

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION (POSC) MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 10, 2025**

The Mound Parks and Open Spaces Commission met on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers at the Centennial Building.

Present: Chair Joanna Kahn, and Commissioners Travis Mills, Tyler Pieper, Kim Blievernicht, and City Council Representative Sherrie Pugh.
Absent: None.
Others Present: Deputy City Manager, Maggie Reisdorf, Public Works Director, Ryan Prich, City Engineer, Matt Bauman, Landscape Designer Casey Bleakly, Public Works Park Lead, Jordan Lemmerman.
Public Present: Nick Karls (5246 Piper Road, Mound), Jenna Soule (3188 Tuxedo Blvd, Mound), Nate Geyen (5201 Piper Road), and Joe Grey (2350 Harbor Place).

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Kahn and Commissioners Mills, Pieper, Blievernicht, and City Council Representative Pugh.

Absent: None.

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Blievernicht to approve the agenda as amended, second by Mills; Motion carried 5-0.

4. Approve Minutes from 3-13-2025 Meeting

Motion by Blievernicht to approve the 3-13-2025 meeting minutes, second by Pugh. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Comments and Suggestions from Citizens Present

NA.

6. Chester Park

Reisdorf introduced this item to the POSC. She informed that the playground at Chester Park is on the city schedule for replacement in 2025. She noted that in 2024 a letter was sent to neighbors of the park inviting them to attend the December POSC meeting for a “kick off” event for the project. Reisdorf stated that those who attended that meeting and were interested in being contacted for future meetings on the topic were asked to provide their contact information. She said they were invited to this meeting to continue the discussion on the project.

Prich stated that Chester Park is across the street for Al and Alma’s Dinner Club in Mound and that the business uses the park regularly. He noted that they have adopted the park as well as part of the City’s “adopt an open space program”. Prich informed that the current playground was installed in 1989 and due to aging and safety concerns, it needs to be replaced. Prich went into detail about the proposed improvements to the park that would be made and what would remain on site. He noted that the dedicated park benches would remain on site, and the wall that surrounds the playground area would stay. He explained that state law requires the city to make ADA accessibility upgrades any time significant updates are made to parks. Prich said that the current sand around the current playground will be moved to the lake beach and replaced with an engineered wood fiber to meet accessibility standards. He noted as well that the public sidewalk leading to the playground will be replaced and graded to meet accessibility standards and will also include the addition of a pedestrian access ramp from the street.

Prich explained that the City of Mound reached out to three different companies to solicit for playground designs. He stated that he provided specifications, and a budget for each company to

stay within. Prich said he asked for two playground designs from each of the three companies. Prich said that due to current regulations for playground and the requirement to have specific “zones” around each type of play structure, there is not enough room for swings to be included in the design.

Prich reviewed the following playground information:

Flagship/Landscape Structures

Option 1: \$50,411: Not installed, no wood fiber. State Contract Price.
 \$62,624.35: Installed with wood fiber.

Option 2: \$37,813: Not installed, no wood fiber. State Contract Price.
 \$57,421.35: Installed with wood fiber.

MN/WI Playground/GameTime

Option 3: \$42,621.63: Installed with wood fiber.

Option 4: \$51,922: Installed with wood fiber

Northland Recreation/Little Tykes

Option 5: \$39,983.50: Installed with wood fiber

Option 6: \$39,995.90: Installed with wood fiber

Prich stated that once the playground equipment is ordered, it can take between 6 – 10 weeks for it to arrive.

Prich noted that there has been a request to rename the park as a memorial park to former resident and business owner Jay Soule. He showed the POSC an example of a memorial plaque that could be placed at the park. He reviewed color options for the playground equipment.

Blievernicht asked about the current playground equipment and the removal process.

Prich explained that the Public Works Department would go in and remove the current equipment. He noted that they would also prepare the site for the new equipment with an excavator. Prich talked about moving the sand that currently sits in the playground area to the nearby beach. He informed that, according to state law, an engineered wood fiber needs to be placed instead of sand as a way to make the playground and park ADA accessible.

Prich reviewed the desired installation schedule and the how the city would need to coordinate schedules with contractors and the nearby restaurant to get the playground installed and park improvements made in a manner that is least disruptive to the area. Prich noted that the city’s intention is to limit as much as possible the disruption to the neighboring business and residential properties.

