

# Natural Resources Commission

## Meeting Minutes March 2, 2022 (Virtual Meeting)

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

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

### Call to Order:

The meeting started at 6:01 p.m.

### Old Business

#### Strategic Public Lands Re-alignment Project

Commissioner Krumwiede provided a brief overview of the Strategic Public Lands Re-Alignment Project memo and explained the changes made to the document since its last draft. A majority of the changes were to reorganize the memo to allow for future tax forfeit land acquisition projects. Commissioner Schuldt made a recommendation that the 3<sup>rd</sup> (future) land designation be called “Critical Green Infrastructure” or “Nature Based Infrastructure” and expressed her hope that the Commission would stay engaged on any major additions made to this document.

Commissioner Schuldt motioned to adopt the revised memo as presented. Commissioner Lindgren second. **VOTE:** 6-yes, 0-no; motion carries.

#### Natural Resources Management Program Plan (NRMPP)

Diane gave a brief all-inclusive and informational overview of the NRMPP and associated [online](#) story map. Commissioner Schrage thanked staff for all the work and dedication to seeing this plan completed. Commissioner Lindgren commented that he was very proud to be a part of this groundwork for preserving natural resources in Duluth for many years to come. Commissioner Schuldt agreed that this was amazing work and added that she was very happy to be part of the Commission that approves this plan.

Commissioner Gibbs inquired on how the Commission can best show support and advocate for funding to implement this plan. The Commission requested that City staff devote time at a future meeting to explain the current and future funding levels for the Natural Resource program.

Director Filby Williams agreed to present the City budget in relation to the Natural Resources program. He is going to request City Council’s Committee of the Whole to be able to present the NRMPP to council before the vote on the resolution for approval.

Commissioner Schuldt motioned to adopt the City’s Natural Resources Management Program Plan (NRMPP). Commissioner Krumwiede second. **VOTE:** 6 – yes; 0 – no; motion carries.

### New Business

#### Natural Resources Coordinators Report

Diane shared that there was a public meeting later this evening at Hawk Ridge focused on obtaining input on an ADA accessible educational platform and associated trail improvements. She reported the City was looking for a volunteer to serve on the MN Point U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study, a 2-year process in which the City is hoping to have one representative from Parks Commission and one from the Natural Resources Commission. The Natural Resource Commissioner would participate in this Section 111 study which will investigate shoreline impacts related to the federal infrastructure.

### **Forester's Report**

Clark updated the Commission on his progress on Ash removals. He is working to finalize the language for the Forest Revitalization RFP and will be working to get this out for bid by the end of March. For additional information see: <https://duluthmn.gov/purchasing/bids-request-for-proposals/>. Lastly, he indicated that his Forestry field crews continue to spend a significant amount of time pruning trees.

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

Director Filby Williams shared that the City is interviewing for the open Natural Resources Coordinator position and an announcement will be forthcoming.

He informed the Commission about the ongoing Lake Superior Shoreline Resilience and mitigation study. This study is part of a \$258,000 grant that the City and St. Louis County received from FEMA to find solutions to shoreline collapses on the North Shore from Brighton Beach to Knife River. The study will analyze and recommend remediation best practices for shoreline areas at risk from the impacts of future inclement weather.

For additional information see: <https://duluthcoastalinfrasturureresilience.com/>.

Lastly, he shared that the City has applied for state funding to acquire an undeveloped 82.3-acre portion of Forest Hill Cemetery in the Woodland neighborhood to be managed for outdoor recreation and long-term preservation consistent with the Imagine Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

### **Announcements**

The Commission thanked Mike Pennington for his service over the past 9 years. The City will be actively seeking to fill his vacant seat on the Commission.

### **Public Comment**

Betty Greene – Expressed frustration with not receiving regular City Council agenda notifications.

### **Adjournment**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30, M/S/C