

Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Minutes April 7, 2021 (WebEx)

Attendance:

Commissioners: Mike Pennington, Judy Gibbs, Brandon Krumwiede, Tiffany Sprague, Brian Fredrickson, Mike Schrage. **Absent:** John Lindgren, Nancy Schuldt

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

Call to Order:

The meeting started at 6:05 p.m.

Forest Revitalization Project Plan

Clark Christenson, City Forester, gave an opportunity for Commissioners to ask additional questions and discuss the public meeting and comments received for the Forest Stand Revitalization project as a follow-up to the Commission's vote held in March. The Commissioners requested that in the future the City provide all unedited public comments *prior* to holding a vote on a relevant agenda item. The Commission held an informal revote and it was unanimous in support of the Forest Revitalization Project as planned and approved at the March 2021 meeting. **(VOTE: 6 – Yes; 0 – No; 2 absent)**. The Commission also encouraged Clark to insure the City has thorough oversight before, during and after the Forest Stand Revitalization project work.

Natural Resources Coordinator Report

Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator, updated the Commission on her efforts this past month. (1) She has been working with the attorney's office to update the Ordinance that governs deer hunting within city limits. Most of the changes are minor language changes, but the City is proposing to change the setback from an occupied dwelling from 400 feet down to 250 feet. This would align with both Hermantown and Two Harbors and opens up more area to avoid hotspots. The Commission will be discussing this topic in depth next month. (2) Diane explained that the Brewer/Piedmont area is lacking good data on the type and health of the Native Plant Communities. Therefore, the City was able to contract mapping and assessment services. This work is and will be useful in future planning efforts and the restoration grant funded that is underway just above the zoo. (3) Progress continues on the Natural Resources Management Program Plan (NRMPP). The team is considering how best to use a decision support tool to help prioritize projects.

Forester's Report

Clark Christenson, City Forester, updated the Commission on the new inventory software secured for Park Maintenance. This software will allow him and his team to log all planted trees and spaces and capture detailed tree data and photos in city parks and boulevards. The group discussed the potential for this data to be available online for the public in the future. Clark also reported that his crew finished pruning efforts and are transitioning to removals, especially Ash. He will be sending out both broad (city-wide) and targeted outreach on EAB via media. Mailers

and brochures will be developed for the Park Point, Lincoln Park, Woodland, and Morley Heights neighborhoods. Clark indicated he will share this information with the NRC over the course of the summer.

Director's Report (Jim Filby Williams – Director of Property, Parks, & Libraries)

Director Filby Williams updated the Commission on the lands protection project with St. Louis County. The group is making progress on negotiating the specific parcel listing and is moving ahead on finalizing an agreement. Once negotiations are complete the listing will come before NRC and City Council for approval.

Announcements

Judy Gibbs volunteers to take on the vacant secretarial position until officer elections are held in September.

Public Comment

Barb Akre spoke representing the League of Woman Voters of Duluth and thanked the Commission for their excellent work.

Adjournment

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47, M/S/C.