



---

## MINUTES

### Call to Order/Roll Call

Andrew Macko called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm

Members present: Teresa Eisenbise, Taher Herzallah, Andrew Macko, Avery Metzgar, Priscilla Perez Umphress, Brian Timm

Staff present: Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; Keith Windschitl, Recreation Director; Deanna Saefke, Recreation Secretary

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Columbia Heights Parks & Recreation Department is to foster a healthy, inclusive community by providing a diverse park system and recreational opportunities that enhance the quality of life for people of all ages while fostering sustainability and environmental stewardship for future generations.

### Community Forum

None at this time.

### Consent Agenda

**Motion** by Eisenbise, second by Timm, to approve the consent agenda. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

### Letters and Requests

None at this time.

### Old Business

Update Sullivan Lake Master Plan – Fitness Court

Hansen indicated the improvements at Sullivan Lake Park will be phased in over time based on available funding, priorities, and reasonable timeframe. He reminded the Commission that the fitness court has placement restrictions, the siting within the park needs to be considered, along with how it may work with existing or redeveloped park amenities, and future redevelopment. The suggested phases could be consolidated or broken into smaller pieces based on the City's preferences and available funding. Phase 1 would include the fitness court, walk connections, and seating area. Phase 2 would include the sport courts, parking expansion, paved trails, seating area, and lift station. Phase 3 would include the larger play area, shade structures, paved trails, and seating areas at the north end of the park. The playground equipment would likely be installed in 2026 with the estimated cost for equipment around \$200,000. The shade structure is an expensive item because the shelter pieces need to be installed on frost footings. Staff are applying for a DNR Recreation Grant in 2025 for use in 2026. Hansen stated that if the community likes the fitness court it is possible that we may be able to install a second one at another location based on the positive reviews from the grant committee.

Hansen stated the fitness court should be installed mid to end of summer. Staff are unsure of when the current tennis courts will be removed. The first step for this project is siting the fitness court. Staff will prepare as much as they can over the winter. Eisenbise verified that there would not be a playground for a year. Hansen replied yes, approximately one year.

**Motion** by Eisenbise, second by Herzallah, to accept the final Sullivan Lake Park Concept Plan. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

**New Business**

None at this time.

**Reports**

**A. Recreation Director**

Windschitl reported the boys' basketball program for grades 2 through 6 are currently taking registrations and there will be a team in each grade level. They will begin practices in December or January. The next event for the public will be the Holiday City Tour on Tuesday, December 17 at 6pm inside Murzyn Hall. There will be treats, activities, and a puppet show while families wait for Santa to arrive from the holiday parade through the city. He invited the members to attend and to volunteer if they would like to help. Windschitl wished everyone a Happy Holidays and thanked them for their service on the Commission.

**B. Public Works Director**

Hansen brought the book, How to Turn a Place Around, that Councilmember Buesgens introduced to the group for any members that want to read it. He reported the Parks Department is working with a reduced staff currently. The Public Works Department is down four staff people in Engineering, Utilities, and Streets.

**C. Commission Members**

Eisenbise asked what the City of Columbia Heights does for the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train. Hansen replied there is a lot of city involvement leading up to the event. City staff conduct locates for fencing, work with the railroad, setup the area with street signs and barricades, and do traffic control during the event. Minneapolis sets up and does the coordinating of the event. The event is intended to raise money, food and awareness for people struggling with food insecurities.

Perez Umphress showed her updated version of the Columbia Heights Parks Passport to the group. There were many positive comments on the passport. They really liked the rating scale using playground slides. Staff will work with Perez Umphress to input the city logo and any other design guidelines.

**Motion** by Timm, second by Eisenbise, to adjourn the meeting. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Macko adjourned the meeting at 6:35 pm.  
Deanna Saefke, Recreation Secretary