

Executive Summary: Minerva Park Council Work Session

Date: May 17, 2026 **Time:** 8:10 AM

Type: Quarterly Council Work Session

In Attendance: Council Members Paessun, Koss, Grant, Camara, Pinter

Meeting Purpose

Council convened for its quarterly strategic work session to:

- Revisit and prioritize strategic planning goals
- Review progress on previously identified initiatives
- Discuss infrastructure, governance, communication, and operational planning
- Establish updated action items and implementation priorities
- Improve institutional continuity and operational structure for future administrations

A major theme throughout the meeting was the need to formalize systems, document institutional knowledge, and improve long-term operational sustainability.

Key Strategic Themes

1. Shift Toward Long-Term Operational Planning

Council emphasized the importance of:

- Thinking beyond immediate operational issues
- Planning for future leadership transitions
- Preserving institutional knowledge
- Creating documented systems and repeatable processes

Several members expressed concern that too much knowledge currently exists informally within individual staff members and administrators rather than within structured systems.

Major Concerns Identified

- Risk of institutional knowledge loss if key staff retire or leave
- Lack of centralized documentation
- Need for searchable and organized records
- Need for repeatable workflows and calendars

Proposed Solutions

- Expanded use of OneNote and digital organization systems
 - Creation of operational timelines and calendars
 - Formalized documentation standards
 - Regular administrative check-ins and reporting structures
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Strategic Planning Review

Council reviewed previously adopted strategic priorities and reorganized several items into updated timelines.

Immediate Priorities (0–2 Years)

Infrastructure Funding and Major Projects

Continue Pursuing External Funding

Council reaffirmed that grant applications and external funding efforts remain an ongoing priority for:

- Bridges
- Infrastructure repairs
- Lake-related improvements
- Culvert and stormwater systems

Four-Bay / Culvert Project

Discussion focused heavily on the four-bay and culvert system tied to:

- Kilbourne Run
- Lake water quality
- Stormwater management
- Future dredging efforts

Council discussed prioritizing use of the Joyce Beatty grant funds for:

- Culvert replacement
- Stormwater infrastructure
- Erosion mitigation
- Related lake improvement work

There was broad agreement that these systems must be addressed simultaneously to avoid repeated road closures and duplicated construction costs.

MS4 Stormwater Compliance

A significant portion of the meeting centered on:

- EPA stormwater requirements
- MS4 compliance obligations
- Administrative burden of environmental reporting

Key Observations

- Even small municipalities maintain dedicated personnel for MS4 compliance
- Current requirements are extensive and ongoing
- Compliance requires structured documentation and maintenance planning

Council Conclusions

- MS4 should become an immediate operational priority
- Maintenance plans must be formalized
- Incremental environmental improvements are preferable to inaction

- Long-term lake sustainability depends on continuous maintenance rather than waiting for full dredging funding
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Lake Maintenance and Environmental Management

Council discussed:

- Toxic sediment (“muck”) accumulation
- Dredging costs
- Tree-related pollution
- Erosion mitigation
- Long-term sustainability planning

Tree Management Discussion

Council revisited previously completed tree surveys and discussed:

- Dead and invasive tree removal
- Environmental mitigation needs
- Community concerns regarding tree cutting

Consensus emerged around reframing future work as:

“Lake maintenance” rather than “tree removal.”

Action Items Identified

- Review existing tree survey
 - Determine required next steps
 - Develop communication strategy for residents
 - Explain environmental rationale behind maintenance activities
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Medium-Term Priorities (2–5 Years)

Governance Reform and Charter Review

Council moved governance-related reforms into medium-term planning, including:

- Charter review
- Clarification of MPCA relationships
- Administrative structure improvements

Discussion acknowledged:

- Future leadership transitions
 - Need for stronger formal processes
 - Importance of institutional continuity
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Employee Management and Organizational Structure

A major operational discussion focused on:

- Job descriptions
- Performance management

- Staff structure
- Department communication

Key Issues Raised

- Existing job descriptions remain incomplete or inconsistent
- Several staff positions encompass multiple responsibilities
- No standardized evaluation structure exists

Proposed Improvements

- Updated and completed job descriptions
- Regular one-on-one meetings between mayor and department heads
- Structured performance conversations
- Better documentation of responsibilities
- Formal communication templates

Council repeatedly emphasized:

The need to move from informal processes to formalized operational systems.

