



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

Members Present: Chair Anderson, Commissioners Goodwin, Stewart, Fermoye, and Commissioner Loidolt (left at 8:35p.m.)

Members Absent: Commissioner Varty (left at 8:01p.m.), Commissioner Niziolek (arrived at 7:36 p.m. and left at 8:19 p.m.)

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 October 8, 2025, agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

4. CONSIDER MINUTES

4.1 09-10-2025 Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Fermoye and seconded by Commissioner Stewart to approve September 10, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

5. OPEN FORUM

6. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

6.1 Track and Field Day For Dogs at Lion John Weicht Park

Mr. Shelby presented his report. Zoe Johnson, 18450 Olson St. NW Elk River was present and gave a summary of her plan to host a track and field day for dogs at Lion John Weicht Park. She shared that she volunteers with Ruff Start and wants to bring together her passion for fostering dogs and the need to complete a class project into one event. This event will raise awareness for fostering dogs. The goal would be to raise money for Ruff Start so she will have donation boxes available for people to donate. She said she will set up hurdles, high jumps, and long jumps for people to do whenever they show up. It is mostly for the foster families and their dogs, but other people from the public can attend. They will have snacks and treats. The dogs will always have to be on a leash for safety. They will also have medals for the dogs. Commissioner Fermoye asked what time the event would be. Ms. Johnson said from 11 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Varty asked how many people Ms. Johnson anticipated showing up. She said about 50 at the most. Ms. Johnson also said Ruff Start will advertise to their current foster families, and she will advertise on her neighborhood Facebook page and send out information in school and

through friends. Chair Anderson asked if she would be able to come back and share with the Commission how it goes. She said she would love to. Mr. Stremcha asked Ms. Johnson to share why she chose Lions Park. She said because it is close to her house and has shelters for setting up and protecting them from rain.

Commissioner Loidolt asked if she would do it annually. She said no because she would be going off to college. Commissioner Goodwin suggested that if she writes it up thoroughly, maybe they could keep the legacy going.

Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Varty to approve the track and field day for dogs at Lions John Weicht Park on Sunday October 26th, 2025. Motion carried 5-0.

7. ACTION ITEMS

7.1 2026 Rental Fees

Mr. Shelby presented his report. He reviewed the attachments. He pointed out that the change in cost is only on the initial rental fee, not on the additional rental hours.

Moved by Commissioner Loidolt and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to recommend to City Council to set shelter/pavilion rental fees for 2026 as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8.1 Electric Bicycles and Devices — Trail Usage

Mr. Shelby presented his report and slideshow. Mr. Shelby said this issue is quickly evolving and he thinks that the goal of the discussion is how to regulate or limit some of these devices. From the research that he and his staff have done there has been little uniformity and continuity in terms of the vocabulary used, as well as enforcement and regulation. What he has put together for tonight is background information. He thinks they need to discuss the possibility of an ordinance to regulate or limit some of these devices.

Mr. Shelby said he would like to identify the pieces that the commission wants included and then he would take that to the Police Department and the City Attorney for their input and to make sure it matches the city's ordinance language, returning to next month's commission meeting for action.

He reviewed the definitions of what electric bikes are via his slideshow presentation. He followed up by showing photos of the e-bikes, pointing out how hard it is to distinguish the differences. He said he also thinks that if they are modified in any way then they are not definable under these class definitions and then they are not legal. Then he went onto the Electric Personal Assisted Mobility devices and motorized foot scooters.

Mr. Shelby pointed out that some cities have grouped them together. We are trying to go by the state statutes. He pointed out how the graphics could help with showing the difference between what is allowed on the trails and what isn't. He then reviewed the potential recommendations.

Chair Anderson said this is a complex issue. He shared that he has been spending a lot of time on our paved trails particularly out at Woodland Trails Regional Park and e-motorcycles which are e-bikes are out of control. Chair Anderson shared that he got a call and a text from an individual as well. He said that there are places out on the trails and in the park where they are “laying rubber” and they have a lot of power.

He said that he was heading out in a city truck to place chips on the trail, and he had a bike driving behind him doing wheelies and trying to get by. Chair Anderson reviewed his handout listing the several types of motorized bikes. He thinks that they should have a discussion regarding what they think of each of these devices and whether they want to allow them onto the paved and dirt trails. Chair Anderson said in addition to driving on the paved trails at Woodland Trails there have been a couple of individuals that have caused extensive damage to the dirt trails. He provided a photo of trail damage along with the list of bikes that he handed out. He asked the Commissioners to discuss what they think of each of the devices and whether they want to allow them or not on the paved, green, or dirt trails.

