing a culture and he questioned if something would be mentioned in the *Minnetonka Memo* or other avenues so we aren't just hoping that people read a sign that they've walked by a ton of times before.

DiLorenzo added that education around this would be really important. You could point out all the restoration work that is happening and how dogs impact it. She likes to believe in the goodness of people and thinks there might be more understanding. She owns dogs and trusts them but listening to this conversation makes her feel that you should just leash them. They might be carrying buckthorn around so she feels like a little education on why it could make a difference would be helpful. It won't erratically change things but it might help people understand why the change is coming and they won't feel like something is being taken away from them. You can tell people that our goal is to preserve and educate them on what we are trying to do, and tell them how to help in order to make this shift in effort.

Ingraham commented that it would be huge if they can pull that off. It really does require a change in our park regulations. The trail at Lone Lake Park is all paved and you do run into people with off-leash dogs but it isn't as common. In the survey, 67 percent of people use Purgatory Park every week. Dog owners are probably on their third or fourth generation of dogs that they have brought to the park to be off-leash there. It would be a huge change not to be able to use that area in the park.

Hanley commented that there was an email in the addendum that says, "They were fine to have a dog park as long as it doesn't change the current policy of the entirety of Purgatory Park." That means the major maintained paths are an off-leash dog park. That is probably not the only person who thinks that and it will be harder to convince them that what they are doing is even acceptable. Hanley doesn't see any middle ground yet that would make her happier.

Ingraham added if you changed the wording on the signage to what DiLorenzo was saying, then you would also have to change the regulations. Someone could say that they don't care what the sign says because they know what the regulation says.

Walick commented that there is a process to change ordinances.

O'Dea said one of the short-term recommendations was to take the park regulation and look at the city ordinance. If that gets into the plan and the city council approves the plan, it then comes back to the park board and we would look at the ordinance. That includes looking into six foot leashes, dogs in areas and other animals. It is a big document and it's not just about dogs. He asked Ellingson when we last reviewed it.

Ellingson believed it was last reviewed in 2018.

O'Dea mentioned that a lot of topics were mentioned when we last reviewed it. Getting it into the plan and having the city council approve it would get the ball rolling. That is what is recommended and it seems like that is what people are asking for.

Walick mentioned with those ordinances, in theory, things would become more concrete with enforceable consequences for not following the rules.

O'Dea thought clarity was a big piece here.

Hanley suggested designating all the outdoor hockey rinks as neighborhood dog parks during the off-season. When they did the tour of Meadow Park, it looked like people were using it that way. That would be inexpensive and less work than making a fence.

O'Dea wasn't sure if that would be a short-term possibility but that might help relieve some pressure.

Kumka said that is what he referred to as the citywide dog park strategy that would be a potential option.

Hanley asked if we would have to wait.

Kumka said no.

Walick said it sounds like there would be a process to designate a dog park in the area. We've talked a lot about the short-term recommendations and the mid-term but he thinks it is important that the city pursues looking into a bigger dog park plan. There seems to be interest so maybe they can try getting that started as soon as possible.

Hanley asked if it was possible to start work on the northwest corner even though they haven't gone through all that.

Kumka said the draft master plan could have a concept related to that. It would then be approved but there would be more work after that to cost it and due diligence there to figure out exactly how it would work.

Ingraham said it would be a huge project because it is a lot of clearing.

Kumka replied that there would be a lot of clearing and various significant fencing related to this idea of dogs being off-leashed together. Often you see an entryway that is fenced in with two gates and other dog park official amenities. That would be a secondary project.

Natural Resources Manager Leslie Yetka said she initially heard the comment about whether or not they could start prepping the area. We don't have funds to do that right now so that would have to be an outcome identified in this plan. Identifying funds to do that work would get the ball rolling. That is something that is identified for natural resources for our stewardship funds so they can do that work right now.

Hanley asked if it would have to be stewardship money. This is a recreational amenity like the inflatables at the beach, in her mind.

Yetka said anytime that level of project happens, we need to budget for it. What she was trying to say is that right now we don't have the funds identified. If they are identified in this plan as a strategy, is recommended and the council approves it, then it gets the ball rolling to include it in future budgets to start doing that work.

Ingraham said that would be an aggressive time table. You might be able to break ground in three years from now if it gets approved.

Walick commented that this is saying if it is at Purgatory Park. We would hate to start on it and then find a different place.

