

1 CITY OF ST. ANTHONY
2 PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING
3 DECEMBER 20, 2021
4 7:00 p.m.
5

6 **I. CALL TO ORDER.**

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8 Chairperson Bellinger called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
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10 **II. ROLL CALL.**

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12 Commissioners Present: Chair Therese Bellinger, Commissioners Michael Guest, James Niemi,
13 and Renee Reed.

14
15 Absent: None.

16
17 Also Present: City Manager Charlie Yunker, Silverwood Park Supervisor Alyssa
18 Baguss, Citizens for Sustainability Representative Lona Doolan,
19 Green Club Member Addie Aman, Code Official Richard Sonterre,
20 and Public Works Director Jeremy Gumke.
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22 **III. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 20, 2021 PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL**
23 **COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA.**

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25 Motion by Commissioner Guest, seconded by Commissioner Niemi, to approve the December
26 20, 2021 Parks and Environmental Commission agenda.
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28 **Motion carried unanimously.**

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30 **IV. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2021 REGULAR PARKS AND**
31 **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.**

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33 Motion by Commissioner Guest, seconded by Commissioner Reed, to approve the September
34 13, 2021 Regular Parks and Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes as presented.
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36 **Motion carried unanimously.**

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38 **V. PRESENTATIONS.**

39 **A. Silverwood Updates**

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42 Silverwood Park Supervisor Alyssa Baguss provided a PowerPoint presentation, noting the
43 mission of the Three Rivers Park District is to promote environmental stewardship through
44 recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. It encompasses over
45 27,000 acres of parks and trails and serves millions of visitors annually.
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47 Commissioner Reed wondered how Ms. Baguss decides which artists will be presented
48 indoors and outdoors.
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1 Ms. Baguss explained there was an open call for the sculpture in the galleries and both will be
2 promoted online. Anyone from the public can apply and submit their work. There is a list of
3 things that need to be entered and there is a team of people looking at the applications. A
4 selection will be made and the gallery coordinator at the park will assist with that.

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6 Chair Bellinger thanked Ms. Baguss for the presentation.

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8 **B. Citizens for Sustainability Update**

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10 Ms. Lona Doolan, 3511 Harding Street, appeared before the Commission to provide the
11 Citizens for Sustainability Parks & Environmental Commission Update. She provided a
12 PowerPoint presentation.

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14 Chair Bellinger thanked Ms. Doolan for the presentation.

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16 **C. ISD 282 Green Team Grant Summary**

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18 Ms. Addie Aman, St. Anthony Village High School 9th grader, Green Club member, provided
19 a PowerPoint presentation on ISD 282 Green Partner Grant.

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21 Commissioner Reed indicated the presentation was done very well and asked in the middle
22 school and high school, how many students participate in this, there was mention about “The
23 Leap”.

24
25 Ms. Aman indicated in The Leap there were close to thirty students and approximately fifteen
26 students in the middle school Green Team. She explained she was not sure what the numbers
27 were on the High School Green Team and Ecology Club.

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29 Chair Bellinger also thought the presentation was well done and thanked Ms. Aman from the
30 presentation.

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32 **D. Pickleball Courts**

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34 None.

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36 **VI. COMMISSION REPORTS.**

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38 Commissioner Reed indicated she had a request from Lana regarding her participating on the
39 Planning Committee for Ramsey/Hennepin County, the suburbs that are in those counties. She
40 noted she would be representing St. Anthony. She asked if the Commission would have any
41 concerns with her representing the City. She noted she would like to find out more about this
42 and bring it back with more information.

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44 The Commission did not have an issue with Commissioner Reed participating in the Planning
45 Committee.
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VII. OTHER BUSINESS.

A. Concept Review for Dedicated Pickleball Courts

City Manager Charlie Yunker explained that St. Anthony has experienced a growing interest in pickleball and as such, the Parks and Environmental Commission has been presented with regular updates on the topic. At its previous meeting on September 13, 2021, the Commission was presented with three options to repair the condition of the tennis court on Silver Lane with shared striping for pickleball. Since that time, the cracks have been filled, sealed, and painted. In the meantime, Saint Anthony staff have been pursuing options to add pickleball courts to the City’s Parks system. Discussions consisted of adding pickleball striping to the newly reconstructed tennis courts near City Hall, reconstruction of the tennis court with shared pickleball striping on Silver Lane, constructing pickleball courts in the existing hockey rink at Central Park, or finding available green space for construction of new pickleball courts.

Mr. Yunker displayed a diagram of the tennis courts and City Hall and explained they are heavily used by local and non-local residents and the High School tennis teams for tennis play, the tennis court on Silver Lane has limited capacity for expansion due to a lack of existing infrastructure, and available green space is very limited in the City. He explained that a proposal was pursued by City staff to construct pickleball courts in the hockey rink at Central Park. The proposal has been received and reviewed and would include excavation, grading, paving, and striping. The cost proposal received is \$75,000.

Mr. Yunker asked the Commission to discuss and provide feedback for the City Council on the following:

- Is adding dedicated Pickleball courts somewhere in the park system is a priority for the City?
- If so, is the Central Park ice rink the best option?
- Any other aspects the City Council should consider

Commissioner Niemi asked if there were any concerns with putting ice over the blacktop.

