



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

**Members Present:** Chair Dave Anderson, Commissioners Mike Niziolek, Greg Loidolt, Melissa Fermoye, Jill Varty, and Joy Goodwin, Councilmember Cory Grupa

**Members Absent:** Commissioner Hal Stewart

**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**

**Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Varty to approve the September 10, 2025, agenda. Motion carried 6-0.**

**4. CONSIDER MINUTES**

**4.1 08-13-2025 Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes**

**Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Loidolt to approve August 13, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes. Motion carried 6-0.**

**5. OPEN FORUM**

**6. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION**

**6.1 Disc Golf - Burr Oak Park**

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Mr. Schreder presented his PowerPoint and shared that the last time he was here he requested permission to set up a course and try it out with some friends. However, Minnesota was very busy over the summer with disc golf. The disc golf world championships were held here in July, which he participated in himself. Others that were interested in disc golf from the Elk River area were either competing in tournaments or running them as Directors. Basically, every weekend of the summer had something going on.

Mr. Schreder explained that he has only been able to go out to the park himself. He designed an 18-hole course which was shown in PowerPoint. He said it felt like private property to him. He was out there one time, and the owner of the private drive was out there on a walk with his wife and dog, and they nicely requested that no one park along the driveway. Since the last time he saw them, he sold his truck and has been walking down by the entrance of the park by the road to gain access. He said it is hard to know exactly what to do without an entrance, and it seems so private, so he is not sure if disc

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golf can happen there. He said he came up with a challenging but fun disc golf course that would require very little mowing. He also came up with an area that would be good to have the parking lot identified by an orange square. He shared that he hadn't actually shot the distances yet with a range finder. He used GPS, which gave him shorter numbers than he thought, and it was using a disc golf app called UDisc. He entered the coordinates, and then it gave him the distances. He has slowly been going out there and looking at it. He thinks it would be great to have a course there, and it would be a good addition to the community. Mr. Schreder said after the time he was last here, he had a couple of questions. Is buckthorn removal something that the city will work at to remove in this park?

Commissioner Niziolek said it is the unanswered question as they move forward, he thinks. They have a lot of issues in regard to managing natural resources within our parks. He thinks of managing natural resources as something that parallels the activities, so this is something that would not prevent disc golf. It would be something that would be an element in the course. Commissioner Niziolek said, without buckthorn, it is still a course, and it could be a great course. It is an issue that they will struggle with within all their parks over the next decade or so.

Mr. Schreder said that safety is always the number one consideration when designing a course. He reviewed the slides that showed costs for another course that he designed in Otsego pre-covid. He showed photos of examples of what he thought would be good tee pads. He said the tees don't have to be concrete poured but with the soft ground there would need to be class five or gravel underneath. Mr. Schreder said disc golf causes a lot of erosion. He does have three people that would be willing to help out and contribute volunteer time off season. He hopes to continue the discussion of disc golf at Burr Oak.

Commissioner Niziolek said that Mr. Schreder spoke about the erosion issue and one of the things that he was hoping they would gather from the summer is the impact that people would be having. In other words, there would be a couple of tees set up, and they would be able to see what is happening in terms of the erosion element, because this site is really sensitive to erosion, because it is all sand and that is one of his reservations, because he thought eventually it would just be a disc golf course in a sand dune effectively. He asked Mr. Schreder if he had any thoughts in regard to his concerns about the erosion. Mr. Schreder said it is a concern and is at Bunker Hills in Andover right now. He said it is actually called Savannah Dunes Disc Golf Course. Mr. Schreder doesn't actually know what equipment Elk River has and isn't sure about that. Commissioner Niziolek asked Mr. Schreder if he sees that as a potential problem there. Mr. Schreder said personally he doesn't have enough natural resources experience like Commissioner Niziolek has. Personally, he thinks erosion creates a more disc golf feel as far as faster greens and elevation change.

Mr. Schreder said he guessed it is the kind of thing you would just have to find out. Chair Anderson said one of the things that he didn't mention was vegetation removal to create fairways. Mr. Schreder asked Chair Anderson if the lines he showed on the map of the disc golf course look like there would need to be more vegetation removed than just buckthorn removal. Chair Anderson said he doesn't know. Mr. Schreder said disc golf holes can be anywhere from five feet wide, to an open field, even up to 1,000 feet. The holes that he has designed on this course have a few narrow fairways but basically removing the buckthorn would be all that would be needed. He shared that some of the holes would be pretty tight and narrow, but some disc golfers like that. Commissioner Niziolek said that with this particular property he sees shrub removal and red cedar removal as something positive that would happen, but protection of the Burr Oak should be a high priority. He thinks there is plenty of room for vegetation removal on this site to create a nice setting. He doesn't think that would be a hurdle as long as they are protecting large Burr Oak trees.

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Commissioner Fermoyle asked if there was a driveway on the map up by holes six and seven. Mr. Schreder said he believes it was connected to the house up there. Chair Anderson said it is a field road that they had walked on when they were out there. Mr. Schreder said he used an app on his phone that shows properties, but he isn't sure if holes seven and eight are considered on the property or not. Commissioner Niziolek told him if he went to Sherburne County Beacon, he could get his answer really quick. Chair Anderson said if you google Sherburne County and then type in beacon it will give you a map of the county, but Mr. Shelby could get you one too.

