

**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, June 6, 2023**

**Commission Members Present:** Timothy Brewington, II, Anna Doherty, Charles Eckberg, Bruce Montgomery (Co-chair), Deborah Musser (Chair), Edward Myatt, Wallace Wadd, Noah Yehalashet

**Commission Member(s) Virtual:** None

**Commission Member(s) Absent:** None

**Councilmember:** Kimberly Wilson

**Staff Present:** Josh Kinney, Parks Planner  
Belinda Reed, Recording Secretary  
Reed Smidt, Recreation Manager  
Jennifer McLoughlin, Environmental Resources Mgr.

**Staff Virtual:** Jodi Sauro, Parks and Recreation Coordinator

**Consultant:** Ted Redmond, paleBLUEdot

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Open Forum**

In-person and virtual

**3. Action Items**

A. May 2, 2023, Parks and Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes

Chair Musser asked for the approval of the Minutes of the May 2, 2023, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Commission.

**Motion:** Moved by Commissioner Myatt, seconded by Commissioner Eckberg, to approve the May 2, 2023, Parks and Natural Resources Commission Minutes.

**Vote:** In favor All  
Against None  
Absent None

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### **4. Copper Hills Park Project Concept Plan Review – Memorandum No. 23 – 19**

Ms. Okada noted that the Copper Hills Park project is included in the 2023 Park Dedication and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget, with an appropriation for the project this year; however, the development occurred a little bit slower than originally anticipated and as a result the park project is now planned for implementation in 2024.

Mr. Kinney shared the project location map, provided a review of the South of Dale Master Plan, the project concept and park schedule. The Copper Hills Park final concept is scheduled to be brought back for a final review by the PNRC, in the fall.

The nearly 2 acre park location is a welcoming gateway nestled in between Dale Road and Radio Drive, near multi-family townhomes.

Mr. Kinney noted the South of Dale Master Plan effort included a robust community engagement led by the city's Community Development and Engineering Departments. The plan set a framework for another 3.2 miles of connectivity, with bike trail connections, a distribution of amenities to be complementary to one another, as well as to the greater city park system, and includes natural resources opportunities and storm water.

Mr. Kinney identified various amenities that fit well in the Copper Hills Park space such as an athletic field, with open green space in the outfield, a playground for a wide spectrum of users, trees for shade, picnicking and if the budget allows, a small shelter. Also being reviewed is bump in parking to provide a few parking stalls.

A possible park shelter amenity was discussed, which could be utilized by the park users as well as made available for reserving for exclusive use. Mr. Kinney noted, that depending on the cost estimates or if something significantly changes, this could be an alternate.

A broader discussion ensued with regard to the general park planning process and how the entire city distribution of park amenities, is used to identify where the gaps are within the park system as new parks are being designed and built, including this park project. The distribution of nearby park system amenities such as those located at M Health Fairview Sports Center and Briarcroft Park, and/or being planned for other parks in the South of Dale Master Plan area, such as Glacial Valley Park and the Westwind development, were discussed.

There was consensus among the Commission that the concept plan will serve the area well and move it forward for approval.

### **5. 2024 – 2028 Parks and Trails System Capital Improvement Projects Annual Review - No. 23 – 20**

Ms. Okada noted that the draft 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was reviewed at the May 17, City Council workshop, with Council providing direction to staff for fine tuning the plan, prior to the City Council's formal plan adoption scheduled at the June 28, 2023, City Council meeting.

Ms. Okada noted that the CIP is a five-year planning document with no expenditure authorized until the capital project or equipment is placed in the annual budget for appropriation authorization. The Commissioners were encouraged to let staff know if there were any questions, or any projects they

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think are missing from the current draft plan, or identify items they would like to see evaluated or considered in a future CIP.

A discussion ensued with regard to how the city identifies land for acquisition for possible future parkland development. Ms. Okada provided information on the undeveloped city-owned parcels of land, including land currently being leased out for farming, as well as a life estate parcel near the M Health Fairview Sports Center. It was noted that the Comprehensive Plan identifies priority parkland for future acquisition, whether it be for natural resource value or for the ultimate completion of the park system, and while park dedication will not support the ultimate buildout of the park system, the city has in the past partnered with Washington County to acquire property, as well as applied for grant funding.

A discussion took place with regard to art in nature and incorporating art into the park system. Mr. Kinney noted that the city staff is working with the Watershed District on art and placemaking at Hasenbank Park. Commissioners mentioned they liked art and sculpture walks.

A discussion ensued with regard to boating opportunities in the city. Staff noted that there is one drive-in boat ramp in Menomini Park for Battle Creek Lake and that walk-in opportunities are available at Powers Lake, Colby Lake and Carver Lake, for canoes and kayaks.

With regard to snowmobiling opportunities, it was noted that Washington County maintains the [Washington County Star Snowmobile Trail](#).

### **6. Park Naming Research and Recommendations for Review – Memorandum No. 23 – 21**

Ms. Okada noted that the city hired 106 Group, as a consultant, to facilitate an exercise with the Park Lands and Recreational Facilities Naming Advisory Committee (Naming Committee) and staff, in considering naming parks in honor of Woodbury's indigenous forefathers. Policy outlines that the Naming Committee makes recommendations to the City Council for consideration. Although the policy does not require any formal action from the PNRC, as part of the public process, having the PNRC review the recommendations for any concerns or glaring questions, is helpful.

