

**MINUTES**

**1. CONVENE PARK COMMISSION MEETING**

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

**A. Roll Call**

Present: Chair Hirner, Commissioners Wenner and Sylvester; City Council Liaison Sanschagrin; Parks and Recreation Director Czech

Absent: Commissioners Garske and Bahneman

**B. Review Agenda**

**Commissioner Wenner moved to approve the agenda as written. Commissioner Sylvester seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Park Commission Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2025**

**Commissioner Wenner moved to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2025, meeting as written. Commissioner Sylvester seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.**

**3. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR**

There were none.

**4. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**A. Minnetonka Lacrosse Association Presentation**

Lindsey Reich, representing the Minnetonka Lacrosse Association, gave a brief presentation that included information on the organization's mission statement, its non-profit status, scholarships, coordination of player and coach development, and financial assistance offered to those in need. She encouraged the Commission to go to their website at [www.mtkalax.org](http://www.mtkalax.org) for more information. She reviewed their programming from January through March, which includes winter dome clinics, training, and co-ed box lacrosse; April through July: there is 8U to 10U competitive league play, and a 6U co-ed lacrosse clinic; and September/October for fall league play. She noted that for the spring league, Badger Field is their primary field, and in the summer, they utilize other facilities in the area, in addition to Badger Park. She outlined details of their participation trends from 2020-2025 and explained that they were very thankful for the relationship they have been able to cultivate with the City over the last year. She noted that they love the convenience and accessibility of Badger Park and get a lot of positive feedback about the wall ball. She explained that they have a lot of ideas for potential enhancements and noted that this was their first year using the 'dibs' program, which meant that every parent has to volunteer or pay two hundred dollars. She stated that they would be a great partner for the City or other associations, if they

were ever considering potential enhancements, such as, digital scoreboard, concession stand, permanent storage, netting on the pond side, landscaping to help with mud on the west side, a dome, and the possibility of additional turf fields.

Commissioner Wenner asked for more details on their 'dibs' and asked if it was designed to get parents more involved. She noted that the parks have had issues with trash and vandalism and asked if any of the parents had been on the lookout for untoward activities in the restrooms.

Ms. Reich noted that Parks and Recreation Director Czech had been an amazing partner for them and explained that their parents do watch for those kinds of things. She thanked him for sending pictures to her and has now started having her parents take pictures and send them directly to her. She noted that with the 'dibs' program, she would rather have their help and participation in the program than their money.

Chair Hirner asked how a sponsorship would work for the Minnetonka Lacrosse Association because there was no sturdy fence where sponsorship signs could be hung.

Mr. Reich stated that one of the ways she sees it working would be with a digital scoreboard that would be able to have some signage around it, and listed examples of other fields in the area that have something similar.

Commissioners and Ms. Reich discussed ages of their participants, coaching staff, interest in a dome and additional turf fields to be able to grow the program, other turf fields available in the area, the competitive interest of soccer associations also wanting access to turf, difficulty with having enough room to install a dome, plans the City has underway for helping with the mud situation described by Ms. Reich, concession stand/storage/digital scoreboard desires for the Minnetonka Lacrosse Association in comparison with the desires of other associations.

Ms. Reich stated that they would love to be part of future community events in the City, such as field clean-up days or Arbor Day activities, so they have a chance to invest in the fields that they already love and appreciate.

Park and Recreation Director Czech thanked Ms. Reich and the Minnetonka Lacrosse Association for their partnership with the City. He noted that Ms. Reich has been very responsive when he has asked them to do things like take pictures of the restrooms or assist with keeping noise, lights, and activities near the north end of the field.

## **B. Parks Master Plan Update**

Chair Hirner asked how many people had filled out the survey.

Anna Springer, Project Manager/Landscaping Architect with Bolton and Menk, stated that so far, there had been thirty-nine people who had filled out the survey. She noted that she believed that if Parks and Recreation Director Czech did another communication blast, it would be helpful and explained that they decided to leave it open until after the Night to Unite celebration in early August, with the hope of collecting additional responses. Following a brief introductory session where the Commission shared some of their reasons for serving on the Park Commission and their vision for the City's parks, Ms. Springer gave a brief presentation related to the overall goals of the project, project schedule, scope of the project, survey, and a summary of the Concert in the Park pop-up event. She noted that they were aiming for City Council approval of the Parks

Master Plan by December of 2025. She noted that Bolton and Menk left the park tour with the overall feeling that the City's parks were clean, well-maintained, and were not cookie-cutter versions of each other, and shared some of their specific thoughts for each park.