Chair Anderson asked Mr. Shelby and Mr. Stremcha if they were going to get some additional property up by hole seven. If the parking lot ended up on the top, would he just renumber the holes. Mr. Schreder said essentially what he did was create an 18-hole course that flowed well. He said you could have parking down by the entrance to the park as well. Mr. Schreder said he could also do a different layout. Chair Anderson said he has another question for staff. What is the current status of the development? Mr. Shelby said, according to Community Development, he thinks that they are looking at final approval this coming summer 2026. That is also the time that possession and ownership of the access road comes to the City of Elk River. He shared that it is a condition of the final plat approval, and he believes that is what is targeted right now. Chair Anderson asked where people should be parking in the interim. Mr. Shelby said that is a good question and that his understanding is that there was a little friction last weekend with the hunting taking place at the park, so to be on the safe side of things, probably County Rd. 33.

Mr. Shelby said that way there is no conflict in terms of in the past. There was some sort of understanding that it was okay to access the road as long as no cars were not blocking or impeding the road, and he knows they had that conversation at the beginning of the summer, and it seems like that has changed for whatever reason so for the time being he doesn't know if they want to be using that road, but he doesn't have all the details of whatever conversations happened last weekend. Chair Anderson said he thinks Bill is moving, the current owner. He said he isn't the owner; he is renting from the folks that bought it. He asked Mr. Shelby if it would make any sense to have a dialog with the property owner.

Mr. Shelby said potentially, but he thinks there was dialog previously though, too. Mr. Shelby said dialog is always good to try and figure out that understanding, and he thinks potentially when they talked to Josh Baas, the Parks Maintenance Foremen this morning, thinking about what access would look like if they were to get in there this fall and start moving anything, what would the access look like. He said there was some thought to maybe it's going in off of Cty. Rd 33 behind the property that is right where our actual parcel starts, so as to not create any conflict of interest using that access road. He shared he doesn't know. Chair Anderson said it seems to make sense to ask the question. Mr. Shelby said that Mr. Baas was going to speak with the Community Development Department this morning, and he doesn't know the outcome of that conversation.

Commissioner Niziolek said he would discourage the parking along Cty Rd. 33 because it is such a busy road. If they could get something such as a safer parking opportunity it would be great. Chair Anderson said the whole point of this morphing conversation is that they should determine parking and access before they do much of anything and that is what Mr. Baas is doing. Mr. Shelby agreed, and said Mr. Baas' intent is to connect with Mr. Schreder in the next week or so, so they can actually meet out at the park to kind of walk through some different things and talk about things like that as well, so that would be kind of the next step in this process.

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Chair Anderson stated, so staff are planning on spending some time doing stuff. He also asked, being there is no money in the budget, how does that work? Mr. Shelby said that in the initial conversations with Mr. Baas was that a lot of this would be done in house in terms of moving land and those kinds of things. It would be a shoulder-season type project. In terms of the tee boxes, he isn't sure they have advanced that far as to what those would look like because a part of the initial discussion was again making sure there wasn't money targeted that they didn't have to spend. He thinks one of the drivers of this was public works seeing this as a shoulder season project that could be done at a very low to no cost. Chair Anderson said, if you don't buy concrete, asked if natural tee boxes are okay.

Mr. Schreder said that generally what he sees is that the granite is down, and then you put a turf tee pad on there, so it stays flat and doesn't get bumpy. Chair Anderson confirmed that it would be on top of granite. Mr. Schreder said that the people he knows that use them are in Clearwater, which used to be Eagle Trace, now has 4-disc golf courses and they use turf tee pads. He said there is a course in East Bethal called Blue Ribbon Pines which has some turf tee pads. Tim Mackey who lives in Elk River had a course designed near East Bethal that also had turf tee pads. He doesn't know if he still has those or what is going on with them. There are resources that he has been talking to about where to find them. Mr. Shelby said this is consistent with some of the things that Mr. Baas had earlier investigated too, in terms of getting them for free, getting them used, whatever the case may be but again keeping cost in mind. Chair Anderson said, So Mr. Baas will put together a budget? Mr. Shelby said he is sure Mr. Baas will put together a budget once we get to that point to see what the actual costs would look like. Chair Anderson said, and then construction starting? Mr. Shelby said that it depends, that's why Mr. Baas would like to go out to Burr Oak with Mr. Schreder and sort of walk and see what they see and talk everything through to what this really looks like. He also thinks the access piece and the parking as suggested tonight is a piece that needs to be ironed out before they start doing anything significant.

Chair Anderson asked Mr. Schreder if once this is built, does he think people will actually golf there, being that he couldn't get anybody to come this year. Mr. Schreder said yes, sand burrs and all. He thinks people will come even though it is kind of early and a very raw piece of property. He thinks the course that gets put in it will go onto the app UDISC and then everybody will look for a course they want to play, and it will be a hit on the map. He thinks it will be busy, and it will bring real disc golf to Elk River. He doesn't want to put down Lions Park, which is great for beginners, but disc golf is growing at a rate that doubles every year. Chair Anderson said without a place to park. Mr. Schreder said there will be cars lined up on County Rd 33. Chair Anderson said that is a bad idea. Commissioner Niziolek said that it is way too busy. He thinks the parking issue has to be ironed out before they can proceed. Mr. Shelby said he agrees which is where they are headed, which is why Mr. Baas wants to go out with Mr. Schreder and see if they can iron those things out before they take any other steps forward.

