

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION (POSC) MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 9, 2025**

The Mound Parks and Open Spaces Commission met on Thursday, January 9, 2025, at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers at the Centennial Building.

Present: Chair Joanna Kahn, and Commissioners Travis Mills, Kim Blievernicht, and City Council Representative Sherrie Pugh.
Absent: None.
Others Present: Deputy City Manager, Maggie Reisdorf.
Public Present: Tyler Pieper.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Kahn, Mills and Blievernicht, and City Council Representative Pugh.
Absent: None.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mills to approve the agenda, second by Blievernicht; Motion carried 4-0.

4. Election of 2025 Chair and Vice-Chair

Mills moved to nominate Kahn as Chair to the POSC for 2025. He stated that she has been very proactive on the Commission and would be a great Chair. Blievernicht seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Blievernicht moved to nominate Mills as Vice-Chair to the POSC for 2025. Kahn seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

5. Approve Minutes from 12-12-24 Meeting

Kahn noted an error in the minutes. She informed that under the Call to Order section is stated Kahn and Stehlik in the statement and that Kahn needed to be removed from the sentence.

Motion by Mills to approve the minutes as amended, second by Kahn. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Comments and Suggestions from Citizens Present

NA.

7. POSC Candidate Interview – Tyler Pieper

Reisdorf introduced this item. She informed that at the end of 2024, two of the four POSC two-year seat terms ended. She stated that one seat became vacant and as a result staff posted an advertisement for the open seat.

Reisdorf stated that they received one application for the vacant seat and that the POSC would be performing the interview this evening with the applicant.

Reisdorf explained the interview process that included each Commissioner asking the applicant a question, followed by a voting process.

Reisdorf informed that based on the voting process, the POSC could make a recommendation of appointment to the City Council.

Mills started the interview with applicant Tyler Pieper by mentioning Pieper's ongoing park native garden projects within some of the City's park spaces. He asked Pieper about his other life experience and how that would make him a strong candidate for the POSC.

Pieper explained that he used to work for a newspaper in which he would cover local City Council meetings. He stated that this was how he became more familiar with City meeting formats. He informed that he was part of a University of Minnesota science based organization in the past that focused on mushrooms as part of a hobby. He mentioned his extensive work with gardening. Pieper informed that he also worked for an organization in the past that helped people with low socially economic backgrounds who didn't have any college experience obtain scholarships.

Blievernicht asked Pieper how long he has lived in the City of Mound and what he likes best about the City.

Pieper stated that he moved to the City of Mound in 2014 from Mankato, Minnesota. He said that he loves the trees, as where he came from didn't have a lot of trees. He said he likes the people here. He said that Mound is located in the "sweet spot" of three biospheres including the woods, lakes, and prairies.

Kahn asked what his future park priorities would be.

Pieper answered that he would like to enhance City sponsored engagements with the community.

Pugh asked Pieper to explain an innovative project he would like to see.

Pieper stated that a goal of his right away would be to create more spaces for children in the community. He informed that it would be great to assess spaces that are not being fully utilized and reexamine their potential for something more.

The POSC voted through a ballot type method anonymously with a yes or no vote on if Pieper should be appointed to the vacant POSC seat. All votes in favor.

Mills moved to recommend to the City Council the appointment of Tyler Pieper to the POSC for a term of January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027. Blievernicht seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

8. Approval of Work Rules for 2025

Reisdorf introduced this item to the POSC. She informed that approval of the Work Rules is an annual item that the POSC reviews and approved, typically at their first meeting of the year.

Reisdorf asked if the POSC was interested in changing their meeting start time to 6:00 PM, as the City Council and other commissions/committees had done so in 2024.

The POSC agreed to move the meeting start time to 6:30 PM.

Blievernicht moved to change the POSC meeting start time to 6:30 PM. Kahn Seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mills moved to approve the 2025 POSC Work Rules to include an amendment to start the POSC meetings at 6:30 PM instead of 7:00 PM. Blievernicht seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

9. Edgewater Park – Native Garden Expansion

Reisdorf introduced this item to the POSC. She informed that resident, Tyler Pieper, was in attendance to provide updates to the Native Garden Expansion project. She informed that at the December meeting, the POSC requested that staff send out a letter to neighbors of the park to invite them to tonight's meeting to get feedback on their vision for this park space and if the project aligns with their vision. Reisdorf stated she received a phone call and subsequent email from one resident who said expressed concerns about maintenance and upkeep of the garden.

