

**Meeting Minutes
New Prague Park Board
Tuesday, October 14th, 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: Christine Wolf, Brian Paulson, Joe Barten, Matt Becka, Shannon Sticha, Jessica Dohm.

Members absent: Maggie Bass.

Staff present: Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director, Evan Gariepy – Planner, Matt Rynda – Director of Public Works. Chris Knutson – City Engineer (SEH) joined virtually from the beginning of the meeting until 6:45pm.

2. Public Invited to Be Heard on Matters Not on the Agenda

No comments were given.

3. Approval of Regular Agenda

A motion was made by Becka, seconded by Wolf, to approve the regular agenda. Motion carried (6-0).

4. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes
a. September 9th, 2025 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Barten, seconded by Dohm, to approve the September 9th, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Sticha and Becka abstained. Motion carried (4-0-2).

5. Review Financial Reports

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich presented the financial reports as information.

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

6. POPS / City Center Site Update

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich introduced City Engineer Chris Knutson with SEH to discuss the City Center Site pond design. Knutson gave background information for the current pond information. He stated that the original larger pond

design that was never completed was to reduce run-off and pollutants into Philipp's Creek, but the City did not secure funding for the final design until recently. Knutson stated that the City has a grant for \$43,000 from Scott County Watershed for designing a storm water pond for the site, due to Sand Creek having an impaired water status. The pond will minimize run-off and pollutants into Sand Creek.

Knutson stated how the area was originally intended just for a pond, and the Small Area Site Plan was amended afterwards to include POPS. Knutson presented the newest pond concept sketch following the prior Park Board meeting requesting it to be shrunk. Knutson emphasized that the original purpose of this site was storm water retention and filtration, and that the pond should not be unprioritized. He stated that the new concept sketch is the smallest the pond could be, and that the design needs to maximize the water storage and filtration.

Dohm asked if the site can focus more on the park aspect rather than maximizing the storm water pond aspect, stating that the pond still takes up a large area of it. Knutson stated that this would have to be brought to Scott County Watershed Management Organization, the source of the grant, and that they may not be eligible for the design grant if it is minimized.

Ondich stated that the City is trying to discuss using Small City Redevelopment funds from DEED for the construction of the pond, and that decreasing the pond size will likely reduce the chances of getting the funding. He also stated that the site was originally intended for the pond, and that POPS and the park are a later addition.

Barten asked when the land was acquired, and Ondich stated it was over ten years ago. Barten stated that he feels like using the site for a pond was a passive project rather than pushed for, and he feels like the pond may overshadow the well-backed and supported POPS facility. He thinks that the pond is secondary, and that changing the pond from the original concept to the newest concept is negligible for the water filtration but beneficial for the park. Barten also does not believe that the grant money would be pulled for shrinking the pond. Knutson stated that shrinking the pond would have a non-negligible impact on water filtration.

Barten asked if any other alternative filtration methods for Sand Creek have been considered. Knutson stated that there are other possibilities, but that the pond has always been considered. Ondich stated that there is localized flooding in the area, which the pond would limit. Knutson stated that the portion of New Prague the City Center Site is in was constructed prior to stormwater treatment, and that this pond would be the only stormwater getting treated before going to Sand Creek.

Paulson asked if there are other possible sites for the stormwater pond. Knutson stated that there is not due to the watershed. He said there are underground stormwater filtration methods, but it is very costly and the site is poorly suited for it. Paulson asked about directly north of the site, which Knutson stated is marked for development. Ondich

confirmed that this northern area has better soils and higher elevation, so it is better suited for developing rather than putting the pond there.

Barten stated he likes the revised storm pond design better than the previous design. Ondich stated that the largest change from the Small Area Site Plan is the size increase of POPS. Becka asked if the perimeter of the pond could be used for anything, and Barten and Knutson confirmed it will be a very steep slope and thus unusable. Becka asked if the pond can support fish or any recreational opportunities. Knutson stated it would be too shallow for fish to survive in the summer heat.

Paulson stated that the stormwater pond in Southside Park is full of litter and smells poorly, and does not like this proposed pond being directly next to POPS. Ondich stated that this was discussed in depth when designing the plan, and that making it a larger pond helps mitigate this. Knutson stated that aeration may be utilized in the long term to reduce any odors. There was general discussion of the safety bench around the pond, and how it will increase safety.