Nate Geyen (5201 Piper Road) resident and owner of Al and Alma’s Dinner Club, mentioned his support for changing the park name to be a memorial to Jay Soule. He asked for clarification on the improvements that are proposed for the public sidewalk and the sidewalk access ramp.

Prich explained that to make the sidewalk ADA accessible and to meet necessary standards, the sidewalk needs to be dug up and replaced with an accessible ramp at the street entrance, expanded in size, and graded properly to meet accessibility standards. He noted that the grading needs to be less than a 2% grade.

Geyen expressed concerns about the construction period and the time period in which the sidewalk would be closed. He stated that the sidewalk is used for business guests to get from the restaurant to the boats on the lake.

Prich stated that the city would be in contact with Geyen to make sure there was ongoing discussion, communication and coordination.

Geyen stated that he like playground #6 that was presented. He recommended that the POSC pick nautical colors like blue and grey.

Prich reviewed the blue, white and grey colors options from the playground company.

Geyen asked that the city maintain as much green space as possible as he grew up near the park and as a kid remembered enjoying the green space at the park.

Prich stated that all green space would be maintained except for a little bit that is needed for the sidewalk expansion.

Jenna Soule (3188 Tuxedo Blvd) and former owner of the Al and Alma's Dinner Club, thanked that city staff for keeping them involved in the park discussion and planning and for inviting them again to the POSC meeting. Soule stated that she liked playgrounds #5 and #6. She said that they aren't overpowering, have some shade elements, and wouldn't impact the view of the lake. She noted that she is not in favor of a playground that would tower over the space and obstruct the view of the lake. She agreed with using nautical colors. She thanked the POSC for considering the park memorial for her late husband, Jay Soule.

Nick Karls (5246 Piper Road, Mound), informed that he agrees with picking a park design that has a lower profile and keeps the site line open to the lake. He expressed support for changing the name to Jay Soule park and recommended that the POSC consider the name change. He explained that he understands that the name Chester in Chester Park may have community significance. He noted that it is worth looking into and taking that into consideration.

Pugh noted that there was an old grocery store in the community that had Chester in the name. Pugh explained that the POSC needs to talk about the name change suggestion more. She stated that she didn't believe the city had a policy in place that provided guidance on the matter. Pugh referenced other recent discussions though on park names; referencing the Eli Hart Memorial Playground. Pugh stressed the importance of maintaining the city's important history that many community members don't know about.

Karls stated that he understood maintaining the city's history. He noted that he is going to reach out the Westonka History Museum to research more information on the history of the park. He explained that a memorial plaque would be great, but that renaming the park would mean a bit more.

Pieper said that he is in favor of the playground designs numbered 5 and 6. He said that he likes the price points of these two parks and the low profiles. He said that he liked how playground 5 was more condensed so that there would be more running room. He explained that he would prefer a playground with more shade coverage. He recommended having the colors of the playground be light colors to reduce the hotness of the playground.

Geyen noted that the park is surrounded by many trees and that the trees would help shade the playground.

Kahn expressed concern about making such a big decision this evening and wondered if more time was needed.

Mills informed that he agreed with picking a playground that has a low profile and doesn't block the view of the lake. He said he was in favor of nautical colors as well.

Blievernicht said that she was ready to make a recommendation to the City Council this evening.

Pugh stated that she was too.

Kahn said she likes the playground that has monkey bars. She said monkey bars are popular with older kids.

Soule agreed that monkey bars are popular.

Pugh also agreed that monkey bars are popular and she would like the playground to have them.

Blievernicht stated that she liked playground design 6 with the monkey bars and the combinations of slides. She said she was in support of nautical colors.

Pieper asked if there was any flexibility with the playground features and if anything could be moved or replaced with other amenities.

Prich stated that the presented playgrounds were specifically designed for the current space and parameters of the park. He said because of that, there isn't much flexibility.

Mills moved to recommend to the City Council moving forward with Playground Design number 6 from Northland Recreation/Little Tykes with nautical themed colors. Pieper seconded. All voted in favor. 5-0.

Mills recommended that the POSC discuss the name change recommendation at the next meeting.

Kahn agreed to have it on the May POSC agenda and that staff research the history of the name of the park. She explained that they need more information why Chester Park was named that.

