



## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes November 2, 2022  
Duluth City Hall, Lakeside Conference Room

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### I. Call to Order

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

### II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Lori Dando, Judy Gibbs, Sophia Green, John Lindgren, Mike Schrage, Tiffany Sprague  
Absent: Allison Ray, Nancy Schuldt

Staff Present: Allison Brooks, Clark Christenson, Kate Kubiak

### III. Approval of the Agenda

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

### IV. Approval of the October 5, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Brooks requested to update the final sentence in "V. New Commissioner Introduction – Lori Dando" to read "Kubiak will review the current list of applicants and provide an update on the status of potential applicants."

**Commissioner Schrage made a motion to approve the September 7, 2022 meeting minutes with the proposed revision; seconded by Commissioner Dando. Unanimously approved.**

### V. Old Business

#### A.) EAB Management Plan Revisions (Clark Christenson)

Christenson commented that the information available regarding the development of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation has progressed since the 2016 approval of the current Management Plan. Revisions include updating graphics and hyperlinks, clarification of language, and formatting updates.

Commissioner Dando asked if the City has pursued the release of predatory insects to limit the prevalence of EAB. Christenson responded that the MN Department of Agriculture is entirely responsible for the release, and that there have been releases of parasitoid wasps that exclusively affect the EAB.

Chair Lindgren asked how the treatment of a tree is triggered and under what conditions will the City treat a tree. Christenson responded that the determination is based on the diameter at breast height and whether the tree has maintained 70% live crown. Chair Lindgren asked if there is an opportunity to treat to retain trees in neighborhoods that are lacking canopy coverage. Christenson responded that there are areas where the City has a low amount of canopy coverage and that overall there is a need to increase canopy. For this reason, the City has moved towards planting more trees beyond a simple one-to-one replacement to add trees when space allows. Chair Lindgren asked if the City needs to be planting more trees to accommodate those that do not survive. Christenson responded that the mortality rate of the planted trees has been below 5% over the past couple of years.

Chair Lindgren asked about the survival rate for treated trees. Christenson responded that the trees can



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survive if treatment is sustained, but there remains uncertainty. Commissioner Schrage asked about the follow up care provided for planted trees. Christenson answered that there is routine follow up, including watering trees, removing stakes when the tree has grown large enough, and replacement when a tree is lost.

Chair Lindgren asked what the next steps are for the proposed revisions. Kubiak responded that there will be an update at the next meeting, and then the NRC would provide a recommendation to City Council.

## VI. New Business

### A.) Presentation – Headwaters Partnership – MN Land Trust [Gini Breidenbach]

Breidenbach provided a presentation on the Lake Superior Headwaters Sustainability Partnership, a bi-state and tribal effort to address the future after the area of concern work is completed to transition towards an estuary landscape focus. The boundaries of the focus area aligns with the previous AOC boundaries, where watersheds are associated with the delineated geographic zones. The goal is to utilize a sustainable landscape approach that incorporates economic development, community health, and natural resources management. Additional information about the Headwaters Partnership is available on [www.headwaterspartnership.org](http://www.headwaterspartnership.org).

Participants include agencies with regulatory jurisdiction and land ownership (City of Duluth), partners and stakeholders who are active contributors in specific Partnership related activities, geographic areas, or interests, and community interest groups. A Memorandum of Understanding is in development for the Tier 1 partners to identify goals and objectives for the partnership moving forward. The partnership organization is in transition to a forum framework with a Chair, Vice Chair, and Coordinator, which will work collaboratively with a Community Advisory Council.

Commissioner Green asked about the funding source for the 0.5 FTE Coordinator position that would be responsible for facilitating the Partnership. Breidenbach responded that NOAA capacity funding would fund the position for 3 years. Currently, the MN Land Trust will host the position, but that may change over time. Commissioner Green asked for clarification about the process for community engagement as plans are developed. Breidenbach responded that the process is still in development and will become more defined over time.

Chair Lindgren asked what integration will look like with the City of Duluth NRMPP, and pondered how projects would advance with the Partnership in place. Breidenbach responded that there will be opportunities for collaboration and information sharing for upcoming and ongoing projects. One of the benefits that would arise from a formal partnership is that there are federal funding opportunities that could be realized in the future.

Kubiak commented that the next meeting will include an opportunity to recommend the MOU for approval by City Council.

## VII. Staff Reports

### A.) Natural Resources Coordinator Report [Kate Kubiak]



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Kubiak provided a report. The first annual meeting for the NRMPP partners incorporated an update for partners on the NRMPP's development, how to work with the City, and an opportunity for partners to share their projects.

Brooks commented that there will be a volunteer project in Hartley to remove Scots Pine on November 16 in partnership with Hartley Nature Center. There will likely require ongoing efforts to continue removal of the Scots Pine as the infestation is quite dense.

A.) Forester's Report [Clark Christenson]

Christenson provided a brief report, highlighting that EAB infested tree removals are ongoing and that the City is currently open for bids to complete pine thinning.

**VIII. Announcements**

No announcements.

**IX. Public Comment**

Julie O'Leary commented on the involvement of headwaters townships such as Hermantown and Proctor. Chair Lindgren responded that Hermantown has not yet been involved in the Partnership, and that there will likely be more engagement with other municipalities once the coordinator position is hired.

Louise Levy commented on the EAB proposed revisions and suggested a public comment period be opened. Levy also commented that ash trees are well protected if the injection interval is started early and treatment is maintained biannually. If the treatments are delayed or lapsed, the tree is susceptible.

**X. Adjournment**

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

**Next Meeting** - Wednesday, December 7 at 6:00 p.m. at Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 155.