



**Meeting of the Parks and Recreation  
Commission  
Held at the Elk River City Hall  
Wednesday, April 8, 2026**

Members Present: Chair Stewart, Commissioners Anderson, Niziolek, Varty, Goodwin, Loidolt, and Fermoye.

Members Absent: None

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 of the Elk River Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Stewart.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. CONSIDER AGENDA**

**Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to approve the April 8, 2026, agenda. Motion carried 7-0.**

**4. CONSIDER MINUTES**

**4.1 03-11-2026 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Varty to approve the March 11, 2026, Parks and Recreation Commission minutes. Motion carried 7-0.**

**5. OPEN FORUM**

Tim Schreder, from Ramsey, Minnesota, requested that discussion of a disc golf course at Burr Oak Park be added to a future agenda. Mr. Schreder has attended previous meetings to discuss disc golf and would like to bring it back for discussion.

Dan Schnabel, from Coon Rapids, Minnesota also spoke. He shared that he grew up in the area and has played disc golf at the Lion John Weicht Park disc golf course over the past decade. Mr. Schnabel recently walked Burr Oak Park with Mr. Schreder and would also like disc golf to be considered for a future agenda.

**6. ACTION ITEMS**

### 6.1 Hillside Park - Jump Line

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Derek Burchill, the Hillside Park Steward who lives in Ramsey, Minnesota presented his portion of the report. He pointed out it would be inexpensive to build, and the City of Elk River Parks Foreman Supervisor Josh Baas informed him he could provide dirt for the project.

**Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to recommend the construction of a jump line at Hillside Park. Motion carried 7-0.**

### 6.2 Hillside Park - Pump Track

Mr. Burchill continued presenting his next proposal. He shared that he would also like to put some picnic tables underneath a large tree near the location. He said he would rent a bobcat to do most of the work and Minnesota Off Road Cyclist group (MORC) will pay for the rentals of the equipment. Commissioner Anderson asked if it was special dirt. Mr. Burchill said dirt with high clay content is desirable but is not necessary and the black dirt they have been using has been holding up quite well. He said he would welcome any high clay content dirt that is available, but they wouldn't need to buy some specifically for this project.

Commissioner Fermoye asked if there is a concern about Ebikes in this area. Mr. Burchill yes, and he would like signage and education provided to the public. He thinks patrons would help enforce the rules once they are clear.

**Moved by Commissioner Niziolek and seconded by Commissioner Loidolt to recommend the construction of a pump track at Hillside Park. Motion carried 7-0.**

### 6.3 Woodland Trails Equipment Request

Dave Kallemeyn, a former commissioner and one of the Woodland Trails Regional Park volunteers, presented his report and slides. Mr. Kallemeyn shared that Commissioner Anderson and Mark Rathbun are also regular volunteer groomers. Mr. Kallemeyn pointed out that the equipment quote is for 2026, so the price would likely change for 2027. He also stated that the new piece of equipment would have to be fitted for the snowmobiles they currently have.

Commissioner Niziolek asked why this piece of equipment is special. Mr. Kallemeyn explained that it is heavier and has metal components also known as "knives" that break up the surface of the trail and turn it into a more skiable surface. Commissioner Niziolek asked if it would also be used on the winter walking trail. Mr. Kallemeyn said yes if it iced up. Mr. Kallemeyn explained that the existing equipment would be kept, and the new piece would be used during icy events. Chair Stewart asked if the equipment required any special training or maintenance. Mr. Kallemeyn said no, they would be pulled behind the snowmobiles at about the same speed and would not be used every time they groomed. Commissioner Niziolek asked where it would be shipped from. Mr. Kallemeyn said Colorado and that the shipping cost was listed in the quote. Commissioner Niziolek said that he thinks this would be a nice piece of equipment to improve the safety and use of the trails when it is icy.

Chair Stewart said that if they want to maintain the reputation the ski trails currently have, then he thinks they should move forward. Commissioner Niziolek said that he thinks he has a source of funds that could cover the shipping cost.

Chair Stewart thinks they should approve the motion as is and work out the details of shipping later once they have more details confirmed.

**Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Goodwin to recommend that the City Council approve the purchase of a new trail grooming tool using the Park Maintenance budget in the General Fund for 2027. Motion carried 7-0.**

#### 6.4 Farmers Market Coloring Contest Vote

Mr. Shelby collected the votes from the commissioners and announced that the winner of the coloring contest was option B.

**Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Loidolt to approve the winner of the 2026 Farmers Market Coloring Contest Option B. Motion carried 7-0.**

#### 6.5 Vikings Youth Football Camp

Mr. Shelby presented his report. He explained that these camps are held across the state. He said the program is like the Twins Clinic that parks and recreation offers each year which has been very successful. Chair Stewart asked Mr. Shelby if legal counsel has reviewed the agreement. Mr. Shelby said it is a standard contract.

Commissioner Goodwin asked if it would be registration based. Mr. Shelby said yes and would probably fill up quickly.

**Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to recommend that the City Council approve the facilities agreement with the Minnesota Vikings to hold a one-day youth clinic for residents. Motion carried 7-0.**

#### 6.6 GNT Trailhead and Trailside Amenities Agreement

Mr. Shelby presented his report. He said the City of Elk River's contribution is capped at

\$26,250 in the agreement. Commissioner Fermoye asked if there would be any additional fees for maintenance in the future. Mr. Shelby said that he believed that the 17.5% listed for the City of Elk River portion is the maximum. Mr. Shelby said the project group starts meeting with the design firm during the first week of May. Mr. Shelby said he could provide an update to the commission at the May meeting.

**Moved by Commissioner Varty and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to recommend that the City Council approve the Joint Powers Agreement between**

**Sherburne County, the City of Elk River, and the City of Zimmerman for design of a trail head and amenities along the Great Northern Regional Trail. Motion carried 7-0.**

6.7 Trail Rules Signs - Ebikes

Mr. Shelby presented his report. He passed around a copy of the actual size of the sign. He knows the commission had some discussion about changing the orientation of the sign to landscape but changing it would be problematic due to the location of the screws that mount the signs.

Mr. Shelby also said there was some discussion among staff about the second bullet point, stating that users must stay to the right and pass on the left, which is not in the ordinance.

He also pointed out they should be consistent with what is on the sign in terms of what is in the ordinance for enforceability. Commissioner Fermoye asked if the trail itself will still be painted as they had discussed before. Mr. Shelby said that they had spoken about doing that at the entry points of the trail and that is still the plan.

Chair Stewart said the point is valid about removing the second bullet stating “trail users must stay to the right, pass on the left” to avoid any points of misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Commissioner Anderson said he thinks the second bullet is extremely important whether it is part of the ordinance or not. He thinks it is an important piece of general etiquette and very critical to the safety of users.

Chair Stewart said that the federal government is looking at this issue because it has become a national concern. Commissioner Goodwin said she thinks the goal of the sign is to teach and encourage good trail etiquette, not really to look up the ordinance. She said they aren’t going to cite people for not staying to the right or the left, but it is a safety issue.

Mr. Stremcha said that he would suggest either making the motion to amend the ordinance to include the second bullet point or change the word “must” so that it is not implied that it is enforceable. Commissioner Anderson asked if the word “shall” would be acceptable. Mr. Stremcha said it was very close to the word must. Commissioner Varty suggested using the word “encouraged.”

Commissioner Goodwin asked if the sign could say “Stay to the right and pass on the left”. Mr. Stremcha said that sounded okay. The Commissioners agreed to just take out the word “must.” Chair Stewart said he thinks they should just change the word must and not change the ordinance. Commissioner Anderson said it would be good to have some time pass before changing the ordinance right away.

Commissioner Fermoye asked if they should take the word MUST out of bullet point one and two. Mr. Stremcha asked if the commission could give staff the ability to make changes as necessary to make sure language is consistent with the ordinance. He said that they could still make the motion as stated but with the intent that it would be amended for this reason. Commissioner Anderson pointed out that he only wanted the sign slightly amended.

Commissioner Goodwin asked if this sign was adequate for Hillside Park. She suggested that if not they could have a workshop to create one for Hillside. Mr. Burchill confirmed that this sign would not work for the mountain bike park. Commissioner Anderson suggested that Mr. Burchill work with staff to create a sign. Chair Stewart said that would probably be the best way to look at it. He said Hillside should have its own signs made with Mr. Burchill and staff collaborating on the details. Mr. Stremcha suggested that the commission create two separate motions.

