



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes December 10, 2025

Duluth City Hall, Council Chambers



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Demmer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: David Demmer, Kala Pedersen, Beth Olson, Josie LaPorte, Sarah Beehler, Dave Cizmas, Terrance Lovejoy, Brooke Marinan, Connie Cummins, Tim Meyer, Stephanie Williams – School Board Liaison

Not Present: Hailey Sigafus, Tara Swenson – City Council Liaison, Ashley Grimm – St. Louis County Commissioner

III. Approval of the September 17 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Pedersen motioned to approve the September 17 meeting minutes. Commissioner Beehler second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

IV. Presentations

- A. Parks & Recreation Programming Year-in-Review (Informational) Recreation Specialists and Alicia Watts, Assistant Manager

Demmer questioned what percentage of Parks and Recreation programs are also offered by other organizations in the community.

Demmer questioned at what point in the cost recovery model the City starts to earn revenue. Questioned what percentage of our programs are fully subsidized versus earning revenue. Peterson stated that everything about the full subsidy tier will bring in some level of revenue back to the City, with more revenues coming in and less subsidy with higher tier programs. Watts stated that most programs are in levels one and two. Peterson stated that at minimum 50% of programs fall into the first tier of the cost recovery model.

LaPorte questioned whether revenue can be generated even from fully subsidized programs. Peterson stated that the subsidy is sourced from the Parks Fund. Stated that there are no prohibitions on assessing fees for programs nor the level of subsidy. Stated that the cost recovery model is a way to manage program operations in a fiscally responsible way.

- B. Waabizheshikana Reconstruction and Intersection with Private Property (Informational) Cliff Knettel, Assistant Manager and Jim Shoberg, Landscape Architect

Demmer questioned what percentage of the ninety letters sent to property owners referenced infrastructure on City property. Shoberg stated that it was less than thirty. Stated that all ninety are associated with the trail and the ordinances apply whether you own the property or not.

Lovejoy questioned if all the letters were the same, or if there were different letters for different properties. Shoberg stated that there were four types of situations for property owners based on property ownership, so there were four letters that were distributed among the ninety. Stated that the intent was to begin a conversation with each property owner.

Questioned if next steps were included in the letters that were sent out. Shoberg stated that the letters were intended to be a courtesy notice to inform the community. Stated that the next steps were laid out at the public meeting, which was well attended. Knettel stated that the residents were generally



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understanding of the situation.

Olson questioned what the timeline is for compliance. Shoberg stated that the initial ask was December 1 to remove personal property. Stated that overall compliance has been very good. Stated that they have met with individual property owners to help them through the process. Stated that a process for trail infrastructure and stairs are still to be determined. Stated that construction is intended to start in May 2026. Knettel stated that a permitting process needs to be in place before docks are reinstalled.

Meyer questioned if there are anticipated conflicts with property owners, and if those could delay construction. Shoberg stated that this is always a possibility. Stated that ultimately the legal cases would not be strong for the property owners if they choose to file an injunction. Stated that there is a contingency plan in place for the project if any conflicts come up.

Beehler questioned how long the lease will be good for. Shoberg stated that there would be a one-time shoreland permit for all and then a one-year, renewable lease if the resident does not own the property.

Questioned what enforcement may look like. Shoberg stated that there will likely be a spring and a fall site visit by a group of City staff.

Demmer questioned if this would lead to ordinance amendments. Shoberg stated that this is likely, specifically on the language surrounding the permitting process.

Questioned if there would be an option for variances. Shoberg stated that he does not believe so, based on conversations with the Planning department.

Questioned if the Parks Commission will be involved in decision making on this topic. Knettel stated that the intent is to provide information at this time, in the event that constituents reach out with questions or concerns. Stated that some permit process and ordinance language changes could come through this body.