Chair Anderson asked if it makes any sense to have nine rather than 18 holes to start. Mr. Schreder said it is possible. Chair Anderson asked if no one would show up if it was just nine. Mr. Schreder said that is not necessarily true. It could be the best 9-hole course in the state. It will be the most attractive course in the area. Chair Anderson asked how big the granite pads are. Mr. Schreder said 10 by 15 feet. He said you could put a frame in and pour concrete, but he thinks it would sink there so he thinks they would have to have something underneath it, not that they have that option. He said they could set up two stakes in the ground and that could be the tee which could be dirt. Chair Anderson asked if you could start that way. Mr. Schreder said yes, you could start that way. You could put a four-by-four-foot toe board down and that is the front of the tee.

Chair Anderson asked if they could start that way? He said they would see what Mr. Baas comes back with, because granite is cheap but not free. Mr. Shelby said that one of the things that Mr. Baas took

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into consideration initially something like throwing the wood down to be your box, and maybe that's one of the things we start with to keep the costs minimal, and then we look at what usage looks like and if usage dictates improving those things, then we explore doing that. Commissioner Loidolt also said if just starting with a tee box or toe board and the alignment of the hole needs to be changed, it is very easy to do that. You can move your tee box wherever you want, whereas if you put down granite or concrete then you are stuck there. He said then if you are playing out there, if the layout doesn't work, and you wanted to move this box six more feet or 20 more feet this way.

Mr. Schreder said that would be the hardest way to do it. Commissioner Loidolt said that if they get the play in there and get it worn down, then they can figure out what they need from there. Commissioner Loidolt is all in favor of this, but we do have to figure out parking, and he doesn't think up by hole seven is a good spot for parking. Chair Anderson said that would be when there would be houses and streets up there. Commissioner Loidolt said that would be awhile. Chair Anderson said that is what he said is the future parking. That's where he talked about and that is why he brought it up, but not today. Commissioner Niziolek asked if the final plat will come here in the next year or so. Mr. Shelby said that is the expected target because that is when that road would transfer ownership to the city, and he believes summer is what the current tentative plan is, but we all know those things can change. Commissioner Niziolek asked Mr. Shelby if he had heard any conversation about the 45 acres for sale immediately adjacent. Mr. Shelby said no. Chair Anderson said if he remembers right, this is going to be phased development, not all platted at once. Mr. Shelby said if he remembers it right it would be three. Chair Anderson said that a phase next year will have this road.

Chair Anderson asked if there were any other questions. Commissioner Goodwin asked if they went with the turf tees would they have to be stored somewhere? Mr. Schreder said, no, that they generally stay out because the course will be played all winter. He thinks it would be a good winter course to play on.

Commissioner Loidolt said that during warm winter days it is nice to play, he has played when there is low snow cover. Mr. Schreder said that a lot of the golf courses are finally picking up the idea. Chair Anderson said to stay tuned.

## 7. PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER UPDATE

### 7.1 Parks and Recreation Manager Update

Mr. Shelby presented his report and read it word by word.

Mr. Shelby said that one other thing that he wanted to mention, which is not in this update because it has been evolving. Last month they talked again about the park usage survey and the commission recommended the survey that had Orono Park included in it, but after internal discussions across departments, and with communications, it has been determined that the version of the survey that will go out will not include Orono in order to get us a better sense of how those three neighborhood parks are used. He knows that the commission spent a lot of time on that, so he wanted to make sure that they were aware of it and be fully transparent before it is sent out to residents. Mr. Shelby said there is also a link to the survey that can be emailed to them tomorrow morning so they can take a look at it.

Commissioner Niziolek asked if that matters, and will their input be received and taken into account, or is it a done deal? Mr. Shelby said this is a done deal at this point. He shared that input is always taken and accounted for, but at this point, there were multiple conversations about what that should look like and, ultimately, past experience and professional expertise, it was just determined that putting Orono

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into that survey was not going to give them the results they needed and that it would muddy the waters.

Chair Anderson stated, so what they say doesn't mean jack. Mr. Shelby said he would say that isn't true. He thinks they take into account all input and opinions, but ultimately, staff has to be the decider as to what things look like when they go out and there were multiple concerns about including Orono in that survey. They always want input and feedback, and sometimes they may need to agree to disagree.

Commissioner Niziolek said that staff should come to their meeting then. Mr. Shelby said that some of the staff were there and some of the concerns were expressed before, but he also doesn't know that they can continue to just kick it back and forth without finally making a decision. Mr. Shelby said, ultimately, staff and Council are the deciders of what goes out. He knows that Council has now seen this version of the survey and is supportive of it. He will always take input and recommendation into any decision-making process, but sometimes decisions are going to be a little bit different from what any of our commissioners would like to see.

