

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota
Minutes
Park and Recreation Commission
Tuesday, January 14, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioners present: Chair Wolfe, Bolles, Vogel, Smith, Pike, Schmidt
Commissioners absent: Sobiech

Also present: Public Works Director Amundsen, Chip Cheney

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Pike moved, Commissioner Vogel seconded to approve the agenda. Carries 6/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Commissioner Vogel moved, Commissioner Schmidt seconded, to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2024 PNR Commission Meeting. Carries 6/0.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Columbarium at Oak Hill Cemetery

Chip Cheney, formerly of Eickhof, was present at the meeting to discuss the potential of a columbarium at the Oak Hill Cemetery. Cheney presented a power point presentation that provided information and insight into columbariums. He stated that cremations have increased significantly in recent years and that now 60% of burials in Minnesota are now cremations. He defined what a columbarium is, which is a structure that holds the urns of cremated remains in "niches" and keeps them dry, are respectful to those that passed, and are low maintenance. He also discussed an ossuary, which is the center void of a columbarium that can hold individual "soft" urns where remains are placed collectively.

Following the presentation, the Commission discussed the potential location of a columbarium at Oak Hill Cemetery. Staff recommended it to be located on top of the hill where the Veteran's Memorial was previously located. Staff also stated that they would work with our consulting engineer, WSB, on other potential locations and where it would be feasible. Installing a columbarium on the top of the hill would require a crane and access. Chair Wolfe asked if they make money and whether or not this effort could generate revenue for the cemetery to conduct other maintenance activities. Cheney stated that he would provide an investment sheet to depict the cost of the improvements and from that it would help to determine what the "niches"

should be sold for to generate revenue. Cheney recommended that, at a minimum, there should be 50-100 niches in the columbarium at Oak Hill Cemetery. The Commission also discussed the potential for a presale of niches prior to construction if it were approved and the potential for a public/private partnership. Cheney will provide the contact information for the new representative from Eickhof to work directly with.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Commons Use Policy

The PNR Commission discussed the Commons Use Policy which intends to implement certain criteria on how proposals for different uses in The Commons are evaluated. The Commissioners stated that uses should provide access to the lake for those that don't have it, research should be done on other cities with use policies, should not include advertisements, and that recreational uses and programming should be addressed. The Commission determined a work group should be formed to work on the policy outside of the normal meeting. Commissioner Vogel, Bolles and Pike agreed to work on a draft policy to be reviewed at an upcoming meeting.

b) 2025 Projects

Continued to future meeting.

c) Studer Park- Discussion Only

Continued to a future meeting.

7. MISCELLANEOUS/ COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

a) Recent City Council Action

No recent action discussed.

8. VERBAL REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

a) Updates on Oak Savanna Project, Commons Ballfield and other Commons Project
Staff provided an update on The Commons Ballfield Project.

9. UPDATES/INFORMATION:

a) Community Garden Plots and Garden Plot Committee; no action taken.

b) Adopt-a-Seat, Adopt-a-Garden, and Adopt-a-Tree Programs; no action taken.

c) Oak Hill Cemetery; no action taken

d) Concerts in the Park/Bandshell Update/Concession Stand; no action taken.

e) Excelsior Park Maintenance Log; no action taken.

Minutes

Park and Recreation Commission

January 14, 2024

Page 3 of 3

f) Discussion on Port Bell; no action taken.

g) Studer Park; no action taken.

h) Gazebo/Mitten Pond; no action taken.

10. MONTHLY FINANCIALS:

a) November 2024 Park Fund Report; no action taken.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Vogel to adjourn, seconded by Pike. Carries 5/0 (Commissioner Smith had to leave early)

Respectfully submitted,

Tim J. Amundsen