Performance Reviews and Employee Evaluations

Council discussed balancing:

- Merit-based evaluations
- Performance expectations
- Department-specific considerations

Special discussion focused on:

- Police department evaluation limitations
- Avoiding quota-based metrics
- Alternative measures of community service and performance

Suggested evaluation concepts included:

- Community engagement
 - Initiative and responsiveness
 - Operational contribution
 - Public safety outcomes
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Communication Improvements

Council identified communication as a major operational weakness.

Current Challenges

- Poor audio quality during meetings
- Inconsistent resident communications
- Reliance on Facebook for project updates

- Lack of centralized reporting systems

Proposed Improvements

- Enhanced meeting audio/video setup
- Use of soundboard integration
- QR-code based project communication
- Web forms for project questions and maintenance requests
- Centralized communication portals
- Potential AI-powered communication tools through CivicPlus

Council expressed strong interest in:

- More proactive resident communication
 - Easier reporting mechanisms
 - Better project transparency
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Long-Term Priorities (5–20 Years)

Lake Dredging and Sustainability

Long-term planning continues to include:

- Comprehensive lake dredging
- Long-term environmental sustainability
- Ongoing maintenance programs

Council acknowledged:

- Costs remain extremely high
 - Work will likely need to occur incrementally
 - Future infrastructure coordination is essential
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Bridge Replacement Program

Council reviewed long-term bridge replacement concepts, including:

- ADA accessibility
- Alternative materials
- Pathway funding integration
- Structural erosion mitigation

Discussion noted:

- Most project costs relate to engineering and erosion control rather than bridge structures themselves
 - Full replacement projects would likely require lengthy road closures and significant funding
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Development and Zoning Discussion

A substantial portion of the meeting focused on:

- Future redevelopment possibilities
- Density concerns

- Apartment development
- Commercial zoning

Key Areas Discussed

- Cleveland Avenue commercial area
- Potential mixed-use redevelopment
- Apartment concerns
- Parking and density impacts

Major Themes

Council expressed divided views regarding:

- Growth versus preservation
- Revenue generation versus village character
- Density impacts on infrastructure and property values

Several members favored:

- Preserving Minerva Park's lower-density character
- Delaying major redevelopment decisions
- Observing outcomes in neighboring communities before pursuing aggressive redevelopment

The redevelopment issue was ultimately moved into a longer-term planning horizon.

Public Safety and Basketball Court Concerns

Council discussed recurring complaints involving:

- Basketball court noise
- Loud music
- Profanity
- Large gatherings
- Nonresident use

Key Discussion Points

- Safety concerns have reportedly improved
- Nuisance concerns remain
- Complaints may be underreported
- Existing enforcement mechanisms are unclear

Potential Solutions Discussed

- Temporary hoop removal ("surprise maintenance")
- Noise ordinance review
- Parking restrictions
- Enhanced communication and reporting systems

No final action was taken, but council acknowledged the issue remains unresolved.

Major Operational Action Items Identified

Administrative & Organizational

- Finalize and update all job descriptions
- Create more formal administrative structures
- Establish regular staff one-on-one meetings
- Improve institutional documentation

Infrastructure & Environment

- Advance culvert and stormwater projects
- Continue MS4 compliance planning
- Review tree survey and maintenance plans
- Coordinate infrastructure projects strategically

Communication

- Improve meeting audio/video quality
- Create resident communication systems
- Develop project-specific communication portals
- Explore AI-enhanced communication tools

Governance

- Continue charter review preparation
 - Formalize operational procedures
 - Improve long-term continuity planning
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Overall Meeting Tone and Direction

The work session reflected a council increasingly focused on:

- Long-term sustainability
- Operational formalization
- Infrastructure planning
- Environmental maintenance
- Better communication
- Institutional continuity

Rather than launching major new initiatives, the meeting largely focused on:

- Refining systems already underway
- Organizing existing priorities
- Improving governance structure

- Creating more sustainable operational practices

A recurring consensus emerged around:

“Doing fewer things better, more formally, and more sustainably.”

Jeffrey Wilcheck, Fiscal Officer

Tiffany Southard, Mayor