

APPROVED MINUTES

PARKS, RECREATION, AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

AND

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2018

7:00 P.M. CITY CENTER

Heritage Rooms, 8080 Mitchell Road

PRNR COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Larry Link, Chair; Debra McBride, Vice Chair;
Cecilia Cervantes, Patrice Erickson, Donald
Jacobson, Andy McGlasson, Leonard Pesheck,
John Rahman, Kirk Spresser

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEMBERS:**

Lori Tritz, Chair; Ashley Young, Vice Chair; Anna
Anderson, Michael Bennett, Cindy Hoffman,
Daniel Katzenberger, Kate Lohnes, Nate Pischke,
Lena Zakharova

**PRNR STUDENT
REPRESENTATIVES:**

Carson Guettler, Tatum Gunderson, John Hilton,
Nile Timmerman, Ananya Vegesna

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:**

Troy Johnson, Govind Makaram, Rhea Sharma

CITY STAFF:

Jay Lotthammer, Parks and Recreation Director
Matt Bourne, Parks and Natural Resources Manager
Lori Brink, Recreation Manager
Valerie Verley, Community Center Manager
Beth Novak-Krebs, Senior Planner

RECORDING SECRETARY:

Jodie Fenske

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Link called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Roll call was taken. PRNR Commission Members Cervantes and Jacobson and Student Representative Vegesna were absent. Conservation Commission Members Young, Lohnes, Pischke, and Zakharova and Student Representatives Johnson and Makaram were absent.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Erickson moved, seconded by Bennett, to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion carried 12-0.

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III. APPROVAL OF PRNR COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion: McBride moved, seconded by Rahman, to approve the October 1, 2018 minutes as presented. **Motion carried 7-0.**

IV. REPORT OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION

Lotthammer reported on actions recently taken by the Council.

A. HENNEPIN YOUTH SPORTS GRANT PROPOSAL

Council adopted a Resolution authorizing staff to submit a grant request to the Hennepin Youth Sports Grant Program for development and construction of the Staring Lake Park building replacement. The \$250,000 application was submitted and Lotthammer expects be notified of results by January 2019.

B. HALLOWEEN ON THE MALL DONATIONS

A Resolution was adopted accepting a donation of \$1,150 from the Eden Prairie Crime Fund (\$750) and the Optimist Club of Eden Prairie (\$400) toward the Halloween on the Mall event.

C. SENIOR CENTER DONATION

Council adopted a Resolution accepting a donation of \$250 from Seniors Helping Seniors to go toward the Senior Center Fall Lunch.

V. REPORT OF PLANNING COMMISSION

VI. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATION

A. HANDOUTS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Staff presented several handouts and discussed details about upcoming events.

1. **Holiday Lunch.** The annual holiday celebration will take place on Wednesday, December 12, at 11:30 a.m. at the Senior Center. Live music will be provided by choirs from Eden Prairie High School. Brink stated this event has become so popular that two seatings may soon be necessary to accommodate all those interested in participating.
2. **Outdoor Rinks.** Information regarding the Staring Lake sledding hill and City skating rinks is provided in the winter program guide and via e-connect, the City website, and social media. Brink noted openings remain for rink attendants.

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3. **30-Day Challenge.** Verley stated the challenge will run January 7 through February 5, 2019 at the Community Center.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. CONSERVATION COMMISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Conservation Commission Chair Tritz shared several accomplishments the Commission achieved in 2018. Members organized and participated in the Clean Energy Forum at Pax Christi, the Home, Landscape and Garden Show at Grace Church, the Arbor Day Walk and Green Fair, and the Citywide Open House.

PRNR Commission Vice Chair McBride inquired where to obtain recycling guidelines. Conservation Commission Member Bennett responded the City follows Hennepin County recycling guidelines and the information is provided to residents via mailings and can also be found on the City's website.