As part of the park naming convention process in new developments, research was conducted with outreach and tribal consultations and guidance sought, resulting in the park names presented for review. Staff reviewed the recent park naming process, along with the specific recommendations made by 106 Group and approved by the Park Lands and Recreational Facilities Naming Advisory Committee.

- Arbor Ridge Development-Arbor Ridge Park
- Brirarcroft Development-Discovery Park
- Canvas/Dundalk Green Development-Conifer Glen Park
- Copper Hills Development-Copper Hills Park

According to the findings and connection with tribal leaders, parklands being named did not include any identifiable cultural significance in any of the four park spaces currently being named; however, the Battle Creek area in Woodbury is believed to have some cultural significance and has been identified as a priority acquisition in the city's comprehensive plan. Staff noted this may be a future opportunity to work with tribal leaders to co-create a park space.

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Ms. Okada noted that the process going forward is to take the additional key findings and recommendations of 106 Group and review and update the current policy and continue to foster a relationship with the indigenous communities and identify opportunities to work collaboratively on future parkland parcels.

A Commissioner shared that recently a local church went through a land acknowledgement process, including researching land ceded by the Dakota to the federal government in the mid-1800s. It was noted that Woodbury, originally was named “Red Rock,” which is considered a sacred name to the Dakota, suggesting that Woodbury write a land acknowledgement statement and continue work with the tribe(s).

One Commissioner shared their disappointment that none of the current parks will be specifically named to honor the Dakota people.

Mr. Kinney noted that the Woodbury Heritage Society is currently working on a history walk at Valley Creek Park, and that one theme is a respectful depiction of the ancestral use of the area land. A Commissioner suggested that an interpretive kiosk be used to provide information on how the land was used by the indigenous people.

### **7. Discussion Items<sup>1</sup>**

A. Current Projects – Status Update – Park Projects website page. Mr. Kinney noted that a number of projects are moving along nicely including the Colby Lake Park hockey rink replacement project, which is scheduled to begin after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

B. Central Park Renovation Project – Ms. Okada noted the project was awarded a \$7.5m grant in funding support from the State of Minnesota.

C. Environmental Stewardship Strategic Initiative Update – Ms. Jennifer McLoughlin and Mr. Red Redmond joined the meeting virtually.

Ms. McLoughlin described what is being planned for the project kick-off at the July PNRC workshop. Prior to the July workshop, the PNRC will be asked for their feedback to help aid in the development of the online community survey.

Mr. Redmond noted that that there will be 2 phases with each phase consisting of 4 primary components: online surveys, community engagement meetings, support for pop-up events and equity listening sessions with partners connecting with underrepresented populations.

For the online survey in Phase 1, input will be sought from the PNRC in shaping the plan. Mr. Redmond will provide the Commissioners with a link with four questions to capture their input.

1. Are there outcomes you would ideally like to see supported by this survey?
2. Are there any broad environmental stewardship topic sectors you would like to understand the level of community support for?
3. Do you have any questions you would suggest be considered for the survey?

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<sup>1</sup> Discussion and updates are intended to be informational or of brief inquiry. More substantial discussion of matter under status updates and miscellaneous should be scheduled for a future agenda.

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4. Do you have any other thoughts on how the survey might help or support the Commission work?

The Commission was asked to complete the survey by the end of day Friday, June 16.

Mr. Redmond noted that upon receipt of the PNRC survey input, a draft survey will be developed, and presented to the PNRC at the July workshop for review, with the final survey available to the residents in order to capture their thoughts and priorities with regard to environmental stewardship. The goal is to make the survey available to the community for as long a period as possible; July through December, followed by Phase 2, the drafting of an environmental plan for input in the fall of 2024.

### **8. Monthly Update – Memorandum No. 23 – 22**

Ms. Okada noted the Monthly Update continues to highlight the various division activities.

### **9. Council Report – Councilmember Wilson**

Councilmember Wilson noted upcoming Council meetings: Council workshops (consent agenda followed by workshops on June 14, and 21, both starting at 6:30 p.m.; and Council meeting on June 28, at 7 p.m.

Councilmember Wilson also highlighted the City Council and Planning Commission joint workshop meeting scheduled for September 18, as well as the Parks and Recreation summer movie series “Starlight Cinema,” which begins at 7 p.m., on Thursday, June 15, in Ojibway Park.

### **10. Announcements/Miscellaneous**

- Volunteer opportunity to help plant a raingarden at City Hall on June 7, 5-7 p.m.
- Reminder for the PNRC to complete the paleBLUEdot survey by Friday, June 16.
- Woodbury’s annual Fourth of July Hometown Celebration at M Health Fairview Sports Center with festivities starting at 5:30 p.m., with fireworks display at 10 p.m.
- Ms. Okada noted that the PNRC July 11, meeting will be a facilitated workshop, held at the Ojibway Park building with agenda and directions to follow.
- City updated its lawn watering policy to allow watering two days per week. Information is available on the city website.

### **11. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Belinda Reed*

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Belinda Reed  
Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Parks and Natural Resources Commission on September 12, 2023.

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