



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of July 11, 2018

City Hall – Council Chambers  
411 W 1<sup>st</sup> St



## I. Call Meeting to Order

President Torch called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

## II. Roll Call

Present: Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, Dennis Isernhagen, Britt Rohrbaugh, Kristin Bergerson, John Schmidt, Dudley Edmondson, Dean Vogtman, Jill Joyce, Em Westerlund (City Council Liaison)

Not present: David Kirby (ISD 709 School Board Liaison), Frank Jewell (St. Louis County Board Liaison)

## III. Approval of June 13 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Torch motioned for approval of the June 9, 2018 meeting minutes; moved by Isernhagen, second by Schmidt. Unanimously approved.

## IV. Presentations

### A. Memorial Park WWI Memorial (Action Item) – William Roche, Parks and Recreation Manager

Roche: Shared the public process for the design concept on the incoming WWI Memorial for Memorial Park. Indicated that concept B was favorited by the public.

Roche: Shared the design concept of the favorited selection. Mentioned the two pillars would be granite, the flag would be lit with a solar power pole. Indicated there is future opportunity for individuals to raise funds for further additions to the memorial. Stated four trees will be planted for landscaping and aesthetic purposes. Requested consent from the Parks Commission to move forward with the design approval.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions from the Park Commissioners. No questions.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions from the public. No questions.

Torch: Commissioner Torch motioned to support the proposed design; moved by Vogtman, second by Edmondson. Unanimously approved.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions or comments from the Parks Commission before moving forward.

Torch: Called the vote, unanimously approved.



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### B. Climate Resiliency in Park Design (Informational) – Tom Beery, Minnesota Sea Grant

Tom Beery: Mentioned his previous term serving as a Parks Commissioner. Stated the focus of the Minnesota SeaGrant is protecting freshwater.

Tom Beery: Defined climate resiliency as being able to withstand disruption and how we can reduce our impacts. Defined climate adaptation as how we are preparing for the changes anticipated and currently experiencing.

Tom Beery: Stated Duluth is trending to be

1. warmer and wetter
2. losing overnight winter cold
3. increase in extreme rainfall events

Tom Beery: Displayed winter profile graph – explained the graph represents average temperature over a period of time. Displayed graph that indicates the downward trend of cold temperatures during the winter. Stated the biological importance that cold weather provides.

Tom Beery: Stated Duluth is experiencing changes with invasive insect's ability to survive the winter due to the warming temperatures. Indicated with the warming temperatures, the ability for EAB to spread has increased.

Tom Beery: Mentioned Duluth has received rain during every month in the last year. Highlighted the concern with skiing and the difficulty to maintain with the given conditions.

Tom Beery: Referred to conversations with Spirit Mountain regarding a piston bully (ski grooming equipment). Mentioned this is a great example for climate mitigation with the higher efficiency method for grooming. Stated the importance of including all aspect of recreation when thinking about climate resiliency, including maintenance.

Tom Beery: Passed out the draft for Duluth Parks and Recreation Resilience Checklist. Mentioned this draft is in the early stages for being a tool with future parks planning.

Tom Beery: Stated outdoor recreation has an incredible role with Duluth. Highlighted the bioswale next to the trail along the Duluth Traverse behind Marshall School. Stated this is an example of how outdoor recreation and storm water management go together.

Tom Beery: Indicated the damage to the Lakewalk from last year's storm was partially contributed by climate change. Mentioned the storm last fall caught us by surprise, but we can apply the ideas of resiliency to prepare for the future.

Torch: Opened the floor up for questions.

Vogtman: Thanked Tom Beery, mentioned the flood watch that we are currently in. Reflected on the



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history of flood events since 2012. Questioned if shore land tree planting occurs within the SeaGrant.

Beery: Confirmed he is involved with tree planting. Mentioned benefits that occur when trees are planted. Indicated tree planting is both climate adaptation and storm water management.