Tyler Pieper introduced himself to the POSC. He stated that the comment from the resident was helpful and that he would take that comment seriously. He said that one option could be to have an educational sign that explains the native garden and how it works. Pieper informed that there different native plants are active a different times and therefore some may look dry and dead as seasons change.

Kahn stated that there is a benefit to the native garden plantings as there would be less water needed to maintain the plantings. She asked for clarification on watering schedule.

Pieper informed that the native plantings need to be watered for one-year generally to get them established at the location. He explained that after one year, watering shouldn't be needed moving forward. He said that plants that are part of the project are strategically chosen.

Kahn asked if Pieper could include that information in the grant application.

Pieper explained that he would, similar to past projects, coordinate with the City's Public Works Department on a watering schedule for year 1. He suggested that the POSC could consider a controlled burn event in the future as well as part of a community education event. Pieper stated that he is recommending mulch along the edging of the gardens to help with the curb appeal of the gardens and to help address concerns from the neighbor who expressed concern about the look of the gardens at times. He stated that a benefit of the gardens were that they would be bee friendly.

Pieper reviewed some of the changes since the previous meeting including the requested flow of the design to allow visitors a better walking experience. He talked about the new location of the fruit trees.

Pieper asked the POSC to provide comments on his proposal. He asked that they consider a partnership for the project that would include him the ability to submit for a grant to the Hennepin County 2025 Good Steward Grant to assist in the funding of the project. He noted that the grant, if received, would cover some of the costs, but that the City would be required to match up to \$1,750.

Kahn stated that she appreciated Pieper taking into consideration the comments that the Commission had at the last meeting. She said that it is a unique park space in the sense that it has a steep hill, therefore making the use of the park space limited. She said the project would be a fun way to develop and use the park space.

Mills agreed. He stated that he liked to proposal.

Kahn moved to recommend to the City Council approval of the native garden project and that Tyler Pieper be allowed to submit the grant application for the Hennepin County Good Stewards Grant, with the support of the City of Mound, and that if the grant funds are received, that the City allocated up to \$1,750 in funds to support the project. Mills seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

10. Reports

Staff Reports: Reisdorf provided project updates to the POSC including that the project planning for Lost Lake Commons Phase II would start in early 2025. She stated that updated quotes are being solicited for the Depot Building improvements for 2025. Reisdorf explained that the POSC requested an audit and list of current park picnic tables to gradually schedule the replacement of the old picnic tables. She provided a list to the POSC.

City Council Representative: Pugh mentioned that Phase I of Lost Lake Commons Park was lit up over the holiday season very nicely. She mentioned that Phase II planning would start in 2025. She stressed the importance of communicating with the Mound Farmers Market about the schedule of those improvements. She asked about trees that were removed as part of Phase I and if those trees were replanted somewhere else. Pugh mentioned the Minnetonka Flats

Development Project currently under construction along Commerce Blvd. She stated a new City Council member was elected and that her name was Michelle Herrick. She informed that the City Council's priority remains on the water treatment plant project and securing funding for its construction. Pugh mentioned the current dysfunction of the State Legislature and the frustration around that as it may impact the State's 2025 Bonding Bill and therefore potentially funding for the water treatment plant.

Commission Comments: Blievernicht mentioned some goals that she would like the POSC to consider for 2025. They included:

1. To adequately fund and staff resources to support annual evaluation of Parks and Open Spaces recommendations that are reported by the Commission.
2. That City staff perform an evaluation on all City parks and open spaces to determine accessibility needs. To prioritize, create and fund a long-range written plan to ensure accessibility improvements are being done over the next five years.

Blievernicht said that there needs to be more funding and resources available. She said that the POSC does visits each year and that there is little follow up and reporting back as to whether those comments and recommendations were considered.

All members of the POSC agreed with Blievernicht's concerns.

Pugh mentioned that the City Council has expressed interest in selling of some of the park and open space land.

11. Next Meeting: February 13, 2025

12. Adjourn

Kahn moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 PM. Mills seconded. Motion carried 4-0.