

**Meeting Minutes
New Prague Park Board
Tuesday, December 12, 2023
6:00 PM**

1. Call Meeting to Order

The regular meeting was called to order at City Hall at 6:03 PM by Chair Joe Barten. Members present were Joe Barten, Maggie Bass, Christine Wolf, Matt Becka, and Jessica Dohm. Absent was Al Hansen. Staff present were Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director, and Kyra Chapman – Planner.

**2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2023 Regular Meeting**

A motion was made by Dohm, seconded by Wolf, to approve the November 14, 2023, regular meeting minutes. Motion carried (5-0).

3. Review Financial Reports

Planning Director Ondich presented the November financial report. In November, an additional \$809.35 was added to the Park Equipment Fund from 11 new residential home permits. Through the plating of Pond Third Addition, \$6,513.48 will be added to the Park Equipment Fund. By the end of the year, staff expects that approximately \$8,000 will be added to the Park Equipment Fund for the plating of land that was annexed to the City for Brick's Boatwork's development earlier this year. So far, \$10,000 has been spent on the picnic tables and \$45,778.09 of the \$60,000 have been spent on the Northside Park Lighting and Court.

A motion was made by Becka, seconded by Bass to approve the financial reports. Motion carried (5-0).

4. Foundry Hill Baseball Field Dugout Bench Donations – New Prague Baseball Booster Club

Planning Director Ondich introduced the Foundry Hill baseball field dugout bench donations. The New Prague Booster Club would like to purchase one or two benches contingent on whether they would be able to get an engraved plaque on the back rest stating the bench was donated. The cost of a thermo-coated 15ft bench with shipping is about \$1,500 each. They would like to hear from the Park Board before purchasing the benches. Under the City's Public Park and Facility Naming Policy, there is a section regarding Plaques, Markers, Memorials that states "small plaques acknowledging a donation may be affixed to the donated item, proportionate to the physical size of the donated item or fiscal amount of the contribution". Staff do not have any issues with the dugout benches being donated with small plaques as long as all costs are paid for by the organization.

A motion was made by Barten seconded by Dohm, to accept the donation of two benches at the Foundry Hill Park baseball field dugouts with affixed plaque acknowledging the donation, contingent upon final review and approval of city staff. Motion carried (5-0).

5. Ball Team Fees Discussion

Planning Director Ondich presented the ball team fees discussion. Staff are in the process of setting up meetings with the Orioles, School District, Legion, and T & C to start discussions and determine appropriate user fees to off-set operation costs of the Memorial Park Baseball stadium. Staff will meet with Orioles on 12/13/2023 to begin discussions. Although the meeting has not happened yet, staff have had discussions on collecting a 10% fee from Orioles for the use of the concession stand to cover city expenses. In 2023, the City spent \$53,082.10 for 47 games (not including tournaments and practices). To break even, the City would need to charge \$1,129.41 per game. The City does not intend to break even, but would like to off-set the maintenance and operation expenses.

Dohm asked if some clubs have lost money if the city will reduce its operation or maintenance costs.

Planning Director Ondich replied that the City will continue to provide the same level of maintenance.

Barten inquired if the teams could maintain the fields to reduce the operation fees.

Planning Director Ondich stated that that has been something staff have discussed in the past. If each club maintained the field, staff believes there wouldn't be the same level of commitment it receives today.

Barten asked what will happen if the clubs don't share their finances with staff.

Becka suggested that during these fee negotiation meetings, the City should explain their costs and the work that needs to be done to maintain field. Perhaps the clubs may have some suggestions on how to cut costs.

6. Miscellaneous

- a. POPS Update** – Planning Director Ondich explained that on 11/20/2023, the City Council heard a presentation from POPS and Bolton & Menk regarding the POPS feasibility study. City staff explained that the Park Board recommended that City Council should consider the City Center/Central Park location as the recommended site but further study will be needed. The City has asked for proposals to complete a small area plan from MSA and SEH to investigate the space needed for the stormwater pond and what additional buildings could be added to the site. Internally staff have considered purchasing the property near the railroad.

Barten asked if the City had reached out to Bolton & Menk to do the study.

Planning Director Ondich stated the city did not and that Bolton & Menk wanted to dive deeper into the project rather than take a high-level approach.

- b. Disc Golf Course Update** – Planner Chapman stated that on 11/30/2023, staff internally discussed the disc golf project, specifically on the layout and signage of the course. A day before the meeting, a resident called, sharing concerns of baskets/tees #3, #4, and #6, which are located on the western side of the park, are often flooded during the spring and summer months. Flooding is caused by the adjacent floodplain, which makes part of the course mucky and unusable. At the meeting, staff considered rearranging the baskets to avoid the floodplain, incorporating the existing practice basket with the rest of the course, and considering locations for the two new baskets.

Becka explained that he liked the western section of the disc golf course and would be sad to see it go.

Barten stated that since the adjacent drainage ditch is owned by the County, it's the responsibility of Le Sueur County to clean it every few years. That could potentially prevent excessive flooding.

Planning Director Ondich explained that the County has been cleaning drainage ditches leading up to the park. The ditch cleaning of Southside Park drainage may happen soon.

Barten stated that the Park Board could consider some minimal additions or allocate funding to the disc golf course project.

Planning Director mentioned that a cash match of \$5,275 for the disc golf course project is shown on the financials.

Becka suggested moving the baskets away from the baseball field so the clubs can get better use of the area.

Planning Director Ondich explained that Southside Park's baseball field has had more usage since the installation of a raingarden to prevent flooding. The baseball clubs have still been hesitant to use the fields due to past concerns of flooding.

- c. Dog Park T-Mobile Grant Update** – Planner Chapman stated that staff met with the dog park group on 12/4/2023 to discuss the layout of the dog park and the first steps in applying for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant. The grant allows projects to request a maximum of \$50,000. The first phase of the project, which would include costs related to fencing, gravel parking lot, signage, trash/recycling cans, and bags dispenser would cost approximately \$33,000. We could ask for

amenities listed in the 2nd phase of the project to maximize our request. Of the amenities listed in the second phase of the project, the dog park group would like to prioritize water, lighting, and shelter.

Wolf added that the dog park group was comfortable having a 60' x 200' small dog area. The small dog area is much larger than you think. Bruce Meyer, one of the dog park group members, visited the area, and his dog had squeezed under the existing fence that was bent. Staff stated that they would block the gap in the fence.

- d. **2024 Budget Update** – Planning Director Ondich stated that the Park Board budget request for 2024 is still fully intact.
- e. **Comprehensive Plan Update** – Planning Director Ondich explained that at least 11 people came to the Comprehensive Plan Open House meeting on December 7th. Visitors provided feedback related to preserving the old downtown, providing diversified housing options (affordable housing), and creating a business flex category.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 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