

**Meeting Minutes
New Prague Park Board
Tuesday, October 11, 2022
6:00 PM**

1. Call Meeting to Order

The regular meeting was called to order at City Hall at 6:10 PM by Vice Chair Brian Molitor. Members present were Jessica Dohm, Matt Becka, and Maggie Bass. Absent were Al Hansen, Christine Wolf, and Joe Barten. Staff present was Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director, and Kyra Chapman – Planner.

**2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2022 Regular Meeting**

A motion was made by Dohm, seconded by Becka, to approve the September 13, 2022 regular meeting minutes. Bass abstained. Motion carried (3-0-1).

3. Review Financial Reports

Planning Director Ondich presented the financial reports to the Park Board.

A motion was made by Bass, seconded by Dohm to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion carried (4-0).

4. GameTime Playground Grant

Planner Chapman introduced new information on the GameTime Playground Grant. She mentioned that after further discussion with Minnesota Wisconsin Playground Representative, the playgrounds were discounted at varying rates depending on the Challenge Course. In the conversation, it was also discovered that the initial cost did not include installation, freight, sales tax, material surcharges, turf or timing systems. The estimated total project cost of the Challenge Course Pro 2000 with synthetic turf would be \$137,669.20 whereas it would be \$104,740.20 with woodchips. The Park Property Acquisition Fund and the Park Equipment Fund could be pooled together to pay for the ninja course if the Park Board wanted to pursue the grant.

Planner Chapman added that Greenfields Outdoor Fitness is also offering a \$40,000 grant for their ninja playground equipment. The playground equipment and transportation would cost \$116,003 after the discount. Features included in the playground are slanted jump boards, swinging rope, peg board, swings, rotating cone wheels, and Burmese floating bridge.

Dohm was concerned about moving quickly in making a decision on the GameTime grant and spending a significant amount of the park funds. When presented the design of Greenfields's playground, it seemed like it had more activities and had actual pictures of people using the equipment. It was difficult to understand the design of GameTime's playgrounds because their website didn't include a gallery or individuals utilizing the equipment. Dohm recommended that the Park Board should consider researching other playground grant opportunities.

Bass inquired if older children and adults would use the Greenfields playground. The Greenfields playground appeared to have more features and demand more physical dexterity than the GameTime playground.

Planning Director Ondich explained that the High School might bring students to the Greenfields playground during their fitness classes. He mentioned that there could be a public survey on whether people would be interested in the playground.

Dohm suggested that the surveys could be distributed to certain groups such as school children rather than a broad range of residents like retirees.

Planning Director Ondich explained that the surveys could be given to the Athletic Director of the School District to better target the intended audience. The surveys would provide a better understanding of the older children's thoughts on the playground equipment.

Becka made a motion seconded by Dohm to create a public survey and to research other funding and playground equipment. Motion carried (4-0).

5. Tree City USA – Amending the Tree Ordinance

Planner Chapman introduced the proposed tree ordinance amendment for New Prague to become a Tree City USA. She explained that to become a Tree City USA, there are three prerequisites the City would have to meet. This includes having a minimum of \$2 per capita on urban forestry, establishing Arbor Day, and developing a Public Tree Care Ordinance. The City can satisfy the two requirements but New Prague must amend their tree ordinance to become a Tree City USA. The amendment includes a purpose, definitions, authority of power, ordinary care standards, prohibition against harming trees, and trees declared a nuisance.

Dohm inquired about the ordinary tree care standards.

Planning Director Ondich explained that existing City Code 92.01 only included nuisance trees but to become a Tree City USA, the chapter must include authority of power and specify standards for public trees. The authority of power could be distributed to a City Department Head, Tree Board or both. However, due to New Prague's small population, it wouldn't be feasible to create another Board, so the authority of power was entrusted to the City Administrator. When staff was originally writing the Ordinary Tree Care Standards, it included more details but after receiving feedback from Emma Schultz, the DNR Community Forest Project Specialist, staff were advised to develop broader clauses.

Dohm inquired about the purpose of becoming a Tree City USA.

