

MINUTES

1. CONVENE PARK COMMISSION MEETING

Chair Wenner convened the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Present: Chair Wenner, Commissioners Hirner, Garske, Bahneman; City Council Liaison Gorham; and Parks and Recreation Manager Czech

Absent: None

B. Review Agenda

Commissioner Garske moved to approve the agenda as written. Commissioner Bahneman seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Park Commission Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2025

Commissioner Garske moved to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2025 meeting as written. Commissioner Bahneman seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

3. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

There were none.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025 Park Commission Meeting Dates

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech noted that at the last meeting, the Commission had directed staff to check into the possibility of scheduling the meetings for the 4th Tuesday of the month rather than the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Commissioners discussed the possible change in the meeting date, as proposed.

Commissioner Garske moved to recommend changing the regular Park Commission meeting dates to the 4th Tuesday of the month beginning in March. Commissioner Bahneman seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

B. 2025 Arctic Fever Recap

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech gave a brief recap of the 2025 Arctic Fever Event on January 17, 2025. He reminded the Commission that some of the event plans had to be modified

due to the lack of snow and explained that they had a 'Name a Snowplow' contest and a coloring contest and noted that Council Liaison Gorham's daughter won the coloring contest. He stated that the coloring materials will be featured on some of the promotion materials for next year's event. He stated that there were 50 submissions for the 'Name a Snowplow' event and the winning entry was 'Frosty the Snowplow'. He noted that they believe that about 144 people attended the event this year, but attendance were not available for past years. He noted that they did receive feedback from people involved in previous years that they felt this year's attendance was higher than in the past for the Friday portion of the event. He listed the sponsors for the event and noted that it was the first presenting sponsor for a City event. He outlined considerations for future events including continuing to partner with Bach to Rock, that the addition of face painting and balloon art was a positive, and to consider additional lighting in the parking lot.

Chair Wenner stated that she also felt it was a great event, especially under the circumstances, with many portions being canceled due to the weather.

Commissioners discussed the feeling that both the balloon animal artist and the face painting artist were very good and that they had thoroughly enjoyed the participation of Bach to Rock.

Commissioner Garske raised the idea of charging a small fee for face painting, rather than providing this for free, with the hope that the City could then hire an additional artist so the lines were not as long. He noted that he felt it may also be beneficial to separate the balloon artist and the face painting because all the kids ended up being crowded into once space.

Commissioner Hirner suggested that the City try to find a way to take some of the elements of the Arctic Fever event, such as the balloon artist and face painting, into some kind of summer event.

Commissioner Garske stated that he liked the idea of the cookie event, because it was a great event that was simple and something that everyone could do.

Chair Wenner suggested that they try to find other food vendor options outside of Joey Nova's Pizza.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that Joey Nova's Pizza had always been a great partner to the City.

Commissioner Hirner stated that he agreed that it would be good if they could expand things a bit and get other entities involved in the events, especially if they could find something within the City limits.

Council Liaison Gorham stated that he agreed with the comment made by Commissioner Garske regarding the cookie station but noted that he believed that the 'cookie lady' was leaving the State later this year.

Chair Wenner stated that the 'cookie lady' had amazing cookies, and suggested that the City be on the lookout for a new cookie vendor for upcoming events.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech encouraged the Commission to let staff know if they run across vendors or other activities that they felt would be a good addition.

C. 2025 Movie in the Park

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech reviewed the list of movies available to be shown at Movie in the Park scheduled for August 22, 2025, at Eddy Station in Freeman Park. He suggested that as they review the movie options they keep in mind other promotional ideas or activities that the City could include as part of the event in order to bring it a bit more substance but cautioned that they do have a limited budget.

Chair Wenner asked if this event would be open for sponsorship.

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech confirmed that this event would be open for a possible sponsorship opportunity.

Chair Wenner suggested that they look into the possibility of being able to have local vendors set up booths at the event, such as a local jeweler.

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech stated that possibility was included within their sponsorship guide.

Chair Wenner stated that she liked the idea of putting together other activities with the movie and gave the example of choosing Cloud with a Chance of Meatballs and then having meatball subs available, selecting Little Big League and having demonstrations provided by Minnetonka Baseball, choosing The Incredibles and having a super hero costume contest with hero sandwiches, or selecting Doolittle and having a petting zoo.

Commissioner Hirner stated that he believed that they have had better attendance in the past when they have selected animated movies.

Commissioners discussed movie options, which ones may appeal to the most people, and brainstormed some possible additional promotional activities to go along with the actual event.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that once the Commission selects a movie, he can put an item on a future agenda where they can have additional discussions about additional activities.

Commissioner Hirner moved to approve Lilo and Stitch as the movie for the 2025 Movie in the Park event. Commissioner Garske seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner Garske suggested that the Commission vote on a second choice option in case Lilo and Stitch ended up not being available.

Commissioner Hirner moved to approve Lilo and Stitch as the 2025 Movie in the Park event, and if that choice was not available, to select Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, as the second choice for the 2025 Movie in the Park event. Commissioner Garske seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0

D. Parks Master Plan

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech explained that staff was putting together an RFP in order to solicit bids from qualified consultants to lead the City through the process of developing a Parks

Master Plan. He stated that staff was looking for some feedback from the Commission prior to the RFPs being sent out.

Chair Wenner asked if the consultants would be drawing anything out of the IPM plan in addition to the existing plan that was created in 2002.

