

**City of Woodbury
Woodbury City Hall
8301 Valley Creek Road
Woodbury, MN 55125
651-714-3583**

**Minutes of
Parks and Natural Resources Commission Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 5, 2022**

Commission Members Present:	Chair Greta Bjerckness, Timothy Brewington, II, Arin Kurttila (Co-chair), Bruce Montgomery, Deborah Musser, Rachel Nelson, Wallace Wadd, Brandon Mersch, Emerson Siefken
Commission Member(s) Absent:	None
Commission Member Virtual:	None
Councilmember In-person:	Councilmember Jennifer Santini
Staff Present:	Michelle Okada, Parks and Recreation Director Sarah Alig, Senior Management Analyst Jennifer McLoughlin, Sr. Environmental Resources Coordinator Belinda Reed, Recording Secretary
Staff Virtual:	Jodi Sauro, Parks and Recreation Coordinator

Call to Order

Chair Bjerckness called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Open Forum

Members of the public were in attendance in-person and virtually.

Mr. Joe Ward, 7817 Somerset Circle, Woodbury, Minnesota 55125, addressed the commission on the subject of environmental stewardship and asked the commission to make a recommendation to the City Council, to consider environmental stewardship as a strategic initiative as well as hire a consultant.

Ms. Molly McCoole, 8511 Timberwood Road, Woodbury, Minnesota 55125, Woodbury High School Environmental Club member, shared with the commission her concern related to surface water quality.

Ms. Audrey Fedunok, 2330 Kings Circle, Woodbury, Minnesota 55125, Woodbury High School Environmental Club member, shared with the commission her concern related to ground water pollution and recommended that the City Council select environmental stewardship as a strategic initiative.

Ms. Stephanie Wang, 7672 Somerset Road, Woodbury, Minnesota 55125, provided her previously involvement in the community and noted her affiliation as a co-founder of the Friends of the

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Tamarack Nature Preserve. Ms. Wang recommended the City Council adopt an environmental stewardship strategic initiative.

Mr. Roger Green, 1254 Donegal Drive, Woodbury, Minnesota 55125, provided a background of his previous involvement in the community as well as other organization affiliations. Mr. Green would like to see more resources for environmental sustainability and suggested a task force be created to address emerging community needs that require additional allocation of resident and business tax investment and/or grants.

The Rev. Anna Doherty, 3308 North View Lane, Woodbury, Minnesota 55125, addressed the commission from a spiritual perspective on the issue of environmental stewardship and asked that an environmental stewardship initiative be recommended to the City Council.

Action Items

A. March 1, 2022, Parks and Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes

Chair Bjerckness asked for the approval of the Minutes of the March 1, 2022, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Commission.

Motion: Moved by Commissioner Montgomery, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to approve the March 1, 2022, Parks and Natural Resources Commission Minutes.

Vote: In favor All in-person and virtual
Against None
Absent None

B. Environmental Stewardship Statement of Intent – Memorandum No. 22 – 11

Ms. Michelle Okada noted that this portion of the meeting will be conducted by Ms. Sarah Alig and Ms. Jennifer McLoughlin and styled like a workshop.

The commissioners were provided two handouts: a worksheet and a Sample Statement template. Ms. Alig noted that the handouts were for ease of reference, as the group works on putting together a collaborative statement for the City Council. Ms. Alig noted that since the March PNRC meeting, staff attempted to summarize the group's conversation in a letter format, resulting in the drafted handout "Sample Statement – for Collaborative Revision."

At this point, the commissioners were asked to spend five minutes reviewing and reflecting on the handouts and encouraged to wordsmith and take notes.

Ms. Alig noted that in summarizing what the commissioners noted as their hopes along with what they worry about and what action they would like to see taken, the Sample Statement was a compilation of all of those things to determine what the commission would like to convey for City Council's consideration, when the Council makes their strategic initiative selection at the June workshop.

Ms. Alig then asked the commissioners to collaborate with their neighboring commissioner for the next five-minute period.

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Starting with paragraph 2 in the Sample Statement, a discussion took place to identify what pieces were identified as important or missing from the statement.

