

MINUTES

1. CONVENE PARK COMMISSION MEETING

Chair Wenner convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and explained that because they had a new Commissioner, she wanted to do a quick round of introductions before beginning the meeting.

The Commission took turns introducing themselves and sharing some of their background and experience on the Commission.

A. Roll Call

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

Absent: None

B. Review Agenda

Commissioner Hirner moved to approve the agenda as written. Commissioner Garske seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Park Commission Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2025

Commissioner Garske moved to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2025, meeting as written. Commissioner Bahneman seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

3. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

There were none.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Minnetonka Football Association Presentation

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech stated that the various associations that use the City's fields have been incredible partners with the City. He explained that tonight, Tony Wixo, Co-Director of the Minnetonka Football Association, was here to give an overview of their association.

Tony Wixo, Minnetonka Football Association, distributed gifts for the Commission and explained that he had been the co-director for the last seven years. He gave an overview of the Tonka Football Association (TFA) and explained that they were a non-profit organization that had around six hundred seventy-five athletes from 2nd grade to 8th grade and noted that if they included the high school athletes, there were roughly 900 athletes involved and 150 parent volunteers. He noted that they have had a good relationship with the City, and one of their larger investments

was working on the turf for the field at Badger Park. He outlined their general schedule of use for the fields; the changes happening in football; projected growth for footballs and the need for space; how the TFA compares to Maple Grove, Wayzata, and Edina; space constraints of the TFA; and information that was in the former Master Plan for Freeman Park that included a football field. He explained that the TFA was financially stable and would like to partner with the City to help bring the Master Plan to fruition because they needed space and noted that they would like the City to consider a possible dome because it would pay for itself with dome fees.

Chair Wenner asked if Mr. Wixo was specifically looking at Freeman Park.

Mr. Wixo explained that they would also love a dome at Badger Park, but he was not sure there would be enough space.

Chair Wenner asked how the soccer season would overlap with the TFA season.

Mr. Wixo clarified that the season for the TFA was the middle of August to the middle of October because for the rest of the year, the high school can accommodate them.

Chair Wenner asked how large of a field they would be looking to have at Freeman Park.

Mr. Wixo explained that, ideally, it would be the size of a regulation football field, which would be 120 yards by 50 yards, and described some possible field configurations.

Commissioner Hirner noted that he believed that if they put on a dome, it would need to be artificial turf and asked about the usage of the field at Manor Park.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that baseball uses the baseball field, but there was also soccer and some lacrosse in the grass field area and noted that they use it in the spring, summer, and fall.

Commissioner Hirner asked how large of a space was needed for the younger players.

Mr. Wixo explained that they practice four teams in the small space available at Minnewashta Elementary so he would guess that they would need a space about 30 yards by 30 yards for practice.

Commissioner Hirner stated that he felt that perhaps the field at Silverwood may be good for a practice field.

Commissioner Garske asked what the TFA was doing for now to address their space constraints.

Mr. Wixo stated that they like to have the entire class/grade in one location because it helps build camaraderie. He explained that they have gone to St. Therese to get space and have also met with the City of Chanhassen. He noted that at the end of every year, they do a survey amongst their members, and every year, the most common answer is a request for additional space.

Chair Wenner asked if Mr. Wixo would forecast that the current football athletes may leave traditional football and move towards flag football or if he felt that there would be more growth for traditional football.

Mr. Wixo stated that he believed that their 2nd and 3rd grade would be growing.

Commissioner Hirner asked about adaptive options and referenced a baseball field at Minnetonka that could be used by handicapped kids.

Mr. Wixo stated that Wednesday night at the high school is for adaptive play and did not feel that the City would need to provide that type of facility.

Chair Wenner thanked Mr. Wixo for his information and explained that the Park Commission would consider this information.

B. Selection of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2025

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech reviewed the usual process for the selection of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Park Commission.

Chair Wenner nominated Commissioner Garske to serve as Chair for the Commission in 2025.

Commissioner Garske accepted the nomination.

Commissioner Hirner stated that he would like to submit his name for consideration as Chair.

Commissioner Garske stated that with having small children at home, he felt it may be difficult for him to run the meetings and be prepared to discuss things in depth, and explained that he would be willing to continue as Vice-Chair and throw his support to Commissioner Hirner.