Mr. Yunker explained there are ways to do that by putting a membrane in between. This does mean that a pickleball court will wear out faster than a tennis court because ice would purposefully be put over concrete.

Commissioner Reed asked how many Pickleball Courts the City could get in that space.

Mr. Yunker explained six could be squeezed in to the space. More discussion will happen if this is approved.

Chair Bellinger asked if the hope would be that these Pickleball Courts would be used for tournaments.

1 Mr. Yunker indicated that was correct.

2

3 Chair Bellinger asked if this would be a revenue producer for the City.

4

5 Mr. Yunker indicated it would not. The dynamic in St. Anthony is that Community Services is
6 under the School District which handles the facility rentals and collects those fees. Generally
7 when cities do fees for utilization of city facilities like that, what the city is doing is just trying
8 to recoup staff costs to facilitate that. The fees are not used for upkeep of the Capital
9 Improvements. Typically the infrastructure is all funded by tax levy.

10

11 Commissioner Niemi asked if there is talk of redoing the boards in the proposal.

12

13 Mr. Yunker explained in conversations with Jeremy they did not see, necessarily, there would
14 be a need for any work on the boards but if this would move forward there would be more
15 details that would be worked out regarding that.

16

17 Commissioner Reed asked if the courts would also be open for public use.

18

19 Mr. Yunker indicated that was correct. He explained staff is looking for a recommendation
20 because this item has been before the Park Commission a number of times and it is getting to
21 the point to either move forward or not do this.

22

23 Commissioner Reed felt the Commission has received enough information on this topic and
24 requests for them and she did see this as a real priority.

25

26 Chair Bellinger thought this was a great solution for the demand.

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28 Commissioner Niemi explained he liked the location but parking is still going to be an issue in
29 the summertime because there is baseball, softball and soccer there and the parking is always
30 full as well as City Hall Parking. He thought this is something to be considered as well. He
31 thought the City decided to make dedicated courts at Culver's Court as well.

32

33 Mr. Yunker explained there were concerns about the conditions of the courts, just like at
34 Central Park, and that discussion revolved around how far the City would need to take those
35 repairs because what the City has is a single tennis court that was put in an open spot without
36 really trying to be a destination for an amenity. There are no lights there and no bathrooms
37 with minimal parking. Given its condition and the cost to do a full replacement, it does not
38 really make sense to try to do that because all they would get is four Pickleball Courts, which
39 would not be enough for tournaments and what the club is looking for.

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41 Chair Bellinger thanked Mr. Yunker for the information.

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43 Motion by Commissioner Reed, seconded by Commissioner Guest, to recommend the City
44 Council approve the Pickleball Courts as a priority as proposed.

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46 Commissioner Niemi indicated he liked the location but the priority, he was not sure about.

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Commissioner Guest indicated he has driven by the Lucky Shots by the Columbia Gold Course and it has been packed in there so he knew there is an interest in Pickleball. He was not sure how much need there is because he had not heard about this until about a year ago. He noted there may be a need for it but was not sure paying seventy-five thousand dollars was a lot for something the City is not sure is needed or not.

Commissioner Niemi explained the presentation had a lot of information there even for area courts and that is the priority piece he was not sure of. He wondered if there are some courts that are not that far away that could be utilized. He thought the location was great but he wondered if the seventy-five thousand dollars could be used for something else that they have been trying to work towards because this just came up in the last year.

Commissioner Reed felt this is a priority to at least have the City Council take a look at this and see whether it can be fit into the budget. She also knew that bike trails are an important issue. She did not know how the City Council decides how to budget. She believed that there is a need for Pickleball Courts and the one over at Culvers Club is not adequate as well as Pickleball becoming more popular, not just with seniors but schools are now teaching it as well.

Commissioner Guest indicated he is not opposed to this but he was trying to understand the entire proposal. He supported the concept and liked the fact that there is a diverse age range playing Pickleball, especially because the community continues to mature. The City wants to make sure it has the amenities for everybody.

Chair Bellinger noted the motion moved.

Mr. Yunker summarized the proposed motion and the Commission accepted.

Motion carried.

B. Aesthetics for St. Anthony Yards

Code Official Richard Sonterre explained that he regularly receives complaints regarding pollinator friendly gardens, natural grasses, and pollinator plants, concerning aesthetics of those gardens, creeping weeds, violation of existing code language regarding weeds, and long grass and non-turf grasses.

Mr. Sonterre stated staff has noticed an increasing level of acceptance for non-traditional yard aesthetics to support environmental sustainability and pollinators in particular. To fit the City's efforts to support pollinators, maintenance practices on City property the last couple of years have been to minimize the use of herbicides to control weeds on public property. The City is currently studying the uses and application of herbicides including organic and natural products to reduce weeds but maintain a pollinator-friendly environment. He stated the City also planted pollinator friendly plants in gardens on public property.

1 Mr. Sonterre stated staff would like input on balancing the aesthetics expectation of a
2 traditional suburban lawn vs. pollinator friendly lawn that will be used in possibly adjusting
3 related code language.