7. **Lost Lake Commons – Phase II**

Bauman introduced this item to the POSC. He explained that Phase I of the Lost Lake Commons park was completed in 2024 with the plan to complete Phase II in 2025. He noted that concept plans have been prepared for the POSC to review for Phase II and that staff is asking that the POSC narrow down design elements for different park features. Bauman explained that the goal with some of the park features would be to include them in a community survey to get community input.

Bauman noted that Phase I is about 90% complete. He explained that the irrigation system and the growing of the grass is planned for this year. Bauman said that Phase II elements will include more of the landscaping and art features of the park. He noted that Phase III will later include the construction of a band stand, and the repaving of the nearby parking lot that is currently used for the Mound Farmers Market.

Bleakly reviewed the eight Phase II elements that the POSC would be reviewing that evening, including, elements related to the plaza, a seating area, the art walk, the art installations, the monument sign, wayfinding signage, interpretive signage, and electrical features.

Plaza and Fire Ring

Bleakly stated that this part of the project would include site grading, plaza pavement, a fire ring with seating and landscaping elements. She asked the POSC what they would like to see as far as the fire pit aesthetic and included ideas that included river rock, limestone, and/or decorative concrete for the design. Bleakly asked the POSC their thoughts on gas versus wood and if the fire pit would be used for events only and/or if it would be available for anyone to use when they want. She asked about what seating features they would like to see included.

Pugh recommended a material that is long lasting and low maintenance for the fire ring material.

Bleakly noted that concrete is likely to last the longest of all the presented materials.

Blievernicht expressed the importance of safety and asked which of the two, gas versus wood, was safer overall.

Bauman noted that there are pros and cons for both wood fires and gas fires. He stated that the city needs to decide which one it prefers.

Lemmerman asked who would supply the wood for wood fires and if supplied by the city, would it be year-round. He said that a gas fire would be easier to control overall.

Kahn expressed concern about a gas line breaking down and the maintenance of it overall. She said that she would like to see the fire pit be a year-round activity option. She noted that the reason for the location was because there is an intention to have an ice rink located nearby during the winter months. Kahn talked about people bringing their own wood to create their own fires. She asked who would clean the pit though when it needs to be cleaned.

Lemmerman explained that cleaning the fire pit wouldn't be too difficult. He did express concern about making sure a wood fire was able to be properly contained and thus not setting anything nearby on fire if it wasn't controlled well. He agreed that there are pros and cons to both gas and wood fires.

Bleakly stated that there could be educational signage nearby informing about the fire pit. She stated that if it were a gas fire, that it could be on a timer that would turn off after a certain amount of time.

Mills expressed concern about a gas fire system breaking down and the maintenance required to get it up and running again. He said that if it were to be down for too long of a time because it was broken, it could cause frustration. He said he liked the idea of wood fires better.

Pieper stated that wood fires have a different feel to them.

Joe Grey (2350 Harbor Place), representative of the Artesa Community Coop, noted that he is representing the Artesa community located nearby the park. He stated that they recently had a meeting on the park and that the community is very excited about the park and its upcoming features. Grey informed that the Artesa development has an outside gas fire feature that has been working well for their outside lounging area. He recommended that if a gas fire ring is used to include instructions nearby explaining how to use it.

Prich stated that if the city were to go with gas, a decision would have to be made on how big the fire ring would be and budget for the cost of gas. He said that the city should look into if it is possible to have a timer in place for how long the fire would run. He agreed that there are pros and cons to both gas and wood. He explained that the wood fire pits worked well for the holiday tree lighting event last year.

Pieper agreed with having some sort of control in place to control the use. He also stated that instructions would be great as well. He asked if the Fire Department has a preference over wood or gas fires. Pieper said that he liked the river rock look for the fire pit, as this theme has been used in other parts of the city.

Kahn said she liked the river rock look as well since it would tie into other parts of the city's features.

Blievernicht agreed with the river rock style.

Mills said that he was ok with the river rock. He said he just wants something that is low maintenance.

Seating Area

Bauman showed a image of several concept drawings for the seating area of the park. He noted that the current pavers are in bad shape and therefore recommends replacement and not reuse. He reviewed the seating area elements that included the plaza pavement design, site furnishings, and landscaping.

Kahn said that she liked Option 1 of the three presented.

Pieper agreed with Option 1.

Bleakly asked what kind of seating options the POSC would like to see.

Pugh asked for seating with arms to help make seating more accessible for the aging population.