Hanley added that there is a bunch of buckthorn up there and nobody would mind if it was gone.

Ellingson added that once the master plan gets adopted and all the future amenities were identified, then there would be implementation of that through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). If there was a dog park in the final master plan in the future, then there would be a CIP page for each of the different items that are done with respect to everything in the park to implement. In the master plan, one of those items could potentially be the dog park, so there would be a CIP page to identify and budget for design, removals, to build it, and the fencing. That would all be part of the CIP.

Hanley asked if the city was given money and that was in the plan, if it could be funded outside of whatever city money there is.

Ellingson said there is a Parks for Tomorrow program where people can donate to the city and move construction improvements through that. For example, a parent in the Glen Lake Mighty Mites group lost her life to cancer so they did a big fundraiser and built the picnic shelter at the Glen Lake baseball fields. They donated a significant amount of money to build that shelter so that wasn't in the CIP initially. There are opportunities if there is a sizeable donation and there are avenues for people to donate things for projects. Typically a memorial park bench is around \$1,000 but it could be anything.

Hanley asked if you can get it started with not too many zeros.

Ellingson said a dog park would first need to be identified as part of the master plan. If it is in the master plan and somebody makes a big donation, it could be accelerated. It would be a different situation if someone wanted to donate something and it's not in the master plan.

Ingraham complimented the people commenting tonight because they are all more or less for constraining the dogs, but they are also being accepting of this proposal. He pointed out that Holm made an interesting point in the addendum by saying we might not think of this as a maintained area but based on the NRMP it is. He asked Kumka if we are maintaining the ridge line right now.

Kumka said yes.

Ingraham asked if we did a burn on the west side of the creek.

Kumka said yes.

Ingraham said we could take a position right now that the entire park is being maintained but would that mean dogs can't be off-leash anywhere. It would make enforcement really easy. He wasn't proposing that but he didn't realize the NRMP called it maintained and that it was a high-valued area.

B. Adoption of the 2024 Park Board Strategic Plan

O'Dea gave the report.

Hanley thanked them for putting in 11 and 12, regarding the dog issues.

Ingraham moved, Hanley seconded a motion to adopt the 2024 Park Board Strategic Plan. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

C. Appointment of chair and vice-chair

O'Dea gave the report.

Ingraham moved, DiLorenzo seconded a motion to appoint Walick to chair and Jacobs to vice-chair. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

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

Beyersdorf reported that the Dec. 9 Winter Farmer's Market went really well and there was a good turnout. There were a lot of great vendors and everybody seemed really happy with it. The next winter market is on Feb. 10.

## **9. Information Items**

### **Winter-Spring Program Registration**

Assistant Recreation Director Sara Woeste gave the report.

### **Ridgedale Commons Tree Lighting**

Woeste gave the report.

### **Timberline Tennis Court Property Donation**

Ellingson gave the report.

Hanley asked if it would make sense to put in some native seed mix that is slow growing so you don't have to mow it.

Kumka said those native seed mixes take several years to establish themselves. By the time we develop playgrounds or other park facilities, it would be easier to mow turf grass for a little while. Then we can do whatever appropriate plantings around that new facility that is going to get disturbed in the construction anyway.

Hanley said there is no equivalent of a green cover crop that is native.

Ellingson added that there are some no-mow fescues like a no-mow grass that they could maybe look at. They generally only get maybe six to eight inches tall and then we aren't violating our city mowing ordinance. This is in a neighborhood and they want to make it look fairly presentable.

Hanley said not having to go down there every other week to mow might be nice.

Ellingson said it wouldn't be highly manicured; maybe periodically mowed to keep it under control.

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

O'Dea gave the report.

Ellingson gave a quick summary about the outdoor rinks. They put a little water down on the outdoor rinks yesterday because it was cold in the morning and to get some moisture there. They had two inches of rain the previous weekend but looking at the weather next week there is a possibility for some colder weather at the end of the week. If we get colder temperatures, they will maybe do half to three fourths of the rinks but not all of them. That way they can focus on getting good ice on the ones they can. The rink season will be a short period of time if it stays cold.

O'Dea said every city is in this predicament and some cities aren't even doing them this winter.

