

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION (POSC) MEETING MINUTES
December 12, 2024

The Mound Parks and Open Spaces Commission met on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers at the Centennial Building.

Present: Chair Mark Stehlik, and Commissioners Joanna Kahn, Travis Mills, Kim Blievernicht, and City Council Representative Sherrie Pugh.
Absent: None.
Others Present: Deputy City Manager, Maggie Reisdorf and Public Works Superintendent, Dustin Koskela.
Public Present: Jenna Soule (5200 Piper Road), Nate Geyen (5201 Piper Road), Kelsey & Nick Karls (5246 Piper Road), and Tyler Pieper.

1. **Call to Order**

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

2. **Roll Call**

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

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Blievernicht to approve the agenda, second by Kahn; Motion carried 5-0.

4. **Approve Minutes from 11-14-24 Meeting**

Motion by Mills to approve the minutes, second by Blievernicht. Motion carried 5-0.

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

NA.

6. **2025 Park Project: Chester Park – Discussion with Neighbors**

Stehlik introduced this item to the POSC. He informed that the City completed a Long-Term Financial and Capital Plan in 2024, and within that plan, Chester Park is scheduled to be updated in 2025. He stated that the POSC wants to start planning those improvements and therefore invited property owners within 350 feet to the meeting to provide comments and feedback on the project. He informed that part of the project would include, per state law, making the park accessible per ADA guidelines.

Stehlik informed that the POSC commissioners split up all of the parks in the City on an annual basis where they go visit each of their allocated parks and write up comments for staff to review. He stated that the recommendations are those that may be aesthetic improvements or bigger short-term and long-term issues that need to be addresses.

Stehlik stated that Chester Park had the characteristics of a neighborhood park that is used by local property owners and visitors to that area. He informed that the play structure on site does need to be replaced because it is getting old.

Stehlik informed that the POSC is a recommending body to the City Council. He said that their responsibility is to assess park projects and ideas and make recommendations to the City Council for review and approval.

Pugh stated that she called around and asked about the history of the name of Chester Park. She informed that for many years the City owned a dock at this location and swimming was taught. She explained that there used to be a grocery store nearby called Chester Park Grocer that people would shop at. Pugh said that she was told people would sometimes buy sandwiches and sit at the

neighboring park benches to eat. She mentioned that park was named after the Chester family and has a lot of history for that area of the City.

Mills agreed that the play structure needs to be replaced. He stated that the park gets a lot of use. He stated that the POSC wanted to invite the neighboring property owners to help decide the future vision of the park because the POSC did not want to make decisions without input.

Reisdorf confirmed that the play structure would be replaced as part of the project. She said that it is getting old. She also confirmed that there would be some ADA accessibility improvements to the site as part of the project. She said that the playground structure would be replaced and that within that space of the park a wood fiber put down instead of sand to assist with accessibility. She said that the current sand would be moved to the current beach area to help build up the sand in that space. Reisdorf explained that park play areas are required to follow stricter requirements when replaced, including spacing requirements for specific types of equipment.

Koskela added that there are “fall space” requirements for different types of equipment for safety reasons.

Kahn said that the POSC wanted to invite neighboring property owners to help decide improvements to the park space as it is a neighborhood park and impacts the neighboring properties. She said she wanted to hear more about how the neighboring community wanted the space to be used, who the space is guided for, specifically asking “is it a play area?”, “a hand out area?” or something else.

Jenna Soule, neighboring resident to the park, and owner of Al and Alma’s restaurant nearby the park, stated that she is very interested in the future of the park. She informed that it is heavily used by the community and is the perfect size for that area. Soule said that she enjoys visiting this park explaining that the bigger parks can be overwhelming at times with activity. She informed that the space gets used as a gathering point for the lake cruises that board nearby that park. She said that people enjoy sitting and waiting at the picnic tables. Soule said the park never feels overcrowded and there is always a constant flow of activity. Soule stated she is the fourth owner of Al and Almas and confirmed that there was a grocery store in the past. She explained that the park space has always been a great partnership between the business and City. She stated that the business waters and mows the grass and takes out the garbage. Soule said that the play structure doesn’t have to be huge. She said she liked the idea of different themes, including a nautical theme as the park sits so close to the lake.

Nate Geyen, resident at 5201 Piper Road, said that he is a longtime resident of Mound and more specifically that area of Mound. He explained that his parents used to own the Al and Almas business, but that he and his family are still involved with the business. He stated that he likes the current park space and how it is used in a variety of ways. He said that partnership has been a great one between the City and the business. Geyen said that it is a well-used park space.

Stehlik asked those in the audience if they would like any changes to be made to the space.

Geyen said that he would like to maintain the flow of different spaces within the park. He recommended possibly more picnic tables.

Nick Karls, a resident at 5246 Piper Road, asked if the POSC could consider making it easier for those who want to access the lake by kayak to do so. He stated that he understood that there was a history with the name for Chester Park, but asked the POSC if they would consider renaming it Jay Soule Park, a resident who recently passed away and had a huge impact on the community.

Reisdorf said that this meeting was meant as a starting point and kick off for the project. She asked if those in attendance would be willing to share their emails as a way to continue to connect in the future and share ideas.

Stehlik added that at some point different playground concepts will be brought to the POSC for review and discussion and that this would be a great opportunity for the neighbors to provide comments and insight as well.

