PARK BOARD MINUTES

City of New Prague

Tuesday, July 14th, 2026

City Hall Council Chambers - 118 Central Ave N

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1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**
   The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Joe Barten.
   Members present: Maggie Bass, Robert Yost, Brian Paulson, Joe Barten, Billy Walsh, Shannon Sticha, and Youth Representative Alaina Bishop.
   Members absent: Matt Becka
   Staff present: Community Development Director Ken Ondich, Public Works Director Matt Rynda, and Planner Evan Gariepy

2. **ELECT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2026/2027**
   Barten explained the process for electing the chair and vice chair.

   A motion was made by Paulson, seconded by Walsh, to elect Barten as the chair for 2026 and 2027.
   Motion carried (6-0)

   A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Sticha, to elect Paulson as the vice chair for 2026 and 2027.
   Motion carried (6-0)

3. **PUBLIC FORUM**
   No comments were given.

4. **APPROVAL OF REGULAR AGENDA**
   a. July 14th, 2026 Regular Meeting
   A motion was made by Paulson, seconded by Barten, to approve the July 14th, 2026 regular meeting agenda.
   Motion carried (6-0)

5. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**
   a. June 9th, 2026 Regular Meeting
   A motion was made by Paulson, seconded by Barten, to approve the June 9th, 2026 regular meeting minutes.
   Motion carried (5-0-1), Bass abstained

6. **REVIEW FINANCIAL REPORTS**
   Ondich presented the monthly financial reports as information.

   Paulson stated that he had spoken with someone that is very involved with softball did not know about the Complex Funds Designated that are allocated for softball. Ondich explained that donations had not been received for a few years which was due to The Rick Tietz Alumni Softball Tournament not having income from alcohol sales. Paulson asked if these funds could be utilized for the sprinklers at Memorial Park, and

Ondich stated it would be up to the donors as it was originally intended when donated to the City for a concessions stand at an athletic complex. Ondich stated he will gather up information regarding that dedicated account and contact the donors from the Rick Tietz Alumni Classic Softball Tournament.

A motion was made by Sticha, seconded by Paulson, to approve the financial reports.
Motion carried (6-0)

7. MEMORIAL PARK ENTRANCE SIGN QUOTE

Gariepy presented the final proposed design for the Memorial Park entrance sign replacement.

Yost inquired about changing out what facilities are labelled on the sign in case they change in the future, Ondich and Walsh stated it wouldn't be the easiest. Yost proposed adding lighting to the Memorial Park entrance sign, Rynda stated it is currently lit up just by street lights.

A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Yost, to recommend to City Council the purchase of the new Memorial Park Entrance Sign that was quoted from Dahlen Signs for $9,100 including installation.
Motion carried (6-0)

8. MEMORIAL PARK BENCH AT CENTRAL PLAZA FOR JULIE BISEK

Ondich presented the proposed bench at Central Plaza in memoriam of Julie Bisek, as proposed by her friends and family. He stated the bench that was being replaced would be moved and kept within the Central Plaza.

Barten asked if the text on the back of the bench would be visible or if a different location may be better for visibility, and Rynda stated that her friends and family asked that the bench be placed in that specific location so that it is closest to Main Street and facing the Chamber building. Barten asked about if the relocated bench would be better put in storage so there is music space on the north side of Central Plaza, and Ondich stated that there has not been any interest in Central Plaza for music.

A motion was made by Sticha, seconded by Barten, to accept the donation of the memorial bench for Julie Bisek to be placed at Central Plaza.
Motion carried (6-0)

9. 2027 BUDGET PROCESS

Ondich presented agenda item 9 after item 10. Ondich stated that Administration and Finance is suggesting to keep the Park Board Annual Budget the same as 2026 rather than increasing. He noted that the Annual Budget is what effects resident's taxes.

Barten noted that the Board has discussed pushing items back further to save money for larger projects. He noted he isn't sure about current interest for bocce ball and cornhole, and that that money may be better saved for larger projects such as the ninja warrior course.

Barten asked about other options with prairie restoration with RES. Ondich stated that the proposed $13,000 was the quote for 2027 and 2028 from Matt Lasch for RES. He stated that, through discussions with Rynda, that Staff may be able to handle it but that but that Staff is suggesting it is contracted out as the prairie is still young and establishing itself. Barten suggested budgeting $5,000, annually, for three years of maintenance, rather than $13,000 budgeted for two years.

Barten also stated he supports the lights for the Foundry Hill Park baseball fields, especially as it acknowledges the work and money that the baseball group has added. Sticha agreed, and noted also being uncertain about the interest in bocce ball and cornhole. Sticha and Ondich stated that pickleball has overtaken bocce ball in popularity.

Barten inquired if there is funding for pickleball nets at Sliding Hill Skate Park after it is concreted. Rynda stated that striping is already covered, and existing nets will be used rather than new equipment required. Paulson noted that the existing pickleball courts being shared with basketball courts means that they cannot always be utilized.

Paulson stated that $14,000 has been added to the Park Equipment Fund 230 this year, and that the current proposal for 2027 shows $240,000 being spent. He stated he supports cutting every project except for Settlers Park prairie restoration and the first half of the sprinkler system for Memorial Park, especially to save money for the unnamed city center park site. Paulson noted that the Rick Tietz Alumni Classic Softball group could be contacted regarding the funds they have donated. Barten stated he does agree with the ninja warrior course being cut.

Barten asked if the sprinkler system at Memorial Park would be constructed over two years, and Rynda stated it would be hired out in 2028.