Commissioner Bahneman moved to recommend Commissioner Hirner as Chair of the Park Commission for 2025. Commissioner Garske seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Hirner moved to recommend Commissioner Garske to serve as Vice-Chair of the Park Commission in 2025. Commissioner Bahneman seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

C. City Council Liaison Dates

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech reviewed the calendar for the Park Commission and City Council meetings and explained the need to schedule the Commission for updates at the City Council meetings.

April 14, 2025 – Commissioner Wenner
May 12, 2025 - Chair Hirner
June 9, 2025 – Commissioner Garske
July 14, 2025 – Commissioner Sylvester
August 11, 2025 – Commissioner Bahneman
September 8, 2025 – Commissioner Wenner
October 14, 2025 – Chair Hirner
November 10, 2025 – Commissioner Garske
December 8, 2025 – Commissioner Sylvester
January 12, 2026 – Commissioner Bahneman

Park and Recreation Manager Czech noted that he would send Outlook invitations to the Commission so their assigned dates were on everyone's calendars. He asked if anything came up and they were not able to do the presentations to the Council, that they reach out to him and let him know.

D. 2025 Park Commission Workplan Draft

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech explained that the Workplan was intended to serve as an overall guide for the work of the Park Commission throughout the year and also to ensure that they are aligned with the City Council and their priorities. He briefly reviewed information that was included in the draft of the proposed workplan and asked for input from the Commission. He explained that the City Council had not seen the workplan yet but noted that staff had put it together with some directives that have been expressed by the Council. He noted that they were still also planning to schedule a joint meeting with the Council sometime this spring.

Commissioner Garske thanked Park and Recreation Manager Czech for the work he put into the draft workplan. He stated that one item he thought may be interesting to discuss was the possibility that at the June meeting try to have some sort of 'state of the parks' discussion before the CIP discussions. He stated that his thought was that before that meeting, the Commission would independently walk through the parks, and then a few weeks before the meeting, they could share a summary of their observations with Park and Recreation Manager Czech for him to consolidate before the meeting.

Chair Wenner noted that she loved that idea and suggested that they may want to include Public Works in that meeting before the budget meeting. She explained that she also liked the idea of possibly getting some community input as well.

Commissioner Hirner noted that he had expressed concern about dumping the Park Tours for several reasons. He explained that it was not just one of the times that the Park Commission tended to get people to show up, but usually the Mayor and some Councilmembers, as well as some Public Works staff, have also joined the tours because everyone has an interest in the parks. He stated that he felt that there were a lot of valuable conversations that took place during the Park Tours. He explained that the value he gets out of the tours is that they get to hear what staff has been doing, but also get to give them a laundry list of things that the Commission felt were interesting or that were typically taken care of by Public Works. He explained that he felt it was valuable to hear Public Works' perspective and noted that he felt that the list they put together last year from the park tours, produced amazing results within the City's parks. He stated that with the Park Master Plan, he felt this would not be the right year to dump the Park Tours. He explained that if the City could provide some advance notice that they would be doing the Park Tours and also beginning to work on the Master Plan, they may get more people to come out and attend.

Commissioner Sylvester asked for a description of the Park Tours and what generally took place.

Commissioner Bahneman stated that she enjoyed the Park Tours.

Chair Wenner stated that she also enjoyed the Park Tours, but the Commission had a lot of work to accomplish.

Commissioner Sylvester asked if the tours superseded the usual Park Commission meetings.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech gave a brief overview of what typically took place during the Park Tours. He noted that with everything going on this year, he did not believe it would be a good idea to lose the ability to hold Park Commission meetings in May and June so they could do the Park Tours.

Chair Wenner noted that last year, they had to cancel and reschedule the tours multiple times due to rain.

Commissioner Hirner asked if the Commission could hold two meetings in a month and suggested that one night could be a park tour and the other could be a regular meeting.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that he believed that would be possible but would require additional evenings of City staff.

Commissioner Garske explained that with his earlier suggestion related to a 'state of the parks' meeting, he had hoped to get some community involvement. He stated that he agreed that there was value in walking through the parks and having open discussions. He noted that his idea of having the Commission essentially pre-walk through the parks on their own and submit their notes to Park and Recreation Manager Czech was so that everyone's voice was heard and they would all have the same discussion points to look at. He noted that he felt this would also save the Commission at least one meeting and would allow them to spend more time in places that the Commission didn't normally cover, for example, the woods or Gideon's Glen. He clarified that he was open to anything but acknowledged that they were expecting to have a very busy year.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech noted that he did not believe that the Commission needed to make a hard cut decision tonight about whether they were or were not doing the Park Tours. He suggested that they wait to see what the Parks Master Plan looks like and what the consultants think, which may be an engagement session and having a Park Tour. He stated that the Commission could adapt its schedule, if necessary, but noted that he felt there was consensus from the Commission that some form of tour would be important.

