

City of Excelsior
Park and Recreation Commission

Agenda

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

6:15 PM Zoom Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL
2. AGENDA APPROVAL
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a) December 14, 2021 PNR Meeting Minutes
4. CITIZEN REPORTS or COMMENTS
 - a) None
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - a) The Commons Pollinator Grant Proposal
6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - a) Water-Oak Street Gateway
 - b) Draft Commons Ballfield Scheduling Policy
7. VERBAL REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION
 - a) Partnership with Historical Society for Electrical Boxes and Ticket Booth Proposal
 - b) Eagle Scout Project
8. UPDATES/INFORMATION
 - a) Community Gardens and Garden Plot Committee
 - b) Adopt-a-Seat, Adopt-a-Garden, and Adopt-a-Tree Programs
 - c) Ice Rinks at The Commons Ballfield
 - d) Concerts in the Park/Bandshell Update/ Concession Stand PAC
 - e) Excelsior Park Maintenance Log
 - f) Discussion on Port Bell
 - g) Studer Park
 - h) Gazebo/Mitten Pond
9. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS
 - a) None
10. MISCELLANEOUS / COMMISSIONER COMMENTS
 - a) Recent City Council Action
11. ADJOURNMENT

Notice: Some items on this agenda are important enough to City Councilmembers that a quorum of the Council may be present to receive information leading to their future deliberations and eventual decision.

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota
Minutes
Park and Recreation Commission
Tuesday, December 14, 2021

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioners present: Chair Wolfe, Rogney, Sobiech, Vogel

Commissioners absent: Mehlhoff and Smith

Also present: Public Works Superintendent Amundsen, City Clerk Williams, Resident Peter Hartwich, Zoom participants

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Sobiech moved, Commissioner Rogney seconded, to approve the agenda as presented. Carries 4/0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Commissioner Sobiech moved, Commissioner Rogney seconded, to approve the Minutes from the November 9th PNR Commission Meeting. Carries 4/0.

4. CITIZEN REPORTS OR COMMENTS

a) Resident Peter Hartwich, 186 George Street, commented on volunteer work and how the PNR Commission could help to obtain and manage volunteers for items within The Commons and other City parkland.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) End of Season Meeting with Dock, Buoy, and Slide Renters

The PNR Commission discussed the dock, buoys, and slides with renters that chose to attend the meeting. The Commission discussed the financials of the Dock fund and wanting to see the funding and transfers being made from it, the moorings on the powerboats and if approved notifying potential renters of the risks associated with mooring on the buoys, and the pricing of the slips based on boat size. The PNR Commission recommended the City Council review the two different classes of boat sizes and make the mooring fees closer to each other as the size of the boat does not dictate the desirability of the moorings. The PNR Commission felt there should not be as large of a discrepancy in price between the two classes of boat sizes.

The Commission also discussed the kayak racks and recommended having removal be in line with the removal of other watercraft, the date of removal for boats and making it

more flexible in warmer fall weather, bringing back the quotation to redo the locks on the piers, adding porta potties to the port area, and storage of items on the docks. Staff would bring pertinent items and information to the City Council for review at the December 20th City Council meeting.

b) Remote Meeting Discussion

The PNR Commission was presented with questions regarding the potential implementation of a remote meeting policy. The remote meeting option would allow Commissioners who are out of town to still participate in meetings if they were in a public place and accessible to the public. The Commission was directed that this was not similar to the remote meeting policy implemented during the Governor's emergency orders regarding COVID-19.

The PNR Commission unanimously opposed the allowance of remote meeting attendance. The Commission felt the hybrid approach was not as effective, the flow of the meeting is better in-person, and in-person meetings are more effective in general. The Commission also felt that it is important that Commission members who volunteer to be on the Commission are physically available to be at the meetings.

The Commission recommended against implementing a remote meeting policy. Recommendation carries (4-0).

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Water-Oak Street Gateway

Continued to next meeting.

b) Ballfield Policy- Discussion Only

Discussed; no action taken.

7) VERBAL REPORTS FOR DISCUSSION

a) Electrical boxes: no action taken

b) Eagle scout projects: no action taken

8. UPDATES/INFORMATION:

a) Community Garden Plots and Garden Plot Committee; no action taken.

b) Adopt-a-Seat, Adopt-a-Garden, and Adopt-a-Tree Programs; no action taken.

c) Ice Rinks at The Commons Ballfield; no action taken.

