



**Meeting of the Parks and Recreation
Commission
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Wednesday, December 10, 2025**

Members Present: Commissioner Dave Anderson, Commissioner Mike Niziolek, Commissioner Jill Varty, Commissioner Joy Goodwin, Commissioner Hal Stewart, Commissioner Melissa Fermoye, Councilmember Cory Grupa

Members Absent: Commissioner Greg Loidolt

Staff Present: Assistant City Administrator/Business Services Director Joe Stremcha, Parks and Recreation Manager Jeff Shelby, and Senior Administrative Assistant Dawn Larson

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the meeting was called to order at 06:30 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. CONSIDER AGENDA

Mr. Shelby suggested swapping out 6.2 and 6.3

Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Goodwin to approve December 10, 2025, agenda with the change of swapping item 6.2 and item 6.3 due to Chief Kuhnly attending to discuss the ordinance. Motion carried 6-0.

4. CONSIDER MINUTES

4.1 11-12-2025 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Varty to approve the November 15, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission minutes. Motion carried 6-0.

5. OPEN FORUM

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Park Dedication - Elk Ridge Center Seventh Addition

Moved by Commissioner Niziolek and seconded by Commissioner Goodwin to recommend that park dedication for Elk Ridge Center Seventh Addition be paid in cash for one commercial parcel, at the applicable rate at the time of recording. Motion carried 6-0.

6.2 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Shelby presented his report. He also reviewed additional spreadsheets on screen starting with park improvement. He said 2026 should look like the projects they discussed in October. He shared that a

lot of the items listed in the future years have largely been used as placeholders. That is part of the reason the numbers look askew. He said they need to start working on a true working plan that they can use from year to year. Mr. Shelby said to do that some things that they have already started working on, such as the park usage survey are needed. They need to prioritize items to get this into a manageable working plan.

Chair Anderson asked if they were specifically talking about 2026, but he said he knew they had discussed talking about the next 5 years. Mr. Shelby and Mr. Stremcha said primarily that is what they are discussing, but also it is a projection of 5 years to coincide with the City Council's 5-year plan. Chair Anderson expressed his concern that they had not previously discussed the items on the spreadsheets presented by Mr. Shelby.

Mr. Shelby said that what is presented tonight for 2027 and beyond are items that were placed there because they were reaching the termed life expectancy. He gave the example of Country Crossing playground this year, which was on the schedule, but they did not end up replacing it because it still had life in it. Chair Anderson said there are several elements on this spreadsheet that are also in their framework plan. Chair Anderson said this plan has had very little vetting by the Commission and asked Mr. Shelby if he expected them to approve it tonight. Mr. Stremcha pointed out that the 5-year plan has already been adopted and approved by the City Council as part of the capital improvement planning process for the 2026 to 2030 plan. The 2026 plan is the priority and as the year arrives, the items listed within it should be examined to see whether they should be done, removed, or moved on to a future year. Chair Anderson asked if the Commission's focus should be the 2026 plan. Mr. Stremcha said yes. Chair Anderson said the action requested is to have a discussion. Mr. Stremcha said yes, and if they feel inclined to make an amendment, they can make a recommendation to Council to amend the plan. Chair Anderson said that he thinks it's too late if it has already been adopted and that there are several things in the plan that he thinks are foolish, but this isn't the venue to discuss that because they need considerable input and discussion. Mr. Shelby asked the Commission if they are good for 2026. His goal is to work with parks maintenance over the next few months to go through everything on the CIP to get a better understanding of the current condition of items on the schedule and confirm if they are still needed or can it be moved to a future year. He would then bring those items back to the Commission to discuss and decide.