#### 11. Adjournment

Beyersdorf moved, Hanley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. All voted "yes."  
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Kline*

Kathy Kline  
Recreation Administrative Coordinator

**Minnetonka Park Board 7A  
Meeting of February 7, 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Purgatory Park Master Planning – Preliminary Strategies Regarding Dogs
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	To protect renew and maintain parks and trails
<b>Park Board related objectives:</b>	Review conditions of park facilities, fields, amenities and natural resources to inform park investment plan projects and priorities.
<b>Brief Description:</b>	Presentation of preliminary strategy options regarding off-leash dog use as part of the Purgatory Park Master Plan process

**Background**

The Minnetonka City Council approved the updated Parks, Open Space and Trail (POST) System Plan at its April 25, 2022 meeting. The plan was developed over the course of 14 months with consultation from the Park Board and community engagement through extensive public outreach, surveys and feedback.

[Parks, Open Space and Trail \(POST\) System Plan](#)

The POST Plan provides a 15-to-20-year road map for planning and implementing park improvements. The plan helps the park board, city council and city staff prioritize park improvements and ensure that changes and investments to parks, trails and open spaces continue to serve the needs of the entire community. It offers guiding principles, recommendations, priorities and tools to help the city, its residents and partners keep Minnetonka’s parks, open space and trail system relevant and functional into the future. Key recommendations from the POST Plan include creating comprehensive master plans for all major community parks, beginning with Purgatory Park.

Purgatory Park Master Planning began in 2023. City staff contracted with Bolton & Menk and their team of park planners, landscape architects, outreach specialists, and engineers to engage with residents and use those findings to create a comprehensive master plan outlining future park improvements to pursue.

**Summary**

The first stage of master planning began in the spring of 2023. Through the summer, the team collected input from residents and park users to inform future recommendations. No park improvements will be recommended until the draft master plan is provided for public comment in mid-February of 2024.

Working with Bolton & Menk, City Staff including Communications staff, helped create an Outreach and Engagement Plan for the Purgatory Park Master Planning Process. This plan outlines a series of engagement opportunities ranging from formal in-person events, “pop-ups” in the park, and a thorough online engagement process including surveys. The City hosted a project website on Minnetonka Matters where project updates are being listed. Residents can sign up for project updates.

More information available here:

[Purgatory Park Master Plan | Minnetonka Matters](#)

At the December 7, 2023 Park Board meeting, staff presented major themes and summary pages of public feedback data to receive preliminary feedback prior to the draft master plan. Topics highlighted include reasons for coming to the park, frequency of visits, distance travelled to the park, and preferences regarding potential changes to the park including off-leash dogs.

In response to the Park Board discussion, staff presented a preliminary strategies document for further feedback at the January 3, 2024 meeting. The presentation materials for this meeting have not changed since January and are being presented again to provide a thorough resident feedback opportunity.

These preliminary strategies include an optional list of short-term through long-term recommendations and city ordinance updates and discussions regarding the popular use of Purgatory Park as an off-leash dog area. These strategies were developed based on Park Board feedback and were presented in advance of staff receiving a draft master plan from consultants.

A draft master plan has been delayed and will be made available for public comment mid-February 2024 and presented to the Park Board at the March 6, 2024 meeting. A summary of the public feedback and a final draft of the Master Plan will be presented at the May 1, 2024 meeting.

This master plan will outline short-term and long-term recommendations for potential park improvements and any future park improvements will be incorporated into future Capital Improvement Plans.