Chair Anderson said that he invited Derek Burchill, 14481 Idone St. NW Ramsey, MN, the trail steward at Hillside Mountain Bike Park, to speak on behalf of damage occurring at Hillside Park with e-bikes. Mr. Burchill said that he has been dealing with similar issues as Chair Anderson with what he calls e-motos. He explained that burning rubber is spraying dirt up behind the bike. He said that Hillside Park has a lot of sharp corners, and it would be easy to collide with other riders and trees. When he sees riders doing this, he tries to inform them that there are no motorized vehicles allowed on the trails. MORCs (Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists) position is the same as the state but Mr. Burchill’s opinion is that only class 1 bikes should be allowed on the trails because the other classes are too fast. He tells people out there that only class 1 bikes are allowed.

Mr. Burchill said a couple of days ago there was a group of six kids flying through the trails and no one looked over 15. He said that the trails are used by all ages, and he doesn’t want to see someone get hurt.

Chair Anderson said that they have little kids on little kid bikes at Woodland Trails Regional Park. He said the people on e-motos are basically using pedestrians as an obstacle course. He shared that he read in the paper that the cops were out there after at least one incident where they had to get someone after they got hurt. Chair Anderson asked staff what the city’s investment in Hillside was, he thinks it was \$100,000. He said it was a very big investment in that resource, it is serving the community well and it is now being damaged by what he and Mr. Burchill think is unauthorized use.

Chair Anderson wants to hear from the rest of the group what they think as well as go through the list of what they think should be in and what should be out. They won’t be talking about sidewalks or streets since those are not something for them to be concerned about.

Mr. Burchill said he has received a lot of concerns about safety from users of the bike trails at Hillside. He also shared that trail management crews are concerned about safety when they are working at the park.

Mr. Shelby asked Mr. Burchill to clarify what he means when he says e-motos. He said that they are the ones that don’t have pedals. He said some of the bikes he sees do have pedals on them, but he thinks the bikes have been modified, and the pedals aren’t functional and won’t move. Mr. Burchill said he does see full-faced helmets on most people or even motorcycle helmets.

Commissioner Goodwin said she called Chair Anderson last week because she was at Woodland Trails Regional Park with her kids and two middle schoolers were riding e-motos around and it made her concerned that they would not see her kids on the trails. She also said she is concerned about the damage to the trails and that there is a lot of investment from the City of Elk River and volunteers. She thinks that teenagers using these don't have the wisdom to make good choices all the time. At the same time, she does see the benefit for those riding them slower that are using them to get back into being active and have mobility issues, etc. She said that she thinks if we have an ordinance then we must have an enforcement period.

Chair Anderson said he thinks that there is a big education piece. Commissioner Stewart said that whatever they decide today they need to get the message out clearly and then have an enforcement period, so people learn what is permitted and what is not.

Commissioner Stewart said that they have to have a living document that they can change as things are constantly changing with these bikes. He thinks that class three bikes are too fast and shouldn't be allowed on trails. He doesn't think that they can do anything about class two since they could always just pedal it, so they should allow one and two and ban the third one. He doesn't think that there are any other motorized things that should be allowed on the trails.

Mr. Burchill said that a lot of the kids he stops on the trails think that if the bike they are riding is electric and not gas that is okay.

Commissioner Varty said that she agrees and that a class three bike is too fast and an accident is waiting to happen. Classes one and two are fine. Commissioner Fermoye said she doesn't have anything else to add.

Chair Anderson said that EPAMD's (Electric Personal Assistance Mobility Devices) such as segways, hoverboards, and electric skateboards have to be allowed. Commissioner Loidolt said one thing he is concerned about is that since the GNT runs through Sherburne County if we aren't consistent then what are we going to do once the people get to the boundary of our portion of the trail? He said he is not for the bikes or against them, but he wants to get in front of the issue. He said if there is a speed limit of 20 miles per hour set up how will it be enforced? With a radar gun?

Commissioner Goodwin said maybe enforcement is through education such as signs because a class three bike can slow down to 20 mph if required to do so. Mr. Shelby said that the Sherburne County Advisory Board didn't want to prevent people who are using them responsibly from continuing to do so. He also thinks they wanted to maintain accessibility and determine how they would limit and regulate what bikes can be on the trails in a reasonable way that makes sense. They thought that addressing speed was the way to go. Mr. Shelby said the City of Elk River communications department could put together a robust education campaign this winter to help people understand what they can and can't do.

Chair Anderson said that we might have to put something together on an emergency basis because they are out of control. He said if he had his way he would say the trails are non-motorized, but he said that the world is changing. He said that he has a lot of friends that have e-bikes, otherwise they wouldn't be biking. They bike all over the state and it is giving them extended time in their life to do leisurely activities.

