



**Meeting of the Parks and Recreation
Commission
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Wednesday, January 8, 2025**

Members Present: Commissioner Jill Varty, Commissioner Greg Loidolt, Commissioner Hal Stewart, Commissioner Melissa Fermoye

Members Absent: Commissioner Joy Goodwin

Staff Present: Assistant City Administrator/Business Services Director Joe Stremcha, Parks and Recreation Manager Jeff Shelby, 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 Acting Chair Loidolt.

Moved by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to appoint Commissioner Loidolt as acting Chair in the absence of Chair Anderson and Vice Chair Niziolek. Motion carried 4-0

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. CONSIDER AGENDA

Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Varty to amend the January 8, 2025, agenda to remove the work session from this agenda and move it to the February meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

4. CONSIDER MINUTES

4.1 12-08-2024 Parks and Recreation Commission Special Meeting Tour Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Varty to approve the December 8, 2024, Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes. Motion carried 4-0.

4.2 12-11-2024 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Stewart to approve the December 11, 2024, Parks and Recreation Commission Special Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 4-0.

5. OPEN FORUM

6. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1 2025 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Calendar

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Mr. Shelby explained that Chair Anderson had expressed interest to him to change the time of the meetings to an earlier time. Commissioner Loidolt said that he did not feel comfortable changing the time with three commission members missing so he said that he is fine with keeping it the same for now.

Moved by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to approve the schedule as presented. Motion carried 4-0

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1 Specht Property Park Dedication

Mr. Shelby presented his report. He explained the slides provided in the packet. He pointed out that the rendition of the green space is only a design suggestion.

Matt Barker with Capstone Homes presented. Capstone has worked with Carlson McCain Design Firms to design these 250 acres along the Mississippi River. He pointed out the Specht farm in the middle of the first slide. He wants to review the needs for the entire property. He pointed out the Plants and Things Recreation Complex and the train station proximity to the property as well as the lack of park space around the property at this time. He brought up the Mississippi River Trail system and where its future potential location is located by Hwy 10 on this map. He has worked with this trail via some of their other projects in Ramsey.

Mr. Barker stated that he thinks there are amazing opportunities for the property as well as parks being right on the Mississippi River. He pointed out the upper left 26 acres of green space. He and their team along with DNR and wetland specialists and have gathered a lot of feedback about what type of opportunities could take place there.

He pointed out the main road coming into the development in the center of the property along with the access to the north and the south which all join leading down to an Oak Savannah area right before the park space by the river. They wanted to design the space to collectively bring people to the river via the trails and sidewalks. The trail would also connect to the north side which would connect to the future over pass that would go to the Plants and Things Recreation Complex.

The greenway corridor is another 15 acres with green space and groves of trees. Oliver Kelly Farm did not want the trail to go through the farm so that is why it is out by Hwy 10 in the design. There will be a large berm with trees and landscaping between the development and Hwy 10. There will be about 2.5 miles of paved trail that would go through the park as well, connecting everything. They also envision some parking areas to the north side.

He wants to be clear that they are not putting forward a concrete plan for the open green space by the river. They have just been brainstorming as they have visited the site and provided some ideas of what could be. On the lower side of the large green space is what is referred to as a flood plain forest. He thinks that people will want to be down by the woods on a dock dropping a fishing line, drop in a kayak, or just being in nature.

They gave this to their park designers at Carlson McCain and they produced the idea of an 18-hole disc golf course. There are wetlands and an area above the 10-year flood plain area that could be a park, etc.

On the right side of the design there is an Oak Savannah area they envision a pavilion or something to be a gathering point over the vista. There is about forty acres in the park dedication and then fifteen acres of the berm that will be maintained by the HOA (they know the berm is not part of the park dedication but consider it an asset).

Commissioner Loidolt said that he thinks a disc golf course would be great, but he will turn it over to the other commissioners for questions and comments. He said he would like to walk the property with them to see the vision from Capstone.

Commissioner Stewart asked if Planning has looked at it. Mr. Shelby confirmed that the plan will go to the Planning Commission meeting on January 28th with the lots and streets drawn in as seen tonight.

Commissioner Stewart shared that he has concerns about what is defined park dedication space and what is not i.e., wetlands vs. uplands and what they can accept. He asked what kind of population mix and number of kids in the development with kids. Mr. Barker said there will be 533 single-family homes with smaller sizes by the berm and then larger homes as they get closer to the river. About 2,000 to 3,000 people with three to four people per home. Commissioner Stewart said this development seems very cut off for the rest of the other parks so he feels there should be a playground incorporated into this neighborhood.

