

**Meeting Minutes  
New Prague Park Board  
Tuesday, February 11, 2025  
6:00 PM**

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

The regular meeting was called to order at City Hall at 6:00 PM by Chair Joe Barten. Members present were Joe Barten, Matt Becka, Jessica Dohm, Debra Tharaldson, and Youth Representative Jacob Bisek. Absent was Christine Wolf, Maggie Bass, and Shannon Sticha. Staff present were Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director, and Kyra Chapman – Planner.

**2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes  
January 14, 2025 Regular Meeting**

A motion was made by Becka, seconded by Barten, to approve the January 14th, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Motion carried (4-0).

**3. Review Financial Reports**

The financial report was reviewed as information only.

A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Becka, to approve the financial reports. Motion carried (4-0).

**4. Dug Outs at Memorial Park Fields**

Public Works Director Rynda introduced the Memorial Park dug out proposal. The New Prague Baseball Booster Club reached out to the City in summer 2024. The New Prague Baseball Booster Club is proposing to add dug outs to the two baseball/softball fields at Memorial Park. The reason they selected the Park is that it's New Prague's main park that gets used the most and the only fields in town that have lights besides the Memorial Park Baseball Stadium. Currently, the fields are 280' wide but the addition of the dug outs would require the field to shorten by 10' to 270'. The existing dug outs are 6' x 20' whereas the new ones would be 10' x 24'. The reason for the larger dug out is to maintain safety and ADA compliance. The City thinks it would be a great addition, especially when there is no shade on the field. The City would provide grading, manual labor, moving fence posts, and removing grass whereas the New Prague Baseball Booster Club would do the building and fence work. It would be a \$70,000 project. For comparison purposes of other fields, Lonsdale has 260'-275' fields, Belle Plaine is 270', Montgomery is 230'-270', and Lakeville is 300'.

Dohm asked if it would be volunteer labor or contracted work.

Public Works Director Rynda replied that the New Prague Baseball Booster Club has their own licensed contractor. It would be similar to what they did in Foundry Hill Park.

Barten shared that he heard that leagues don't want to come to New Prague because the field is smaller. He was concerned that reducing the size of the field could be a barrier. He suggested that the dug out could shrink to 8' instead or expand the outfield line in the future. The outfield line could be expanded even further than it was before. He inquired if the City could designate Park Board funds for potential expansion of the field or replacement of new fencing in the future.

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich said that funding would not be available until 2026 since the budget for 2025 has already been solidified. The Park Equipment Fund cannot be utilized since that would be considered a rehab or maintenance project. Funds would have to come from the General Fund.

A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Dohm to approve the donation of the dugouts while also trying to minimize the loss of field area. Motion carried (4-0).

## **5. Park Plan Survey**

Planner Chapman explained that although the Comprehensive Plan was approved last year, the Park Plan will establish more specific goals regarding the City's parks and trails. Sometime this year, staff will create a Park Plan survey to collect the public's initial thoughts and suggestions. Recently, staff researched a few communities on what they've done in their surveys. Most communities provide virtual and paper copies of the survey. Most surveys include an interactive map or static map. The surveys commonly asked questions related to demographics, frequency of visiting parks, amenities in need of improvement, trail connectivity needs, etc. Staff recommend using Survey 123 through ArcGIS Online for more customization of questions and adding an interactive map.

Dohm recommended that instead of asking "would you like to see more natural features in parks", it could be rephrased as "what types of features would you like to see". This would provide a more open-ended response. It would be beneficial to have more questions regarding demographics, especially in regard to their age group.

Barten asked if there were a question on the number of people in a household, how would the City be able to differentiate the individuals. In other words, how would you be able to tell if it were a couple or parent and child.

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich stated that during the outdoor pool survey 10 years ago, there were survey questions asking the age groups of all the people in their household.

Barten suggested including direct questions in regard to whether the public would like a ninja course, pickleball court, splash pad, etc. There could be questions specific to certain age groups.

Dohm proposed that there should be open-ended responses otherwise the City would be omitting other ideas. There could be a question that asks something along the lines of “If you had a certain number of dollars, what improvements would you make to the parks system”. Perhaps there could be a follow up question on whether they’d be willing to pay more in taxes or privately fundraise the improvement.

