



**Meeting of the Parks and Recreation
Commission
Held at the Elk River City Hall
Wednesday, April 9, 2025**

Members Present: Chair Dave Anderson, Commissioners Mike Niziolek, Joy Goodwin, Greg Loidolt, Hal Stewart, Jill Varty, Melissa Fermoye

Members Absent: Councilmember Cory Grupa

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 Anderson.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CONSIDER AGENDA

Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Varty to approve the April 9, 2025, agenda with the removal of agenda item Archery Deer Hunt Steward due to a scheduling conflict this evening. Motion carried 7-0.

4. CONSIDER MINUTES

4.1 03-12-2025 Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to approve the March 12, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes. Motion carried 7-0.

5. OPEN FORUM

6. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

6.1 Archery Deer Hunt Steward

Moved to May meeting agenda.

6.2 Student Presentation - Johnathan Vick

Mr. Shelby presented his report and introduced Mr. Vick who is a local student and a part-time employee of the City of Elk River Parks and Recreation department. Mr. Vick reviewed his slideshow presentation about his proposal for an adaptive playground swing in a city park. This proposal is his senior capstone project for graduation at Spectrum High School. His project is called "Swinging into Inclusive Play." Facebook comments showing disappointment regarding the lack of adaptive options on the new playground in the Trott Brook neighborhood prompted him to want to act. His cousin and her daughter with spina bifida inspired him as well. Mr. Shelby connected Mr. Vick with staff at Landscape Structures, a company that makes playground equipment to gather information on pricing. He held a

fundraiser at the Trott Brook Barn in December offering refreshments and crafts to raise money for an adaptive swing. Over thirty people attended the fundraiser raising \$1,100 to go towards the swing. In March, the money was donated to the City by Mr. Vick.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1 Farmers Market Coloring Contest Vote

Mrs. Wingard presented her report. She shared the history of the coloring contest for the Farmers Market bag design. The communications team narrowed down the entries to the three options presented to the Commissioners for voting. The bags will be handed out on Farmers Market opening day, June 12. The winning artwork will go on one side of the bag and the sponsors for the farmers market will go on the other side. Mrs. Wingard handed out the voting sheets and the commissioners chose option A as the winner.

Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Niziolek to approve option A provided by Gianna for the Farmers Market bag art. Motion carried 7-0.

7.2 Athletic Facilities Emergency Action Plan

Mr. Ellingworth presented his report. Commissioner Fermoyle asked who would be educated on the plan once it is approved. Mr. Ellingworth said he will share it with his main contacts at each association beginning this Spring and the associations can share it during their trainings with coaches and volunteers.

There will also be a laminated copy at each complex in the concession area or by the scoreboard controllers. Mr. Ellingworth will review the plan with tournament organizers at the beginning of each tournament event as well.

Commissioner Niziolek asked if there was anything in the plan regarding lightning. Mr. Ellingworth said after discussing with Fire Chief Dickenson lightning falls under the severe weather category. Mr. Ellingworth learned during the process of working with Chief Dickenson and Commissioner Stewart that less is more in the wording.

While doing research for the plan, one important thing he learned is to keep it simple when there needs to be an action plan initiated. He referenced on page 2 in big bold letters, it states to dial 911 in an emergency and to seek shelter during severe weather.

Commissioner Niziolek said that he would like them to explore adding lightning to the plan since it is very dangerous and does not fall under severe weather category and there are a significant number of fatalities nationwide. Commissioner Niziolek said the Minnesota State High School league language on this is much different. He would highly encourage us to look at adding this language. Mr. Ellingworth said all the association plans include the rule that if a lightning strike happens there is a 30-minute clock that starts and if it strikes again the clock starts over. Commissioner Goodwin asked if that means that since it is in their plans it doesn't need to be in ours.

Commissioner Stewart shared that he has worked on many of these plans and the plan is meant to be informational, brief, and concise. People on the field need to know enough to get through the first 10 minutes of an emergency and then they can reach for additional documentation for support.

Commissioner Fermoye pointed out that the plan is misnumbered under bomb threat starting with 5, 6, 7, and 8. She also asked if it is the emergency responders that write up a follow up summary following an incident so staff can learn from it.

Mr. Ellingworth said that yes, on a case-by-case basis i.e., if the AED was used there would be follow-up with the association that used it. There would be follow-up of some sort in every situation based on what occurred. He would fill out reports after the event once he is contacted by those that were on site during the event.

