

# Natural Resources Commission

## Meeting Minutes June 3, 2020 (WebEx)

### Attendance:

Commissioners: Judy Gibbs, Brandon Krumwiede, John Lindgren, Mike Pennington, Nancy Schuldt, Mike Schrage, Tiffany Sprague, Brian Fredrickson, Brandon Van Tassel.

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

Absent: Clark Christenson, City Forester

### Call to Order:

The meeting started at 6:06 pm.

### Minute Approval:

Due to COVID-19 and limited City building access, minutes from our last meeting in March were not available.

**Announcements:** Due to COVID-19 meetings in both April and May were cancelled.

### Duluth's Guidelines for Selecting Tax-Forfeit Open Space Parcels for City Ownership and Protection

Diane presented on the overall purpose and process that the City and County will use to negotiate and select tax forfeit open space parcels that the City will seek to acquire. Jim shared that the purpose to bringing this before the Commission was to seek meaningful direction on the process and guidelines and to test the soundness and efficiency of staff's initial efforts.

The Commission voted to hold a special meeting in two weeks' time to discuss the written guidelines in more detail. **(VOTE: 7 – Yes, 0 – Opposed)**

### St. Louis River One Watershed One Plan

[One Watershed, One Plan](#) is a voluntary planning process that can be initiated by any local water planning authority. The program is coordinated by the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources and serves as a parallel program to the MN Pollution Control Agency's 10-year major watershed assessment program (WRAPS) for watershed monitoring and assessment. Planning for the watershed as a whole, instead of just in pieces, allows for policies and actions that are consistent from the headwaters of a river to its outlet, and also focuses planning efforts on actions that address the specific pollutants that threaten a particular watershed.

A majority of the Commission's agreed that the City represents a large urban parcel and held a vote to prepare a City specific comment letter. **(VOTE: 6 – Yes, Nancy Schuldt abstained)** Tiffany Sprague and John Lindgren volunteered to draft an initial letter. Comments will be collected from Commissioners and approved by key City staff. The deadline for submission is Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>.

### Natural Resources Report (Diane Desotelle – Natural Resources Coordinator)

Diane indicated she was making progress on the Natural Resources Management Plan RFP. The EPA GLRI grant was submitted to help with funding. She updated that group on the Native Plan

Community Management Plan for Hartley and wondered if our monthly meetings could be used as the required public meetings for this work simultaneously. Lastly she updated the Commissioner's on contact work planned on the Invasive Species this summer.

### **Forester's Report**

Park maintenance continues operations as normally as possible and a small part of that is continuing to plant trees in the boulevards. There are only three of us doing this which has made progress slower, but, we *are* on track to replant all 500 (or so) trees that we ordered. With leaves filling out there will be more demand of our time from trees that fail during wind events so I expect our progress to slow and with the wrong storm system, progress will halt altogether.

Given the realities of my work, I have had very little chance to work on larger issues that the NRC could weigh in on. The forester's report could become a "rinse and repeat" cycle for the remainder of the summer. There is one issue I will touch on briefly. We have talked with all affected user groups that are available about the pine-thinning project. Upon further discussion with administration, it was suggested that we engage a steering committee to further explore our proposed activities. With that slight wrinkle added, we plan on meeting with that group several times this summer and then reporting back to the NRC on this issue.

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

Jim stressed that the City will stand behind and attempt to implement, without bias, the principals defined in the Comp Plan and added further that if we choose in good faith to do so, the policies and politics of the County land swap will work themselves out.

### **Adjournment:**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58, M/S/C.