Commissioner Niziolek said he wants to make sure that they keep the verbiage of “Stay to right, pass on the left” and just remove the word must. Councilmember Grupa confirmed that the discussion was primarily to remove the word “Must.” Commissioner Anderson asked that the final version be shared with the Commission before being put out.

**Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Loidolt to recommend the installation of the trail rules signs along the Great Northern Trail. Motion carried 7-0.**

**Moved by Commissioner Niziolek and seconded by Commissioner Varty to recommend that a trail rules sign be developed for Hillside Park and created in collaboration with park stewards and park staff. Motion carried 7-0.**

## 6.8 Parks and Recreation Framework Plan - Request for Proposal

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Commissioner Niziolek suggested they review the document page by page. He asked if there is a requirement for the consultant to visit the parks and which parks would be a priority. Chair Stewart summarized the requirements for the consultants that are currently listed in the RFP.

Commissioner Niziolek asked again if there is a requirement to visit the parks, specifically Woodland Trails Regional Park.

Mr. Shelby asked if Commissioner Niziolek was asking about the park inventory portion where parks are listed with their amenities. Commissioner Niziolek said he thinks the consultants need to spend time in the parks to connect with them. Commissioner Anderson agreed that it wouldn't just be for inventory but to be a part of what is going on. Commissioner Niziolek said that if the consultant doesn't spend time in Woodland Trails Regional Park and some of the other big parks viewing the amenities, the City won't get the finest product. Mr. Shelby said part of that would be covered in the level of service analysis, where the consultant would analyze what we have in terms of assets, what we have to offer to the residents, and what we are doing well, as well as opportunities to grow.

Council member Grupa asked Commissioner Niziolek if he is questioning the consultant's ability to do their job. Mr. Niziolek said he thinks the consultant should visit particular parks and not just particular events.

Mr. Shelby asked for confirmation if Commissioner Niziolek is asking for the consultant to be required to visit all the parks. Commissioners Niziolek and Anderson said they would like them to visit key/signature parks. Commissioner Niziolek said that he is just looking for signature parks. He thinks they will get a better product if they require them to spend some time in the

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parks and preferably on a good day when there are users. Mr. Shelby asked if the Elk RiverFest event would be acceptable for the visit to Orono Park. Commissioner Niziolek said that would be fine for Orono Park, but they still need something for Woodland Trails.

Commissioner Goodwin asked if they should visit Trott Brook Park since they had just put a new playground in it. She said she thinks that the consultants will need to determine and highlight where there is possibility to grow and where there is opportunity to scale back and use those resources differently. She said the consultants need to get their eyes on areas that may not be involved in some of these public events but are vital to the park's system.

Mr. Shelby said he thinks that would be included in the needs and trends assessment. He said they can include specific locations in the RFP if the commissioners would like to do so.

Mr. Stremcha said that for the consultant to provide an acceptable final product, the consultant would have to include information that would meet these requirements. He doesn't think it would have to be narrowed down to signature parks because they would be included in the overall system review.

Commissioner Niziolek said he thinks that this would fall under system plan/park usage. He said to have a quality product they would expect them to do their research at these parks. Commissioner Niziolek said in recent years, when he has worked with a variety of people in these situations, he has found they don't actually walk the site that they are responsible for making recommendations for, so he would like to encourage any entity working for them to go on site and actually see what's going on versus doing it from a chair in an office.

Mr. Stremcha asked if there was a specific event at Woodland Trails that he would strongly encourage them to attend to capture that. Commissioner Niziolek said in a perfect world on Saturday in the winter with good skiing. Mr. Stremcha said there is a variety of activities listed that don't have a date determined, so they could list some of those additional activities that they could strongly encourage them to attend if possible. Commissioner Varty asked if they make a visit during the winter though, would they have to do one for all the seasons?

Commissioner Niziolek said that Woodland Trails takes on an entirely different image in the winter and the summer. He thinks to capture the essence, you have to go there both in winter and the summer on a good day when it is highly used. Mr. Stremcha said, ultimately, both of those are user engagement opportunities, so they would be articulating Woodland Trails in some way in the list of engagement opportunities with the residents.

Chair Stewart questioned if there would be enough time to do a winter visit to Woodland Trails. Mr. Stremcha said there is a 12-month turnaround date for the project. Chair Anderson said that there are 4 events listed that he would take out because the larger parks have a more significant impact. He said that he thinks they are missing the point. He said these are the events that have the largest attendance where the consultant and staff will be able to engage with the public for their feedback; It is not about the location.

