

**Meeting Minutes
New Prague Park Board
Tuesday, July 8th, 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 Christine Wolf, Matt Becka, Jessica Dohm, Shannon Sticha, and Brian Paulson. Absent was Maggie Bass. Staff present was Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director and Evan Gariepy – Planner.

**2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes
June 10th, 2025 Regular Meeting**

A motion was made by Dohm, seconded by Barten, to approve the June 10th, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Becka abstained. Motion carried (5-0-1).

3. Elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2025/2026

Motion by Dohm, seconded by Sticha, to re-elect Barten as chair and Becka as vice chair for 2025/2026. Motion carried (6-0).

4. Review Financial Reports

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich reported that there is no financial report to be reviewed as of now due to staff transitions. He stated that a complete report will be available for the August meeting. No action was taken.

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

Resident Maggie D'Silva spoke with regards to mowing the dog park. She stated that she is glad that it was mowed, and she has reached out to the City regarding it in the past. D'Silva stated that she also had support on social media, and that people were angry and frustrated that it wasn't being mowed and did not visit due to this. She also stated that ticks and the inability to pick up dog waste were issues due to the tall grass. D'Silva questioned whether the park would continue to be mowed, and stated she hopes it will be mowed weekly.

Myles Pavcek, a resident and employee of the City's Parks Department, spoke in agreement that the dog park should be mowed as it was last year. He stated that he was the employee who mowed the dog park last year but then was told to stop. He added that it would only take a couple of hours a week to mow.

6. 2026 Budget and 2026-2030 Project Plan

Planning / Community Development Director Ondich stated that there is no quote from Aim Electronics yet regarding the High School's electronic display. Dependent on the cost, fundraising through other organizations may be discussed in the future. Paulson suggested a more natural sign with less lit-up parts may fit the area best.

The City Engineer is currently working on a plan for a pond at the City Center site and advised that the budget will not all be used towards a proposed 2026 project to complete a master plan and near bid documents for amenities such as landscaping, trails and plazas.. The Park Board expressed concerns with the interests between the engineer versus landscape designers, and that it may need to be addressed by both. Access to Main Street and 2nd Ave was also discussed as a priority. Ondich will discuss this further with the City Engineer for a budget estimate.

Ondich stated that there were no discussions with City Council for a change in the 2025 Park budget, which is currently approximately \$78,000.

The Park Board discussed park projects being pushed up to 2026, specifically the splash pad feasibility study. This was estimated at \$20,000, with the location of the former outdoor pool being highlighted as a potential site. Ondich stated that other sites should also be considered. The Park Board discussed the potential of public or private fundraising for the splash pad, but that there may be limitations due to the younger age demographic targeted. Ondich addressed the high community interest in the preliminary results of the park plan survey. Ondich and the Park Board discussed keeping the survey open for a longer period and advertising it again through the New Prague times for more public feedback. They also discussed reaching out to community members who expressed interest in championing for the splash pad.

Paulson stated that a more naturalistic splash pad that can be added onto over time, similar to Burnsville's, may be ideal.

Becka discussed the community benefits of having a splash pad, and that it may encourage younger families to continue to move to New Prague. He also stated that the younger age demographic may be a limiting factor for fundraising.

Barton discussed other potential financial routes, such as budgeting over time for a splash pad, rather than fundraising due to its uncertainty.

Sticha stated that the previous idea from Youth Representative Jacob Bisek to put lights at the tennis courts was not on the budget project list and should be added back on the list. The Park Board discussed pushing the skate park equipment addition to 2028, and replacing it in the 2027 budget with tennis court lighting. Ondich stated that the tennis courts are on school property, so it will have to be addressed with them but that he would add the anticipated costs back on the project list for 2027.

Paulson stated concerns for irrigating the softball fields at Memorial Park due to the cost and maintenance. Future costs of maintaining and using the sprinkler system may reduce

budget in other areas, such as for the splash pad. The Park Board discussed other irrigation ideas, such as smart sprinklers that do not run when it rains.

7. Miscellaneous

- a. Dog Park Mowing Complaints** –Planning / Community Development Director Ondich stated that there were community concerns regarding the dog park not being mowed. Due to budgeting and staffing issues, the dog park cannot currently be mowed weekly. He discussed this with the Public Works Director Matt Rynda and Parks Maintenance Supervisor Jim Calliguri, and stated that he will talk to them about attending the August meeting to discuss further. Mowing only portions of it, using a larger mower, and different potential mowing frequencies were all discussed by the Park Board. Ondich also stated that there is a known issue with standing water and mud, and that there are plans for an eastward swale to reduce this at some point in the future.

Wolf discussed adding amenities such as benches, but this would only be feasible if the park was mowed.

Dohm stated that there may be current safety issues at the dog park due to longer grass, as people may be unable to see their dogs. The Park Board also discussed concerns that the dog park may not be used by residents due to unhappiness over the grass length.

Becka inquired about whether the dog park has encouraged residents to purchase more dog licenses. Ondich stated that he will obtain information about issued dog licenses for the August meeting.

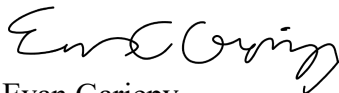
- b. POPS Update** – Planning / Community Development Director Ondich stated that POPS has selected Shimota Project Management as contractor. The building plans are currently being reviewed, with the goal still being for construction to begin in August 2025.
- c. Preview of Park Plan Survey Results** – Ondich stated that preliminary results showed very high interest in a public splash pad. Ondich and the Park Board discussed the Park Plan Survey remaining open longer than August 1st, and potentially being advertised further including at Czech Out New Prague. Ondich stated that he will keep the survey out longer. Having the Survey advertised in the New Prague Times again, specifically with a QR code, was also mentioned.
- d. Central Plaza Shade Umbrellas** - Dohm raised questions with umbrellas and table placement and stated that their current locations were not ideal and unappealing for the park. Ondich will provide feedback to the Public Works Director. Alternative heat management strategies were discussed, such as painting the benches white or additional tree cover.

- e. **Park Vandalism** - Becka suggested locking up parks at dark rather than 11pm due to vandalism, and the Park Board discussed concerns with the cameras and other park vandalism mitigation techniques. They discussed having additional signs put up announcing that the parks are recorded, specifically at the south entrance to Memorial Park.
- f. **Natural Park** - Paulson expressed interest in a more naturalistic and interactive park, alongside concerns with the broken zipline at Memorial Park. He stated that he wants a less traditional park for the new one, which Berka and Barten also agreed with. Finding a balance between the environment, practicality, and maintenance was discussed. Ondich affirmed that repairing Memorial Park's broken zipline is currently being prioritized and worked upon.
- g. **Agenda Organization** - The Park Board discussed rearranging the agenda for future meetings. This would be to better accommodate members of the public who come to speak on issues.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 PM by order of Chair Barten.

Respectfully Submitted,



Evan Gariepy
Planner