4
5 Chair Bellinger asked if the current code presented in the information is what is being
6 proposed for change.

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8 Mr. Sonterre indicated that was correct. He noted the code is confusing in two ways. He
9 explained how the code will be changed to make it more clear and will put all of the
10 information in one section. The definitions are the starting point of creating language that then
11 meets to address the desired effects of that language.

12
13 Commissioner Niemi asked if staff has received a lot of calls from residents complaining
14 about their neighbors' yards.

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16 Mr. Sonterre explained a lot is relative to the type of call but it is between the months of June
17 and August where he has to explain to people why he is not enforcing something. He showed
18 some examples of yards that appear not to be in code but actually are with one being designed
19 by an arborist. He welcomed suggestions from anyone as to how the City can advance the
20 process.

21
22 Commissioner Niemi asked when staff gets call from neighbors are they directed to the forum
23 or the website to help them self-educate.

24
25 Mr. Sonterre indicated he always tries to help the resident understand after he gives them the
26 answers and the education that everything is also available in a print form and where to obtain
27 that information.

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29 Commissioner Reed asked what staff needed to do to change the code.

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31 Mr. Sonterre reviewed the process with the Commission.

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33 Chair Bellinger asked if it would be reasonable to ever talk about acceptable need
34 management options.

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36 Mr. Sonterre thought it was very difficult because there are so many different ways to
37 prescribe a specific or preferred way to remove weeds. He spent an enormous amount of time
38 this past spring and summer researching different products for removal of weeds. There is
39 actually a strong will in the City to use City property as test locations for products that are
40 more environmentally friendly. He also did a lot of work with landscape companies and
41 manufacturers of products that were not chemical based. The problem at this time is that none
42 of the eco-friendly products are effective because the current science is such that these
43 products are non-specific, non-discriminatory so whatever it lands on, weed or grass, it will
44 die.

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46 Chair Bellinger thanked Mr. Sonterre for the presentation.

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C. 2022 Draft Work Plan

City Manager Charlie Yunker stated the Parks and Environmental Commission is a five-member advisory commission, appointed by the City Council and charged with following the following duties (City Code Chapter 32, Section 32.25):

- A. To prepare, revise, and maintain a comprehensive, long-term plan for the redevelopment of parks within the City. This plan shall be viewed as a working document that serves as a framework and reference to future redevelopment.
- B. To make recommendations to and advise the City Council and staff regarding park and environmental issues and ideas.
- C. To establish priorities and recommend a phasing plan and schedule for implementing innovative park and environmental initiatives improvements, renovations, and plans.
- D. To work with other communities to explore cooperative arrangements to develop connecting routes in the form of bikeways, walking paths, and corridors of green space wherever possible.
- E. To investigate funding sources, including requests for increases in the City budget, designated for parks, green spaces and environmental initiatives.
- F. To seek new areas for additional parks, natural areas, walking paths, bikeways, and green space corridors.
- G. To generate community involvement in the development of parks, environmental initiatives and their elements.
- H. To review and recommend revisions to the operation and maintenance of City parks and environmental initiatives; and
- I. To periodically review, re-evaluate, and update the comprehensive park and environmental initiatives plan to reflect current and future park needs of the City.

Mr. Yunker noted in 2022, the Parks and Environmental Commission will focus on the following items:

- Continue with Citywide Parks cleanup in Spring 2022.
- Education and outreach in conjunction with community organizations to promote use of the organics drop off site.
- Explore pedestrian & bike friendly routes.
- Joint meeting with Planning Commission.
- Explore water conservation initiatives working with Rice Creek and MWMO watersheds, and partner with schools for water conservation poster contest.
- Promote Arbor Day and Tree City activities in, including outreach and education to residents and City contractors about tree diversity, climate resiliency, and proper planting techniques.
- Promote Sustainability Fair at the Community Center.
- Review results of Tree Inventory.
- Explore dedicated Pickleball courts be added to the park amenities.
- Review results of parks

Chair Bellinger asked if in 2022 will the Commission have the two work sessions like in 2021.

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Mr. Yunker indicated the Commission would have a joint work session with the City Council as well as with the Planning Commission. He also indicated the Park Commission can also have work sessions to review things as well.

Chair Bellinger indicated she found the work sessions to be very helpful and gave the Commission a chance to communicate together when normally they cannot.

Commissioner Guest asked if it would make sense to put on the agenda more fuller discussion about bike and walking paths.

Mr. Yunker indicated that is already on the to do list.

The Commission did not find any changes or additions.

VIII. COMMUNITY FORUM.

There was no one in the audience to speak.

Chair Bellinger thanked the Commission and indicated this was her last meeting. She indicated she has enjoyed being on the Commission immensely and has been a great way for her to be a part of the City and meet people in the City. She thought the City has done a great job of listening to its residents and she has noticed over all of the years the number of changes that have been made which have been terrific.

The Commission thanked Chair Bellinger for her service.

IX. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Commissioner Niemi, seconded by Commissioner Reed, to adjourn the December 20, 2021 meeting of the Parks and Environmental Commission at 8:13 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Osbeck
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.