Commissioner Goodwin said she remembered some discussions about taking the basketball courts out at Ridgewood East during the work session, and yet she still sees it reflected in the 2026 schedule. Chair Anderson confirmed that their recommendation was to take it out. Mr. Shelby said they would have to go back and look at the minutes to confirm. Commissioner Niziolek said that he is concerned because it was a lengthy discussion, and now it just pops up. Commissioner Stewart said he also has a question about the master plan. He asked if because they skipped creating it last year would the entire bill of \$100,000 come due this year? Mr. Shelby said that the \$50,000 that was budgeted for 2025 will move forward to 2026, making a total of \$100,000. Chair Anderson also pointed out that there is \$15,000 in the spreadsheet for Hillside Park, which they agreed upon. Commissioner Goodwin also said they had discussed the turf tank so that line item is okay. Chair Anderson said that the basketball court is a duplication of community resources. Commissioner Niziolek said that the court at Salk Middle School is not far away and is a much better venue. Mr. Shelby said they can vote to make a recommendation not to pursue the replacement of that court. Mr. Stremcha explained that this spreadsheet is a planning document, and they can vote to make changes as they go along.

Commissioner Niziolek said that he has concerns that they had a lengthy discussion about the basketball court being removed for 2026, and then it is still in the plan. Chair Anderson said he is

concerned because Council has already approved this plan with the court still in the budget. Mr. Stremcha reiterated that the plan itself has been approved by Council, but the Commission can make a motion tonight to still amend the budget and remove the item.

Commissioner Niziolek said he is concerned that their discussions were not heard, and it didn't show up in the presentation to City Council. Commissioner Stewart asked if there is a drop-dead date for the document they are looking at tonight so they can be prepared next year.

Chair Anderson said that they had the discussion in a workshop in October, and he was under the impression that the commission would get a chance to review this document in November as an action item, and then that recommendation would go to City Council for approval.

Mr. Stremcha said that he does think that part of it could have resulted because of the survey and that they wanted to get results from the community before they decided to remove any amenities from a park. He reiterated that just because it is in the planning documents, it does not mean that they have to do it. Chair Anderson said once things get approved, they kind of get legs. He would have liked to represent their formal motion about this at the time the City Council looked at this item. Chair Anderson said that he thinks the easiest recommendation is that it would be a waste of money based on the duplication of community resources since there is one a block away.

Commissioner Niziolek said he doesn't want to take away recreational amenities; he just thinks there is redundancy in a tight financial budget.

Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to recommend to City Council amend the CIP for capital improvement fund for 2026-2030 that the basketball courts at Deerfield/Ridgewood East to be removed from the plan.

Chair Anderson asked why it said Deerfield/Ridgewood East because those are two separate things. Mr. Shelby said he isn't sure, and that is the way it was set in the budget spreadsheet. Commissioner Goodwin asked if they were lumped together. Chair Anderson said it should be two specific items, but he can't remember the details in October. Commissioner Niziolek said they aren't sure if this line item includes the cost of one of the parks or both. Mr. Stremcha said that he would interpret it as so if they wanted to remove one, they would need to rephrase the motion, or they would bring it back next month to discuss and take action.

Chair Anderson said they needed to withdraw the second on the motion then. Commissioner withdrew her second. Commissioner Goodwin withdrew her motion.

Council member Grupa pointed out that this is just a plan, and they do not have to do it. Mr. Stremcha confirmed that, at the end of the day, staff do not have quotes to do any of these projects, and it is just a document to guide them. Chair Anderson said that they voted to take out Ridgewood East so he would like staff to review the minutes from October and confirm if this is for one court or the other or both.

Staff will determine if having both parks listed on the line is a typo or not, and which basketball court should include Deerfield or Ridgewood East. Commissioner Niziolek asked if adequate information had been collected for both Deerfield and Ridgewood East as far as the use of the basketball court. Mr. Stremcha and Mr. Shelby said next year they could do a survey and then potentially move it to 2027.

6.3 E-bike and Electric Powered Device Ordinance

City of Elk River Police Chief Kuhnly was in attendance to answer questions. He shared that he reviewed the proposed ordinance draft and sent it to the City Attorney for additional review for consistency. He said it would be important to discuss the city sidewalks etc. as well as the trails in relation to an ordinance, possibly even downtown. He said the 20-mph speed limit seems to be an accepted speed limit but not a requirement. He questioned whether their trail systems can handle that speed limit when it comes to their designs and curves etc. He said that he understands the direction that the group is going in as far as their concerns about safety on the trails.

Chair Anderson asked if anyone had any questions. Chair Anderson said that the Commission had purposely shied away from discussing sidewalks because it wasn't under parks. The Chief said that while the ordinance drafted so far is within the commission's scope, the City Council will probably add more to it to make it a broader holistic approach. He asked the Commissioners what their intent was on enforcement from a public safety standpoint.