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech confirmed that the City would be providing them with most of the working documents the City had related to Parks because it will help show them the current state of the City. He noted that he felt the primary focus will be the more active areas of the parks, as a whole, and a smaller focus would be on the natural areas of the parks.

Commissioner Garske stated that he would love to see the consultants take on the City's repair/replace timelines.

Commissioners discussed the possibility of delaying the plans for Cathcart Park until the consultants weighed in on what they saw throughout the City parks related to equipment and viability.

Council Liaison Gorham suggested that this could be something discussed at the upcoming City Council/Park Commission Work Session meeting.

Commissioner Hirner noted that he felt that the City could have the plan in place for Cathcart but wait on the implementation until the consultants weighed in. He stated that he felt that the Master Plan needed to include, at the very least, a look at the woods and gave the example of the recent work that had been done to remove buckthorn which resulted in additional open space.

Chair Wenner stated that she felt that was a good point and asked if trails would be included, the possibility of having an educational component that showed native plants and things like the buckthorn removal process.

Commissioner Garske stated that he was assuming that the consultants would provide some recommendations or ideas of amenities or uses that the City may want to consider and also some things that the City may want to actually phase out of its parks.

Council Liaison Gorham mentioned the skateboard park and asked how much time the consultants may spend looking at it and South Shore Park.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that the intent of the RFP was to update the Master Plan for all City parks and generate conceptual plans for South Shore Park.

The Commission discussed the budget for this Master Plan work and what items may be undertaken by the City staff in order to stay within the existing budget.

Chair Wenner asked if it may be possible to move money from another place, for example, the Cathcart renovation, in order to enable the consultants to be able to look at trails and natural areas as well.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that would have to be a decision made by the Council. He noted that the RFP would be sent out on February 12, 2025, and the deadline for proposals would be in mid-March so he should be able to have a clearer idea on what the

proposals were looking like by the March 25, 2025, Park Commission meeting, even though a consultant would not be selected yet.

Commissioner Hirner asked if the consultant would be involved in the Park Tours over the summer months.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that was still to be determined.

Commissioner Hirner stated that he felt that would be a good way for them to get a good tour of the parks and also get a sense of what the Commission and City Council were thinking about the parks that could be good feedback for them.

Chair Wenner stated that one of the discussion item that came up at a recent meeting was the possibility of not holding Park Tours anymore.

Commissioner Garske stated that they had also discussed doing tours individually or only touring the parks that had upcoming projects so they would spread out the tours over a few years instead of trying to do them all at once.

Commissioner Hirner stated that he disagreed with the idea of phasing out the Park Tours because he didn't feel that the City could discount the public involvement and interaction that they get from the Park Tours.

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of holding Parking Tours and the importance of finding a way to focus on public engagement through the Master Plan development process.

Commissioner Hirner asked if the Council had discussed what their expectations were for the frontage between Highway 7 and the park, or if they would like to do something like install a sound wall to separate the park from the roadway. He explained that when the City goes to do a plan for South Shore Park, they will end up having a different result if there will be a barrier or not. He noted that he would not to anything in that park that will involve kids without some type of barrier.

Council Liaison Gorham stated that generally a sound barrier would probably not be done right away and would likely not be part of the Highway 7 project, so it would probably end up being funded by Shorewood. He noted that the process for the Highway 7 project has started to move forward with MnDOT and explained at some point there will be engagement with Shorewood on the project as well. He stated that he would love to see some type of 'Welcome to Shorewood' message near South Shore Park and suggested that they may be able to find some of creative approach to that because he felt that they did need a barrier there. He asked about the engagement of the Park Commission in the selection of the consultants to work on the Master Plan. He suggested that they could possibly have someone from the Commission sit on the interview panel and noted that if the Park Commission was not engaged in this process, he felt it may be a missed opportunity and asked what the engagement of the Park Commission would be after the initiation of the project.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that their engagement would come throughout the process and assured Council Liaison Gorham that they would be heavily involved the whole way.

5. OLD BUSINESS

6. COUNCIL, STAFF, AND LIAISON REPORTS / UPDATES

A. City Council

Council Liaison Gorham gave an overview of recent City Council discussions and decisions. He noted that in addition to reappointing Chair Wenner and Commissioner Hirner to the Park Commission they also appointed Janet Sylvester to join the Commission. He noted that he believed that a City Council/Park Commission Work Session meeting would be scheduled after the Council held their upcoming retreat.

B. Staff

Park and Recreation Manager Czech noted that the Shorewood Community and Event Center had been busy and explained that they had opened a tax appointment line in mid-January. He explained that AARP comes in and does taxes for free for 55+ or low-income households and as of last Friday, all available appointments had been filled. He noted that the warming houses were still open, but were running a bit short on staff because college students had returned to their campuses. He explained that he would be out of the country starting tomorrow, without access to phones or e-mails, but would return on February 25, 2025.

C. Commissioner

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that this was a new agenda feature in order to give the Commission the opportunity to give feedback, provide updates, or request having future agenda items.

Commissioner Garske asked if the 2025 Work Plan for the Commission would be available at their next meeting.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that staff had been working on it and he hoped to be able to bring a draft of it to the next meeting.

Chair Wenner stated that the South Lake Mayors Forum would be held on February 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Shorewood Community and Event Center put on by the League of Women Voters.

7. ADJOURN

Commissioner Bahneman moved to adjourn the Park Commission Meeting of February 11, 2025, at 8:15 p.m. Commissioner Garske seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.