Commissioner Niziolek said he is questioning their purpose and the policy that they are setting as a city. He said they were there volunteering their time, spending numerous hours voting, and then they found out that it is a done deal and there was no conversation between staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission. It is a big slap in their face because they are trying to do good things for their community, and they need to have that dialog before they decide.

Mr. Shelby said some of the concerns were put forth in the meeting in July. He thinks they were brought forward and shared, so there was a dialog. He said then when the communications department got involved, they said that they have to get this out and there were two large concerns. One is, if the goal of the survey is to get feedback on the usage of those three small parks, adding Orono muddies those waters. Number two, the confusion that could potentially be provided to citizens in terms of the usage of Orono, and how money is being spent there, is a legitimate concern to staff coming out of the Active Elk River campaign. Again, Mr. Shelby shared that the staff appreciate the time and the effort and the thought that goes into all of this. That isn't what he thinks this is about. He thinks ultimately there is a body of experience on the staff side of the city that decided this version will work better.

Commissioner Niziolek said he thinks that would have been fine had that conversation occurred before they knew it was going out. He said in other words, the door is shut on conversation, staff didn't come back and say this is really what we have to do and explain, and then they move forward after they acknowledge staff's opinions and vote and then pass it on to Council. So, there is a step missing. Commissioner Niziolek said they decided on something, it went to staff, staff changed it and moved forward. He said staff should have brought it back to us, discussed it with us, and then they should have proceeded forward. He said they are very receptive to ideas, but that has to come back, and he knows there would have been a time delay on it but that is an important part of the process. They need to have strong communication between staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, good things are going to happen then. Commissioner Niziolek said now there is a bitter feeling because staff just did something different than the group decided upon as a majority. Chair Anderson asked if it went to Council.

Mr. Stremcha said we respect Commissioner Niziolek's opinion on the matter, totally understand where he is coming from, also recognizing that the commission is there to provide recommendations and feedback, but ultimately, the buck stops with Council. He said staff have shared the survey as part of their weekly communications from staff to Council. Mr. Stremcha said revisions that they had received from the commission's recommendations in August were then discussed with the

communications department, who provided additional feedback, whether it be in the way the questions were asked or whether it was the questions in the menu of selection for the multiple choice so whether it was two to three times a month vs monthly. Those kinds of things that they have experience in communicating with the public are what they then took the recommendation of through a group of professionals who use communication as their full-time career and knowledge and expertise. He said that is what is ultimately helpful in the process as well. It's not to say that you guys don't know what you are talking about. It's we are leveraging what you guys are providing as feedback as the groundwork in helping to formulate an idea but then putting it on to the group of professionals to help finalize the document.

Chair Anderson asked if those two combined recommendations go to the Council and then the Council said this is what they are going to do. Mr. Stremcha said two-fold; one, the Council didn't vote on it, they are not going to vote on every case-by-case decision that staff might make. Mr. Stremcha said it's open-door communication to relay information. The recommendation from the commission was carried up to a certain point. Mr. Stremcha said when the group of professionals within the communications department are the ones fielding the phone calls from the people with questions, comments, and concerns relaying answers to questions such as, well how come my neighborhood got this survey about Orono Park but those across the highway didn't, and not understanding why this zone makes an impact for our survey targeting neighborhood parks. He said the whole conversation revolved around the neighborhood parks having equipment removed from the park. It wasn't anything to do with future improvements in Orono Park. Mr. Stremcha said the spirit of the survey lost its focus by including a regional park. Then the community as a whole, all it takes is one person to take a picture of the survey and say, how come my neighbor got this survey and how come I didn't when I am just as equally concerned about what happens at Orono and how come my voice doesn't matter at Orono. Chair Anderson asked how come our voice doesn't matter? He said this is the first time in almost 40 years that this has happened. He repeated first time, first time. Chair Anderson said we are a recommending body. We fully understand that, but our recommendations go to Council they don't go to staff, and it makes one wonder what they are doing there. He said it really does. Chair Anderson asked staff, "Do they really need them? It doesn't sound like it.

Commissioner Niziolek said that what makes it a little bit more bitter is that the staff had a second shot at this. He said that they didn't see it just once and decide at it. It came back a month later, an opportunity for that presentation and dialog to occur, and he is not saying that this survey isn't going to be great, but a policy that includes everybody, clear relationship, clear discussions is important and he is going to leave it at that. He really hopes he takes that to heart because we are spending a lot of time here, and we really care. We really care. Commissioner Niziolek said this hurts, it is a failure of the policy.

## 8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Niziolek said that he has one. If anyone would like to come to one of the largest sporting events held in the City of Elk River it will happen immediately before this Park and Recreation Commission meeting in October. They will be hosting the Northwest Suburban Conference Championship, at the wonderful Elk River Golf Club. He said it is an incredible venue, and they will probably have 800 participants and well over 1000 spectators, and he is very grateful to have a community that supports it and have the Elk River Golf Club support this wonderful event. He would highly encourage people to come. He will not make it to the meeting because he will be busy cleaning

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up and relaxing after the huge event. Commissioner Niziolek said he is not sure if any of them have been there, he knows Commissioner Varty has been there on numerous occasions. He asked her if it was a big event. Commissioner Varty said it is a big event and even if you don't want to watch the kids run but want to stand outside for a couple of hours and walk around a golf course, it might be a good excuse to get out of work. Chair Anderson said it is a community celebration that is pretty much 100% positive and is really fun. Commissioner Fermoye asked when it started. Commissioner Niziolek asked her to email him, and he said he would send them the schedule.