Crosby: Thanked Beery. Stated the presentation was fascinating.

Beery: Thanked Crosby.

Torch: Thanked Beery for the presentation. Expressed the hope to have the Resilience Checklist finalized in a timely manner to be used for future development of the Lakewalk Mini Master Plan and the Parks Master Plan.

Beery: Stated it is his job to do the research. Stated how he appreciated the Parks and Recreation team for being receptive in incorporating climate resiliency with parks planning.

Torch: Suggested to further expand the network with our city partners and groups.

Tom Beery: Agreed this would be a good idea.

Torch: Opened the floor for public comment.

Roche: Thanked Beery for the informative presentation. Stated the relationship with SeaGrant as being a long term partnership. Mentioned the hope to have Tom available during the future climate related events.

Torch: Thanked Roche.

Dave Zetner (public): Thanked the Parks and Recreation Commission by being cautious to Kayak Bay. Stated it was unfortunate that City Council didn't agree with the Parks Commission. Thanked the Parks Commission for being attentive to details.

Schmidt: Indicated the need to have discussions related to climate resiliency when creating Master Plans. Stated the past winter proved it being difficult to flood rinks and create snow for recreational opportunities.

Torch: Thanked Tom for the presentation.

C. Hartley Park Duluth Natural Areas Program (Informational) – Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator

Torch: Opened the floor for Diane Desotelle to present on the Hartley Park nomination for the Duluth Natural Areas Program.

Desotelle: Referred to the packet that was sent to the Parks Commissioners for the Hartley DNAP



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nomination. Indicated the DNAP program was adopted by ordinance in 2002, with the partnership with the Nature Conservancy. Stated the program is to protect and preserve Duluth's natural heritage by protecting properties from inappropriate development or exploitation.

Desotelle: Shared trees are important for carbon sequestration, which relates to climate resiliency. Reflected to 1942, where Hartley was first presented to the City, indicated the goal was to have the area purposed for wildlife habitat. Stated the Master Plan reflects that Hartley is an unusual expanse, diverse landscape, and has significant water resources. Highlighted Hartley contains one of Duluth's largest hardwood forests and meadows.

Desotelle: Indicated that the process of nominating an area also involves planning to protect and preserve the native plant communities.

Desotelle: Stated the process to nominate Hartley has been in partnership with the Hartley Nature Center. Mentioned the involvement with the Director, Tom O'Rourke.

Desotelle: Highlighted the nomination for Hartley would be for three areas – significant plant communities, water features, geological features. Displayed map of the Hartley nomination, highlighted the portion that was purchased from the school district.

Desotelle: Mentioned the portion in the northwest corner would be tax forfeited land, but the City has realized that this property is City owned. Reflected on the plant communities, indicated more survey work needs to occur. Highlighted the large patch of White Pine that is highly resistant to Blister Rust that is commonly found in MN.

Desotelle: Indicated the water features within Hartley, stated Tischer Creek is one of the 16 named trout streams in Duluth. Mentioned Hartley as an education center. Addressed that the current trails would adhere to the 2014 Master Plan – indicating the current trails would still exist, but new trails would not be added. Stated trails may be moved if impacts are being made to significant features.

Desotelle: Stated native plant communities are more diverse, stressed the importance of invasive species management and education.

Desotelle: Stated the pond as not being natural, but a plan will be involved to address the current fish communities within.

Desotelle: Indicated if a landowner is wanting to put an easement, they should contact the City. Highlighted this program will develop management plans for further protection and restoration. Stated the City is currently hiring for a full time City Forester and Natural Resources Coordinator. Mentioned the application for grants will be easier with a management plan that is put into place.

Desotelle: Referred to the stakeholder meeting that was held at Hartley Nature Center. Indicated the feedback from the meeting was overwhelmingly positive. Stated during the August 8<sup>th</sup> Parks Commission meeting, feedback would be brought back from the Parks Commissioners. Stated the nomination would be brought to City Council in September.