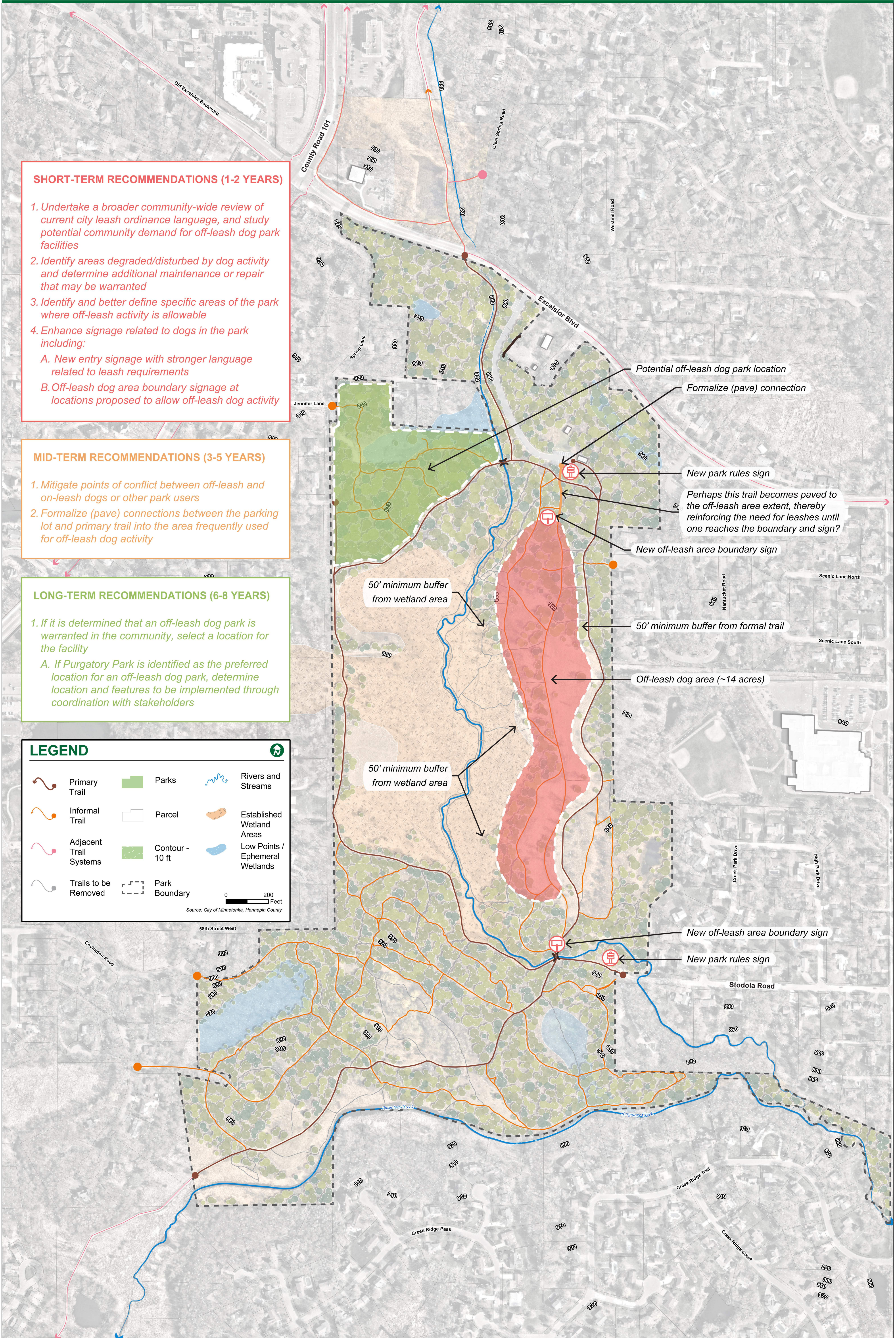
**Recommended Park Board Action**

Receive presentation and provide feedback to Staff

**Attachments**

Purgatory Park Master Plan – Preliminary Strategies Figure  
City of Minnetonka Park Regulations, Section 1135





**SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (1-2 YEARS)**

- Undertake a broader community-wide review of current city leash ordinance language, and study potential community demand for off-leash dog park facilities
- Identify areas degraded/disturbed by dog activity and determine additional maintenance or repair that may be warranted
- Identify and better define specific areas of the park where off-leash activity is allowable
- Enhance signage related to dogs in the park including:
  - New entry signage with stronger language related to leash requirements
  - Off-leash dog area boundary signage at locations proposed to allow off-leash dog activity

**MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (3-5 YEARS)**

- Mitigate points of conflict between off-leash and on-leash dogs or other park users
- Formalize (pave) connections between the parking lot and primary trail into the area frequently used for off-leash dog activity

**LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (6-8 YEARS)**

- If it is determined that an off-leash dog park is warranted in the community, select a location for the facility
  - If Purgatory Park is identified as the preferred location for an off-leash dog park, determine location and features to be implemented through coordination with stakeholders

**LEGEND**


0 200 Feet  
Source: City of Minnetonka, Hennepin County

Potential off-leash dog park location

Formalize (pave) connection

New park rules sign

Perhaps this trail becomes paved to the off-leash area extent, thereby reinforcing the need for leashes until one reaches the boundary and sign?