Chair Anderson said that he thinks that class 3 e-bikes are too powerful and too fast, but he doesn't

know how to decipher that as they are going by. He said that when ATVS and snowmobiles started using the trails they used education to get the information out and other trail users ended up enforcing it.

Chair Anderson reiterated that EPAMD's have to be allowed. Mr. Shelby said he wasn't sure but that he thought if there was a demonstrated need to show they should be limited there could be some latitude to make create limitations, but it wouldn't be easy. Chair Anderson said those are not the current problem.

Commissioner Stewart said a big component is the education piece and if they agree that there will be multiple users on the trails at the same time then they need to get back to basic trail etiquette. He shared that trail etiquette signs in Livonia township on the Great Northern Trail are good, and we need to include that in our education component.

Mr. Shelby listed some examples of trail etiquette and pointed out that it is part of the education piece that many cities are using.

Chair Anderson asked the Commissioners if they could all agree that all classes of the e-bikes should be allowed with a 20-mph speed limit to be consistent with Sherburne County. Mr. Shelby asked Chair Anderson for confirmation that they would be starting with allowing all three classes of e-bikes but with a speed limit of 20-mph. Mr. Stremcha said that another recommendation could be a trailer placed out on the trail that could help manage the enforcement by posting the speed with the flashers etc. He said it could be moved around to different trails.

Chair Anderson said that he doesn't want any bikes allowed on the green trails. He asked what everyone thought about the mountain bike trails since they are different. Mr. Shelby asked Mr. Burchill what he is seeing at other parks as far as hard regulations. Mr. Burchill said most parks are sticking with class one e-bikes only with pedal assistance and no throttle. He said it is hard to damage a trail with a pedal assisted e-bike. He said a class two e-bike with a throttle could damage the trails. Mr. Burchill said MORC approves all three classes of e-bikes on the mountain bike trails, but his personal opinion is to allow the class one e-bikes only because of the twisting of the trails.

Chair Anderson confirmed that everyone agreed that class one, two and three bikes will be allowed on paved trails, class one bikes will be allowed on mountain bike trails and no bikes will be allowed on green trails.

Chair Anderson then asked what everyone's thoughts were about the motorized items on the lower part of his list. Mr. Shelby reviewed the details of the slides describing motorized foot scooters. Some of the Commissioners and staff said they are seeing a significant increase in usage of these around the city. Mr. Shelby said he thinks it is important to consider how an ordinance would be enforced if the scooters were restricted.

Chair Anderson said that if a walkway is paved it is a trail and if it is concrete it is defined as a sidewalk. He said he believes that scooter riders should have helmets on if they are under 18. Commissioner Niziolek pointed out that they should be talking about trails since that is their jurisdiction. Mr. Shelby said he believes the only time they can be on sidewalks if they are pulling up at home. Commissioner Loidolt asked where they are going to stop with this as far as having too many restrictions. He said he doesn't have a problem with these, but he wants to focus on trails and not sidewalks. Commissioner Stewart pointed out that according to the state of Minnesota the motorized foot scooters are treated

the same as bicycles.

Commissioner Nizolek arrived at this point (7:36p.m.) and said that the fact that these are motorized foot scooters and human propulsion doesn't exist, these are just little power machines. What is the essence of our parks from a recreation perspective? The scooters just don't fit into our present view of what trails are used for. What he sees from the motorized scooters is that kids just jump on them quickly to get somewhere.

Commissioner Stewart pointed out that the new law treats motorized foot scooters as bicycles, so they have the same rights as bike riders. Chair Anderson said we are living in an AI world, and he doesn't like it, but he doesn't know what they can do about it. He asked if this is a fluid document.

Mr. Shelby said that fluid is a good description of this entire discussion. Commissioner Goodwin said that she thinks they have a pretty good idea of what the state of MN says about this subject as well as Sherburne County. She believes that once they get through the next three to five years, they can evaluate what changes may be needed.

Mr. Shelby said that he thinks that as defined by the state a motorized foot scooter is not to exceed 15 miles per hour and is held up by the rules of the road. Chair Anderson read the rules from 2020 online about where a motorized foot scooter may operate. Commissioner Varty asked for clarification that a scooter can have the capability to go 30 miles per hour, but the rider just can't ride it faster than 15 mph. Mr. Shelby said he believes that is correct.

Chair Anderson stated that the motorized scooters can go on paved trails only and same with the EPAMD's and motorized foot scooters. He also stated again that at Hillside Park they will allow class one e-bikes only.