Commissioner Niziolek said one more thing, he will steal the show. Once again, he would like to shout out the Friends of the Mississippi River for their great contribution to our community with their restoration activities bringing in 100's of 1000s of dollars in grant money that has made a wonderful presence in our town. He said it is an incredible organization doing incredible things for the Houlton property, Bailey Point, and future Camp Cozy project. Incredible group. Positive things to say about that group.

9. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

**Moved by Commissioner Niziolek and seconded by Commissioner Goodwin to adjourn the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 7:19p.m. Motion carried 6-0.**

10. WORK SESSION

10.1 Elk River Parks and Recreation Framework Plan - Introduction

Chair Anderson called the work session to order at 7:25pm

Commissioner Niziolek continued sharing his feelings about not being involved in the changes related to the park survey.

Mr. Stremcha said that this is a completely different story on the formal plan that will last the next decade and is going to have much more of a formalized process than a postcard survey that is going out to our neighborhood parks to focus on what kind of improvements are going to be made at our neighborhood parks. We are not talking about improvements at Orono.

Chair Anderson said that what he put together, ChatGPT, got done in a short amount of time. Commissioner Niziolek said that he would like to make sure they can review this before it goes to City Council. The commissioners discussed where to start. Both Chair Anderson and Commissioner Fermoye provided versions of a rewrite of the Intro. Commissioner Fermoye used ChatGPT, Chair Anderson used Perplexity. Mr. Stremcha and Secretary Larson explained that there is a limit per our communications policy on how much ChatGPT can be used.

Chair Anderson said that previously a consultant would do this work.

Commissioner Loidolt said, Let's move on to number three. We just beat that horse. Chair Anderson said no, he wants to start over. He thinks Commissioner Fermoye's version has some compelling changes to the overview. The Commissioners read over two new versions of the introduction. One was put together by Commissioner Fermoye and one was put together by Chair Anderson.

Chair Anderson said that the next two have to stay with an asterisk because Mission and Values and

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community profile. The mission will be tied to the city council just as we had it and communication and profile develop with community profile, or community profile develop with communications and consist largely of data provided from multiple sources. So, perplexity just left those out. He doesn't care how they proceed. He really doesn't. Secretary Larson asked Commissioner Fermoye if her version is the overview one or the intro one. Commissioner Fermoye confirmed it was the overview. She said, Let's go with what Commissioner Loidolt said and go with number three. Secretary Larson asked for documentation. What version are they sticking with up until number three? Chair Anderson said they are just talking. Secretary Larson said that she is trying to take minutes on what they are agreeing to. Chair Anderson said they have not agreed to anything.

Commissioner Loidolt said so can they talk about AI and issues they are going to have with governing bodies. How much do they need to change as far as wording is concerned to be able to leave it as a structure like it is. Mr. Stremcha said 50 % plus one. The majority cannot be AI. Commissioner Loidolt said they have work to do. Commissioner Fermoye said so let's start with number three.

Mr. Stremcha said going through Microsoft Word to change synonyms for a word doesn't count. Commissioner Goodwin said she thinks it really needs to reflect the spirit of why they are even doing this work. She thinks they all have the ability to do such a task. It's just arduous, and she thinks they are looking at it as a major chore, and it's a lot of work for the staff, communications and for them as volunteers. Chair Anderson said they aren't getting anywhere. Commissioner Goodwin thinks they are spinning their wheels here. She is putting it out there that, yes, it sucks, it's kind of like a chunky task, it's like, uh, this is a lot but I also think that we are offering a vision to our community, and we are taking their input and putting it into the future of where they live. They have to look at this with an opportunity lense. Saying this matters and when we think about parks, what do we want our parks to look like and feel like, and how do we want them to bring people together in the future? It would be a great opportunity here. Let's put on our big boy pants and big girl panties and do the work. So, number 3, and we will keep the language up until here, and we will take into account the language from the AI that is great but that we cannot use. So, inform program and service delivery. This one says strength and this one says enhance. Does anyone have any preference on the words for number three?

Commissioner Niziolek said inform, program. That sounds a little awkward to him. Commissioner Fermoye said take out inform and just put programming or service delivery. Or take out delivery and put program and service. Commissioner Loidolt said that he likes the word evaluate better than assess. So, evaluate current recreational programs, and he likes the way it ends with residents of all ages and abilities. Youth and seniors covers it.

Commissioner Fermoye asked if Mr. Shelby could add all abilities after seniors. Commissioner Loidolt suggested all age groups. Commissioner Goodwin said that meets the needs of resident's kind of gets at what Commissioner Fermoye is talking about when she says all abilities, and she thinks that they don't need to be incredibly explicit but maybe they can talk about adaptive playgrounds later on. Commissioner Loidolt said that's what ensuring a diverse range of offerings gets covered. Mr. Stremcha asked if it is solely residents or is it the area. He said that a recreational program might have people that live in Ramsey that are signing up for programs in Elk River. They suggested and surrounding area.