- d) Concerts in the Park/Bandshell Update/Concession Stand PAC; no action taken.
- e) Maintenance Log; no action taken.
- f) Discussion on Port Bell; no action taken.
- g) Studer Park: Discussed; no action taken.
- h) Gazebo/Mitten Pond; no action taken.

9. MONTHLY FINANCIALS:

- a) None

10. MISCELLANEOUS/ COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

- a) Recent Council Action: no action taken.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Sobiech to adjourn, seconded by Roney. Carries 4/0.

Respectfully submitted,
Tim J. Amundsen

EXCELSIOR COMMONS POLLINATOR GRANT PROPOSAL

January 11, 2022

Presented by Colleen Lockovitch of Sustinea LLC.

The City of Excelsior and Community for the Commons have received two grants in coordination with Great River Greening. The first grant was a Shoreland Habitat Restoration grant. The initial work was performed in 2019 with follow up maintenance which ended in June 2021. The removal of invasive Buckthorn and planting native seeds, shrubs and plugs adjacent to the beach and along the slope were the priorities. The overall goal was to enhance existing edges of the beach to minimize erosion into the lake and improve water quality.

We have begun working on the project goals for the second grant which is a Pollinator Habitat Grant. Today, we'd like to get your approval to move forward with the objectives outlined below. This additional support will continue the work already in progress and will be incorporated in phases.

PROJECT GOALS - 2 separate areas in the Commons have been identified and include turf conversion and pollinator plantings.

- 1) **Pollinator-Enhanced Turf (PET) Flower Lawns.** See attached map outlining proposed turf to be prepped and seeded with pollinator supporting plants. The goal for these areas is to utilize existing turf areas to create a diverse, multi-species "bee lawn" that can provide resources for pollinators throughout the growing season, while also reducing inputs such as chemical, fertilizer, and mowing schedules. This will continue to provide park users with usable space for recreation, relaxation and enjoyment of the park. Additional information provided at the end.
 - a. What is a Pollinator/Flower/Bee Lawn? These lawns are made of a mix of turf grasses and low-growing perennials that can be used and treated much like a regular lawn. They also offer high-quality nutrition to pollinators and the beauty of the flowers themselves.
 - b. What are the other benefits of these lawns?
 - i. Provide natural diversity of forage for our declining pollinators
 - ii. Require less mowing and watering
 - iii. Increase resilience to extreme seasonal temperatures and drought
 - iv. Create beauty without using synthetic harmful chemicals such as herbicide or pesticides.
 - c. Prep work and seeding would occur Spring 2022



Figure 1: Showing the extent of the previous shoreline restoration and buckthorn removal project on the beach and hill units previously completed. The Bee Lawns are proposed in the light green areas outside of the red circle and around the pods in the image below.

- 2) **Pollinator Buffer Strip & Pollinator Islands/Pods.** The second project goal focuses on designed native plantings in two areas. The first area is the Buffer Edge in the Oak Knoll and the second area are adjacent pods or islands within the turf. (See Photo)
 - a. The goal of the buffer strip is to provide a continuous native habitat along the wooded edge as well as providing a soft deterrent to detrimental pedestrian traffic on the wooded slope. This would help mitigate erosion from runoff on top of the hill. This area is also where the previous grant work removed Buckthorn and planted woody shrubs. This second phase will help support the previous work.
 - i. Additional boundary fencing such as a split-rail fence can be added which would provide aesthetic value and protect the native vegetation. This fence is identical to what was installed by the beach. However it is an

additional ask and it is beyond the scope of our funding but very desirable as a barrier and aesthetic element. Perhaps we can work with an Eagle Scout Group on installing and making this fence.

- b. The pollinator islands/pods would be located at the crest of the hill throughout the existing turf. The goal is to create beautifully designed mini gardens that allow visitors to meander, picnic, learn and enjoy while supporting pollinators. We are ultimately trying to mimic a stylized composition using native Oak Savanna habitat and other supportive perennials while still keeping the park accessible for recreational use.
- c. Prep work for these areas would be performed in the Spring of 2022 with planting in Fall 2022.



