

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota
Minutes
Parks and Recreation Commission
Tuesday, April 15, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Also present: Public Works Director Amundsen, Parks Manager Quinn, Mayor Ringate

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Bolles moved, Commissioner Smith seconded to approve the agenda. Carries 6/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Commissioner Bolles moved, Commissioner Smith seconded, to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2025 PNR Commission Meeting. Carries 6/0.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

a) Mayor Ringate was in attendance as the Council liaison. Mayor Ringate stated he was there to observe the meeting and that if any Commissioner had questions or wanted to communicate with him to reach out directly.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Elections of Officers

Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair were opened. Chair Wolfe and Commissioner Sobiech were nominated for Chair.

Commissioner Smith motioned to elect Commissioner Sobiech as Chairperson, Commissioner Vogel seconded. Carries 6/0.

Commissioner Vogel motioned to elect Chair Wolfe as Vice Chairperson, Commissioner Bolles seconded. Carries 6/0.

b) Commons Use Policy

The PNR Commission reviewed the feedback provided from City Council on the policy draft. The Commission discussed the need for more clarity around structures in The Commons, particularly the need for them to be temporary in nature, and to not impact park use and view corridors. Commissioner Vogel and Bolles will revise the draft one more time for City Council following the guidance from City Council.

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c) Parks and Recreation Commission Goals

The Commission discussed the need for a Studer Park improvement budget as well as direction for improved park use. The Commission discussed the need to collaborate with community gardeners on how to use the space and to balance potential changes with its existing use.

Programming The Commons

The PNR Commission discussed broadening their partnership with the Rotary and other local organizations to improve and increase programming. The PNR Commission brainstormed ideas to bring more low-key programming that is focused on community building. Some programming ideas discussed were affordable boat rides to raise funds for the park, community orchestra concerts, winter gatherings for hot cocoa / beer garden, ice skating, and Christmas tree lighting. Commissioner Smith inquired for direction on whether these events should have a goal of raising funds. Commissioner Bolles raised the idea of working with Community for The Commons on collecting data on what the community would like to see more of in The Commons. The Commission discussed tasking commissioners with relationship building within the community to improve participation with programming.

Oak Hill Cemetery

The PNR Commission discussed the need for direction on how to prioritize cemetery projects including a potential columbarium. Commissioner Wolfe brought up a question regarding the cemetery's historical status and whether it would be eligible for additional funding due to its status. Staff will work to produce project estimates for the improvement plan.

d) Arbor Day Celebration

Parks Manager Quinn spoke about the upcoming Arbor Day Celebration on Saturday, May 17th at So-Hi Community Park from 10am-12pm. The Commission discussed the importance of youth involvement with the event.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) 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
Parks Manager Quinn and Director Amundsen 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) March 2025 Park Fund Report; no action taken.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Smith to adjourn, seconded by Bolles. Carries 6/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim J. Amundsen

Kevin P. Quinn