Mills said that he likes the idea of considering a name change for the park.

Pugh stated that it would be great to get an informational sign put up with a detailed history of the park displayed.

7. Tyler Pieper – Edgewater Park – Native Garden Expansion

Tyler Pieper introduced himself to the POSC. He stated that he has presented to the POSC in the past for other projects that he has worked on. He informed that his current project proposal is at Mound's Edgewater Park. Pieper explained that the project proposal is for a native garden expansion; similar to those that he has presented in the past.

Pieper said that he has been looking into a grant called, the Good Steward Grant, with Hennepin County, that he would like to submit an application for to help fund the project. He estimated that about 75% of the project cost could be covered with grant funds. Pieper explained that the native gardens that were completed at Belmont Park have been going very well and have received positive feedback. He said that there is a real ecological benefit to the gardens and therefore is interested in doing another one at Edgewater Park.

Pieper explained that the gardens help with beautifying the park for visitors, increase critical pollinator habitat, and in this case specifically reduce hillside erosion and water run-off into Harrison Bay. Pieper explained that the project would focus on the collaboration of local vendors, volunteers and the City. He reviewed in detail the installation and maintenance plans.

Pieper presented a tentative timeline for the project, including needed approvals from the POSC and City Council for the grant submission.

Pieper estimated the plant cost to be about \$5,944. He provided a visual of the park site and the proposed layout of the plants and gardens, including what specific plants and trees would be recommended in the project. He explained the vision for the park as being a place where people can not only come to visually enjoy the gardens, but a space where people could sit at picnic tables and even host a barbeque event.

Pieper asked the POSC if they would be interested in supporting this project concept and if there was any feedback. He said that if the POSC was ok moving forward with the project, that he would want to bring a final presentation and grant proposal back to the POSC at their January meeting, where he would ask for a final recommendation to the City Council from the POSC.

Mills asked Pieper if he could adjust the current design a bit to be more open in one spot to allow for a continuous walking path, instead of it being closed off and causing people to have to walk back to get out of that garden area. Pieper agreed to make that change. Mills said he liked the tables throughout the gardens. He said he loved the concept and the idea of adding fruit trees.

Stehlik stated that he wasn't against planting plumb trees, but wondered if when the fruit became ripe, if it would cause a maintenance mess.

Pieper agreed that it could create a mess. He said that birds can get into the fruit at times as well, Pieper recommended that maybe different shrubs be placed in where he proposed the fruit trees and/or he could incorporate the fruit trees into the gardens more so that the dropped fruit would integrate more with the gardens and eliminate the mess.

Pieper estimated the total cost to the City to be about \$1,500. He said that the local partnerships between the City and volunteers keeps the costs significantly down.

Koskela said that the past projects have gone very well.

Kahn stated that she loves the pathways and Mills' idea to make it a continuous walking path. She said that her only hesitation is approving this project without the input of the neighboring properties. She said it is a neighborhood park and would be a big change for that area. She wondered if a letter could be sent to the properties inviting them to the January POSC meeting for review and feedback.

Pieper said that would be a great idea to get feedback.

8. Project Updates

Reisdorf provided project updates to the POSC including that the project planning for Lost Lake Commons Phase II would start in early 2025. She walked about planned improvements for the Depot Building at Surfside Park in 2025 that would include the replacement of the furnace, air conditioning and ceiling fans. Reisdorf said that the plan is to replace the decking and update the kitchen of the Depot Building in 2025 or 2026.

Reisdorf explained that staff is completing an inventory of park picnic tables of which will be put into a Long-Term Financial Capital Plan for staggered replacement. She also provided a link to an online interactive map, put together by the City Engineer, that lists park amenities at the parks within the City of Mound.

Kahn thanked Public Works for the holiday lights installation at Lost Lake Commons. She said that they looked perfect.

Koskela thanked Kahn for the feedback and said that it was a lot of hard work from the employees of the Public Works Department. He said they did a great job.

Mills said that he liked the color of the lights.

Mills asked if the POSC could consider again allowing for the Depot building to be used as a concession stand. He noted in the past, that it was rejected as an idea, but wondered if it could be brought up again.

Pugh like the idea of having food trucks before the Farmers Market starts.

Stehlik mentioned the City of Minneapolis renting out park pavilion spaces to businesses.

9. Reports

Staff Reports: Reisdorf thanked Chair Stehlik for his time on the POSC and wished him well. Stehlik thanked the POSC. He said that he loved participating and providing comments on the parks. He stated that it was very rewarding and enjoyed working with everyone.

City Council Representative: Pugh provided an update on the Lake Minnetonka Flats Development adjacent to Lost Lake. She said that the project got approval for a private boardwalk that would connect to a dock access site for the owners of the units. Pugh stated that the City would be hosting a volunteer appreciation event in February to recognize volunteers in the community. Pugh said that the City Council approved the final budget for 2025 at the last City Council meeting. She said that the City Council is still working to get funding from the State of Minnesota for the Water Treatment Plant. Pugh talked about a recent meeting she had with the Age Friendly Minnesota Board on age friendly initiatives.

Commission Comments: None.

10. Next Meeting: January 9, 2025

11. Adjourn

Mills moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 pm. Blievernicht seconded. Motion carried 5-0.