PRNR Commission Chair Link inquired in what ways City events could be structured differently to avoid waste. Bennett recommended compostable plates and utensils. Conservation Commission Member Anderson suggested people stationed at recycling bins to educate participants into which receptacle to place items. She also recommended being thoughtful when choosing give-away items.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

PRNR Commission Member Pesheck asked for a brief update to the Staring Lake Park dog park/ski trail situation since the first snowfall. Parks and Natural Resources Manager Bourne responded Eden Prairie High School Nordic Ski Coach Boonstra has been grooming trails and expected to determine if trails were in a condition to start being used. Bourne stated upon snowfall, staff sent notifications regarding the dog park closure. PRNR Commission Member Spreser suggested staff be available at the park to educate users from both parties, particularly during the changeover times.

IX. REPORTS OF COMMISSION & STAFF

A. PARKS AND RECREATION EXPERIENCES

Members from both Commissions shared recent experiences related to parks and recreation. Link enjoyed riding his fat bike on the trails around Staring Lake and Purgatory Creek. Bennett commented the trails near Homeward Hills Park were cleared quickly after the recent snowfall. McGlasson added the trails connecting Staring Lake to Purgatory Creek are well done and provide a great area for exploration. Link and Spreser have both received positive feedback about the new pickleball courts at Staring Lake Park.

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Anderson inquired and Bourne responded the City does have a cricket pitch at Nesbitt Preserve Park. Rahman stated his son has recently joined the Eden Prairie High School Nordic Ski Team. He's impressed with the program and feels the PRNR Commission should be proud for supporting the team's efforts. Katzenberger shared his son is impressed with the recent Pokémon Go additions in the City. Erickson is participating in the Twelve Days of Fitness at the Community Center.

Verley added the Community Center has recently partnered with the Hennepin County Library in hosting story times since the closure of the Eden Prairie Library. Additional similar events will be held at the Community Center in the coming year.

B. RECREATION SERVICES MANAGER

C. COMMUNITY CENTER MANAGER

D. PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGER

Bourne provided updates on a few of the efforts he oversees in his position.

1. Wildlife Management.

The Parks and Recreation Department oversees many wildlife management initiatives with assistance from other City departments, as well as both State and Federal agencies. The three major wildlife management programs involve deer, coyote, and turkey.

The City's Deer Management program was implemented in 1994 and is in line with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) guidelines. Annual aerial helicopter surveys in the winter under total snow cover conditions are performed to determine the City's deer population. Using this data, staff then contact the DNR Wildlife section and apply for a permit to reduce the deer population to keep it in line with the City's management plan. The reduction is performed by sharp shooters from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services. The goal is not to eliminate the population but keep it at a manageable level. All

deer taken during the reduction program are then processed and the meat is donated to a local food shelf.

The City has added a new coyote reporting category to its SeeClickFix reporting tool. Residents are able to report coyote sightings and communicate if a coyote has displayed any aggressive behaviors. There are currently no plans to start removing coyotes as a population control

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measure. However, monitoring for aggressive coyotes and removing them would be necessary so they do not become a nuisance or threat to residents. The City has contracted with the Wildlife Services Department of the USDA for removal should it be needed in the future.

The City has seen a large increase in complaints regarding wild turkeys, including damage to property and aggressive behavior toward kids and adults. Staff has been working with the DNR and USDA to explore the need for a turkey management plan similar to the Deer Management Program. Currently aggressive turkeys are being removed; however, the City is not removing turkeys as a population management measure. Turkeys are taken using nets and then processed with the meat going to local food shelves.

2. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

Bourne provided a PowerPoint presentation describing the EAB Management Plan developed two years ago and approved by Council in March 2018, covering three main topics: ash preservation through chemical treatment, proactive removal and replacement of ash trees, and public outreach and education.

An ash tree inventory was performed within maintained areas of City parks, within City right-of-way areas, and in unmaintained areas adjacent to City trails. The inventory indicated the majority of ash trees in the City are located on private property so public outreach and education is an important part of the EAB Management Plan.