Chair Hirner stated that there should be data available somewhere within the City's files that should show the results of the last community-wide survey that had been conducted related to South Shore Park.

Commissioner Wenner asked if she could take some of the cards and place them in local businesses for people to be able to scan the QR code and fill out the survey.

Park and Recreation Director Czech stated that he thought that would be fine, but would need to double-check. He noted that the City had placed yard signs in all the parks, at main entrances, and near the playgrounds, which encourage people to respond to the survey. He explained that he also planned to attend some of the gatherings around the City and encourage people to fill out the survey information.

Ms. Springer stated that they were planning to hold one more pop-up event at Oktoberfest.

Chair Hirner noted that a frequent comment he has gotten was that older people were interested in someplace to sit in the shade.

Ms. Springer stated that they could schedule a senior group listening session.

Chair Hirner stated that it was a good idea because there had been a thought that the seniors in the City were an underserved population.

Ms. Springer discussed their boards and stated that they can make them available to the City for people to give feedback, but suggested that they have a staff member nearby so people aren't sticking too many stickers on. She suggested that the Commission begin its conversation tonight with South Shore Park.

Chair Hirner stated that the last time the park was discussed, he brought up the idea of horseshoe pits. He noted that his son spends a lot of time in Bloomington, and they have bocce courts and horseshoe pits, but they have ripped out all the horseshoe pits. He asked if horseshoe pits still make sense, or if interest in that activity was on the wane.

Ms. Springer stated that it was probably that interest in playing horseshoes was beginning to wane.

The Commission discussed horseshoes; challenges with storing the horseshoes on site; whether people bring their bocce balls to these kinds of courts; focusing on some type of senior use for South Shore park because it is walkable and did not have a lot of parking; possibility of outdoor exercise equipment along a pathway; the possibility of putting in a fountain area where people could sit; traffic sounds at South Shore Park; the possibility of including a dog run, not a dog park; remaining interest from the public in pickleball courts; possibility of a basketball court; concerns related to the proximity of Highway 7; the historic rest area/wall and whether the City could do anything in that area or not; possible addition of stairs/trail in the hilly area; addition of pollinator gardens, when possible; and inclusion of a 'Welcome to Shorewood' sign serving as the gateway to the City.

Chair Hirner asked Council Liaison Sanschagrín if the desire was to have playground equipment at every City park and whether the Council would have any issues if the Commission made a recommendation to go a different direction with South Shore Park.

Council Liaison Sanschagrín stated that the Council would appreciate the discussion of whether it was worth replacing or refurbishing it or not. He stated that he believed residents would appreciate the City saving money in some instances and just repainting the equipment rather than replacing everything, which can be very expensive. He noted that he was not sure how much the playground equipment was used and shared an example of him speaking to a family using the equipment, but they were not from Shorewood and had just come to use it after church. He asked if there might be a way to measure how much usage the equipment got. He noted that the question he had about Cathcart was that it was surrounded on three sides by Chanhassen, and asked what other communities had done in that situation. He stated that he did not know the history of why the City had taken it over and noted that it was also located in Carver County and to him, seems more like a Chanhassen park than a Shorewood park and asked if they may be able to approach Chanhassen about it becoming a joint venture type of park to help reduce the cost to Shorewood taxpayers.

Parks and Recreation Director Czech explained that what he had learned from digging through files was that there was an agreement in place before Shorewood took it over. He stated that Chanhassen was not doing a great job of taking care of the park, and Shorewood residents were using it, so the agreement was that Shorewood would do some maintenance, but Chanhassen would still own it, and it was eventually annexed into Shorewood as a City park. He stated that once that happened, Chanhassen communicated to the City that they were not interested in doing any maintenance or capital improvement to the park moving forward. He stated that he met a few months ago with the Chanhassen Parks Director and brought up Council Liaison Sanschagrín's idea, and was told that Chanhassen has a lot of other projects that would take precedence, and there was not a lot of interest in partnering with Shorewood.