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Desotelle: Displayed the logo for the Duluth Natural Areas Program. Mentioned she would like to have the brochure completed for the next Parks Commission meeting.

Torch: Thanked Diane Desotelle for the presentation and the nomination packet. Opened the floor for questions.

Schmidt: Questioned if the response was positive at the public meeting.

Desotelle: Indicated all the responses were positive.

Schmidt: Questioned if the neighbors had a positive response during the meeting

Desotelle: Confirmed the neighbors had a positive response.

Schmidt: Thanked Diane Desotelle.

Joyce: Questioned the definition of what "hold water back" means.

Desotelle: Indicated hold water back refers to an area that catches storm water. Stated the slow the flow methodology. Highlighted the importance of not installing impervious surfaces. Stated as creeks get harder rains, it causes erosion. Mentioned if creeks are not used to the hard rain events, the creek starts to meander, and erosion begins.

Joyce: Stated she was glad to hear that this is a natural made structure. Thanked Desotelle for the clarification. Questioned if there are any other implications for Parks and Recreation by taking on this opportunity.

Desotelle: Stated the biggest implication is putting more effort into managing resources. Mentioned invasive species have been a big issue, indicated that restoring disturbed areas to something more natural will take more effort. Stated grant writing will come into play.

Roche: Stated Diane's response was good.

Edmondson: Questioned when City Council will see the nomination.

Desotelle: Indicated the current goal is September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Edmondson: Thanked Desotelle.

Vogtman: Questioned how the DNAP program would change the day to day organization within Parks and Recreation.

Roche: Indicated we are responsible to push forward the management plans that are put into place. Indicated this may not effect daily operations. Stated if a management plan is put into effect, we



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have a responsibility to enforce it. Highlighted the strong partners who are involved with Hartley. Mentioned this is an investment to protect the areas. Stated as the management plan is put into place, less maintenance will occur over the long run.

Torch: Stated he reviewed the nomination. Highlighted the understanding on why Hartley is nominated due to its ecological uniqueness. Indicated he would like to see a written document explaining why this nomination is important.

Desotelle: Questioned if Torch would like to see a background on the DNAP and why Hartley was nominated in a written document.

Torch: Confirmed with Desotelle. Indicated he sees this as a preface. Indicated it would be a great addition to what has already been created.

Desotelle: Stated this was a good suggestion. Questioned if it would be helpful to include a one-page document before the August 8<sup>th</sup> Parks Commission Meeting that reflected the DNAP history.

Torch: Confirmed it would be helpful. Questioned if there is a plan to address the process with future nominations.

Roche: Reflected on the older ordinance that established the DNAP. Indicated updates need to occur, and a formal process to be addressed. Stated that he is aware that the process is slow going. Indicated that Parks Commissioners have a formal role with DNAP nominations. Stated feedback is needed in a variety of areas to establish a solid process moving forward. Thanked the Parks Commissioners for providing feedback.

Torch: Thanked Roche. Questioned if the 26-acre parcel is City property.

Desotelle: Confirmed it is City property, not tax forfeit. Indicated this makes the process easier.

Torch: Questioned if private land would be enrolled?

Desotelle: Confirmed the private land is owned by Hartley Nature Center, they have agreed to deed this land to the City.

Torch: Indicated it would be helpful to have a rough outline/timeline on how to proceed with the management and maintenance plan going forward.

Desotelle: Stated after an area is nominated, there is 1 year to create the management plan. Indicated there will be a public process.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions from the public.

Glenn Marrick (public): Representing Izaak Walton League, mentioned work history as being an Ecologist for Lake Superior College for over 30 years. Mentioned his involvement with Miller Creek



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planning. Indicated he supports the Hartley DNAP nomination, and believes other areas that should be nominated in the future. Stated the potential opportunity to further educate the public with the DNAP. Questioned if there is budget set for developing management plans. Thanked the Parks Commission.