Commissioner Niziolek said it will not represent all user groups equally. Commissioner Anderson said that not all user groups that use the parks will be at the community events listed. Commissioner Goodwin pointed out that there will be a lot of users at Woodland Trails during

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the Entertainment in the Park event that is listed on the schedule. She agreed that speaking to the users when they are using the park proves they are engaging and using the parks.

Commissioner Varty asked if there could be a public open house at each of the signature parks. Commissioner Niziolek said that is a good idea, and that they should post signs and invite the residents to be there to talk about their park and why it is special to them. Chair Stewart questioned if there should be a mix of nature versus recreational. He said they also have a massive athletic fields master plan that they spent months talking about which should be included.

Commissioner Niziolek said they should brainstorm a list of significant parks tonight and come up with a plan of what they would recommend, getting an idea of what the user group sees as a need in the park and enjoys in the park. Commissioner Loidolt asked if Mr. Shelby needed this tonight. Mr. Shelby said yes because of the established timeline. It will go to the Council on April 20.

Commissioner Niziolek suggested Woodland Trails Regional Park and the Furniture and Things Community Event Center. Mr. Stremcha suggested they list three or four specific locations for the public open houses to solicit user feedback and incorporate that into the RFP so they have transparency with the future consultant, or they could just reiterate more of the things that are on the current RFP and staff would work with the consultant to make sure the outcomes are accomplished. He said there is wiggle room to navigate through that, and they could have more than one open house for the public to attend.

Commissioner Niziolek asked where the open houses would be. Mr. Stremcha said that they could either list them or leave it up for discretion, such as the “open houses are yet to be determined” but list what they would like to gain from them. Commissioner Anderson said right now it is written as just one open house. Commissioner Varty pointed out they could change it though. Chair Stewart suggested, for example, they should add Plants and Things Recreation Complex and some of the larger neighborhood parks like Trott Brook Farms Park.

Mr. Stremcha pointed out that they can add as many open houses as they desire, or they can leave it open for interpretation based on staff direction, where the selected firm would be expected to have up to ten site visits. But the expectation would also be that they would be billed accordingly for the consultant’s time. Chair Stewart asked if they could accept the list as is but with the ability to add additional open houses where they feel there would be a legitimate need and appropriate desire to visit. Commissioner Loidolt suggested that they change number six to public open houses, plural, with dates and times to be determined by staff. Everyone agreed that it was a good idea. Secretary Larson pointed out that more of the fine details could be worked out during the process of building the plan with the consultants once they are chosen. She also reminded the commission that they had created subcommittees to work on the individual pieces of the framework plan, so each area will be done with their input and review.

Commissioner Niziolek said he still has concerns about the results being skewed and he wants to be certain that all user groups are represented. He gave the example of hunters and fisherman that use the William H. Houlton Conservation Area. Chair Stewart suggested that they be invited to an open house that specifically invites them. Mr. Stremcha pointed out that there has to be some ownership of the user groups to attend the open houses as well, because

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it is unrealistic to always be everywhere. Commissioner Anderson said if they specifically list youth baseball and youth softball, why shouldn't they list other sports?

Commissioner Niziolek said he is concerned about the silent sports such as skiing, running, and hunting getting overlooked.

Mr. Stremcha said while the other user groups and their feedback are important, the major capital improvement projects are in the two sport categories of baseball and softball. The staff are trying to implement the athletic facilities framework plan the commission has recommended, and city council has approved. Commissioner Niziolek asked if that is okay. Mr. Stremcha said that it is up to the commission to decide as a recommending body. Commissioner Anderson said those are things that matter, but those are not the only things. Mr. Stremcha said that he understands that. He said those are not the only things they are soliciting feedback on, and he is just pointing out why those two sports were listed in the engagement opportunities when others are not.

Chair Stewart pointed out that there isn't anything that says they can't use the public open house to solicit feedback during one of the cross-country events at Woodland Trails Regional Park or any other of the silent sports activities. He said they could make the public open houses whatever they would like to make them be. Secretary Larson pointed out that these are just some of the physical ways they will be doing engagement, but they may have many other tools to collect feedback, data, and information and provide engagement. When the proposals come in, that will be one of the things the commissioners on the interview committee will have a chance to review the tools the consultant will offer for engagement. Chair Stewart asked if the consultants would have to provide their fee schedule. Mr. Shelby said yes, that it would need to be included in the proposals that are submitted. Mr. Stremcha pointed out that staff would also be doing additional engagement above and beyond internally what is listed by the consultant and without the consultant present.