Councilmember Grupa asked if they wanted to say surrounding area. Commissioner Goodwin said surrounding area doesn't match, it's not the same. Commissioner Varty said but then aren't they writing this for Elk River. Mr. Stremcha said not necessarily, it is just generic, and the needs of the community are left vague. The Commissioners agreed.

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Commissioner Fermoye said manage resources effectively. And I would probably put community input first before the data part. Mr. Shebly said to propose analytics with community input and data. Councilmember Grupa asked Commissioner Fermoye what her reasoning was for that just out of curiosity. She said that just because she thinks it's because if they are talking about community engagement and want the input of the people, she thinks they should focus on community first. That is just her opinion.

Commissioner Loidolt said so establish a basis? Does that make sense? He asked how about establish a foundation. He asked what they thought. Commissioner Fermoye said she liked it because what is a basis? Commissioner Goodwin said that they don't have that yet.

Mr. Shelby asked what Commissioner Loidolt said. He asked what the rest thought. Commissioner Fermoye said, sure. Mr. Shelby said communicate probably plays well with the new city communications policy in terms of making everything compliant with the ADA. There are complaints about language and words that are hard to pronounce. The right change is putting communicate in there rather than articulate.

Commissioner Fermoye asked if we need to document the community engagement process or do we develop a tool, or do we have a tool? Mr. Stremcha said he wanted to go back one and ask do we just want to establish a foundation or do we want to establish and maintain. The commissioners said that it sounds good.

Councilmember Grupa asked Commissioner Niziolek and Chair Anderson if they were going to give input or make them go back? Chair Anderson said they are doing a great job. Commissioner Niziolek said a foundation refers to something that is permanent and nonchanging. Commissioner Goodwin asked about adding a process. Establish and maintain a process for effective resource allocation and grant funding application. Because process talks a little bit more about management and it is a process. Foundation is set in stone. She said they will patch and rework it a few times. Commissioner Fermoye said she looks at it as manage resources, she is having a hard time getting it away from thinking of people or tools or whatever to say, it is a process unless she is missing something. Commissioner Goodwin said she thinks it is referring to effective resource allocation so establish and maintain a process for effective resource allocation and grant funding. So that's not really, the main thing is the effective resource allocation and grant funding. Commissioner Loidolt said get rid of the a and change from process to processes.

Commissioner Nizolek asked: What are you thinking about when you think of resources?  
Commissioner Fermoye said people or tools. Commissioner Goodwin said she thinks it is money and asked if that is what they are talking about here. Commissioner Niziolek said it could mean multiple. Commissioner Varty said it could be time, people, it covers a wide range of ideas. Commissioner Niziolek said another resource that hasn't been mentioned is natural resources. Chair Anderson said that it is coming up. Commissioner Niziolek said, "But it is managing resources effectively, so one might jump to the conclusion that resources are natural resources. Commissioner Goodwin said she still thinks that fits within there for effective resource allocation. Chair Anderson said this is financial resources. Commissioner Goodwin asked if this particular point is financial. Commissioner Niziolek said manage financial resources effectively. So, we need to add financial resources. Commissioner Goodwin said, So you are saying there is something lower about natural resources. Commissioner Fermoye said so we put manage financial resources in the header there. Commissioner Varty asked isn't this an overview and don't we want it to be a little more broad? Commissioner Niziolek said what he is doing is making sure that the perception of resources is viewed the same by everybody in the room by asking

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the questions about what you think about when you think about resources, and so, one of the things that jumps into mind is natural resources. Chair Anderson said, But if it says financial in front of it, Commissioner Niziolek said, then it's not, but do we want to do that. So, it's a perception of the word. Commissioner Fermoyale said, right, but everybody is going to have a different perception of what resources is. Commissioner Varty said, But if we have a section later on about natural resources, if they have a question here, it will be answered later so she thinks it should be more general now. Commissioner Niziolek said that is fine. The commissioners agreed to take it back out. Commissioner Loidolt said he agrees with Commissioner Varty, and he thinks this is more of a broad statement.

Commissioner Fermoyale said, Alright, #five engage the community. Commissioner Goodwin asked if they were going to move it up or keep it at number five. She asked if anyone else had any feelings about it. Commissioner Goodwin said she thinks they need to start with vision, and then she feels like it should definitely be moved up because it is valuable and necessary. Commissioner Loidolt said that he thinks it should be moved up to number two. Commissioner Fermoyale said to say Community engagement. Commissioner Goodwin said that most of them start with a verb "provide, guide", and we eliminate it from program and service delivery. It should be deliver programs and services. Mr. Stremcha said delivery of programs and services. Mr. Shelby asked if they were talking about moving engaging the community up. Commissioner Fermoyale said she thinks you are right talking about community. This is going to the community, and it is a reference guide for them. Commissioner Loidolt said he thinks it has to be one of the top headers. Commissioner Goodwin said the question she has about all this is are we supposed to come up with the strategic vision, are staff supposed to be coming up with the strategic vision? Is it a collaboration between us, community residents and staff? Who is providing all this? She said, You guys have all these great ideas about what the parks need to look like in the next decade.