Dohm stated that she thinks that there should be an increased focus on the site at large during the finalized execution of the pond plan. She thinks that the aesthetics and park usability should be considered and prioritized, and believes there was a miscommunication in the creation of the proposed plans thus far. Dohm also confirmed with Ondich and Rynda that the pond would be treated for mosquitoes. Barten agreed with Dohm, and asked if more of the pond could be trimmed off the NE corner and brought to the SW. He also stated he wants them to look into further shrinking the pond and utilizing other stormwater filtration methods.

Ondich stated that a finalized concept plan will be ready within a few weeks. Staff will meet with DEED in a few weeks, and will discuss funding possibilities with a smaller pond. Dohm asked if there could be a small dock or platform constructed on the pond, and Ondich stated it may be possible for the future. Knutson then left the virtual meeting.

Ondich stated that POPS has still not begun construction, and that they need to make changes to the grading plans. Planner Garipey stated that the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's grant for audio and visual equipment was not awarded to POPS.

7. Large Assembly Permit: New Prague Arts Foundation – Summer Concert Series

Ondich stated that the application is similar to that of the previous years.

A motion was made by Sticha, seconded by Dohm, to recommend approval to City Council of the large assembly permit for New Prague Arts Foundation's Summer Concert Series. Motion carried (6-0).

8. POPS Programming Discussion

Ondich stated that Den Gardner, the head of the POPS Foundation, is pushing for the City to manage and budget for scheduling for POPS once it is constructed. Ondich stated that the City likely does not have staff to do the scheduling and outreach for POPS. He also stated that the City has not yet reached out to the School District Community Education department to see if they would be interested in scheduling.

Dohm asked if the site would be used for events that charge an admission fee. Ondich stated that some groups may want to do that, and any events that have alcohol will be required to put up temporary fencing and have gated entry. Ondich stated there could be varying rates to rent POPS for open-to-the-public events versus events that charge for entry. Dohm stated that POPS could be a revenue stream, but Ondich stated it is very unlikely to ever make a profit with all of the costs of upkeep and management. Wolf recommended reaching out to Shakopee to inquire about how they manage events.

Sticha stated that reaching out for POPS scheduling should be done by staff at least initially. She also asked if the New Prague Arts Foundation was asked if they would schedule for POPS, and Ondich stated it could be looked into but they may ask for financial compensation to schedule. Dohm recommended reaching out to businesses for scheduling, and stated that the Chamber of Commerce may be interested. Barten stated that the primary options for scheduling seem to be the City, the School District, or a paid contractor. He proposed putting out a request for proposal for scheduling events throughout the summer. Paulson stated he is against a contractor for using it. Ondich stated that staff will continue researching, and that he will reach out to the Arts Foundation and the Chamber of Commerce.

9. Tree City USA and Arbor Day Celebration

Garipey stated that the City has celebrated Arbor Day in the past for Tree City USA status by doing tree giveaways and listed other methods of potentially celebrating Arbor Day. Paulson stated that he likes doing a tree giveaway again, and suggested getting elderberry or more ‘typical’ shade trees rather than hazel nut trees, which were not well received last year. Paulson stated that Scott County offers trees for a low price and suggested offering the tree giveaway to non-residents as well. Ondich stated that it can only be offered to City residents.

Dohm proposed doing a kids coloring contest through the Elementary Schools, and to do a contest and the ‘winner’ gets displayed on the City website. Wolf stated she saw a town do that, and the winners then brought the drawings before City Council. Barton also proposed offering free trees to the school and supports the idea of a tree giveaway. Offering more typical shade trees (oak, maple, hackberry) was supported over smaller or shrub trees. Barton asked if there could be direct mailing to target residents for the tree giveaway. Staff will put together multiple ideas and return them to Park Board for further consideration.

10. Miscellaneous

- a. **Memorial Park Improvements – “German Deck” and Dug Outs** – Ondich stated that construction on the German Deck is almost complete. He stated that the dug outs at the softball and baseball fields are also almost complete, which Rynda confirmed.
- b. **2026 Budget and 2026-2030 Project Plan** – Ondich stated he brought the updated Budget and Project Plan to City Council, and there are no updates to provide. There will be another City Council budget meeting before the next Park Board meeting, at which point there may be further updates.
- c. **Dog Licenses Update** – Ondich stated that the City’s online permitting system has not provided a quote for offering dog licenses yet. Ondich stated that the Police Department does utilize the dog licenses, and that it’s extremely useful for verifying rabies vaccinations on dogs that are involved in an incident.
- d. **Park Plan Update** – Ondich stated that Staff has been working on updating the park plan.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm by order of Chair Barten.

Respectfully Submitted,



Evan Gariepy
Planner