Commissioner Varty said she agrees with Commissioner Stewart that there needs to be a playground area. She said that she is concerned about how much area is a play area in the green space. Mr. Barker said the play area is 2-3 acres and then a large playground in the "park area" that is grey on the plan. Mr. Barker agrees that walking the property would be a good idea.

She also said she has concerns about parking if there was a disc golf course there. He said there would be 30 parking spots along the top part of the development right outside the park as well as the on-street parking along the road that runs to the future overpass on Hwy 10. They have designed that road to be wider to accommodate for this.

Commissioner Loidolt said that with the disc golf course being in a flood plain in the spring they would not be able use the lower eight holes. He has concern about that area being a future park and potentially not being able to use portions of it throughout the year.

Mr. Shelby said that a special meeting would have to be called tonight with a date and time to set up the tour or Mr. Barker and/or Capstone staff could go out individually or in small groups with the commissioners.

Commissioner Loidolt said that he would not feel comfortable selecting a date tonight with the other three commissioners not present so he would rather do the smaller group tours.

They could do meetings of three or under with Mr. Barker to go out and tour the property to avoid a quorum. Mr. Barker said that they would just want to be respectful of the Specht's and would work out some options. Mr. Shelby said that staff will work with Capstone to set up the tours.

Mr. Barker said that the last time the water was high it was still not up to the 10-year water mark. The Specht's have never had to miss a farming season yet because the water recedes quickly even when it was high.

Commissioner Fermoye asked if the commission should talk about the concerns submitted from Chair Anderson and Commissioner Niziolek in writing. Commissioner Stewart asked if Capstone could provide a response to them. Mr. Barker confirmed he received a copy of the letters and said Capstone staff will respond to them that they will be at the February meeting as well. Mr. Shelby confirmed that there will be discussion before action on this topic at the next commission meeting.

8.2 Community Garden - Lion John Weicht Park

Mr. Shelby presented his report. He pointed out there would be eighteen plots, ten by twenty feet and \$30 per plot. One person per household would be allowed to have a plot and they would be available from June 1 to October 31.

Commissioner Fermoye asked how much interest there is on this and if staff thinks all the spots will fill up. Mr. Shelby explained that Karen Wingard, the Farmers Market and Special Events Coordinator, has done the prep and research for it, and it will be experimental this first year. February 1st online registration for the plots will open.

Commissioner Stewart said that in other cities garden plots are very popular. Commissioner Fermoye asked if the renters are responsible for maintaining their spot. Mr. Shelby confirmed they are and said that the master gardeners will work with Karen Wingard on managing the garden.

Commissioner Loidolt asked if the plots are fenced off and how they manage each of their spots. Mr. Shelby said that he can get more details on how the plots will be segmented and managed as it moves forward and update the commission at future meetings.

Commissioner Varty asked if they can plant anything they want such as flowers and then sell them as part of a business. Mr. Shelby said he said thinks it is just garden vegetables, but he can check on that to confirm what the rules are.

9. RECREATION MANAGER UPDATE

9.1 Parks and Recreation Manager Update

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Commissioner Loidolt asked about a Rivers Edge Commons update and Mr. Shelby said he will provide photos at next month's meeting.

Commissioner Loidolt asked Mr. Stremcha about the Overlook Lounge at the Furniture and Things Community Event Center. Mr. Stremcha explained that it is a twenty-one plus lounge available a couple of times a week. It is limited due to high school events when it is not able to be used.

September through December, the catering and lounge have generated a lot of revenue. The cable commission provided all the electrical improvements as well as the tv's and digital signage etc. in the lounge. Dahlheimer Beverage provided all the sports themed wrap around on the walls in the space. Bernick's provided the soda well. Furniture and Things provided the furniture within the area as well as the chandelier.

Commissioner Varty asked if they are going to have set hours and publish them to the public. Mr. Stremcha said right now they are in the process of hiring a new concessions manager and then they are hoping to turn it into more of consistent schedule.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Loidolt welcomed City Council member Cory Grupa as the new Parks and Recreation liaison.

11. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Commissioner Fermoyle and seconded by Commissioner Varty to adjourn the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 7:40pm. Motion carried 4-0.

12. WORK SESSION

12.1 Trailhead Locations - Great Northern Trail

Removed from the agenda.

13. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Removed from the agenda.



Dave Anderson, Chair



Tina Allard, City Clerk