Mr. Stremcha said that when we originally planned how this would all frame out, is that for each chapter, each section of the plan, each month, staff would come in with the recommendations that they had seen from other plans and provide that feedback to you, so you would have the data or comps and then weigh in on okay we are talking about introduction section this month and then next month we can move to section two and then section three and so on. So, each month we would be talking about a different section. Commissioner Goodwin said, Okay, so that's based off what other cities have done? Commissioner Goodwin asked if it's looking at our city. We aren't just going to do something because another is doing it. We are thinking about what the long-term plan is for Trott Brook or what is the long-term plan for some of our smaller parks. So, when it comes to engaging the community, what's the process like? She thinks it should mirror how our systems already work. So, like the Play My Way survey you all did, did that come out of an initiative that you did? Mr. Shelby said that it was largely Secretary Larson. Secretary Larson shared that when staff make decisions, they do a lot of research first. For example she spent months researching other cities that did similar things to play my way. By the time staff put things together, we had looked at up to 30 different cities and put so much effort into picking out different things from their websites. Sometimes it's picking out one or two things that each city does, such as community engagement, and then putting them all together and building one that I liked. I then went to our marketing team and regurgitated that to them and explained my vision. They then created a logo and, based off things in my head, they came up with colors etc. and the campaign. We as staff do not' just make up anything. The first version of Play My Way came to fruition from what I consider and tell people what it is like what you do when you pitch an ad for the Superbowl. When you begin on a whiteboard in a room with a bunch of people, you start with version one. By the time that commercial hits the Superbowl, it's version 195, but that is what makes it to such an awesome thing. I want you to know that a lot of effort went into that, and so we do a lot of research. When I sent out the master plan examples to you to review, I sent out 14, but I looked at way more than that. I

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dumbed it down to 14 and then I dumbed it down to five. There is a lot of garbage out there too, and we don't give you all of that. Mr. Shelby and I look at a lot of websites out there, and we are shocked at what goes out to the public. We try to get the best of the best, so I just want you to have a little more faith in knowing that we don't just make it up and that we care too and that we put a lot of effort into the research and the stuff that we do too.

Commissioner Goodwin said it shows in the communications that are coming out of the department and the things that they see for fliers and events. They are top-notch, and you can tell that somebody thought really well about what our community is and what our branding is. It is good, and you can tell that somebody didn't just make chicken scratch. Secretary Larson reiterated that the amount of effort it takes to do these things and the research is a lot though, and that is why people hire professionals, because you still get to make the decisions and tweaks, but the professional consultants do a lot of the engagement. She said that's why cities typically do it like Chair Anderson mentioned before, because it takes every chunk of effort and some of it might be better with help just because of the time factor. Commissioner Goodwin said and what it takes you guys away from. She also said so when you think about the process that you just shared, how does that reflect then in the way that we number these things? Commissioner Goodwin said that if we are coming, are we bringing a strategic vision to the community, and then we want engagement, or are we asking them to inform? So, is community engagement number one or is it number two? Mr. Stremcha said he thinks that engagement of the community is a top priority, so having all of your priorities from one to six and ranking them by all means. Commissioner Fermoye said she likes providing a strategic vision and then for engaging with the community to be this is what we see and what we want to do, and then get feedback or whatever and move on. Commissioner Loidolt said number two.

Commissioner Fermoye said that we want community engagement to serve as a tool. Commissioner Loidolt said he did too. Secretary Larson said it might be more like Play My Way, and instead of documenting the comprehensive community engagement, it would be more like gathering the results, or utilizing the results, you are doing comprehensive community engagement and using the results you get as a tool. I am not sure how you guys want to say it. Commissioner Fermoye said that how about that the decisions reflect community input? Mr. Shelby asked where this should go. She said she encourages taking out the whole statement and just put engage the community. Commissioner Fermoye suggested Decisions reflect community input and continue to have communication transparency to the community or transparent conversations. Commissioner Goodwin said, Yeah, something like that. Councilmember Grupa said that he looks at number four and says he hopes they will do that. Commissioner Goodwin asked him to say more, what does he mean by that.

Commissioner Niziolek said two and four have overlap so they can consolidate and make them one. Goodwin asked what he meant. Commissioner Niziolek said because they said resources dealt with financial Commissioner Goodwin said like guide and manage capital expenditures and improvements.

The commissioners agreed there was overlap. Commissioner Niziolek said staff will blend two and four, so let's move on and then they can come back and look at what staff have done to blend 2 and 4 to keep the process moving. He thinks that it would be important. He thinks they are getting a little bit too technical. He thinks they just have to verbalize our thoughts and ideas, let staff tweak it, come back, and share it with us and then proceed on because this is going to take way too long if we don't do it that way.