Tharaldson liked the idea of mentioning what the Park Board can afford right now so that a project could be funded immediately instead of waiting for multiple years for a project to be funded.

## **6. Large Assembly Permit Requests in Memorial Park**

Planner Chapman explained that the Chamber of Commerce submitted three large assembly permits to utilize Memorial Park and road closures of portions of Main Street. The project included Czech Out New Prague, Dozinky Festival, and Holiday Parade. All the event details and conditions are the same as last year except the dates.

A motion was made by Dohm, seconded by Barten to recommend approval of the three large assembly permits to the city council. Motion carried (4-0).

## **7. Miscellaneous**

- a. Residential Development Park Dedication Reviews – Planning / Community**  
Development Director Ondich mentioned that staff received a concept drawing for a 60-acre single family home development. The Park Board’s review will gather initial thoughts on possible park and trail dedication. According to Chapter 66 of the Subdivision Ordinance, this specific development would require 7.77 acres of land dedication. The City may choose to have park land dedicated through land dedication and improvements or take cash in lieu of. Wetlands and stormwater ponds cannot count towards park land dedication. The submitted concept plan only shows park dedication of a greenway trail on the east side of the development. The park plan envisions Heritage Park to be expanded up to 10 acres in size from it’s current 1.2 acre size. Based on the Comprehensive Plan, it’s anticipated that the existing greenway trail near 7<sup>th</sup> St NE would continue to Heritage Park. In the Comprehensive Plan, several members wanted to see more trails in serene or natural areas as opposed to along streets.

The Park Board recommended having the greenway continue northward rather than immediately connecting to Heritage Park. The greenway trail corridor could be along the north edge of the 60-acre development area and connect with Heritage Park and the Greenway Trail located near there. Additionally, heritage Park could be expanded east within the 60-acre development area to have a portion of the park dedication be as park area expansion and the other portion to be greenway expansion to meet the full park dedication requirement. This would

have the least amount of impact on the proposed development while also maximizing the size of Heritage Park and creating a longer trail.

- b. POPS Update: Final Grading / Building Construction Plan and Booking/Utilization Research** – Planning / Community Development Director Ondich explained that the draft grading plan and draft building plans for the POPS facility are being reviewed by City staff and POPS before it is put out to bid.

Public Works Director Rynda stated that grading is anticipated to occur sometime in May during the same time as the street reconstruction project. It's intended that the contractor for the street reconstruction project may also want to do the grading for POPS, which would save costs.

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich said that engineering estimates it will cost about \$124,000 for external grading and seeding. The council does not have dedicated money for grading. Actual tree plantings would not be included in that cost. POPS will be at a lower grade and there will be a catch basin behind the facility. It is a higher grade near the southeastern corner of the property.

Planner Chapman said that the City reached out to three different communities (Buffalo, New Ulm, Belle Plaine) on how other cities program their events. Each community does their own programming differently. Some communities pay for acts through grant funds, annual budget, or donations. One city pays by collecting local donations. Based on the amount donated, there are different tiers from Bronze to Platinum with additional perks for each level. Some cities reach out to bands whereas bands may reach out to the city. Most cities found that if there are local bands, they tend to ask for less money whereas bands from out of town ask for more.

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich noted that the New Prague's draft agreement states that POPS will do programming on certain Thursday nights for 10 years from June to August. After 10 years, the City will take over programming. POPS did not show interest in programming other events.

- c. Creek Clean Up Event** – Planner Chapman explained that the Creek Clean Up flyers will be posted on the City website and social media page. The flyers mention that if the weather is poor on April 26<sup>th</sup>, the alternative date will be May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9:00am-11:00am.
- d. Unified Development Code / Park Plan Update** – Planning / Community Development Director Ondich explained that Bolton & Menk spoke with the Planning Commission to start initial discussions on the Unified Development Code. The Park Board will be asked to review the park dedication language during the UDC update process.

## **9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM by order of Chair Barten.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyra J. Chapman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kyra J. Chapman  
Planner