Pieper asked for tables that have accessibility features.

Prich stated that tables and chairs will be movable and not mounted to the ground.

Pieper asked about having tables that have coverage from the sun, like an umbrella.

Art Walk

Bleakly reviewed three concept options for the art walk section of the park. She asked the POSC to discuss the art walk and hammock grove elements including the concrete pavement design, the art foundations, the seat block benches, the hammock posts, and landscaping.

Mills stated that he liked the option 3 design for the hammocks because they are less visible and tucked into the landscaping features more.

Pieper recommended that the city choose more native planting options if possible. He recommended maple trees and oak trees. He expressed concern about non-native options being more prone to disease and dying quicker.

Mills agreed with using native plantings.

Prich informed that native plantings can be great, but that they too can come with more maintenance and upkeep. He noted that the city's public works department has limited staff for park maintenance and that it is important to take ongoing maintenance into consideration when choosing trees and landscaping. He recommended not choosing anything too messy. He expressed concern about choosing features that will require too much maintenance and then staff struggling to maintain it adequately.

Pugh talked about relocating the tree used for the Christmas tree lighting.

Pieper recommended planting more trees in the open space of the park for shade.

Bleakly asked about the POSC's preferences for the art footing designs in which art would be installed. She reviewed several concepts that include concrete, river rock, and stone. Bleakly showed a concept of a changeable cabinet where art could be placed temporarily and changed out from time to time. She explained that it could be art from the local schools.

Pugh said that she liked the close to the ground slabs for the art installations. She said she would like to see at least one of the changeable cabinets.

Kahn liked the changeable cabinet as well for kids art from the local schools. She informed that she preferred the concrete slab for the art installations.

Pieper asked if there would be a gap between the art and the sidewalk. He expressed concern about the art being right against the sidewalk noting that people may then feel inclined to touch it. He asked if the art would be replaced over time.

Bauman said that there is a lot of unknowns at the moment as far as the art features. He said that it may be a good question for a community survey.

Grey noted that the Artesa Community expressed a desire to have art features that focused on educational and historical topics. He specifically referenced storytelling and engaging young kids into the art. Grey said that several residents of the Artesa Community have adopted the park as part of the city's Adopt a Green Space program and that they are excited to get involved and volunteer their time. Grey said that a community survey would be great.

Monument Sign

Bleakly showed a picture of the current park monument sign and noted that with the current name change, the sign needs to be updated to reflect the new name. She recommended that the POSC provide recommendations on adding in some landscaping features like plantings, stones, and flowers.

Mills recommended keeping the current sign and just changing the name section out. He agreed with adding plantings.

Wayfinding Signage

Bleakly showed images of several existing wayfinding signs in the park and their current condition. She noted that some of them are getting old and may need replacement.

Pieper liked the idea of keeping the river rock theme with the signage.

Kahn stated that she was ok with the current signs and didn't believe that the river rock elements needed to be added to the base of the signs.

Prich asked if it would be possible to rehabilitate the current signs or if they should be replaced. He noted that there were more signs in the past, but that several of them have had to be taken down because they were falling apart. He said that they are almost 25 years old.

Interpretive Signage

Bauman showed several examples of interpretive signage styles and the recommended locations for these signs for the park including topics amount Tonka Toys, Native American History, and the Andrews Sisters.

Kahn noted that the examples provided were different and based on the type of information provided. She said that she agreed that the style of the sign should reflect the type of information being provided.

Electrical

Bauman talked about electrical features for the park including pedestrian lights, flood lighting, lighted bollards, event power, and power pedestals.

Pieper recommended amber LED lighting/soft yellow to help with the bugs.

8. Parks Visit Discussion Public Works

Prich handed out some documents on the city's long-term capital plan for the city parks. He also provided documentation on the Public Works Department Parks Lead inspections of the city parks for their information.

9. Top Commission/Top Individual Annual Priorities

Tabled until next meeting.

10. Reports

Staff Reports: NA.

City Council Representative: NA.

Commission Comments:

POSC Commissioner Pieper: Letter to Community Education/Westonka School District. (Tabled).

11. Next Meeting: May 8, 2025

Tentative Discussion Items:

Parks and Open Spaces: List of Protected Spaces.

Parks and Open Spaces Program – Review Program Documents.

12. Adjourn

Mills moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 PM. Pugh seconded. Motion carried 5-0.