Figure 2: Proposed rough layout of “Hillside Buffer Strip” (green), “Pollinator Pods” (red) and “Dry prairie slope unit” (purple) (we have removed the Purple Dry Prairie Slope from the Proposal)



Figures 3 & 4: Native plant images representing designed compilations.

Signage. We will work with GRG to create and install effective and inspiring signage to inform visitors of the great work we are doing. GRG has existing verbiage from their past and current similar projects.

Community Engagement, Volunteers & Educational Offerings

Part of receiving this funding also includes educating the community and supporting their involvement. This spring will provide ample opportunity to include volunteers to help prep the buffer strip and islands for seeding and planting along with GRG staff. In the fall, community members can also assist in the actual planting. I can be the lead on this so that GRG time can be spent on actual project labor budget vs on managing volunteers.

Maintenance, Monitoring & Long Term Success

The first three years of these areas will require establishment maintenance and monitoring during the contract period. This includes weed removal, cutting back, mulching, mowing and supplemental watering in extreme drought. The end goal is that these areas will be self sustaining. However there is no such thing as a No Maintenance garden or turf. The pollinator islands and buffer strip will require a spring cut back and mulching every year and occasional rejuvenation pruning. The pollinator lawns will require less mowing with zero inputs. All of these areas will not be treated with any type of harmful chemicals. Only natural organic mulch such as shredded leaves or straw will be used. They will require some supplemental irrigation during establishment. Planting in the fall will drastically assist with water needs.

Project Timeline (in collaboration with GRG, Volunteers and Public Works)

- Spring 2022: prep and seed Pollinator lawns. Prep pollinator buffer and pods. Install temporary signage and fencing if necessary. Provide volunteer involvement and education.
- Fall 2022: plant pollinator buffer and pods. Provide volunteer involvement and education.
- Ongoing monitoring and establishment maintenance 2022-2024.
- GRG involvement concluded late June 2024

Funding

- LCCMR(Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources) is funding \$15,000 for the total project via GRG. This sum largely supports GRG crew time for labor and supply costs
- Cash Match \$5,000, from the City plus in kind donations of labor from volunteers and Public Works.
 - Question – are there Park Improvement Funds that could be added to the City Match? This could help accomplish more of our goals. The initial grant funding was to continue to remove Buckthorn and seed on the second oak knoll. We thought it made more sense to complete the first area and do it well vs two areas minimally. By increasing the grant match we can hone in on larger plant material such as a one gallon or plugs vs seeds in certain areas and/or use it to purchase a Mobile Watering Tank. It could also help support the educational workshops.

Scope of Services

GRG agrees to provide the following list of services for installation of 3 acres of Pollinator Habitat at Commons Park:

- Site prep and installation of pollinator enhancement species in existing Turf areas
- Site prep and installation of several intensive native species plantings on the crest of the hill
- Establishment maintenance and monitoring during the contract period

The City agrees to provide the following list of services for the project:

- Public notification and signage
- Trail closures as necessary for public safety
- In kind labor and equipment resources
- \$5,000 Match

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & REFERENCES

- 1) Other Local/Midwestern Cities with pollinator lawns & supporting guidelines include:
 - City of Minneapolis: Holland Basin and many others. Also see their Pollinator Council Agreement.
 - City of St. Paul: Victoria Park, a 4 acre area was planted for a mixed use/recreation turf and was seeded with an all-native pollinator enhanced turf mix.
 - City of Madison, WI is doing some of their roadsides and all of their trail edges with bee lawn seed mixes.
 - Other GRG projects with a bee lawn component in the works: City of Savage, City of Little Canada, South Washington Watershed district and Mendota Heights in St. Paul
 - City of Chicago
- 2) University of Minnesota Bee Lawn Handout & Webpage:
<https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/planting-and-maintaining-bee-lawn>
- 3) Twin Cities Seed Co:
<https://www.twincityseed.com/bee-lawn.html>
- 4) Minnesota Horticultural Society
<https://northerngardener.org/bee-lawn/>
- 5) Lawns to Legumes Program
<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/l2l>
- 6) Minneapolis Pollinator Council Agreement (this is a good read)
Declaring Minneapolis a Pollinator Supporting Community.
<https://lms.minneapolismn.gov/Download/PriorMetadata/-52878/2015R-357.pdf>



