

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
October 10, 2024

The Mound Parks and Open Spaces Commission met on Thursday, October 10, 2024, at 7:00pm in the Council Chambers at the Centennial Building.

Present: Vice-Chair Joanna Kahn, Commissioner Travis Mills and City Council Representative Sherrie Pugh.
Absent: Chair Mark Stehlik and Commissioner Kim Blievernicht
Others Present: Deputy City Manager, Maggie Reisdorf.
Public Present: None.

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Kahn at 7:03pm.

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Vice Chair Kahn, Commissioner Mills, and City Council Representative Pugh.

Absent: Chair Stehlik and Commissioner Blievernicht.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Pugh asked to add the following two items to the agenda:

1. Staffing/Internship recommendation for recreational events at Lost Lake Commons.
2. Age Friendly Grant application opportunity.

Motion by Mills to approve the agenda as amended, second by Pugh; Motion carried 3-0.

4. **Approve Minutes from 6-13-24 Meeting**

Motion by Pugh to approve the minutes, second by Mills. Motion carried 3-0.

5. **Comments and Suggestions from Citizens Present**

NA.

6. **2024 Park Visits – Staff Update and Recap**

Reisdorf introduced this item to the Commission. She informed that within the packet were comments included as to what items were able to be completed by the Public Works Department over the summer months, related to comments received from the 2024 park visits. She stated that some items were taken care of, while other items were still pending.

Reisdorf informed that the summer was a very wet year which meant a lot of grass and weed maintenance with the seasonal staff. She stated too that the Public Works Department went through a restructure that caused a staffing vacancy within the Park's Department for a good part of the year.

Reisdorf stated however, that a new Park's Department Lead maintenance worker was hired and will be starting the following week, which will bring the Department back up to fully staffed status. She explained that with a fully staffed department, that there has been internal discussions already for 2025 as to priorities, including those for parks and open spaces.

She stated that there is a goal and emphasis being placed on being more proactive with regards to weed and grass maintenance, and keeping the parks visually appealing at all times. Reisdorf mentioned that the City Council recently passed a Long Term Financial Plan that included a schedule for replacing high cost capital park infrastructure, including playgrounds. She said that Chester Park is scheduled to be replaced in 2025.

Mills stated that the POSC should bring the neighboring Al and Alma's business into the discussion of updating Chester Park.

Kahn recommended that the POSC think more about how it visualizes its park spaces as there are a lot of small pocket parks that don't get used that have play structures.

Reisdorf agreed. She mentioned that at a staff level, staff thought it may be a good opportunity to go away from the traditional tower and slide play structure and do themed parks instead. She provided an example of a park having a variety of rope climbing structures, and another one having some other different theme.

Kahn recommended getting the community involved more with regards to how the parks could be designed to include and attract people of all ages. She recommended reaching out to WeCAN or to high school students. She thought focus groups could provide good information.

Mills said that he liked the parks theme idea.

Reisdorf explained that even small activities can be installed at parks including, for example, tether ball or a four square pad.

Pugh mentioned that in the past, the City was considering a disc golf course.

Reisdorf stated that with staffing at full capacity again, staff has talked about committing to applying for more grants as a way to forge partnerships and to try and get project completed sooner.

Pugh recommended that the POSC put together a work plan for 2025 as to how it can rethink its parks and how to better involve the community and those nearby the park spaces where improvements are proposed.

Kahn recommended meetings at the parks with residents.

Pugh agreed that the POSC members should meet with residents at the park and talk with them about what they would like to see.

Mills asked if a Public Works Parks employee could attend future meetings. Reisdorf said that would make sense to start doing that.

Pugh asked the POSC if it would make sense to send letters to the residents nearby Chester Park informing them that the park will be improved the summer of 2025 and that we would like to get their input and that meeting in the winter will occur to bring people together for a discussion. She added that Al and Almas should be included in the discussion as well as they have been a partner with that park for a long time.

Pugh made a motion to direct staff to write letters to property owners nearby Chester Park informing them of the upcoming improvements in 2025, a request for their input, and that a meeting will be scheduled during the winter months to discuss the improvements. Mills seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

7. Park Commission Vacant Seats - 2025

Reisdorf informed that there are two seat terms that are ending at the end of 2024. She said that the terms ending are Commissioners Blievernicht and Stehlik. Reisdorf stated the Blievernicht said she would extend her term. She said Stehlik has yet to confirm his interest in another term. Reisdorf said that Commissioner Kahn is running for City Council and that if elected, her seat could become vacant as well. She said that POSC could have up to two vacancies by the end of the year and therefore staff will be posting to fill those vacancies with the next month.

8. Project Updates:

Lost Lake Commons –

Reisdorf reported that Phase I is underway and that Phase II is projected to start in spring of 2025. She informed that the POSC will be discussing Phase II project details soon at one of their upcoming

meetings. Pugh recommended that the Farmers Market Coordinators be included in on project updates so that there isn't any impact to their operations.

Wayfinding Signs –

Reisdorf said that the wayfinding signs discussion will be part of the Lost Lake Commons Phase II planning. She said these are the signs that would be located along the Dakota Trail and guide people to City amenities. Pugh asked about working with the historical society about informational signs as well that would explain historical features throughout the City.

2024 Chester Park Project Planning –

Reisdorf mentioned again that Chester Park planning would start soon.

Skate Park Upgrades – Potential Grant Opportunity –

Reisdorf informed that staff has been working with the consulting planning company, HKGi, to assess the current skate park and determine park amenities that could be updated, added, or improved. She stated that the goal would be to identify these items and then determine if there are any grants that could be applied to, that could help fund the improvements.

Staffing/Internship recommendation for recreational events at Lost Lake Commons (Added) –

Pugh stated that the City should consider a part time internship position that would work as a recreational park events coordinator who schedules events at Lost Lake Commons Park. She said that it would be something good on a resume for someone in high school. She talked about previous discussion on the City turning the farmers' market parking lot into a skating rink. She mentioned that it should be a park that has activities year-round. She said there should be more planned family activities. Pugh informed that the Gillespie Center has recently committed to one event a month at the park that is age friendly focused.

Age Friendly Grant application opportunity (Added) -

Pugh stated that the statewide Age Friendly Grants are now available for application. She said that there are four categories including: community, health/vitality, income security and emergency preparedness. She asked the POSC to discuss grant opportunities to put in an application for. She mentioned current stress on the Fire Department for fall related calls and how there is an opportunity for a grant to cover visits to people's homes to help make their homes more livable and prevent falls. She talked about retrofitting the rest of the park benches with arms. She recommended the possibility of doing a grant for Chester Park. Kahn recommended submitting a grant that would resurface the Farmers Market parking lot. She said she understood that is currently planned to be done in the future, but that if a grant could push it up, that would be great.

Pugh moved to recommend to City Council submitting an application for the resurfacing of the Farmers Market Parking lot with the Age Friendly Grant opportunity. Kahn Seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

9. Reports

Reisdorf informed again that a new Parks Lead Maintenance employee was recently hired. Pugh mentioned that the City Council recently approved a development near Lost Lake called the Lake Minnetonka Flats and that it will be a nice addition to the area.

10. Adjourn

Mills moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 pm. Kahn seconded. Motion carried 3-0.