



NORTH BRANCH —Minnesota—

**PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE
COMMISSION
REGULAR AGENDA
MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2024 @ 7:00 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

Charles Klopp
Chair

Bob Bernier
Commissioner

Farfum Ladroma
Commissioner

Lynn Wilson
Commissioner

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH IN THE COUNTY OF CHISAGO AND IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, June 3, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ROLL CALL
4. PUBLIC COMMENT
5. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA
 - a. Additions to the Agenda

ACTION

None

6. MINUTES
 - a. Approval of Minutes

ACTION

Motion by Ladroma to approve the minutes of the April 1, May 6, 2024 meetings and May 6, 2024 special meeting minutes. Seconded by Klopp. All voted AYE.

7. REPORTS
 - a. Park Fund Balances

INFO

Sondrol provided an overview of the park fund balances.

- b. Project Updates

INFO

Sondrol provided an overview of the project updates.

He noted that the pickleball courts were scheduled to be completed in June and walking trails later this

summer.

Wilson commended the public works crew for all their work to help bring the project under budget and allow for the additional walkway construction.

Sondrol noted that the language on the signage for the Riverwalk park dome was a trademark.

He noted that the seeding had been completed and would be looking to hold a grand opening in August.

He noted that a ribbon cutting for the Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail would be taking place on June 7 at the Harris trailhead and that the county would be conducting seal coating and fog sealing maintenance on the trail.

He noted that he is working with the Max Malmquist on survey costs and locations for potential future acquisition of the Malmquist property.

He noted that the Concerts in the Park would be starting on June 18 at the North Branch Viking Plaza and then again on June 25 at the Viking Plaza at the High School and the concerts would then shift back to Central Park in July and August.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Veterans Memorial

ACTION

Sondrol provided an overview of the North Branch Veterans Memorial Committee's request for the city to sponsor grant applications for the Veterans Memorial for funding that requires a local government entity to be the fiscal agent. He noted that an agreement could be developed similar to the agreement between the Veterans Committee and the City that was utilized for the site plan for the memorial.

Joe Scaramell, thanked the commission and veterans for their support of the project and bringing it to this point. He provided new marketing materials for the memorial to the commission and members of the public and noted that a website is in the process of being completed to help promote and provide info on the memorial and will be up and running in the next month. Scaramell presented the marketing video of the memorial to the commission, noting that several of the members that participated in the video serve the North Branch Community in a variety of ways.

Scaramell noted that the project has been in the process for a long time and has explored several options including a location. He noted that school site location had potential issues of the long term ability of memorial to remain there and that the memorial being centrally located and highly visible has been a top priority for the veterans for the memorial.

Bob Streater felt that the Veterans Memorial is a great project but expressed concerns with future impacts to Midsummer Days with the Veterans Memorial going into the park. He felt that the memorial should be funded by community support and not utilize state grant funding and the funding from the state should be utilized for helping veterans with housing and mental health issues.

Klopp noted that the American Legion hosts the Midsummer Days carnival and that they were the ones who identified Central Park as the location for the memorial with the understanding of the impact on the carnival.

Scaramell noted that the legion has been very involved with memorial location in the park and have

discussed modifying the carnival to not infringe upon the memorial location site. He noted that there are several grant funding opportunities that are focused to regional projects including memorials. He noted that significant planning has been put into the determining the location of the memorial in Central Park. He noted that placing the memorial in this location put Veterans front and center in the community.

Klopp noted that the agenda item tonight was to discuss supporting a funding request for the memorial not the placement of the memorial. Sondrol added that the request was for the city to provide support and act as a project sponsor for state grant funding applications. Klopp inquired about the source of the funds. Sondrol noted that there are legacy funds, legislative appropriations and other opportunities.

Wilson inquired if there are funds that are specifically identified for projects as memorials. Scaramell noted that there are grant programs that are identified specifically set up for projects such as memorials noting the City of Wyoming recently received a \$100,000 grant for their project. He noted that the veterans committee is working with Senator Koran to help identify funding opportunities.