Tom O'Rourke (Director of Hartley Nature Center): Stated the importance of having a more comprehensive natural resource plan for Hartley Nature Center. Mentioned Hartley's partnership with the City is to put a focus on restoration work and further invasive species removal within the park. Indicated Hartley is wanting to take the lead of the management plan. Indicated a completed management plan will help with additional funding provided by grants. Stated a management plan could also have a positive effect on the endowment fund. Stated the goal for Hartley is to have a long term care taker to fulfill the management plan and take over the stewardship responsibilities. Indicated having plan would help to solve answers with future plantings.

### V. Commission Committees

- a. Administrative (E-board) – meeting date: Tuesday, July 26th at noon at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room: Chair – Erik Torch – Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer [William Roche]
- b. Golf Committee – meeting date: July 12 at noon at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room: Chair – Erik Torch, Dennis Isernhagen

Torch: Indicated Golf Committee Meetings are scheduled until the end of September.

### VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Torch: Opened the floor for comments from the Parks Commissioners.

Joyce: Mentioned the future meeting with a member of the public that will take place with Commissioner Schmidt. This meeting will discuss accessibility concerns that were brought up during the pre-planning phase for Lincoln Park.

Torch: Mentioned the process meeting that occurred with Commissioner Schmidt, Edmondson, William Roche and City Councilor Joel Sipress. Indicated this meeting discussed the process for when the Parks Commission and City Council are not in alignment. Indicated if there is a disagreement, the process would drastically slow down. Stated that after an Action Item within a Parks Commission meeting. Stated there would be an opportunity for Commissioners to fill out a form to share their thoughts and comments after an Action Item. The comments would be compiled before sending to City Council. Indicated this process would work well for the other City Commissions.

Schmidt: Thanked Torch for giving a good summary of the meeting. Indicated the importance of asking the difficult questions from the beginning once a Master Plan is created.

Edmondson: Questioned if Torch could elaborate writing a one-page document of the process.



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Torch: Indicated he would compile the information and make no edits, a summary at the top of the document would also be included.

Rohrbaugh: Questioned if City Counselors would be required to read the document. Stated she was surprised with the lack of interest that happened after the vote. Questioned if the document would be sent via email, or personally distributed.

Roche: Stated we cannot require City Council to digest our information. Indicated it was recommended by Councilor Sipress to have the president distribute the document with their agenda. Mentioned electronically distribution via email as well as through the agenda. Indicated it is the City Council Liaison's responsibility to address concerns that were made to the City Council during meetings. Stated it is still up to the City Council to decide if an item makes the agenda.

## **IX. New Business**

## **X. Old Business**

## **XI. Division Manager's Report**

Torch: Opened the floor for questions related to the Division Report.

Roche: Apologized to the Parks Commission for not having a traditional Division Report. Stated the exceedingly busy month and the yearly workload is not to scale. Indicated in the next couple of months, Parks and Recreation will have a new Assistant Manager, Administrative Clerical Specialist, Natural Resources Coordinator, and Trails Coordinator. Indicated 50% of the work force has been in their role for 14 months or less.

Roche: Displayed map of City property above Lake Superior College. Indicated the college would like to develop the property for student housing. Stated this is not designated a park property, but the land is utilized in a recreational capacity for disc golf. Stated this is not the first time this property has been brought up for development purposes. Stated this will be brought to City Council as a notice of intent, which gives the developer comfort to invest funds on research aspects. Stated this does not obligate the City to turn the property over. Stated he would like to provide a curtesy notification during the August Parks Commission Meeting.

Roche: Opened the floor for questions.

Torch: Thanked Roche.

Roche: Opened the floor for general questions.

Schmidt: Requested an update on the dog waste and bathroom concern that was brought up during the Annual Meeting. Questioned if the fence at Lower Chester was installed.

Roche: Confirmed it was removed.





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Schmidt: Questioned why the perimeter fence was removed, along the street.

