

# Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Minutes November 6, 2019

## Attendance:

Commissioners: Beth Kleinke, Judy Gibbs, Brandon Van Tassel, John Lindgren, Mike Pennington, Nancy Schuldt, Mike Schrage, Brandon Krumwiede.

Absent: None

City Staff: Jim Filby Williams, Director of Administration; Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator; Clark Christenson, City Forester; Jennifer Ondrik, Administrative Clerical Specialist.

## Call to Order:

The meeting started at 6:03 pm.

## Minute Approval:

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019, Meeting. M/S/C.

## Announcements:

Susan Stanich opted to end her term early, and therefore, there is a vacancy on the Commission. The City Clerk's office will be accepting [online applications](#) now through their targeted spring recruitment effort at which time the City will proceed to fill that and any other positions whose terms have ended.

## NEW BUSINESS:

**Tree Preservation Standards Text Amendment** – Steven Robertson, Senior Planner with the City of Duluth, explained the reasoning behind the proposed changes to the City Code, known as the Unified Development Chapter (UDC). The terms “special tree” and “significant tree” are currently both used throughout the document and have caused some confusion. The first proposed amendment is that “significant tree” be referred to as a “*tree of interest*”. The other amendment proposed is to slightly increase the calculation used to determine the replacement ratio of trees. Clark informed the Commission he is also working on a 1-page application for folks to request and obtain approval on tree inventories and replacement plans. The Commission felt it would be beneficial to include the scientific names of the listing of trees of interest. The Commission voted to approve the proposed amendments to the UDC. The amendment will now go to the Planning Commission for approval.

**VOTE: Yes – 8; Opposed – 0 – Motion carried.**

## Hartley Natural Area Management Plan

Diane Desotelle updated the Commission on the DNAP Management plan for the nominated Hartley Natural Area based on comments received and final editing. The group discussed these changes and were asked to vote to approve this plan as written.

**VOTE: Yes – 8; Opposed – 0 – Motion carried.**

Next, the plan will go before the Planning Commission and finally onto City Council for as part of the final designation of the Hartley Natural Area to the DNAP.

**St. Louis River Natural Area**

The Commission discussed the St. Louis River Natural Area draft management plan. The Commission was asked to send edits and comments to both Diane and Gini Breidenbach (MN Land Trust) for incorporation into the revised final draft for review in December. The group would like to see additional information and background to better explain how and why the nine separate areas were selected that make up the St. Louis River DNAP area. Much of this is included in the nomination packet, and staff will consider how best to provide the information. Additionally, the Commission would like a more robust explanation as to the challenges and limits on including adjacent and connecting parcels. Furthermore, they asked to include language that highlights the importance of preserving the island sections on the Minnesota side and emphasize the ecological significance of the complementary Wisconsin shoreline. Finally, it was discussed that referencing target dates rather than specific dates in this plan was preferred.

#### **Forester's Report**

Clark asked the Commission to vote on a letter of support to seek grant funding for costs associated with additional EAB removals next year.

**VOTE: Yes – 8; Opposed – 0 – Motion carried.**

Clark updated the Commission on City crew cleanup efforts from the small storm in late October. Most of the work was related to public hazards trees. Clark indicated that at a future meeting he would like the Commission's review on updates to the viewshed policy.

#### **Natural Resources Report (Diane Desotelle– Natural Resources Coordinator)**

Diane updated the Commission on recent efforts to write a Conservation Partners Legacy grant for vegetative restoration work on Amity Creek and invasive work follow-up at Kingbury Creek. She is also in the process of preparing a request for proposals (RFP) for work called for in the Hartley Natural Area Management Plan to be ready to complete projects should the area be designated as a DNAP in early 2020. Last, she updated the Commission on progress related to the St. Louis County land swap. The City and County have met to discuss the general process of how parcels will be identified and conveyed. The City's intention is to work with the Commission to develop guidelines on final parcel selection. Jim Filby Williams updated the Commission on recent developments related to Duluth's golf courses. In October, the City issued requests for residential development proposals at both [Enger](#) and [Lester](#) Gold Courses. These proposals are due on [November 21<sup>st</sup>](#). Jim Filby William will report on the number and character of the proposals received at the Commission's December meeting.

#### **NRC Bylaws Amendment – Section 9 (2<sup>nd</sup> reading)**

Proposed changes to Section 9 (Order of Business) of the NRC Bylaws were read for the second time. The Commission voted to approve the amendment.

**VOTE: Yes – 8; Opposed – 0 – Motion carried.**

#### **Adjournment:**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10, M/S/C.