



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes June 7, 2023

Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 330

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair Schuldt called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Lori Dando, Pam Foster, Judy Gibbs, Mike Schrage, Nancy Schuldt, Tiffany Sprague
Absent: Sophia Green, John Lindgren, Andrew Streitz

Staff Present: Allison Brooks, Kate Kubiak

III. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Schrage made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Dando. Unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of the May 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Sprague made a motion to approve the May 3, 2023 meeting minutes; seconded by Commissioner Schrage. Unanimously approved.

V. Old Business

A.) Tischer Creek Hartley Pond Feasibility Study – Bimonthly informational update

Kubiak stated that the modeling that will inform the study is progressing and additional funding has been secured to model the flow below the dam. The study is still on track for completion this fall, then there will be time for review and selection of the alternative. There will be two more meetings for public informational updates later this summer.

VI. New Business

A.) Post-EAB Urban Forest Planning

Kubiak commented that the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Management Plan, which primarily addresses boulevard trees, is on track for full implementation by 2025. The City is starting to plan for management after the EAB Management Plan is completed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced a funding opportunity to support urban forestry. The City has submitted an application to support post-EAB forest planning and work, which includes the proposed addition of three staff. The funding opportunity does not require a match if work will be completed in pre-identified environmental justice regions. Award announcement is anticipated to happen this fall.

B.) Arrowhead Bowhunters Association (ABA) 2022 Season Summary and 2023 Season Plans [Brian Borkholder and Phillip Lockett]

Brian Borkholder, secretary and treasurer for the ABA, and Phillip Lockett, president of the ABA, attended the meeting to provide an annual update on the Duluth Hunt. The ABA has been active for 18 years of hunting and during that time, over 7,000 deer have been harvested within Duluth. In 2022, the ABA placed 306 hunters and 166 deer were harvested. This year there was no earn-a-buck requirement based on feedback from hunters.

Commissioner Schrage asked if hunters were surveyed to gather more information about the type of deer that were harvested. Lockett responded that the surveys are qualitative and short. The types of questions ask if there are more, less than, or equal to the amount of antlerless in previous years. Respondents



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indicated that there were less antlerless deer this year. Commissioner Schrage asked what a balanced male to female ratio would be. Borkholder responded that there does seem to be more antlered deer than antlerless. Commissioner Schrage responded that the focus needs to be on the antlerless side if the intent is to reduce population. Borkholder agreed and commented that the focus has been on harvesting antlerless leading to a successful reduction in the quantity of deer being harvested, suggesting that the ratio is in favor of population reduction.

VII. Staff Reports

A.) Natural Resources Coordinator Report [Kate Kubiak]

Kubiak stated that the resolution to move forward with the public lands exchange will go before City Council on June 12.

B.) Director's Report [Jim Filby Williams]

Williams did not attend. No report.

VIII. Announcements

Vice Chair Schuldt shared that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has revoked the PolyMet copper-nickel mining wetlands permit. The project presented a risk for increased mercury and other pollutants entering the wetlands and St. Louis River downstream from the proposed mine, which would harm the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

IX. Public Comment

No comments.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Sprague made a motion to adjourn; second by Commissioner Dando. Unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Next Meeting - Wednesday, August 2 at 6:00 p.m. in Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 330. There will be no meeting in July.