



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes

Natural Resources Commission.

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

6:00 PM Room 330, Third Floor, City Hall, 411 West First Street

Call to Order

The meeting started at 6:02 pm.

Roll Call

Commissioners: Brandon VanTassel, Judy Gibbs, Nancy Schuldt, Mike Pennington, Beth Kleinke, Mike Schrage, Tiffany Sprague, John Lindgren. City Staff: Jim Filby Williams, Director of Administration; Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator; Clark Christenson, City Forester ; Jennifer Ondrik, Administrative Clerical Specialist.

Approval of Agenda

This NRC was adopted.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

This NRC was adopted.

Announcements

Our meeting in March will be held at 4:00 PM due to the EPA's Open House at 6:00 PM at the Morgan Park Community Recreation Center to discuss the river cleanup at the U.S. Steel mill site.

The Commission welcomed Tiffany Sprague to her first meeting as the newest Natural Resources Commissioner. Beth Kleinke's term will end in March and we will be advertising to fill her seat.

NEW BUSINESS

Scope of work for the Natural Resources Management Plan

Diane updated the Commission on the request for proposals (RFP) that will soon be advertised for the Natural Resources Management Plan. She explained that this would help the City get an idea of the cost of preparing this plan and may aid in identifying grant opportunities. Diane explained how the City will strive to incorporate and utilize existing data sources and that the plan would focus on public lands and not private lands. Diane asked that the Commission submit any comments on known existing data sources, partnership opportunities and grant prospects by February 12th.

Natural Resources Update

Diane updated the Commission on progress made on amending the DNAP Ordinance. She has been working with City attorneys to identify an efficient process for incorporating additional parcels into the DNAP. She will continue to update the Commission as this moves forward. Diane reported that an RFP will be advertised for high priority native plant community work identified in the Hartley Management Plan. Lastly, she indicated that the City will likely obtain some non-competitive GLRI funding that will aid in the cost of the land acquisition/swap with Saint Louis County and may help fund the Natural Resources Management Plan.

Foresters Report

Clark reported that he was able to review the historic management plan recently found for Magney-Snively from 1980. Unfortunately, this version was lacking some critical maps. Judy Gibbs offered to aid in this search. Clark indicated that he and his crew have spent several days marking Ash trees for removal. The EAB management plans call for removal of trees known to be infected and under twelve inches in diameter. Trees over twelve inches in diameter are treated with an injection. Clark explained that injections are expensive and are really only prolonging the inevitable, however, there are some Ash trees identified throughout the City that are worth saving! Clark will be sending adopt-a-tree letters out to homeowners interested in paying to save their beloved boulevard trees.

Spring will soon be here and there will be plenty of trees to plant. Commissioners were asked to notify Clark of any known groups who would be interested in volunteer tree planting.

Directors Report

Jim Filby Williams spoke to the Commission on methods utilized in parcel selection for the Saint Louis County lands exchange. He indicated staff are currently working on the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that would be shared with the Commission.

Jim spoke about the actions and roadmap for the proposed changes to

ownership and use of public green space in the Lester Park and Enger Park areas. The goals of this endeavor are to protect green space, provide workforce and affordable housing, and preserve public golf in the City of Duluth. No formal proposals were received during the first advertising period. Jim explained that the roadmap for decisions related to the golf course areas have already been approved by City Council and it does not specifically call for a vote by the NRC.

Public Comment

A member of the public indicated when possible microphones should be used when conducting business in City Hall room 330.

ADJOURN

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45, M/S/C.