Commissioner Anderson suggested adding a number seven that lists Woodland Trails Regional Park. He said it is very diverse in the silent sports such as running, hiking, skiing and is heavily used. Mr. Stremcha asked if the Chair and Commission would be comfortable if, during the public open houses, staff would work with the committee who is assigned to inventory and assessment as the liaison. They would make Woodland Trails Regional Park a priority when they schedule those open houses. Chair Stewart said he would be comfortable adding a Woodland Trails open house but wouldn't go any further than that at this point because there are more details to be determined. Commissioner Niziolek said he wants to make sure that whoever is working for them is aware there is a huge silent sports community that needs to be recognized right at the beginning of the process. He doesn't feel that it is represented at this point. Commissioner Anderson said that to do something at Woodland Trails you would have to schedule it, publicize it mostly via networking, but it would be hard to get there on short notice for a great ski day. Chair Stewart asked Mr. Shelby if they would also be able to publicize it via social media. Mr. Shelby confirmed.

Mr. Shelby asked for confirmation if the commission is asking to add a seventh engagement event specifically for Woodlands.

**Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Niziolek to recommend that the City Council approve the Parks and Recreation Framework Plan Request for Proposals (RFP) with additional changes to add item number seven**

**for Woodland Trails Regional Park and change number six to plural. Motion carried 7-0.**

## 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 7.1 Local Sales and Use Tax Amendment

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Commissioner Niziolek said he thinks they always have to be true to their constituents and to the voters and make it very clear what they are voting for, and they have to follow through with the voting results and that particular focus of the voting initiative.

Commissioner Loidolt said he is disappointed that the city council got so tunnel visioned with this sales tax when there are other big things the city is pushing the commission to get done such as the fields. He thinks the fire station is important, but he wishes there was more discussion instead of just one project on the line. He said baseball has been in the city as long as fire stations have been, yet Elk River has the worst fields around and he finds this hard to digest while understanding there is also a need for a fire station.

Chair Stewart asked if they had access to any sort of final report card showing the results of how the money was spent. He said the assumption is that the bond is being paid off early which in turn allows them to reallocate that potential revenue source to something else. Do they have something that says what the original things would be that the money would be for and where are they now?

Mr. Stremcha explained they cannot pay off the bonds early until they are callable. They have specific terms and conditions they must follow so while they may be collecting funds greater than what they had anticipated through a study they did years ago, post-COVID had changed the dynamic with the level of inflation and costs of services and food and beverage sales tax to a rate that they are collecting more sales tax than they had projected in the past.

Mr. Stremcha said in terms of the projects they had voter approval for, also known as the Active Elk River projects, they have been constructed and that project and scope is in the process of paying down its payment as the bonds allow it. When bonds become callable around 2033, they could make that early payment at that point and refinance the remaining debt. Based on the legislation and pending voter approval, the bonds that they would also be paying on would also be using the excess fund rather than paying down the debt early, years down the road. He also explained that some of the other opportunities that exist would be that if the fire station is built on property other than the existing property the future sale of that property could be used for park improvements or added into the park improvement fund as a recommendation for this body to provide additional funds for those capital improvements. He shared that it would not be a large revenue source but a step in the right direction.

He said the commission could make a recommendation to the City Council to consider sales tax expansion or modification before they go to the voters for approval. The City Council has their retreat in May and are always planning and setting long-term goals for the community in those sessions. The other option over the long term would be through community development contributing to the park dedication fund over time. They could also structure some of their debt

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so as their existing projects fall off the debt levy, those bond payments could be financed through park dedication and then financed later down the road through their existing debt levy as an alternative funding source. He confirmed with the commission that they are looking to elevate this in the priority list and reaffirm the plan that was adopted, and push the council to decide on how to fund the capital improvement plan.

Commissioner Loidolt said when he got on the commission seven or eight years ago, he said that one of the first things they talked about was the baseball fields. He said that he is concerned because nothing has happened, and he feels that they need to do something or forget about it. He said he thinks at the rate they are going nothing will ever be done, and they are getting further away from the goal.