Roche: Stated it was a maintenance burden for the volunteers to take down the fence. Stated the Master Plan indicates to remove half of the rink to activate the green space.

Schmidt: Thanked Roche.

Isernhagen: Questioned what the timeline is for Master Plan implementation for Chester Park.

Roche: Indicated we are advancing with the best of our capacity. Indicated the opportunity to apply for grants for additions. Mentioned late fall/early winter timeline to establish a fundraising plan. Stated the earliest construction will occur is likely be 2020.

Vogtman: Stated the \$400,000 Legacy Metro Grant being put to good use. Highlighted the buckthorn removal along the Western Waterfront trail, also indicated the tree plantings. Mentioned the Stewart Creek Bridge restoration, recommended the Parks Commissioners to visit. Questioned if the City manages Bayfront.

Roche: Indicated the DECC manages Bayfront.

Torch: Referred to the previous Parks Commission meeting that brought up a concern with trapping. Requested Roche to provide an update from the City Attorney.

Roche: Stated there is a city ordinance that prohibits trapping on park property. Mentioned this is more of a city issue, than a park issue.

Torch: Opened the floor for public comment.

### **XII. Public Comment**

Denette Lynch (public): Stated the appreciation for the Division Report. Mentioned the concern for lack of signage for the restrooms at Lafayette.

Roche: Stated the Park Point Community Club has brought up this concern, and the City is agreement.

Denette Lynch (public): Requested clarity on the current Phase for Piedmont.

Roche: Stated Jim Shoberg will respond to Denette Lynch's question.

Denette Lynch (public): Requested an update with bocce and horseshoes at Wheeler.

Roche: Indicated we did not receive the Outdoor Recreation Grant for Wade and Wheeler. Stated staff have not had the opportunity to circle back and establish the next steps.



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Bill Lynch (public): Indicated there is not an ordinance for City property regarding trapping. Thanked Roche for the information update.

Denette Lynch (public): Stated she would happy to provide a detailed report on the history with the dog parks. Stated the dog parks have been carefully planned with minimal maintenance, and are low cost to build compared to other park and trail opportunities. Mentioned Gary New Duluth dog park opened late 2017, which was funded by the GND Development Alliance, community volunteers, and donations. Mentioned City contributions were fill and mulch. Stated Jean Duluth dog park opened in 2016, volunteers installed over 1800 feet of fencing, paid by donations and fundraising efforts. Stated Park Maintenance installed concrete platforms and benches. Stated volunteers removed decades of overgrown brush from Observation dog park. Stated volunteers received bids and hired contractors, mentioned City contributions were 1 employee and a truck to remove the brush. Indicated a skid loader was used by Park Maintenance to level fill for the benches. Stated the dog parks have not been led by the City. Referred to the Duluth Traverse Trails, which is 28% funded by COGGS, 25% state and federal money, 25% from the Parks and Recreation budget, and 25% from the half and half tax. Stated the paved trails are fully funded by tax dollars. Indicated the desire to be community partners with the City. Mentioned being denied a letter of support for a grant for the past two years from the City. Stated the grant was nationally recognized and would not require a city match. Indicated City Council will soon approve over 4 million dollars in grant applications for 5 Park and Recreation projects. Stated the volunteer efforts made by Duluth Dog Parks want to be considered fairly and receive support from the City. Thanked the Parks Commission.

Torch: Thanked Denette Lynch.

Roche: Stated Denette brings up valid points. Apologized for the failure to communicate. Indicated the City did not move fast enough to move forward to apply for the grant. Stated many user groups contact Parks and Recreation for requests, shared the appreciation for everything our partners do. Stated he is looking forward to establishing a process in order to effectively process through requests.

Torch: Thanked Roche.

### **XIII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm. Moved by Commissioner Joyce. Second by Commissioner Isernhagen.

### **XIV. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday August 8, 2018 at City Hall – Council Chambers.