Chair Hirner stated that the City had done a half-new and half-refurbished approach in Freeman Park South that has turned out well. He stated that he felt this approach had potential for other parks, as well.

Ms. Springer stated that they could look into that, but noted that many times it ended up coming down to insurance and potential liability related to keeping old equipment around.

Chair Hirner noted that he felt the City should have a similar conversation about Freeman Park North.

Ms. Springer explained that they would be doing an analysis of the distribution of the City's playgrounds and comparing the data from Shorewood to other communities on a per capita basis, including looking at neighborhood parks and community parks.

Commissioner Sylvester stated that she was glad to hear that, because what she would like to know is whether the City's parks are meeting the community needs and taking a look at how the needs may change over the next ten years. She asked that one of the inputs for Bolton and Menk's analysis would be field utilization percentages to show whether the City had the correct number of fields to serve the community.

Ms. Springer stated that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has backed off on making recommendations about the number of facilities that should be provided, per capita, because they recognize that every community is different, but noted that they do still look at this within their analysis. She stated that if the City has data related to rentals and field usage, they can tie that into their analysis, but clarified that they would not collect that kind of data themselves.

Parks and Recreation Director Czech explained that this was a hard thing to quantify and noted that every association that has addressed the Commission has stated that they need more fields and more space. He noted that the City does have most of the fields rented out throughout the year when they are open. He stated that there may be some increased demand if the City made some improvements to some of the fields.

Commissioner Wenner asked about the microplastics in turf and if they impact the environment or leach microplastics.

Ms. Springer stated that she did not have hard data on the microplastics in the turf material, but it would be plastic in the environment.

Commissioner Wenner explained that she would be amenable to turf in the City parks if she knew there would be an environmentally safe option.

Council Liaison Sanschagrín stated that the Minnewashta elementary school fields were not included and asked if there was a way for the City to use those as resources, because they also have quite a bit of land that would be 'dome-able'.

Parks and Recreation Director Czech noted that it was all school district land, but noted that other communities have had partnerships between the city and the school district, explaining that this was not something that Shorewood had done in the past.

Chair Hirner noted that both public and private schools frequently rent out their fields and facilities for use as well.

Ms. Springer stated that it was a good point and they would include those facilities in their mapping and treat them as quasi-public spaces, even though the City did not have input in those situations unless there was a joint powers agreement of some sort. She noted that they should be wrapping up the remainder of their listening session by mid-August and stated that once the survey closed, they would provide the City with a full summary of the results. She explained that they would finalize the needs assessment by mid-September and present their preliminary recommendations in October.

Parks and Recreation Director Czech asked Ms. Springer to briefly review the stakeholder listening sessions.

Ms. Springer explained that they use the listening sessions as a chance to just listen to the groups so they can share what their needs are, what they were looking for, what they liked, and what they did not like. She noted that they try to separate the groups, such as baseball, football, and soccer, from each other so they are more comfortable speaking freely. She stated that the intent would be a one-hour-long session where she would give them an overview and explain why the City wanted to hear from them, and then allow them to give feedback, where they would just listen. She explained that they would provide summaries of all of the listening sessions to the City and

would also put together meeting minutes so there would be transparency of what was talked about.

### **C. Park Maintenance Items**

Parks and Recreation Director Czech noted that in the past, the Commission had taken park tours and made notes of maintenance or capital projects throughout the City parks. He reminded the Commission that after the 2024 tours, they compiled maintenance items, and throughout the year, Public Works has worked to cross items off the list. He explained that this was intended to be a living document that they could update and change, as necessary. He noted that the Commission had chosen to forego the official Commission-wide park tour this year and conduct self-guided tours instead, and asked them to use this document as a guide as they tour the parks and make notes on their status or if there were any new items. He noted that Mayor Labadie had asked the Commission to include Gideon Glen in their personal tours. He stated that if they can send their notes to him before the August Commission meeting, he can compile them and bring an updated copy to the meeting.

Chair Hirner noted that City staff had done a good job of plowing through many of the items that were on the list from 2024 and expressed his appreciation for their work and the number of trees that they have planted.