MEMORANDUM

Re: P&R Item 6(a)- Water-Oak Street Gateway

Date: January 11, 2022

Tim Amundsen

To: Park and Recreation Commission

From: Public Works Superintendent

The Park and Recreation (PNR) Commission was tasked with developing concepts for the Water Street-Oak Street Gateway. Once discussed by the City Council, the feedback for the Gateway project included having the landscaping be more native and natural and scaling back the size of the project from the initial \$300,000+ concepts that were developed. This would tie into more recent plantings throughout the City- more specifically along Lake Street at The Commons and the new Trailhead project. Members of the Excelsior Men's Garden Club also discussed their desire to provide a monetary donation to improve the site at a recent PNR meeting.

The PNR Commission had asked staff to gain additional feedback from the City Council regarding the scope of the project. The City Council discussed the Water-Oak Street Gateway at their November 15th Work Session. In general, the Council wants to wait on major upgrades until the area (Huntington Bank Property) has been developed in which major improvements could be funded by a developer.

Long-term, the Council wants more of a mix of plantings that are beautiful and sustainable. The Council also wants the PNR Commission to help form a relationship between the Men's Garden Club and the UnCommon Garden Club who has been doing work at The Commons and the new trailhead.

The PNR Commission should put together cost estimates for the following items:

- Repairing the gazebo structure (Attached to the memo)
- Minor lighting enhancements
- Upgrades to the seating within the gazebo
- Possibly a blade sign (similar to the trail)
- The City Council was not supportive of a sculpture concept

The PNR Commission should also begin to work on the pocket park at Academy and Water. The Council would like the PNR commission to develop a plan for the park so that it can be implemented following the Met Council construction project.

Action:

Discuss and determine a path forward for the Water-Oak Street Gateway and the recommendations from the Commission that need to be made to the City Council. Begin to work on developing ideas for the pocket park at Academy and Water Street.

Welch Construction LLC
4136 Eaken Ave SE
Delano, MN 55328
Andrew Welch 612.366.9958

Excelsior, MN

***ESTIMATE #: 510**

Date: 3/31/2021

NAME / NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	
Tim 952-653-3676	Pergola Replace all cedar: 1" X 2" X 8' 1" X 8" X 8' 4" X 8" lattice Paint all the wood on pergola 1. Pressure wash 2. Sand 3. Prime 4. Paint PVC Wood grain look 1" X 2" X 8' 1" X 8" X 8' 4" X 8" lattice All New Cedar painted with new cement patio	Materials \$3,036.80 Building labor \$6,400.00 \$2,900.00 Materials \$3,202.90 Building Labor \$6,400.00 \$28,664.72
	Total:	

Email: 83andrewdice@gmail.com

*Estimate valid for 30 days from the date listed above.

50% deposit due prior to start date agreed upon with Customer and Welch Construction LLC

Thank you for calling Welch Construction LLC. We appreciate the opportunity to give you an estimate for the work listed above and look forward to working with you.



MEMORANDUM

P&R Item 6(b)- Draft Commons Ballfield

Re: Scheduling Policy

Date: January 11, 2022

Tim Amundsen

To: Park and Recreation Commission

From: Public Works Superintendent

The Parks and Recreation (PNR) Commission discussed the Ballfield Review Policy at the October PNR Meeting in 2021. It was determined that staff would attempt to work with the entities for the 2022 season in hoping to accommodate all organizations and the PNR Commission would focus on developing a new policy over the early months of 2022 to implement in 2023.

Chair Wolfe and Commissioner Mehlhoff have had extensive discussions with the organizations to better understand the needs of those that would like to utilize the ballfield. Commissioner Mehlhoff has written some draft policy language to help facilitate discussion:

"Excelsior Ball Field reservation requests must be received by November 1st of the prior year. The Park Board will review and assign slots based on seniority, group locality, diversity, and consistent usage and will inform groups by December 1st of that prior year. Any applications received after that will be reviewed and assigned as received. Organizations regularly found not to be using the field for reserved times may have their reservations removed and be deprioritized for the future season."

The PNR Commission should review the draft policy language to provide feedback and further develop the policy for implementation in 2023.

Action:

Review the draft language and further develop The Commons Ballfield Scheduling Policy.