New off-leash area boundary sign

50' minimum buffer from wetland area

50' minimum buffer from formal trail

Off-leash dog area (~14 acres)

50' minimum buffer from wetland area

New off-leash area boundary sign

New park rules sign



## City of Minnetonka Park Regulations, Section 1135

### **1135.020. General Rules.**

The following rules apply in and on all park facilities.

#### **Animals**

1. Except as allowed in this subdivision, a person may not transport any animal to or be accompanied by any animal at any park.

a. Domestic animals are allowed in the following areas only, subject to the restrictions in this subdivision:

- (1) improved trails;
- (2) maintained turf areas other than athletic fields;
- (3) unimproved and unmaintained areas; and
- (4) parking lots as necessary to transport the animal to and from the park areas specified above.

b. At all times while present in the park, a domestic animal must be accompanied by a competent person in the immediate vicinity of the animal, who is responsible for the animal.

c. When on improved trails, maintained turf areas other than athletic fields, or parking lots, domestic animals must be either kept in a secure container from which the animal cannot escape or must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet in length. Tethering animals is not permitted.

d. Unless otherwise signed, dogs may be off-leash within areas of a park that are unimproved and unmaintained, provided the following conditions are met:

- (1) the person responsible for the dog must maintain sight of the dog at all times;
- (2) the maximum number of dogs that any person may accompany off-leash at any time is two;
- (3) the person must be able to demonstrate that the dog will respond to the person's voice command on the first command given.

e. No person may allow a domestic animal under his or her responsibility to disturb, harass, or interfere with any park visitor, a park visitor's property or a park employee.

f. A person may not have custody or control of any domestic animal in a park without possessing an appropriate device for cleaning up the animal's feces and disposing of the feces in a sanitary manner.

g. Paragraphs a. and b. above do not apply to service animals as defined by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, or to law enforcement animals.

2. Wild animals including birds may not be fed, except pursuant to a city sponsored program.

3. Wild animals may not be killed, trapped, pursued, caught, or removed, except when necessary to protect the immediate safety of a person or domestic animal. This prohibition does not apply to a law enforcement officer, or other person authorized by the director, who is performing official duties.

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 9  
Meeting of February 7, 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Information Items
<b>Park Board related goal:</b>	N/A
<b>Park Board related objective:</b>	N/A
<b>Brief Description:</b>	The following are informational items and developments that have occurred since the last park board meeting.

**2023 Gray’s Bay Marina Summary**

The Gray’s Bay Marina facility opened to boat launchers and slip holders on April 14. The site was staffed beginning May 13 for gas sales and waste pump-out service.

Marina operations notes:

- Attendants were on site starting May 13
- Hours of operation at the gas dock covered prime hours
- Permanent restrooms were open to the public during staffed hours and biffies were available at all times.
- 22,967 gallons of gas were sold

In October, renewal leases for the 2024 season were sent to existing slip holders. The slip fee is \$4,200. There were four slip vacancies at the end of 2023 and staff filled these vacancies using the wait list which currently stands at 148.

The marina was closed for the season October 26 due to inclement weather. The boat launch remained open until December 8 when ice formed on the bay. At that time the entrance gates to the parking lot were closed for the winter season. Winter access to Gray’s Bay (ice fishing, snowmobiles, etc.) is available from the causeway directly north of the county road 101 bridge.

With nearly all expenses accounted for, revenues (\$272,637) have exceeded estimated expenses (\$213,655) by \$58,981. This estimated balance will remain in the escrow fund which has a projected 2023 year-end overall balance of \$948,922 (see attached).

**2023 Athletic Field Use Summary**

The city of Minnetonka provides athletic fields for a variety of community and city sponsored programs. Field fees were originally established in 2010 by the park board to streamline field reservations, process fees, and generate funds for operational maintenance and future capital projects (67% of revenue assigned to general operations and 33% to a capital fund for future upgrades to fields).

In 2023, field hours reserved totaled 3,989 compared to 4,097 in 2022. The primary difference in hours is attributed to a soccer tournament that did not return in 2023.

Staff implemented the park board approved fee increase of 12-15% for the 2023 season. Field fee revenues totaled \$41,937 compared to \$36,887 in 2022, the most collected since fees were established (Attachment - 2023 field use summary). Sales tax accounted for \$1,027 of total collected revenue leaving net revenue at \$40,911. The amount allocated to the capital fund for future field improvements was \$13,501.