Ladroma inquired if there is a timeline for the grant funding. Scaramell noted that deadline for legislative funding is May 2025. Ladroma expressed that he would like to see an MOU. Neider inquired as to a timeline for the funds to be utilized if they were received. Klopp inquired how grant funding may impact competing with concerts in the park funding. Sondrol noted that it would all depend on the grant funding applied for. He noted that the concerts in the park is from a separate funding opportunity. Wilson inquired if there was an advantage to having this completed sooner than later. Scaramell felt that is very beneficial to have it submitted sooner than later. Wilson inquired about other fundraising activities planned. Scaramell noted that the committee will be hosting a gala and are exploring other event activities for fundraising.

Streater felt that the commission had a duty to analyze the location of the memorial and impact on the use of the park. He added that he had provided the initial thoughts to the veterans memorial committee to explore regional grant funding to acquire another site for the Veterans Memorial that would be in a safer location and would not create a conflict or impact to Midsummer days carnival.

Ladroma noted that cameras have been installed in Central park that could provide additional help for deterring vandalism to the memorial.

Motion by Ladroma for city staff to develop a draft agreement between the city and veterans memorial committee for the city to act as a fiscal sponsor for grant funding applications and bring it back to the next meeting for review. Seconded by Wilson. All voted AYE. Motion carried.

b. BCBS/National Fitness Campaign (NFC)

ACTION

Sondrol provided the commission with an overview of the BCBS/National Fitness Campaign grant funding opportunity.

Bernier noted that there is one in St Cloud and during his travels has not noticed much use on it. He did not feel that this was something that the city should pursue at this time.

There was consensus from the commission to not pursue this at this time.

c. Ragnar Relay Special Event Permit

ACTION

Sondrol provided an overview of the Ragnar Relay special event permit scheduled for August 9/10, 2024.

Motion by Wilson to approve the Ragnar Relay special event permit application for August 9/10 2024. Seconded by Bernier. All voted AYE. Motion carried.

d. Meadows Ridge Preliminary Plat

ACTION

Sondrol provided an overview of the Meadows Ridge Planned Unit Development. He noted that the development is within the Meadows North Park credit utilization area. He noted that there are trails and sidewalks planned throughout the development

Neider inquired how many units were in development. Sondrol noted 342 units were proposed. Wilson inquired if the city had the ability to accommodate this number of units. Sondrol noted that an EAW was being completed to address those concerns. He noted that trail connections were being installed along Flink and 400th and that an open space park area was being planned to connect to the proposed adjacent Chain Lake Shore development providing access to Chain Lake. Sondrol noted that the development was planned to be completed in 5 phases.

Ladroma inquired if there is a park to resident ratio or if there is a distance. Sondrol noted that the city's comprehensive plans identifies having a walkable and bikeable community that provide parks and open space within a 1/2 mile or 10 minute walk.

Wilson inquired if the ponds were usable open space. Sondrol noted that the ponds were intended for stormwater management and that trails had been identified in those locations. Wilson suggested pollinator plantings in the outlot ponding areas.

Ladroma inquired about access to Chain Lake. Sondrol showed an overview of the concept plan for the Chain Lake Shores development that would connect to the open space park area in Meadows Ridge allowing access to the lake.

Bernier inquired how many additional units there would be outside the park credit utilization area. Sondrol noted 60 based on the preliminary plat.

Motion by Bernier to recommend the acceptance of cash for park dedication fees for the units above the park credit utilization area. Seconded by Ladroma. All voted AYE. Motion carried.

e. Pollinator Pathways Request for Proposal (RFP)

ACTION

Sondrol provided an overview of the Pollinator Planting RFP to the commission. He noted that the SWCD was planning to submit an application and that they were looking for interest from community partners on potential projects. He noted that Clayton Anderson Park had been identified in the past as a location for pollinator plantings and possible Oak Savanna.