Mr. Burchill said that educating the public will help a lot. He gets a lot of questions about what bikes are allowed at Hillside Park. He said that the mountain bike volunteers at the park will help with enforcement too. Once everyone knows the rules, users point them out to other users.

Commissioner Nizolek asked Mr. Burchill if his user groups would help with educating users out at Hillside Park. He clarified that no one from MORC is doing that but users tell other users. Commissioner Nizolek asked why the average user at Woodland Trails Regional Park can't do this too. Chair Anderson and Commissioner Varty said once there is signage then users will inform other users as the word spreads. She said hopefully they will be civil to each other and inform each other. Mr. Shelby and Mr. Stremcha summarized what had been talked about so far in the meeting, so Commissioner Nizolek was able to be caught up.

Mr. Shelby thanked Mr. Burchill for his work on the trails and help with the meeting.

9. PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGER UPDATE

9.1 Parks and Recreation Manager Update

Mr. Shelby presented his report.

He added that the new Activity Center Assistant did not start when planned. She declined the job on the same day that she started.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

11. MOTION TO ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Fermoyle to adjourn the regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 8:01 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Varty left at 8:01 p.m.

12. WORK SESSION

12.1 2026 Capital Improvement

Mr. Shelby reviewed the budget handouts which will be provided as an attachment to the minutes. He reviewed the park improvement fund first. He explained the recommendations that were determined following his meeting with Mr. Baas, the City of Elk River Park Maintenance Foreman.

Mr. Shelby explained what a turf tank is. He shared that he and staff are working on creating a flag football program in the spring which will necessitate more lining of the fields. The manpower required to do this would be eased by the leasing of this machine. It would be leased for three years at the cost of \$16,000 per year.

Chair Anderson said that if this is the only way they are going to get it then should it come out of this fund. Mr. Stremcha said that it is up to the commission and what they recommend, but the general fund could also be an option. Commissioner Niziolek said that he thinks it seems like it should come out of a park's maintenance type of fund, but he does think it should be pursued but find a different source of funding.

Commissioner Goodwin asked what this machine is and if it is better to purchase or lease. Mr. Shelby said that this machine is typically leased because they are so expensive. Commissioner Goodwin also agrees that she thinks this falls into the park's maintenance budget.

Chair Anderson said that if this is an ongoing annual expense and saves on labor and is a piece of equipment that they are renting, then they should pursue it if it is the only way it is going to get done but it should be under an alternative funding source in future years. Commissioner Stewart asked Mr. Shelby if he knew how many hours in labor Mr. Baas thought he would save. Mr. Shelby said that is something he thinks Mr. Baas was working on but it can be used in any field and city wide so it would help with labor. Chair Anderson asked if they could change the paint and use it to stripe the trails. Mr. Shelby said he isn't sure what all the capabilities are quite yet, but he can follow up with the company to clarify all of that. Commissioner Stewart said that if it is going to be an ongoing expense then they should find another way to pay for it other than the Parks and Recreation budget.

Commissioner Niziolek said he wanted to say two things before he had to leave for the night. He thinks that the Ridgewood East court usage doesn't warrant the cost of replacement because Salk Junior High School has a nicer court that is nearby. He thinks they should tear it out and not replace it. He thinks if they replace it, they would be wasting the \$30,000.

Commissioner Niziolek also thinks that they need to stripe the trails. He said that he is concerned there could be a bad collision at 20 mph. He thinks there will be serious injuries and maybe a death. He

thinks they should stripe the trails at the same time as they are rolling the education piece about the out the e-bikes. He thinks it would create a visual to draw attention. Mr. Shelby asked for clarification that this would be done for directional purposes. Commissioner Niziolek said yes to primarily help avoid a head on collision. Commissioner Niziolek left at 8:19pm.

Chair Anderson asked if there are other things that should be on this list. Mr. Shelby clarified that these items were the only things that he and Mr. Baas discussed and if the Commission would like to add additional items they can. Commissioner Goodwin asked what the WHHCA/ Friends of the Mississippi line item is. Mr. Shelby said that it is the Friends of the Mississippi River agreement to manage and work on the whole property.

Commissioner Goodwin asked if there was an obligation for them to do anything with the newly acquired property at Camp Cozy. Commissioner Stewart said that there is a Master Plan for Camp Cozy, and the Friends of the Mississippi involved in it. Chair Anderson explained that was done before this property was acquired though and doesn't affect the Maher Property. Chair Anderson suggested that we have a plan in the future to discuss the Maher property.