Chair Anderson asked, so we don't think community engagement is its own thing. The other commissioners said yes it would be. Mr. Shelby said it would be number two. Chair Anderson asked if

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there will still be managing resources effectively? Commissioner Niziolek said it would probably be lumped with number two because guiding capital expenditures and improvements deals with. Commissioner Fermoye said, "Number three," you mean. Commissioner Goodwin said the new number three.

Commissioner Niziolek said he feels that number six stands by itself. Commissioner Goodwin asked to do what? Commissioner Niziolek said, partner collaboration. He said we have all kinds of youth leagues, organizations, we've got all kinds of potential partners to work with, and we need to focus on developing that relationship with those partners and making it stronger, so we have a more vibrant community. We cannot ignore them. We must as a community find them. Commissioner Goodwin suggested grow partner collaboration. She thinks that is what Commissioner Niziolek is saying. Chair Anderson said to also define it. Commissioner Goodwin said they do after the heading, and these are in here and she thinks it is really well written in yours. Mr. Stremcha said to work with non-profit and community organizations to improve city assets. Chair Anderson said it is not only to improve, but you also have the disc golf for example that you are creating. Mr. Stremcha said you could also look at it as improving the city asset of Burr Oak Park. Mike said he thinks city assets works well, and creating a disc golf course at Burr Oak Park is improving Burr Oak Park.

Commissioner Goodwin said that she thinks it also benefits baseball improvements, that isn't just something that improves the city, it contributes to the baseball program. Commissioner Goodwin asked if collaboration is enough, that word, because it looks like it is to improve city assets but to also be an asset to the residents or visitors. Commissioner Fermoye asked if they should add schools too? Mr. Stremcha said it's a city asset, so, like the Plants and Things Recreation Complex they are referring to is a city asset, so if we are trying to work together with partners to improve that site, it is a city asset. Mr. Stremcha said having us influencing the schools' assets doesn't necessarily equate in the same way. Our focus is to focus on our stuff and for the school board to focus on school stuff. Commissioner Niziolek said that there is overlap between what the schools are doing and what the city is doing. For example, the playgrounds have to be looked at, the playgrounds on city property and the ball fields on city property, the ball fields on school district property. We have to look at all of them to make good decisions as a city about our property.

Mr. Stremcha said that, if we have a park next to a school, and we are talking about how to improve that park, if there is a park next door to a school, we don't have to improve our park to the same level or degree of assets that are near or duplicated. Commissioner Varty said, "isn't that where collaboration comes in? Mr. Stremcha said correct. Commissioner Varty said then, "we don't have to say anything else because we have who we are working with and what our goal is. Doesn't that cover everything? Mr. Stremcha said he thinks so. Chair Anderson asked if user groups and community organizations are the same. He said user groups are very significant. Commissioner Niziolek said yes, that he thought they were the same. Chair Anderson said he thinks they should have their own words. Mr. Stremcha said a baseball group is a user group, but they are also a community organization.

Commissioner Goodwin asked about Sherburne County and that we partnership with them, so what are they considered, an organization or a non-profit? She said this can be general and that they can talk about that later. Commissioner Niziolek said that it is an important relationship that the city must develop with the County and vice versa. Chair Anderson said overlapping jurisdictions.

Mr. Stremcha said, work with non-profits, government entities and community organizations.

Commissioner Fermoye said, Okay, next paragraph: Planning process. She thinks they should just leave

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it after a multi-phase process. Chair Anderson said this is a very thorough and painstaking process. Commissioner Fermoyle said that she thinks they should remove the "spanning 12 months." Commissioner Varty said that she doesn't like the word data. Neither did Commissioners Varty and Loidolt.

The commissioners agreed to change to community-focused and information-driven. Councilmember Grupa said that he hoped that each citizen should know that every staff member at City Hall, commission and council should know that everyone is working in the best interests of what the community would want and need.

Mr. Stremcha asked if they wanted these bullet items under the Major Phases? Commissioner Goodwin asked if the different phases of the process should be numbered. Councilmember Grupa said if staff recommend that we use bullets, they will use bullets. Commissioner Fermoyle said to change ensured to ensures and take out the s and the word that. Commissioner Goodwin said she likes the way that the statement reads.

Commissioner Nizolek said that something he thinks is missing here is this document should be constantly evolving in that they shouldn't be doing this once every 10 years, it should be tweaked and changed frequently so it evolves with the change and time and the community. We are creating this document, and why are we saying that it is going to last for 10 years? This should be a working document, and it should evolve. He said it is the big next step to creating a great plan. Most communities do this every 10 to 15 years. Why aren't they creating a document that evolves? If things don't evolve, they go extinct.

Commissioner Goodwin said that, yes, this will go extinct because the previous one is done now, all the initiatives have been done now. It is kind of like a checklist. Chair Anderson said that you would have to have a small portion that you modify, you couldn't modify the whole thing.

Commissioner Goodwin said they would need to have updated data, and then it would need to reflect updates in these areas regularly as you make changes. Chair Anderson said that this will be stated somewhere here that it is opportunity-driven, whether it is land acquisition or recreational opportunities. Things are going to happen that they won't be able to plan for.

II. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Goodwin to adjourn the work session of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 8:23p.m. Motion carried 6-0.**



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Dave Anderson, Chair



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Tina Allard, City Clerk