Staff proposed to chemically treat approximately half of the ash trees located on City-maintained property that met certain criteria regarding diameter, condition, and location. After reviewing several bids, the City contracted with Rainbow Treecare. The three-year-interval contract includes an option for City residents to take advantage of a bulk discounted rate.

The EAB population will rise and crest before ultimately falling. The treatment will be aggressive for approximately ten to twelve years until the crest is reached and then the maintenance protocol will take place. Pesticide safety has been strongly taken into consideration. Trunk injections are used which greatly reduce the exposure to pesticides. The product being used is not a neonicotinoid which aligns with the City's pollinator-friendly policies. In addition, the treatment interval has been reduced from every two years to every three years which is still very beneficial.

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Along with the preservation of ash trees, those not meeting certain criteria are pre-emptively removed and proactively replaced. This process will positively help manage cost, aesthetics, and staff workloads.

Staff proposed planting 1.5 trees for each tree removed. Planting locations are focused in parks, on city right-of-way areas, and larger streets. Species diversity will be considered throughout the replanting process.

Public education and outreach continue to be an important part of the program. Education promotes proper treatment on private property and the treatment contract option with Rainbow Treecare for residents will be maintained. Although the City researched four tree care companies to determine the best rate and service, residents are able to use any tree care company they prefer.

Lotthammer added concerned residents can request a site visit from the City's forestry technician. Spresser recommended additional marketing of this free service and educational opportunity to residents.

The City's website will stay updated with management options and treatment recommendations. Targeted mailings will be sent to residents in neighborhoods with higher densities of ash tree population. Educational materials and sessions at City events will be provided.

Conservation Commission member Hoffmann suggested adding average cost and timing estimates for treatment to resident mailings in the future. Conservation Commission member Bennett suggested estimated costs of removal would also be beneficial to residents.

Bourne concluded his presentation with a slide displaying the number of trees treated by Rainbow on public and private property in the last three years. In 2018, over 1,600 trees were treated on private property and 361 trees on City property. He noted residents of Eden Prairie participated in Rainbow Treecare's municipal program at almost twice the rate of Rainbow's average participation in other cities.

3. Native Conversions.

Bourne provided a brief update since both Commissions had previously been provided a complete overview of the turf to native plant conversion program.

The City has three classifications of mowed turf in its parks: active-use

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(athletic fields), aesthetic (main drive areas and trails), and open space. The conversion program focuses on the open space areas. Rather than mowing and treating these grasses, the conversion to native grasses and plants allows for time and cost savings.

He displayed a map illustrating over twenty sites at which the conversion process has already been started. This fall, the process was started at five additional sites: Prairie East Park, Creekwood Park, Riley Lake Park, Round Lake Park, and Rice Marsh Lake Park.

Conservation Commission member Anderson inquired and Bourne responded “native planting in process” signage is available at all conversion areas. Increased interpretive signage explaining the process and displaying pictures to show progress and end result is also planned.

Link inquired and Bourne responded the conversion process is not necessarily maintenance free. Most areas are on a prescribed burn rotation. Any areas too close to residential areas are mowed in spring and fall.

Hoffman inquired and Bourne responded fall dormant plantings have been performed in the past. Since optimal results were not experienced, staff is experimenting with spring planting this rotation. Staff will continue to monitor both processes.

Tritz inquired if additional educational opportunities like the signage and paths at Fire Station No. 2 are planned. She suggested the Community Center may be another good location due to high traffic and she inquired if a joint partnership with the Conservation Commission would be possible. Bourne responded he will discuss the possibility with the City’s facilities and engineering staff while planning the 2019 work plan and will respond to Conservation Commission Staff Liaison Beth Novak-Krebs.

4. Park Boundary Update.

Bourne provided an explanation of the park boundary inspection process. Since 2006, the City has hired seasonal staff to check property interfaces between parks/conservation areas and private property.

A letter is sent to adjacent property owners of upcoming park boundary inspection work. Seasonal Park Boundary Inspectors verify City property pins and property lines, install boundary posts with signs at property pins, and search for missing pins previously installed by a Registered Land Surveyor. If no trespass is discovered, resident receives a notification thanking them for being a good neighbor. If a trespass is discovered, photographs and notes are taken. A second letter is then sent making the

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resident aware of the boundary issue.

