

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota
Minutes
Park and Recreation Commission
Tuesday, February 11, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Also present: Public Works Director Amundsen

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Pike moved, Commissioner Vogel seconded to approve the agenda. Carries 5/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Commissioner Vogel moved, Commissioner Bolles seconded, to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2025 PNR Commission Meeting. Carries 5/0.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Memorial Bench at The Port Ticket Booth

Staff presented a request to add a memorial bench at the ticket booth to honor a long-time Captain of The Port gardens. Staff stated that there is already a second bench that was left by City staff following the donation of a new bench in memorial of Steve Bauman. The Commission supported the replacement of the existing, older second bench with a new bench to honor the long-time captain of The Port garden area from the Excelsior Men's Garden Club.

Commissioner Pike moved, Commissioner Vogel seconded, to approve the location of a new memorial bench in The Port Ticket Booth to honor a long-time member of the Excelsior Men's Garden Club. Carries 5/0.

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. Commissioners Vogel and Bolles worked on a draft Commons Use policy which included commercial use guidance, park donations and naming, special events, and potential code modifications. The Commissioners reviewed the draft policy, more specifically parts 1 and 2, and provided the following feedback:

Commissioner Pike had a comment about Part 1-2 regarding exclusive use and Commissioner Vogel commented that if there were a special event or city event that would take precedence over the Commercial Use. The Commission discussed park programming and asked how PNR plays a role in park programming and what organizations the City would work with. Commissioner Pike was directed to provide language and verbiage for 3J within Part 1. Commissioner Pike discussed the Naming policy on page 5 under POLICY and stated that verbiage should be changed to something to the effect that all costs associated with a donation will be done at the donor's expense and that cost sharing between the donor and the City will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Commission noted that on page 5 of Naming policy that approval process should be in all caps and that verbiage in policy should be changed throughout from superintendent to Public Works Director. Chair Wolfe discussed the naming of structures and that language should be amended within the policy to not allow naming of the actual structures. Recognition of donors would be allowed for structures but naming rights would not be allowed throughout The Commons Property.

In regard to Page 2 of policy and Classes the PNR Commission would need a process in which to review proposed classes in the Commons. Considerations of impact and frequency would be utilized. Scheduling would also have to occur to not overuse The Commons for classes. On Page 2- Section 4 of the draft policy the Commission asked about physical structures and currently we allow it to be there over seasons. The Commission asked if it is supposed to be removed per the current agreement. Staff were tasked with finding that information. Staff were asked to measure the shed for kayak rental and discussed advertisements and stated advertisements for Commercial Use would need to meet the existing City sign ordinance.

Chair Wolfe commented on 5F for vending and stated that special events and vending of merchandise should be handled in Special Event policy and/or Commons Special Event Policy if one is created. Commissioner Smith suggested an edit to 3E to add as access to park. The Commission also added 4F to state that structure appearance must be approved by PNR and City Council.

The Commission discussed the naming policy and stated the term of donation should be included and be 10 years to align with current bench and picnic table donation policy. The City should have the right to move any donation as needed or desired. The Commission also suggested that the policy should mention that donations can be disposed of in the event of unrepairable damage. The Commission also discussed removal of memorial plaque and chose to add "if removing the item upon which the plaque or name is (either due to disrepair or other need).

The Commission also discussed proposed artwork and developed verbiage that states that proposed artwork should complement the natural landscape and aesthetic, not create visual clutter, and focus on the lake, the views to the lake and what is important which is keeping The Commons as-is for the enjoyment of the Community and parkgoers.

Commissioner Bolles recommended that at the introduction of the policy there should be verbiage regarding public grounds and how it was originally platted and to find the founder's statement, speak to history of The Commons and that it is one of two Commons in the United States. The Commissioners also stated that the land is owned by the residents and property owners of Excelsior and the City maintains and it is platted for the "common enjoyment for the people."

Staff stated they would discuss the process moving forward with the policy with the City Manager and City Attorney prior to review by City Council.

b) Joint Meeting with Community for The Commons

The Commission discussed scheduling a meeting with Community for The Commons. The PNR Commission developed the following questions to start the conversation:

- What are the goals of the Community for The Commons and are there any challenges or issues that the PNR Commission could help support them in?
- They discussed asking for a brief overview of the history of C4C and how their organization is structured.
- How can the PNR Commission and C4C collaborate? How can the Commission assist in surveys and outreach to gather public information regarding The Commons?
- Are there currently any surveys being planned by C4C in the near future? How can the Commission and C4C collaborate to gain vital information for future decision making?
- How can the Commission and C4C align and collaborate on park project prioritization?

The Commission also discussed the potential for C4C to weigh in on the Commons Use policy. Commissioner Wolfe will send an email to C4C to ask for their attendance at the March PNR Meeting.

c) 2025 Projects- 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.
- 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) January 2025 Park Fund Report; no action taken.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Bolles to adjourn, seconded by Sobiech. Carries 5/0 at 8:26PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim J. Amundsen