Mr. Shelby said that for years they worked off a Capital Replacement Plan that was put together by former staff and is no longer valid. He is working with Mr. Stremcha, Mr. Femrite, the Public Works Director, and Mr. Baas to rebuild that plan, projecting a budget for the future. Chair Anderson said that staff will need to have input from the Commission for this as well. He said that they, as the Commission, come up with a concept and staff will come up with the reality. Commissioner Goodwin said she doesn't feel like they have enough information to add anything to the list.

Commissioner Loidolt said that the baseball fields in this city are in bad shape, and they are way behind in updating them, but he isn't sure where money would come from for the plan they came up with. Mr. Shelby said the three things listed were definitive, but that doesn't mean there aren't going to be other things that come up in 2026. He said that they may end up needing some money for the master plan or a portion of it. Tonight is the night to come up with ideas to see if they can be added into the budget.

Chair Anderson said that Mr. Burchill had shared with him prior to the meeting that he would like to have some money put in place for park improvements for Hillside Park without listing anything specific. Mr. Shelby said that they would need specifics to approve that versus a random amount that is open-ended. Chair Anderson said that one thing that came up in conversation was a motorized wheelbarrow. Mr. Stremcha suggested that Mr. Burchill explore what he has on his wish list and then it can be put on the regular agenda for next month's meeting.

Mr. Stremcha said that he thinks the \$50,000 in the budget for the master plan should be carried forward to 2026 and Chair Anderson agreed. Chair Anderson also said that they need to think about Scout Island access in the future.

Commissioner Stewart asked if there is an ATV replacement plan. Chair Anderson said that it would fall under equipment budget per a discussion he had with Mitch Litfin, the Public Works Supervisor. Chair Anderson said both Woodland Trails Regional Park and William H. Houlton Conservation Area have older ATVs that need to be replaced. He said Mr. Litfin told him they were removed from the 2026 budget and that there isn't anything in the near future for replacement. Commissioner Stewart said they are so old they can't find replacement parts. Chair Anderson said it would be nice to have a side-by-side when they have to go out for projects and have multiple people who need to ride together.

Chair Anderson said it would be nice to have a cab in the winter, especially when using the rollers to prep the ski trails out at Woodland Trails Regional Park. He said they currently use the ATVs to pull the rollers. He said years ago they used to walk the trails and pull them behind, putting hundreds of hours. He said it would be an especially useful tool to have a new ATV or side-by-side in the budget.

Chair Anderson said last year they ran out of wood chips for Woodland trails, and they did this year too. He likes to do about 20 loads a year and this year only did about 8. Mr. Stremcha asked if that is a maintenance thing. Chair Anderson said yes, but they are falling behind. Chair Anderson said that one load is about \$100 for four yards. He said they are extremely useful tools but they only last about three years on the trails.

Commissioner Loidolt said that it should come out of misc. projects. Mr. Stremcha said that could come out of other funds and is discretionary funding. He said that staff can make the decision on something like that. Chair Anderson said he has been told that there isn't money available in the past two years when he has asked staff. He said that the City of Elk River loads the trucks for them and then volunteers go out every week with two trucks starting in late August. Mr. Stremcha said that they are discussing improvements tonight and this is a maintenance item.

Commissioner Loidolt left at 8:35pm.

Chair Anderson asked if everyone is okay with the \$50,000 for the master plan being moved to next year. He also asked the commissioners and staff what their thoughts were on Ridgewood East Park. Mr. Shelby said that Mr. Baas said that it needed to be updated and resurfaced. Chair Anderson said that his observations are that it isn't used. Mr. Shelby said that it is something they would include in the survey when it comes time to do that region. Councilmember Grupa said move it forward and wait until we do the neighborhood survey for that area to determine. They all seemed to agree to move forward.

Mr. Shelby then reviewed the park dedication fund. Mr. Stremcha said that Bradford Park will also potentially come online in 2026 for a cost share for the north half of the trail. Joe said that something will start to get phased in. Chair Anderson suggested a budget placeholder for Bradford Park in 2026 in the amount of \$60,000. Chair Anderson asked if County Rd 44 was on there. Mr. Shelby asked when it was originally, and Chair Anderson said 2024. The commissioners said that they would like an update on this.

Mr. Shelby said that there will also be reimbursement from the mega loop trail. He thinks it is a significant amount from park dedication in 2024. That money will build this account significantly. He is not sure when it will be coming yet.

13. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved by Commissioner Goodwin and seconded by Commissioner Fermoye to adjourn the work session of the Parks and Recreation Commission at 8:40 p.m. Motion carried 4-0. Minutes prepared by Dawn Larson.



Dave Anderson, Chair



Tina Allard, City Clerk