



Park Commission Meeting

April 7, 2025

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Borman called the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present

EB Graham
Peter Borman
Melissa Luna
Tim Kirk
Ken Schultz
Don Whalen

Also Present

Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director
Nick Schmidt, City Engineer

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Agenda for April 7, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Kirk to approve the April 7, 2025, meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Graham. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes for February 3, 2025

Motion by Commissioner Whalen to approve the February 3, 2025, meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. The motion passed unanimously.

Open Forum

Jodi Rehlander commented that she will be the newest member of the Commission and introduced herself.

New Business

1. Innsbruck Nature Center Invasive Species Volunteer Check-In

Maija Sedzalarz provided background information on the collaborative effort, which began in 2004, to remove buckthorn and invasive species from the Innsbruck Park and Springbrook Nature Center properties.

Julie Wellman commented that she moved to Fridley four years ago and provided information on the volunteer effort they began in 2023 to clean up buckthorn at Innsbruck using the critical cut method. She estimated that she and Ms. Sedzalarz spent 60 to 80 hours between the two of them during the 2023 season. They gained 17 additional volunteers who assisted in 2024 with buckthorn removal at Innsbruck, noting 280 hours spent on the project. She commented that she was impressed with the social/community element involved with the project.

Ms. Sedzalarz commented on the upcoming training/refresher they will be conducting at Innsbruck to prepare for the upcoming season.

Commissioner Whalen asked the percentage of Innsbruck that they would estimate has been addressed through the volunteer efforts. Ms. Wellman replied that they have done one acre of the 24 acres.

Chair Borman commented that it was his understanding that the only way to remove buckthorn was to pull it up and asked if they are having success with this method. Ms. Wellman commented that this method does take longer, as it can take one or two years for the plant to die, but it is less backbreaking as well. Ms. Sedzalarz commented that the City of Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota are also using the critical cut method.

The Commission commented on what a great effort this is, as well as an opportunity for residents to gain community service hours.

2. Fridley Youth Sports Association Baseball Check-In

Taylor Stein, FYSA Baseball President, provided information on the upcoming season, noting that practices begin in one week. He stated that he has been involved with FYSA baseball since 2020. He provided information on the FYSA baseball program and the fields used by the different levels. He noted some locations that would be nice to have a porta-potty added.

Chair Borman asked how the numbers compare to the previous year. Mr. Stein commented that the numbers are similar, with some slight decreases due to Columbia Heights forming their own team, along with some players aging out to high school.

The Commission thanked Mr. Stein for his work and the update.

3. Commons Park Bid Approval and Construction Update

Nick Schmidt, City Engineer/Project Manager, explained that the park is split into two projects, which are site improvements and the building. He provided information on the bidding for both

the site work and building projects and included project elements. He stated that staff are currently looking at options for lighting that will help to decrease that cost, as that element bid was higher than anticipated. He stated that the project bids were approved at the March 24th Council meeting, and the goal is to have the park open for the summer of 2026. He reviewed details of the proposed construction phasing for the projects, noting that phase two would begin after the completion of the 2025 baseball season. He provided information on what residents can expect during construction in the park. He confirmed that the contractor has worked with the City on multiple park improvement projects over the past five years.

Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director, commented on the great job that Mr. Schmidt does.

4. Commission Appreciation Dinner

Chair Borman noted the upcoming Commission Appreciation Dinner. Mr. Maher hoped that everyone on the Commission could join them for the event on April 21st.

Old Business

None

Staff Reports

5. Staff Reports for Parks and Recreation Team

Mr. Maher provided a brief overview of the staff reports for parks and recreation.

Chair Borman noted the upcoming Spring Spree event, which features a golden ticket contest.

Adjournment

Commissioner Luna made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Maher, Staff Liaison