Chair Anderson said he spends a lot of time in Woodland Trails Regional Park, and he says he has seen a significant shift in all things electric. He said e-bikes have changed everything and there is a definite concern for safety. He is shocked at their speed. Chair Anderson said there is an educational component needed for all, to understand what is allowed and what isn't. He said that, for example, if e-motos aren't allowed, then it is up to the parents to tell their kids where they can ride them. When they buy them, they need to check where they can ride them.

The Chief shared that he thinks most of the people driving these devices are adolescents, or 10 and 12 years old. He doesn't think the kids know how to navigate the roadway, but they know how to navigate the sidewalks because that's what they were taught when they were toddlers. He is concerned that when children are forced to use roadways, they don't know how to navigate them, and it becomes dangerous.

Chief Kuhnly understands that when they are driving 20 mph on a path that also puts pedestrians and dogs at risk. Chair Anderson said this whole discussion started out of safety. Commissioner Stewart said that they have discussed an educational component which includes a possible bike rodeo event with the community. Chief Kuhnly agreed this was a good idea and said that he also believes they should do an educational campaign, including regular bicycles as well. He thinks it could include social media messages as well as in-person events with his staff.

Chair Anderson asked the commissioners about their thoughts on the proposed ordinance before them tonight, which was prepared by Mr. Shelby with the assistance of the subcommittee of Commissioners Stewart, Niziolek and Chair Anderson.

Chair Anderson said under 76.01C in the provided ordinance draft (he read it) that he thinks, for the purpose of not understating the obvious, they could include: This shall include, but not be limited to, vehicles that resemble electric-assisted bicycles, for example an e-moto but exceed the 750-watt motor power limit or the 28 miles per hour maximum assisted speed limit.

Commissioner Goodwin asked if the intent was to add sidewalks to it so that it is more of the whole picture. Mr. Shelby said that the Chief just wanted to let them know that it would be the City Council's intent to add something that is tied to sidewalks and maybe particular area usage as it relates to these devices. It wouldn't change what is here, but it would be more of an additional piece, so there aren't

multiple ordinances. Mr. Shelby thinks public works; the City Council and City Attorney would put that together.

Commissioner Goodwin said she still has a lot of questions about what can be ridden on the sidewalks versus the streets etc. Mr. Shelby said he thinks a lot of people do and that's e-motos in particular. He explained that those bikes that can go over 28 mph no longer fall into the definition of the devices listed here, such as a bike or EPMD. They must follow the rules of the road like automobiles and motorcycles and need to be licensed. He thinks they have become so available very quickly and the companies that have put them out on the consumer market have not been completely transparent in terms of where they might fall into a legally gray area in terms of usage.

Commissioner Goodwin said that she thinks that we need to offer some clarity to the residents of Elk River. Chair Anderson said that there are designated trails typically on 1,000 of acres where they can be ridden on but not here in Elk River other than private property. Commissioner Goodwin is curious about how to identify trails that people can be ridden on with these bikes and if there would be one created in Elk River at one of the parks.

Chair Anderson said that Elk River doesn't have parks large enough to accommodate trails for this. Mr. Shelby said that over the past couple of weeks, both local and national media have started to look at the sellers of these bikes and their lack of educating the purchasers about where they can ride them. He said they don't want to discourage residents from using the parks but that they need to act responsibly and do what's right in the eyes of safety.

Commissioner Goodwin said she doesn't want to limit residents from where they can ride them when they have purchased them but also wants to be safe.

Chair Anderson said that Hillside has trails that are attractive for these bikes to ride but have already seen the damage they can produce.

Moved by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to recommend that the City Council approve the proposed ordinance for E-bikes and Electric Powered Devices on city trails and within city parks as presented with the addendum located in 76.01C adding e-motos in the second sentence. Motion carried 6-0

7. PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER UPDATE

7.1 Parks and Recreation Manager Update

Mr. Shelby presented his report.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

9. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Goodwin to adjourn to the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting at 7:38 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.



Dave Anderson, Chair



Tina Allard, City Clerk