Wilson inquired if this is something that could be extended to private residences. Sondrol noted that Chisago SWCD could potentially look into this.

Bernier inquired if the SWCD would be requesting the city to contribute to the 10% match. Sondrol noted that the city would need to provide a match, noting that it could be in-kind labor. He would not expect the match to exceed a maximum of 10,000. Wilson inquired if the grant would allow for the purchase of pollinator trees and how that may help with the city's Tree City designation. Sondrol noted that it would.

Bernier inquired where the funds would come from. Sondrol noted the park improvement fund or general levy if the in-kind match was utilized.

Wilson felt that there was definite interest in this. Bernier felt that trail development would be a higher priority than increasing pollinator habitat at this location.

Motion by Klopp to support the Chisago SWCD pollinator pathway RFP. Seconded by Ladroma. 3 (AYES) 1 (NAY)

Wilson inquired if any of the other commissions had appointed their representative for the joint commission meeting. Mayor Scheiber noted that he is working with Interim Administrator Jason Ziemer.

9. OLD BUSINESS

a. PTOS Strategic Plan

INFO

Sondrol provided an overview of the draft Wildridge Park community survey based on initial discussion and feedback from the Wildridge Homeowners Association meeting with city staff.

Dave Maas, noted that when they purchased their home they were informed that area behind their home would never be developed and not told that there was a plan for soccer fields or a park. He noted that he did not want to see soccer fields at this location.

Sondrol noted that the commission has identified placing info kiosks in each park to help residents or visitors more aware of future plans/development. Wilson noted that she has heard from others who have purchased homes in the neighborhood that were made aware.

Vikcy Maas, inquired if the wildridge master plan is set in stone and going to happen. Klopp noted that the city is seeking feedback from the community what they would like to see in that park.

Haylee Goulet, noted that she contacted the city and attended the commission previously to work with the city to conduct a survey to help educate and inform the neighborhood of the park and what they would like to see in the park.

Neider noted that she would encourage new residents to contact the city and do as much research as possible to help know what is with and around that property.

Ladroma noted that the park is a public park and is open and available to all public.

Sondrol noted that the city is working with Haylee Goulet of the Wildridge development to contact residents in the Wildridge neighborhood and the city would be posting on its website and social media sites. He noted that the survey helps guide and prioritize future park development.

Goulet noted she would work with each HOA to obtain contact info and distribute the survey to their respective associations.

Sondrol inquired if the commission had any additional info that they would like to include in the survey.

There was consensus support to move forward with the survey.

Bob Streater, expressed that he along with others did not feel welcome to provide their comments at public meeting over the past few years. He felt that the Williams Park site has significant opportunities along County Road 30/Old Highway 61 and that community gardens may not be use in that location. He also expressed the ability to utilize storm water retention ponds as park/open space areas.

Klopp noted that the commission is in the process of developing a strategic plan of its parks, trails and open space facilities. He added that there is an agreement in place with the Williams Park Community Gardens that would relocate the gardens with a 1 year notice.

Streater felt that the commission should look to engage citizen and community groups to conduct long term planning for its parks and trails and open space system. Wilson inquired as to how engage the community. Streater suggested going out to neighborhoods and to get community input. Wilson suggested conducting outreach at the concerts as an option. Klopp noted that the City Council has started a joint commission meetings.

Streater noted that he is part of a group that has started called North Branch First to obtain nonpartisan discussion and solutions.

Bernier inquired if Streater felt that there is a desire to buildout Williams Park. Streater felt that the community is high taxed and that a plan needs to be developed to begin looking at fundraising options. Streater felt that the community could capitalize on Old Highway 61 and tourism efforts at Williams Park.

10. NEXT MEETING - July 1. 2024: 7PM

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ladroma to adjourn. Seconded by Wilson. Meeting adjourned.