Chair Anderson said that the plan is specific in areas such as heat, active shooter etc. so he thinks they should add lightning to the severe weather area. He said that when he used to work on the ball fields the most common and likely emergency would be lightning so he said he thinks that it should have its own set of rules.

Commissioner Loidolt said that the lightning rule of the 30 minutes is built into everyone's head. He said that all the coaches and kids are taught this from day one of learning the sport. He feels that everyone knows it.

Commissioner Niziolek reiterated that he does want a bullet point item of lightning under severe weather because it does not fall under severe weather definitions and some people do not always take it seriously. He said that he has run some very large events, and he did not have a very good response from people when he was warning them about lightning.

Mr. Shelby asked if they were able to add several sentences addressing the lightning within the context of the 30-minute clock that would be acceptable. Commissioner Niziolek agreed.

Mr. Stremcha asked if they should wait to act and bring the plan back in May. Chair Anderson said yes. Mr. Stremcha said they can approve the plan as is, approve with amendments, or not pass it and it can come back for review again in May. Commissioner Goodwin asked if not approving it tonight would have an impact and delay implementation. Mr. Ellingworth said that he would like to get it out to the associations as soon as possible but it is up to the Commission. Commissioner Goodwin asked if they could move to approve it with the request to add the part about lightning per the Minnesota High School League policy around lightning. Commissioner Niziolek said he would like it to be titled as a separate break out item. Mr. Ellingworth confirmed that they could do that.

Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Niziolek to approve the Emergency Action Plan for the Athletic Facilities upon the inclusion of language supporting plans for lightning in a specific section based on the rules of the Minnesota State High School League guidelines and renumbering the items under bomb threat. Motion carried 7-0

7.3 Field Trip/Large Group Park Rental Reservation

Mr. Shelby presented his report.

Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Goodwin to approve the revisions to the existing Organization/Business Large Group Policy as presented, including changing the title of the policy to Field Trip/Large Group Park Rental Reservation. Motion carried 7-0

7.4 Parks and Recreation Commission By-Laws

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Commissioner Fermoye pointed out five grammatical errors such as spacing and misspelling. Secretary Larson made note of the errors to correct in the document.

Commissioner Niziolek said with the recent park dedication issues they have had over the past couple of months he said that he thinks they should add some verbiage about what should and shouldn't be done for park dedication. From what he saw happening with the Specht property recently he thinks that the park dedication policies are very gray and are hard to understand. He said that the details are unclear to him about what land/cash can be accepted as park dedication. He said he isn't sure if that should go in the bylaws or if there needs to be some additional training on the subject. Chair Anderson and Mr. Stremcha said that should go under ordinances instead of bylaws.

Commissioner Goodwin suggested that it could be under member training or a yearly refresher from staff. Commissioner Fermoye said that from a training perspective reviewing something annually about the park dedication ordinances would be appreciated.

Commissioner Niziolek asked if they could utilize park dedication ordinances when needed. Mr. Stremcha said he thinks it is already incorporated into the training area in the bylaws and implied as one of the core functions that would necessitate training. Chair Anderson said for example like the master trail plan etc. Chair Anderson said that he has discussed with staff about having more trainings but that it adds to the meetings already expected to attend. Mr. Stremcha said it could be done offline not necessarily at a meeting. Commissioner Goodwin said that she thinks there should be more time dedicated to staff training.

Chair Anderson asked if there were any other questions.

Moved by Commissioner Niziolek and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to approve the April 2025 revision of the Parks and Recreation By-Laws with the noted changes that were outlined by Commissioner Fermoye. Motion carried 7-0

8. PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER UPDATE

8.1 Parks and Recreation Manager Update

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Commissioner Niziolek requested staff to come up with a presentation to review the park dedication ordinance and related topics. He shared that he felt uncomfortable about how things went with the Specht property, and he was unsure of what he should be doing as a park commissioner regarding park dedication. Chair Anderson confirmed that the subject should be brought back to a future meeting as a discussion item.

Commissioner Niziolek said he noticed that someone was doing soil borings under Cty Rd 32. He said he is assuming that it is for some sort of project being that the road is immediately adjacent to Woodland Trails Regional Park, and he would like staff to find out that is for, so the commission can pursue a trail along Cty Rd 32. Chair Anderson said they are doing the same thing along Cty Rd 30 and so he would like an answer from staff on that as well.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to adjourn the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 7:30pm. Motion carried 7-0.



Dave Anderson, Chair



Tina Allard, City Clerk