### **D. CIP Discussion**

Commissioner Sylvester stated that in the maintenance document, there were items coded as number five that were long-term capital items, but there was no line item included in the CIP to capture those, and asked if they should plan for that to be included. She listed off some examples from the maintenance needs list for long-term capital improvements.

Park and Recreation Director Czech stated that those things will have to be incorporated into the capital budget and stated that the things listed were intended to make sure they are kept in mind as they are building the CIP in order to plan for the future. He stated that the overall process will be a bit different this year because they are putting together the Parks Master Plan, so at the moment, they do not know what will be included in the plans for 2026.

Chair Hirner gave an overview of how the CIP budget process usually worked and noted that, for this year, he does not see the Commission spending much money because the Parks Master Plan has not been completed. He suggested shifting Cathcart Park to 2026 and then, once they see what comes from the Parks Master Plan, they can move ahead and readdress it early in 2026.

Council Liaison Sanschagrín stated that he had heard a lot of complaints about how bad the hockey boards were looking.

Chair Hirner suggested that they do the same thing they did the last time, and put together a group of volunteers from the community to paint and replace boards.

Commissioner Wenner stated that they may also be able to utilize Sentenced to Serve.

Park and Recreation Director Czech stated that the relationship between the City and Sentenced to Serve has grown over the last year, and they have worked on various projects throughout the City, so it could be an option to work with them on other projects.

*There was consensus of the Commission to direct staff to look into putting together a volunteer event, similar to what was done in the past, to repair/paint the hockey boards, including the possible option of working with Sentenced to Serve.*

Commissioner Sylvester asked what 'Manor Park Surface' meant in the CIP.

Chair Hirner explained that it is for the rubber playground surface.

Park and Recreation Director Czech stated that adding the term 'playground' to that item on the CIP would be a helpful clarification.

Commissioner Wenner stated that she would like to add native plantings and/or seeds to the CIP and suggested that they include a few thousand dollars in this category every year. She noted that she would also like to see some money included for adding educational signage to the parks.

Park and Recreation Director Czech clarified that, for right now, the Commission was not going to add or make changes to the CIP and would wait to see what came from the Parks Master Plan.

Chair Hirner referenced the tennis court and asked if there may be other surface options that could be considered.

Commissioner Sylvester expressed concern with the amount of money it takes to maintain tennis courts compared to the number of people who use the courts.

Park and Recreation Director Czech stated that the courts at Badger Park are heavily used.

**Commissioner Wenner moved to recommend approval of moving the CIP item for Cathcart Park to 2026 after the Parks Master Plan has been completed. Commissioner Sylvester seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **5. REPORTS / UPDATES**

### **A. City Council**

Council Liaison Sanschagrín summarized a few key points from the Council's last meeting.

### **B. Staff**

Park and Recreation Director Czech stated that Concert in the Park was held on July 17, 2025. He stated that they had beautiful weather and estimated attendance of one hundred seventy-five, which is about twenty-five more than last year. He stated that Midco sponsored the event and had a booth set up with information available for residents. He stated that Parks Bingo is live in July for National Parks and Recreation Month. He encouraged people to complete their bingo cards and submit photos to have a chance to win a prize. He stated that they have an RFP for a study and task force formation for the Shorewood Community and Event Center (SCEC), which is due at the end of the month. He stated that the intent is to take a closer look at the SCEC and do an analysis of the facility in comparison with similar communities and attempt to find a way to get as self-sustaining as possible. He asked if any of the Commissioners present at tonight's

meeting would be able to do the Council update, because Commissioner Bahneman ended up having a family commitment, so she would be unable to do it.

Commissioner Wenner volunteered to give the Council report.

### **C. Commission**

Commissioner Wenner noted that she attended an online presentation by the Trust for Public Land, who work with communities to secure funding for parks and public land projects. She stated that what she heard during the presentation was interesting and suggested that the City may consider working with them on future projects. She stated that Conservation Minnesota has a professional network for Commissions and stated that if anyone was interested in more information on joining, she would forward the information to them.

## **7. ADJOURN**

**Commissioner Wenner moved to adjourn the Park Commission Meeting of July 22, 2025, at 9:27 p.m. Commissioner Sylvester seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.**