Planning Director Ondich clarified that becoming a Tree City USA would not only increase City recognition, but it would be easier to receive grant funding. Some grants require cities to be a Tree City USA or cities may receive additional funding due to this association. It was also highly recommended that New Prague become a Tree City USA when the City became a GreenStep City earlier this year.

Becka asked Bass if City Council would be interested in becoming a Tree City USA.

Bass explained that City Council approved the DNR Emerald Ash Borer Grant, therefore, its likely that councilmembers will like Tree City USA. Trees provide multiple benefits such as reducing carbon in the atmosphere, therefore, by participating in Tree City USA, it would further encourage the health, wellbeing, and need for trees. Bass suggested that perhaps Scott County would allow the City to sell bundles to residents.

Molitor suggested that the proposed amendment could include buckthorn, honeysuckle or other noxious trees in the trees declared a nuisance section of the ordinance.

Planning Director Ondich further noted that in an email, Chair Barten suggested the that residents should plant native trees as opposed to invasive tree species.

Vice Chair Molitor made a motion and seconded by Dohm to recommend the Tree City USA amendment and suggestions to City Council. Motion carried (4-0).

6. Miscellaneous

- a. **2023 Park Board Budget Update** – Planning Director Ondich presented the 2023 Park Board Budget Update and noted that the next budget workshop will not occur until October 27th.
- b. **Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (P.O.P.S.) Update** – Planning Director Ondich introduced the P.O.P.S Update. Staff was able to review and make comments on the request for proposals for site selection that the former Outdoor Performance Center Group, now known as the Praha Outdoor Performance Stage (P.O.P.S) group has been working on. They sent out the RFP on October 7th. Once they have reviewed the proposals, they will decide on a consulting firm by November 20th and the goal is to have the consulting firm presenting their findings to the Park Board in the second quarter of 2023.
- c. **2023 CIP Project Greenway Park Trail Improvements** – Planning Director Ondich explained that the existing public east end roads of 1st Street NE and 2nd St NE east of Sunrise Ave N will be reconstructed into public trails. This change would provide better trail access and reduce costs of maintaining and repaving the roads. However, it will be an inconvenience for the four houses that currently have easy access to their alley due to the road ends. The homeowners will have to use a different street to get to their alley. Sidewalks are proposed to be installed on 1st St NE in the project areas as well as on 3rd Street NE.
- d. **Central Plaza Update** – Planning Director Ondich explained that the central plaza sign was installed before Dozinky festival, and the furniture is intended to arrive on October 12th. The dedication ceremony will likely occur in spring of 2023.

Dohm inquired if the Rotary will install a sign that says that central plaza was adopted by the Rotary Club.

Planning Director Ondich said that he would look into that.

- e. **Towering To Our Future Update** – Planner Chapman explained that she spoke with artist Kiersten Dahl-Shetka in early October to discuss the project budget. Over the coming weeks, Chapman will answer the budgetary questions and fix grammatical errors. If awarded the grant from Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, the project would receive a maximum of \$7,000. However, this grant would not cover the entire cost considering that the total project would be roughly \$12,000. Additional funding options will need to be explored.
- f. **FAC Update** – Planning Director Ondich reviewed the Fitness and Aquatic Center updates.

Becka inquired what the City or residents can do to get involved or assist FAC.

Dohm suggested that perhaps services could be separated. For instance, maybe the fitness pass could be separate from a pool pass, therefore affordable for residents.

Bass replied that it would be too difficult to monitor who uses the fitness center and the pool, especially when they're so short staffed during the weekday.

Becka was concerned that the membership cost penalizes people from being able to afford the services and amenities of the FAC. He suggested that the costs could be affordable to what each person could afford or pay.

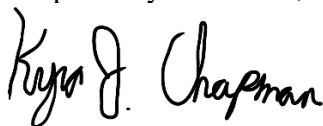
Molitor suggested that to address the issues of short staffing, maybe FAC could recruit seniors as lifeguards. Many seniors are bored during retirement, therefore, becoming a lifeguard at FAC would occupy them during the day while helping prevent issues of staff shortage.

Bass was concerned about seniors' physical ability to perform the job and handle an entire shift.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM by order of Vice Chair Molitor.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kyra Chapman
Planner