Commissioner Sylvester noted that she liked the idea of doing individual tours and having some pre-work, and stated that one other thing they could also capture would be to see how the park was being used, because they may hit the parks at different times of the day. She stated that the Commission could also pepper in one or two tours throughout the year in addition to the individual tours.

Chair Wenner noted that she would suggest, for this year, that the Commission move forward with the workplan recommendations from staff.

Commissioner Hirner suggested that the Commission tentatively say that they will do one Park Tour on a non-meeting night, as a placeholder.

Chair Wenner asked Park and Recreation Manager Czech to send the bullet point list to the Commission that included the recommendations and priority levels for the various maintenance items.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that he could send the maintenance list to the Commission and suggested that they could also consider working on a rotation of parks to visit

each year on an off meeting night. He reiterated that this particular issue did not need to be figured out during tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Hirner stated that if the Commission did do something like what Commissioner Garske had suggested for the Commission to go out individually and submit a list to staff, he felt it would also be helpful for Public Works and the Police Department to provide a list of what they felt should be worked on within the parks.

Council Liaison Gorham noted that 2025 felt like a unique year, but noted that with the Parks Master Plan, the consultant would need to go out to the parks, which meant some type of tour would need to be done, but did not believe that the Park Commission should piggyback on that tour. He stated that he felt that there would be recommendations that came out of the tours by the consultants as well and stated that he wondered if that would inform what the Commission would gather for looking at the parks. He explained that he kind of wanted to take 2025 on its own, because it was going to be a unique year for how they visit the parks, because someone independent would be looking at them.

Chair Wenner noted that it would be nice for the Commission to know the dates and times when the consultant would be touring the parks, so if anyone was available, they could go ahead and join the tours at that time.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that he felt that they would have more clarity by the next Park Commission on what the Parks Master Plan process would look like. He noted that he would also like to get a picture of the full Park Commission tonight before they left, so it could be included in the official workplan document.

Council Liaison Gorham asked if the Vegetative Management Plan was something for the Parks.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech noted that it would be coming up at a Council Work Session meeting in April and would be getting direction from them on how to filter the Vegetative Management Plan down for the City.

Commissioner Hirner noted that one of the things he had not seen within the workplan was the state of the trees.

Council Liaison Gorham explained that his understanding was that the trees were part of the Vegetative Management Plan.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech encouraged the Commission to share some possible meeting topics with him if there were things that they wanted to discuss. He explained that he was trying to create a hopper of topics to be placed on the agenda for a future meeting when there was room on the agenda.

Commissioner Garske suggested that if there was an open meeting, they could consider having a Parks Open House meeting for open discussion and feedback from the residents.

Commissioner Hirner noted that he felt it would be interesting if they could find a way to compare Shorewood with similar cities concerning what others were doing with their city parks in order to find out if the City was behind the eight ball or on the leading edge as well as what type of amenities similar communities were offering.

Commissioner Bahneman stated that she was handed a card at a recent City Council meeting from a realtor who told her he was a musician and asked if there was a way to be included in the Concert in the Park events. She asked how they would go about inviting people to be part of things like that.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that those types of inquiries should be directed to him.

Chair Wenner stated that she loved the layout of the draft workplan and commended Park and Recreation Manager Czech for doing an amazing job listening to the Commission and had incorporated much of what they have been saying at their meetings. She stated that when it was finalized she would like to see it posted to the City's website as well. She referenced the goal statement from August 1996 and explained that she felt that it should be updated, so the goal was more recent.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that would likely be something that could come out of the joint meeting with the Council to make sure that they create a goal that was aligned with the City Council.

Chair Wenner referenced the Parks Master Plan and explained that a few weeks ago she had attended an event where she spoke with Davey Resource Group. She stated that through her conversation she learned that they appeared to have a lot of services that they can provide that the City may not be taking advantage of. She asked if the contractor would be working with Davey Resource Group since they were considered the City's official forester.

