



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

December 4, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.

Lakeside Conference Room 430, City Hall

I. Call to Order

Chair Streitz called the meeting to begin at 6:00 PM.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Pam Foster, Judy Gibbs, John Lindgren, Mike Raichel, Mike Schrage, Nancy Schuldt, Andrew Streitz

Commissioner Sprague was present via virtual Teams link due to a medical reason.

Commissioners Absent: Lori Dando

City Staff Present: Kate Kubiak, Bronwyn Bauer

III. Approval of the Agenda

Vice Chair Schuldt made a motion to vote to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Lindgren. Unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of the November 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Raichel made a motion to vote to approve the minutes; seconded by Commissioner Foster. Unanimously approved.

V. Approval of 2025 Meeting Schedule

Commissioner Foster made a motion to vote to approve the 2025 meeting schedule; seconded by Commissioner Raichel. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Schrage arrives 6:08 PM.

VI. Old Business

A. Vice Chair Schuldt asked if there was an update about the Tischer Creek spill and drinking water. Kubiak said that she contacted Councilor Awal but received no reply. Chair Streitz asked about the status of the Amity Hawk Ridge DNAP process. Kubiak said that she met with the four key partners – Trout Unlimited, Soil & Water Conservation District, MN Land Trust, and Hawk Ridge - earlier this week and hopes to have more info at the January or February meeting.

VII. New Business

A. Green Code Audit Presentation (Natural Resources Research Institute and Consultant)

Commissioner Sprague introduced her colleagues who worked on this project, including Madison Rodman, MN Sea Grant, Jessy Carlson, MN Sea Grant, and Juli Beth Hinds, Birchline Planning, LLC. They then went through a presentation to incorporate more green stormwater infrastructure by changes to our City zoning code and Engineering Guidelines in six areas: parking requirements, trash management, stream/wetland buffers, landscape standards, land disturbance & erosion control, and soil volume/depth of trees.

Commissioners agreed that it would be nice to create a resolution of support of this work to present to the Planning Commission, and James Gittemeier said he could help bring to his Planning manager. Vice Chair Schuldt said that having NRC Commissioners attend a Planning Department brown bag meeting to help explain why this is important would be valuable.

B. West Superior Street Update (James Gittemeier, Senior Transportation Planner)

James Gittemeier shared a presentation of the West Superior Street Reconstruction Project that included



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renderings of each section of the project from Carlton Street to the M&H gas station. The project started with design in 2022 and is scheduled to be complete in 2028, with construction beginning in 2025, using almost \$25M federal RAISE grant money and \$7.68M state IJA match funds. Commissioner Raichel asked if the Blatnik Bridge closure would affect the traffic in this area and Gittemeier said it will, but when the Twin Ports Interchange project is completed, that will help. Commissioner Schrage asked about possible light pollution from this project, but Gittemeier said they are using dark sky compliant lighting.

C. Magney Management Plan Progress (Kubiak)

Kubiak reported that she met with an advisory committee last week to work on this plan, and they will meet 4-5 more times throughout next year.

VIII. Staff Reports

A. Natural Resources Coordinator's Report (Kate Kubiak)

Kubiak provided the following written report:

- Held first meeting of the Advisory Committee for the Magney-Snively Natural Area Plan update Nov 22.
- Attended urban forestry conference in Chicago with Clark Nov 19-21. More info to come.
- Held annual Natural Resources Projects review meeting with partners on Nov 15 – more info in January.
- Held pre-bid for small forestry restoration project at Park Hill.
- Buckingham Creek at Enger weekly meetings.
- Paperwork and other details wrapping up 900K EPA grant by end of the year which funded property purchases and development of the NRMPP.

B. City Forester's Report (Clark Christenson)

We miraculously continued planting trees well into November this year, adding 71 trees to the streetscape during that time. We need to switch gears and remove some trees before we start pruning.

Kate and I were able to attend the Partners in Community Forestry Conference in Chicago the 20th-21st of November. There were a lot of excellent presentations, covering great content we had and had not considered for Duluth and a lot of ideas are roiling in our minds. You will be hearing more about those in the near future!

C. Director's Report (Jim Filby Williams)

None.

IX. Announcements

Commissioner Schrage said that the MN DNR issued a press release asking citizens to report bear dens they may find for a study of urban bears, and he thinks it would be nice to have someone from UMD and/or the DNR brief the commission on their plans.

X. Public Comment

None.

XI. Adjournment

Commissioner Schrage made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Schuldt seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Next Meeting – January 8, 2025 at 6:00 PM Lakeside Conference Room 430, City Hall.