The violation letter is sent to the property owner and includes the lot survey, photographs, and aerial photo map. Corrective action is outlined with a deadline date. Re-inspection occurs on deadline date and if violation has been resolved, the good neighbor postcard is mailed. If violation has not been resolved, the issue is forwarded to the Eden Prairie Police Department for an additional violation letter. If the violation remains unresolved, it is referred to the City Attorney for formal legal action.

To date, 33 parkland areas have been inspected. The average rate of trespass issues has been 30 percent, with the majority being minor violations (mowing too far, dumping yard waste onto City property, etc.). Almost 2,000 property pins have been found and posts installed, and 773 property pins remain to be found and marked.

A map was displayed indicating which parks are completed, in progress, and incomplete. Several photos of previous trespass violations were shared with the group, along with an encroachment/trespass list.

5. Invasive Species Management.

Bourne provided an update on buckthorn removal on City property. Parks Department staff and Institution Community Work Crews (ICWC) are making progress and heavily rely on the help of volunteer and neighborhood groups.

Bourne explained the free vegetation alteration permit process through which volunteer groups can work with staff to make sure removal is done properly on City property. Herbicide, tools, and free haul-away are provided by the City. Desirable species are marked so they are not removed in error.

Areas in progress and areas to be worked on this winter and next spring include: Red Rock Conservation Area (lakeshore), Edenbrook Conservation Area (central area), Eden Valley Park (large wooded area at northern part of the park), Miller Park (wooded area near picnic area), Smetana Lake Park, Edgewood Park (along Edenvale Boulevard), Mitchell Lake (west side of the lake), Staring Lake Park (near Grill ballfields and cross country ski trails), Round Lake Park (north side of the lake), Richard T. Anderson Conservation Area (prairie area), Camp Edenwood, and Rustic Hills Park (part of a restoration project).

A contractor will hopefully be conducting a controlled burn in the woodland area at Riley Creek Conservation Area in spring 2019.

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E. PLANNING DEPARTMENT

1. **Sustainable Eden Prairie.** Senior Planner Novak-Krebs explained the Sustainable Eden Prairie initiative was started a few years ago as a foundation for residents and businesses to carry out sustainable practices in four areas: energy, solid waste, water, and pollinators/landscaping. Carol Lundgren is the Sustainability Specialist in the City's Public Works Department. The Conservation Commission's role is to help promote the four focus areas.

The Energy Action Plan was developed in conjunction with Xcel Energy and encourages residents to save energy and consider renewable energy resources. Programs include an Energy Challenge and encouraging Home Energy Squad visits. The Energy Action team recently reconvened to determine strategies for 2019. Solar panels are being considered on several City buildings as a way of leading by example.

The Public Works Department is close to completing a Solid Waste Management Plan and the Conservation Commission will coordinate specific focuses within the plan.

The City offers a number of water rebates and the Conservation Commission encourages residents to take advantage of the rebates and assist in educating residents on conserving water.

The Conservation Commission follows the City's lead regarding pollinators and landscaping and the conversion process on City property. The Commission educates residents and encourages them to convert to native plantings on their property and to apply for rebates for doing so.

Novak-Krebs stated the Conservation Commission will continue to implement the Energy Action Plan and engage with and educate the public and City residents through various programs including the Home and Garden Show, Arbor Day event, and Citywide Open House.

F. PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

1. **2019 PRNR Work Plan.** Lotthammer provided an updated work plan, noting the January meeting will include additions to the work plan, an Aspire 2040 update, and possibly a Staring Lake building plan review.

X. NEXT MEETINGS

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The next PRNR Commission Meeting will be held on Monday, January 7, 2019, in the Heritage Rooms at 7 p.m.

The next Conservation Commission Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 8, 2019, in the Prairie Room at 7 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Spresser motioned, seconded by McBride, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried 12-0. Chair Link adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.