V. Commission Committees

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: tentative Thursday, January 8 at noon, Parks Conference Room - David Demmer, Kala Pedersen, Josie LaPorte [Jessica Peterson, Bridget Erickson]

VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Cummins shared an update on the community meeting for the Becks Rd land use study.

VII. New Business

A. Lester Park Golf Course Land Use Study (Discussion)

Manager Peterson provided an update on the Lester Park Golf Course Land Use Study and the ordinance passed by Council on December 8. Stated that the Planning office will be working with DEDA and the Purchasing office on an RFP for the study. Stated that they are requesting Parks and Recreation Commission representation on a stakeholder steering committee that will be formed. Stated that they expect recommendations from the steering committee to pass through the Parks and Recreation Commission at some point next year.

Demmer made some comments on the process of the land transfer to DEDA. Stated that the PRC is the



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liaison between the City and citizens and Commissioners have an opportunity and a role in this conversation.

Cummins made some comments on the process of the land transfer to DEDA and the frustration of citizens. Stated that the bylaws give direction on Commissioner's role in these types of conversations.

Meyer made some comments on prior work done on this topic. Stated his opinion that Parks should retain at least some of this property.

Olson questioned what the community's vision is for the property. Demmer stated that the study will reveal that more clearly. Stated that elements of recreation, development, and land preservation are all options and a combination of all three seems to be the vision by a lot of people.

B. 2026 Commission Schedule (Action Requested)

Cizmas motioned to approve the 2026 Parks and Recreation Commission and E-Board schedule:

2026 Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, all start at 5:00 p.m.:

January 14
February 11
March 11
April 8
June 10
August 12
September 9
October 14
December 9

2026 E-Board meetings, all start at 12:00 p.m.:

January 8
February 5
March 5
April 2
June 4
August 6
September 3
October 8
December 3

Marinan second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

C. Recommendation to amend Parks and Recreation Bylaw Article IV: Officers, Section 1. Terms of office (Action Requested)

Demmer motioned to amend the Parks and Recreation Commission bylaws Article IV: Officers, Section 1. Terms of office to the following:

1. Terms of office:

- a. All officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year at the regular meeting held in April. If the April meeting is not held, officer elections shall occur at the next public meeting of the**



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Commission.

- b. All elected officers shall begin their terms with the new business of the next public meeting of the Commission.**

Manager Peterson asked for Commissioners' interpretation of item b, and whether to edit the language to clarify at which meeting the new officers begin their terms. Demmer stated his preference for new officers to begin their terms at the same meeting elections occur.

Marinan stated that the commission on disabilities recently amended their bylaws and voted to have officers begin at the following meeting.

LaPorte questioned whether amending the bylaws will also require amending City Code. Peterson stated that City Code gave direction to how the E-Board was formed, then gives the Commission the ability to amend bylaws to conduct business.

LaPorte questioned what prompted the commission on disabilities to change their bylaws. Marinan stated that they did a thorough review of their bylaws overall to clean up errors.

Lovejoy questioned if commissioner terms begin April 1. Peterson stated terms commence on April 1 and end on March 31. Lovejoy questioned if it would make more sense to hold elections in March before terms end. Peterson stated that there are options in place for back-up if an E-Board member terms before the April meeting.

Demmer motioned to amend the Parks and Recreation Commission bylaws Article IV: Officers, Section 1. Terms of office to the following:

2. Terms of office:

- a. All officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year at the regular meeting held in April. If the April meeting is not held, officer elections shall occur at the next public meeting of the Commission.**
- b. All elected officers shall begin their terms immediately upon election.**

Pedersen second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

D. Recommendation to extend current terms of Executive Board members through end of March 2026
(Action Requested)

Cizmas motioned to extend the terms of the current E-Board members through the end of March 2026. Marinan second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

VIII. Old Business

IX. Division Report

Manager Peterson highlighted the upcoming Solstice Luminary Hike.

X. Public Comment

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.



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XII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be tentative Wednesday, January 14 at 5:00 p.m., Conference Room 330.