

**Meeting Minutes
New Prague Park Board
Tuesday, November 18th, 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: Maggie Bass, Christine Wolf, Brian Paulson, Joe Barten, Shannon Sticha, & Jessica Dohm.

Members absent: Matt Becka

Staff present: Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director, Evan Gariepy – Planner, & Matt Rynda – Director of Public Works.

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 Barten, seconded by Dohm to approve the regular agenda. Motion carried (6-0).

4. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

a. October 14th, 2025 Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Dohm, seconded by Sticha, to approve the October 14th, 2025, regular meeting minutes. Bass abstained, Motion carried (5-0-1).

5. Review Financial Reports

Ondich presented the financial reports as information.

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

6. POPS / City Center Site Update

Ondich presented the updates regarding construction at POPS. He stated that the building inspection of the new helical piers was supposed to occur today (11/18/25) but may have been delayed by the weather. Payment to the Forward New Prague Foundation for POPS will only occur after documentation of work completed. The current opening date of POPS is expected to be roughly fall 2026. Ondich stated that the City is still waiting on

DEED to confirm if the Small City Redevelopment Fund money that the City has can be used on the construction of the stormwater pond and a sidewalk at the site.

7. POPS Programming Discussion

Gariepy stated that Staff met with representatives from both the Chamber of Commerce and the New Prague Arts Foundation (NPAF). Both had expressed interest in doing programming for POPS as a paid service.

It was noted that Brooke Sticha, Executive Director of the New Prague Chamber of Commerce, inquired if events at POPS would be free. Ondich stated that the Chamber may ticket for events. Ondich proposed the City could have varying fees for renting out POPS, such as free or no-cost for children's programming and a higher fee for bands.

Paulson stated that the NPAF and Chamber could work together to fund and schedule programming for POPS and that he would not want to see the City be involved in running it.

Barton supported doing an RFP for programming POPS, and supports the City having a clear role outlined in it - such as the City having control over community events such as the annual Parade of Lights, Dožínky Festival, etc., and maintaining supervision over the site. He also supports multiple organizations running POPS together.

8. Tree City USA and Arbor Day Celebration

Gariepy stated that he looked further into different potential Arbor Day celebration ideas, as advised by the Park Board.

Dohm supported hosting an essay and coloring contest and having City Council recognize the winners. This would get children involved in local government, and that they would like getting awards. Maggie supports having a word limit on essays, especially if they were to be read to the Council. Gariepy proposed having a tree poetry contest instead of essay.

Paulson stated that the tree giveaway in 2025 required online and in-person verification of addressing, and that it was a lot of work which may have discouraged residents from getting trees. Ondich stated that this could be changed to be made easier.

Barten supported allowing residents to get multiple trees out of a small variety, and prefers deciduous trees over conifers. He suggested getting 150-250 trees and offering some to the schools particularly if participating in the coloring or essay contests. Rynda confirmed that the fund for purchasing trees comes from the Parks Department budget.

Gariepy stated that he would reach out to the school districts to see if there is interest in a coloring and essay/poetry contest. He will also reach out to Scott SWCD to inquire about trees being offered in 2026.

9. Miscellaneous

- a. **2026 Budget and 2026-2030 Project Plan** – Ondich stated there were no updates to provide.
- b. **Park Plan Update** – Ondich stated there were no updates to provide.
- c. **Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve Information** – Ondich stated that Staff met with Scott County staff regarding the planning of Blakeley Bluffs Park Reserve. City Staff asked the County about the proposed trail from the City to Cedar Lake Farm Regional Park, and they still support the trail but do not have funding for it.
- d. **Settler’s Park Native Restoration Update** – Ondich stated that RES performed native seeding of wet prairie areas that were not done prior. He stated that Staff may be performing cattail removal, but that it will need to be discussed with RES first. Barten inquired if having Matt Lasch with RES walk City Staff, Park Board, and/or disgruntled residents through the park as it flowers next year would be beneficial, and Staff stated they will reach out to him. Barten inquired about putting oak trees in the park, which wouldn’t potentially occur for at least 3 years.
- e. **Other** – Barten inquired about if there are discussions of a trail going from the City to the City of Jordan. Ondich stated he would look into this.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 pm by order of Chair Barten.

Respectfully Submitted,



Evan Gariepy
Planner