A discussion took place with regard to the commission having previously expressed their values and there was a consensus to move forward with the recommendation to the City Council to designate environmental stewardship as a strategic initiative.

Important things the commissioners mentioned as concerns during the environmental stewardship discussions, which they would like to be communicated to the City Council:

- Clean air and water
- Safety for all
- Include what we believe and love
- Help protect the most vulnerable members of the community, such as individuals with chronic health conditions
- Review opportunities
- Resident engagement is important
- Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely
- Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity
- How to address emerging issues
- We are at a crossroad – gas emissions, blue algae bloom
- Local things that are in danger.
- Commission is ready to serve, take action
- Greenhouse gases and time is running short to make meaningful reductions and burning fossil fuels
- More emphasis on the risks of not making a formal plan
- Urgent, massive, and complex issues
- Urgency, that time is running short if we don't have a plan
- Action plan with robust public engagement process
- Narrow down list of possible actions
- Include recommendations that are tangible for residents to take action on
- Language as to what we want professional services to accomplish
- Cost benefit ratio analysis looking at how much we spend and the outcome
- Prioritize paragraph at the end that will produce concrete, measurable steps that people and businesses can take to achieve goals
- Green space – reduce those high-density zones, concerns about crime
- Health of the southernmost tamarack stand in the state
- Smoke from wildfires
- Heat waves
- Emerald Ash Borer

It was noted that the PNRC City Council Liaison has had the benefit of hearing the environmental stewardship discussion at each meeting while the other City Council members have not had that same opportunity. In order to make an impactful and concise statement to move forward the recommendation of environmental stewardship as a Council strategic initiative, it was suggested that the “ask” to elevate environmental stewardship among all the other important items the city is facing and need to be considered by the City Council.

Ms. Okada noted that the City Council receives each PNRC monthly packet issued.

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A discussion took place regarding whether existing city staff has the time to properly address environmental stewardship for the community and whether a consultant might be hired to help draft a plan. A suggestion was made to reach out to the residents about environmental stewardship and be able to provide achievable steps and goals for individuals to act upon that are realistic, measurable and attainable.

Ms. Alig noted that the final paragraph could summarize that in order to eliminate these risks and lead the way to protect our community, while meeting the needs of future generations, the city must establish environmental stewardship strategic initiative and commit the resources, such as hiring a consultant to create an action plan.

Ms. Alig noted staff will refine the statement, to include the specifics the commission has identified as important to be included in the statement. The new statement will then be brought to the May PNRC for the commission's review to affirm whether the statement reflects what the commission wants to go to the City Council from the collective body.

C. Monthly Update – Memorandum No. 22 – 12

Ms. Okada noted that staff has been working on a design and created a beautiful video for the Angel of Hope project. The community group will begin fundraising efforts in preparation for construction in 2023. Final agreement and design is pending Council approval.

Ms. Okada noted that the Recreation Division summer program registration experienced the best first week sign-ups in history. Seasonal staff hiring remains a concern. Staff are utilizing every creative approach, including social media, recruitment at area high schools, etc. Ms. Okada asked if the commissioners know anyone that may have an interest in working with us, please encourage them to visit the city's website employment section.

Council Report – Councilmember Santini

Councilmember Santini noted that March 30, was a joint workshop meeting with the Cottage Grove City Council and included a Glacial Valley Park presentation made by the South Washington County Watershed District.

Announcements/Miscellaneous

Ms. Okada noted that the community engagement for the Central Park renovation project has begun with open houses for the general city and stakeholder meetings for city partners, Central Park renters, seniors, youth, and pop-ups for all park users.

Ms. Okada noted that the May, PNRC agenda will be quite full and inquired if the commission would like to start park tours, similar to past years, scheduled either immediately before the monthly meetings in order to obtain group feedback, or ask each commissioner to visit a park space individually. There was a consensus to meet as a group. Park spaces listed for future visits included: Hasenbank Woods; especially if the goats are present and Andy's Bark Park and Community Garden.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Belinda Reed

Belinda Reed
Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Parks and Natural Resources Commission on May 3, 2022.