Barten asked if the City Council would know that the Park Board is specifically requesting less to potentially bank it for the future. Barten also asked if the Foundry Hill Park lights could be split over two years, and Rynda stated they could be.

Walsh stated that he supports cutting cornhole, bocce ball, and the ninja warrior course, but is unsure about completely cutting the Foundry Hill Park baseball field lights. Bass noted that it would show support for the baseball association, and Walsh stated he supports keeping it on the budget even if it is split up.

A motion was made by Paulson, seconded by Walsh, to adjust the 2026 budget to allocate $20,000 for Foundry Hill Park baseball lights, $25,000 for the first half of the sprinkler system for Memorial Park, and $5,000 for Settlers Park prairie restoration with an additional $5,000 in 2027 and 2028, and for Staff to reach out to the Rick Tietz Alumni Classic Softball group regarding potentially using their donated funds for a portion of the Memorial Park sprinkler system.
Motion carried (6-0)

10. HARVEST FIELDS DEVELOPMENT – CONCEPT PARK DEDICATION

Ondich presented agenda item 10 prior to item 9. He stated that the City received a concept review application, and presented the overview of the proposed development.

Lucinda Spanier, representing JPB Land, LLC, was present. She noted that the applicant is having internal discussions regarding having the sidewalk along Bohemia St. NE being made of concrete rather than bituminous so that it is easier to maintain with crossing driveways, even though it would be a temporary extension of the Greenway Trail.

Paulson asked if the costs of the construction of Bohemia St. NE's sidewalk would count towards park dedication, and Ondich stated it would not as a sidewalk would be constructed there either way. Walsh stated that using concrete instead of bituminous along Bohemia St. NE makes sense, especially as it is only a temporary greenway connection.

Barten stated that, due to the uncertainty regarding the north parcel of land developing, the proposed temporary sidewalk connection for the Greenway Trail may become a long-term solution if the property doesn't develop for decades. Spanier stated that they explored options for putting the Greenway Trail along the northernmost part of the proposed development, but it didn't appear to meet the goals of the City nor the development, so no alternative concepts showing it were created.

Barten stated that he doesn't like the connection of the Greenway Trail directly through the parcels and road on the southwestern side of the development. He proposed the cul-de-sac on the southwestern corner connecting directly to 7th St NE rather than through the unnamed street, so that the trail connection does not cross the street and instead goes through back yards, and Spanier stated that would eliminate many desirable lots. Barten stated he would rather see the trail go along 7th St NE until the edge of the proposed development, then go north along the eastern boundary.

Walsh noted that the trail along the north border of the development would cut almost 20 feet off of the parcels there. Barten stated that putting it there could have a reduced right of way, with the intention of expanding it when the land north of the property is developed. Spanier stated that the property owner is not interested in encumbering the land north of the site at this time.

Sticha inquired if the City can require a future developer of the northern portion of the land to extend the Greenway Trail. Ondich stated that it is in the Comprehensive Plan, and due to the Greenway Trail not currently having a completed connection through this area, any proposed development could be deemed premature without the trail connection.

Barten asked if the Greenway Trail could go along the northern edge of this property entirely on this development rather than encumbering the next, and Ondich stated that it could be installed there but it may be prohibited by economic and desirability factors.

Yost stated he supports that the sidewalk along Bohemia St. NE being a normal width rather than a wider trail. Spanier asked if the sidewalk along Bohemia St. NE would eventually connect with Alton Ave. NE, and Ondich stated it would.

Barten stated that he believes the proposed 1.4 acres for expanding Heritage Park seems appropriate.

Youth Representative Bishop inquired if the expanded Heritage Park could be a potential site for a splashpad.

11. MISCELLANEOUS

a. POPS Programming RFP Update

Ondich provided the POPS Programming RFP Update. He stated that the POPS Foundation set a grand opening date for June 2027.

b. Vandalism at City Parks

Ondich presented the vandalism report.

Bass inquired if there has been any progress on vandals being identified and caught through the cameras. Rynda stated that more vandals have been caught then before, though there is still an issue with vandalism occurring within the bathrooms.

Barten asked what other best practices may exist to prevent vandalism. Walsh clarified what time vandalism occurs, and Rynda stated it is generally in the evenings, and that the bathrooms get locked at night. Rynda noted that newer parks have satellite restrooms which have less issues with vandalism.

Bass asked if the restroom fixtures are porcelain, and Rynda stated that the Memorial Park bathrooms are. Bass asked if a different material, such as stainless steel, would reduce vandalism, and Rynda stated it may. Walsh noted that it may be less appealing, even if better in regards to vandalism, and Rynda noted it would cost more upfront.

Barten asked if the cost of hiring someone to monitor and clean the facilities every few hours during the summer would cost less then replacing facilities due to vandalism, as well as narrowing down the timing when vandalism occurs within buildings.

c. 2026 Budget Projects

Ondich presented the 2026 Budget Project updates. He stated that the City is still working with DEED for City Center funding, as DEED is stating their grant funds will only cover the pond, as the sidewalk would benefit more people than those who live directly adjacent to the site.

d. Park Plan Update

Ondich stated that Staff is continuing to work on background information for the Park Plan.

d. Miscellaneous Items Not on the Agenda

Rynda stated that the batting cages that were donated for Memorial Park are in the process of being put up. He also stated that there is maintenance occurring at the Memorial Park Ball Fields, all paid for by the State Baseball Tournament Committee. Gariepy noted that the Settler's Park Prairie Restoration grant was submitted to the MnDNR.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39pm by order of Chair Barten.

Respectfully submitted,

Evan C. Gariepy
Planner