Park and Recreation Director Czech explained that the Parks Master Plan would not be tree specific so he did not believe they would work with Davey and reiterated that he felt the trees would fall into the Vegetative Management Plan.

Chair Wenner noted that she loved that the various associations would be coming to Commission meetings because she loved that they would be able to see their needs and understand the kinds of things they were looking for. She noted that with the SCEC she believed that the Commission had talked a bit in the past about programming ideas. She asked if they had different programming ideas, whether that would be something that should be discussed during a Park Commission meeting.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that they have Parks and Recreation Programming as one of the other potential topics session. He noted that the City was going to have some larger discussions about the SCEC coming up in the future.

Chair Wenner asked if the Commission would be working through the Park Commissioner handbook next month.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that was slated for next month's agenda.

Chair Wenner suggested that they make sure to include information on communication channels for Commissioners who may have questions, ideas to share, or if it was okay to e-mail anyone on the Council.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that, in general, communications should filter through him, and he can navigate the appropriate channels.

Chair Wenner stated that she also liked the inclusion of the tentative agenda items and asked Park and Recreation Manager Czech to send updates, when necessary, to the Commission.

E. Tonka United Kick-Off Event

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech noted that the representative from Tonka United was unable to attend tonight's meeting and explained that they have requested to partner with the City and hold a free kick-off event at Freeman Park to help bring some attention to their program. He stated that if this event was successful, they would also like to hold similar events before the summer season ended in late June. He explained that with the involvement of a food truck, it would be considered a Special Event, which would require City Council approval, but he wanted to bring it to the Park Commission first to see what their feelings were on this type of event.

Commissioners discussed details of the event, traffic, parking, partnering with the City, possible public involvement, a possible backup date for the event if there were weather issues, and possible locations for food trucks and inflatables.

Commissioner Garske moved to recommend approval of the Tonka United Kick-Off event to be held during the week of April 28, 2025, through May 2, 2025, with allowance for a food truck to be parked at the event. Commissioner Sylvester seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

F. Off-Leash Dog Signage

Parks and Recreation Manager Czech reviewed examples of the updated off-leash dog signage and asked for Commission feedback.

Commissioner Bahneman stated that she loved the updated signage.

Chair Wenner asked how many total signs there would be.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech explained that if the Commission liked the 3 designs included in the packet, the City could order a few of each sign and rotate them around to various locations, and noted that the intent was for the permanent signs to be at the existing waste stations.

Commissioner Hirner stated that he liked the first two sign examples and felt the third option was okay.

Commissioner Sylvester explained that the third sign was her favorite because that scenario had frequently happened with her and her dog.

The Commission and Council Liaison Gorham discussed a few different layout options for some of the graphics, bolding some text, and suggested some language amendments that shared the same basic information, but were depicted a bit differently.

5. STAFF AND LIAISON REPORTS / UPDATES

A. City Council

Council Liaison Gorham gave a brief report on Council discussions and activities from the Council retreat and recent City Council meetings.

B. Staff

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that Mr. Wixo sent him an e-mail that he had just seen an article that fifty-one schools would be putting forth a girls' flag football team this spring with the help of the Minnesota Vikings. He noted that March 31, 2025, was the deadline for firms to submit their RFP for the Parks Master Plan and explained that earlier in the month, he had a question-and-answer session with eight interested firms. He stated that the City may also have a presenting sponsor for the upcoming Concert in the Park event. He explained that the City would be bringing back the Shalo Lee band with Bach to Rock as the opener. He reminded the Commission that for Movie in the Park they would be showing Lilo and Stitch.

C. Commission

Commissioner Hirner stated that for the Concert in the Park, Frankie Torres, lives in Deephaven and may be someone to consider in the future.

Chair Wenner read aloud some information about State of the Parks Three Rivers at Highland Hills and noted that it was so fun. She encouraged the Commission to RSVP if they wanted to attend and noted that it should have come to their email.

Commissioner Hirner cautioned that it would need to be a total of two Commissioners in attendance so they did not violate the open meeting laws.

Park and Recreation Manager Czech stated that if anyone on the Commission intended to go, he asked that they let him know. He stated that he wanted to also officially welcome Commissioner Sylvester to the Park Commission and stated that he was excited to see her perspective be included in their discussions.

7. ADJOURN

Commissioner Hirner moved to adjourn the Park Commission Meeting of March 25, 2025, at 9:06 p.m. Commissioner Garske seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.