Commissioner Loidolt said he is concerned about where the kids will play ball and sports, especially with a 500-house development coming to the south of town. He pointed out that Otsego and Rogers fields are great, and Elk River is very far behind.

Commissioner Niziolek said he agrees with Commissioner Loidolt. He said they have talked about fields many times and nothing has happened.

Commissioner Anderson said it would be a good selling point for the package and diversify the audience. Commissioner Goodwin said it is such a great thing that they have been able to raise the revenue quickly. She confirmed with Mr. Stremcha that they must reach the threshold of 35 million by a certain point and they are on track to do this. She thinks there needs to be a little more care because the intended purpose of the money and what they told the community they were going to use the money for was Active Elk River and now they are saying they are going to use it for the fire station. She thinks that is inconsistent with the initial message. She also said she is concerned about the Specht property, and they don't have money to build a playground in it. She is also concerned about the baseball fields that need to be improved, playgrounds that need to be replaced and trails that need long term maintenance. She feels they need to make this town continue to have a legacy of people being able to be active and enjoy their outdoor amenities. She feels it is very much like bait and switch. She does not want to prolong something without the residents being able to say they don't want their tax money to be used for something. She said she doesn't think the council should just pick a fire station to spend the money on. She said it doesn't feel collaborative. She recommends that they talk about it before making such a big decision.

Commissioner Anderson said he agrees with Commissioner Loidolt that Elk River used to be the leaders in parks and now they are being left in the dust. Commissioner Niziolek said that so much of Active Elk River was primarily inside facilities other than the baseball fields. Commissioner Loidolt said that isn't true, they got lights at the Plants and Things Recreation Complex, Orono Lake was dredged, that it was a mix. He said that this tax proposal seems a bit disingenuous.

Commissioner Varty said that people may feel deceived like they voted for it but then the city may come with another referendum later and the people may question if the city will really use it for that or switch it up later. Commissioner Anderson said that linear recreation is one of the most popular forms and the trails need to be repaired at Woodland Trails Regional Park. He said it was very bumpy and damage was caused to the trail by the construction of the force main. Commissioner Niziolek said he has had users tell him to do something about the bumps on the trails at Woodlands as well. Commissioner Anderson said that mowing at the park feels like he

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is on a bucking bronco and one of the bikers told him that riding on the Great Northern Trail is one of the worst rides he has done in the state of Minnesota. He said it should be and could be better.

Chair Stewart said going forward he is worried that they don't have a funding pathway to fund the new things that they think they should have. He is worried that they don't have the money to fund the things they already have. He said in the last year they have been talking about identifying neighborhood parks that they can no longer support because they simply don't have the money for it, how are they going to do anything else if they can't afford what they already have. He said it is a value statement and not everyone is going to feel the same way, but if people value these amenities, some things come with a cost.

Commissioner Loidolt asked what the next step would be. Mr. Stremcha said next steps are he and the City Administrator Cal Portner will be testifying before the legislature, Senate on April 9 and then the House next week for the sales tax, and then in November the voters would vote for approval of it.

Chair Stewart asked Mr. Stremcha if once the state approves the amendment is there a way to amend the ballot. Mr. Stremcha said the process would need to amend legislative approval and he doesn't know how quickly they would do that.

Mr. Stremcha said the first step would be for the council to request amendment, and then it would be our representative from our area to amend the legislation as it currently is, but the clock is ticking so they would have to act very quickly.

Commissioner Niziolek said he thinks recreation is so important to the community and he thinks it is worth a hard look at it. Commissioner Loidolt said he thinks their backs are up against a wall. Commissioner Goodwin pointed out that Mr. Stremcha is going to get the language approved the very next day after this meeting. She said that she thinks all this is a moot point. She asked Mr. Stremcha if the language was going to say that they were going to try and change the money to go towards the building of a fire station. Mr. Stremcha said confirmed.

Chair Stewart asked if there would be any money left over after the money would go for the fire station. Mr. Stremcha said no. Commissioner Niziolek said he was disappointed and would encourage the City Council to find additional sources of revenue to help them out. He said they are struggling to provide quality recreational opportunities for their community. Commissioner Anderson said they are going on 35 years for the request for additional funds for Parks and Recreation.