**Gray's Bay Marina**  
**Summary of Revenues and Expenses**

	<b>Actual 2022</b>		<b>Budget 2023</b>		<b>Est 2023</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$260,735</b>		<b>\$261,700</b>		<b>\$272,637</b>
Expenses	(\$173,291)		(\$205,900)		(\$187,655)
Capital Outlay	\$0		\$0		\$0
LMCD	(\$30,500)		(\$26,000)		(\$26,000)
Escrow*	(\$56,944)		(\$29,800)		(\$58,981)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>(\$260,735)</u></b>		<b><u>(\$261,700)</u></b>		<b><u>(\$272,637)</u></b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>		<b>\$0</b>

\* Total original busniess plan escrow budget 2003-2023 = \$404,600; estimated amount escrowed through 2023 = \$948,922.

## City of Minnetonka 2023 Athletic Field Use

Dedicated Field Complex	Non-city Programs			City-sponsored Programs			Revenue		
	2021 Actual Use Hours	2022 Actual Use Hours	2023 Actual Use Hours	2021 Actual Use Hours	2022 Actual Use Hours	2023 Actual Use Hours	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
Big Willow Baseball - Reg	515	546	541	0	0	0	\$14,142	\$15,009	\$17,601
Big Willow Baseball - Yth	0	0	0	38	35	35	\$0	\$0	\$0
Big Willow Soccer	107	71	77	112	153	138	\$2,101	\$1,495	\$1,571
Big Willow Softball	0	0	0	1119	1068	1092	\$0	\$0	\$0
Civic Center	571	589	579	341	312	306	\$7,164	\$7,347	\$9,308
Guilliams Softball	337	330	332	0	0	0	\$2,632	\$2,500	\$3,334
Glen Lake Softball	4	0	0	0	0	0	\$42	\$0	\$0
Glen Lake Yth baseball	7	0	0	0	0	0	\$280	\$0	\$0
Lone Lake Soccer	221	171	140	311	345	306	\$4,498	\$4,050	\$3,399
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1762</b>	<b>1707</b>	<b>1669</b>	<b>1921</b>	<b>1913</b>	<b>1877</b>	<b>\$30,858</b>	<b>\$30,401</b>	<b>\$35,213</b>

Non-Dedicated Field Complex	Non-city Programs			City-sponsored Programs			Revenue		
	2021 Actual Use Hours	2022 Actual Use Hours	2023 Actual Use Hours	2021 Actual Use Hours	2022 Actual Use Hours	2023 Actual Use Hours	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
Gro Tonka Field	177	189	167	96	124	164	\$1,041	\$1,023	\$1,296
Oberlin Field	0	79	48	98	85	64	\$0	\$1,393	\$944
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>\$1,041</b>	<b>\$2,416</b>	<b>\$2,240</b>

Designated Field Complex	Non-city Programs Est. Use Hours	Revenue		
		2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
Big Willow - Youth BB	1560	\$1,650	\$1,650	\$1,815
Glen Lake Youth BB	1200	\$770	\$770	\$850
Guilliams Youth BB	700	\$1,210	\$1,210	\$1,335
Glen Lake Youth SB	325	\$440	\$440	\$485
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$4,070</b>	<b>\$4,070</b>	<b>\$4,485</b>

<b>TOTAL REVENUE ALL FIELDS</b>	\$35,969	\$36,887	\$41,937
		<b>Sales Tax</b>	<b>(\$1,027)</b>
		<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>\$40,911</b>

### Est. Capital/Operations Revenue Allocation

Allocated to Operations (67%) \$27,410

Allocated to Capital (33%) \$13,501

**Minnetonka Park Board Item 10  
Meeting of February 7, 2024**

<b>Upcoming Meeting Schedule</b>				
<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Agenda Business Items</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Wed</b>	3/6/24	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purgatory Park Master Plan Draft Review</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	4/3/24	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	No Meeting
<b>Wed</b>	5/1/24	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purgatory Park Master Plan Final Review</li> </ul>	
<b>Wed</b>	6/5/24	Regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2025-2029 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)</li> </ul>	

**Other meetings and activities to note:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Special Notes</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	Feb. 10	Winter Farmers Market	Minnetonka Community Center

**Items to be scheduled:**