Councilmember Grupa said he agreed with them but questioned why it took so long for them to ask. Commissioner Anderson said that this would have been a good opportunity to ask for the money. Councilmember Grupa pointed out that there is money that Parks and Recreation receive every year from the liquor store fund. Commissioner Loidolt pointed out that money is falling behind. Commissioner Anderson said that fund only provides \$250,000 when they are looking for millions of dollars.

Commissioner Niziolek recommended that they pursue the utilization of franchise fees for parks and recreation activities. He said that would be a shift of from how the city currently uses franchise fees, but it is not out of the ordinary. Mr. Stremcha asked if Commissioner Niziolek was asking above and beyond what the city already collects in franchise fees as a separate fee.

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Commissioner Niziolek asked for confirmation from Mr. Stremcha that currently the franchise fees go towards road work. Mr. Stremcha said yes. Commissioner Niziolek said he would like those fees shifted from road work to parks and recreation and that roads are funded from a different source.

Mr. Stremcha said the commission can make any recommendations for ways they could improve the flow of revenue into parks and recreation as well as the possibility of franchise fees as a possible source of revenue. They are more than entitled to do so.

Commissioner Niziolek said he would like City Council to look at ways in which they could improve the flow of revenue into parks and recreation and to look at things like franchise fees as an opportunity to do that. He said it could be any other source as well. Mr. Stremcha asked Commissioner Niziolek if he was making a motion. He said the message he is trying to send is that they are trying to do some things and they need additional funds to do them. Commissioner Loidolt pointed out that they have been receiving the same amount of money from the liquor store for 20 years and it hasn't changed and that they could get more. Commissioner Goodwin said she thinks they need to look at all of the ways they are getting money such as park dedication which is never enough to cover the cost of a playground. She said they need to start over and come up with better ideas because they are running out of money. She thinks they need to be more strategic. She wants to review how they receive funds through park improvement and park dedication. She thinks they need to look at how people are using these recreational facilities and adapt to it because they are using models that don't work anymore for a society that is completely different.

Chair Stewart said that it would be a good idea for a meeting down the road, to review where the revenue comes from, how it is generated, and how they use them to project budgets. He said they need to discuss how to find more money down the road. Councilmember Grupa pointed out what the liquor store pays for. Mr. Stremcha asked if it was possible for them to make motion during the discussion. Secretary Larson stated it is not limited by our bylaws, but the bylaws reference to follow Roberts Rules. Chair Stewart said that he thinks they should decouple this topic from the conversation they started with and start fresh with the subject of looking for ways to pursue new funding. Commissioner Goodwin pointed out that with the City Council having their retreat in May she feels it is important for them to make a motion to suggest the City Council put their minds together to come up with funding ideas for the parks they have. The commission agreed that they are not interested in pursuing changing the sales tax amendment to add a request for funding for the parks.

Commission Goodwin suggested that Commissioner Niziolek make a motion for the Council to pursue funding. Commissioner Niziolek asked Mr. Stremcha to explain more about how the franchise fees work. He doesn't necessarily want to tell the taxpayers that they are going to increase taxes to fund parks and recreation. He would like it to come from something within the city taxes that exist today. Mr. Stremcha explained how the franchise fees work in relation to how they support funding the city roads.

Commissioner Niziolek moved that the City Council explore creative financing mechanisms for parks and recreation and explore the franchise fee as one of the many resources to do that.

Secretary Larson clarified that they can't make a motion that does not pertain to this specific agenda item.

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Commissioner Anderson asked Mr. Stremcha what would happen if the voters did not pass the sales tax amendment in the fall and if there could be a new one. Mr. Stremcha said yes, the process could start over with a new sales tax amendment.

The commission agreed to recommend that the City Council pursue additional funding sources for parks and recreation.

8. PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER UPDATE

8.1 Parks and Recreation Manager Update

Mr. Shelby presented his report.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Stewart shared that there will be a controlled burn at Bailey Point Nature Preserve on April 10. Commissioner Anderson asked if the downed eagle's nest would be burned. Chair Stewart said it would not. Commissioner Anderson said he would be pulling it out next week.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**Moved by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Loidolt to adjourn the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting at 8:45 pm. Motion carried 7-0.**



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Hal Stewart, Chair



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Jolene Richter, Deputy City Clerk