

# Natural Resources Commission

## Meeting Minutes August 7, 2019

### Attendance:

Commissioners: Brandon Van Tassel, Susan Stanich, Judy Gibbs, John Lindgren, Nancy Schuldt, Mike Schrage, Mike Pennington.

Absent: Beth Kleinke and Brandon Krumwiede

City Staff: Jim Filby Williams, Director of Administration; Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator; Clark Christenson, Forester.

### Call to Order:

The meeting started at 6:02 pm.

### Minute Approval:

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Meeting. M/S/C.

### New Business:

**Mud Lake Habitat Analysis Discussion** - Jim Filby Williams shared the major goals of the project including trail building, railroad preservation and assurance of limited costs to the City. He indicated it is impossible to appease *all* user groups but the City is willing to try. The main question to resolve is if the rail should remain in place. He shared that administration has had a change in course and is now recommitted to trying to keep the rail system. The timeline calls for a second stakeholder meeting on August 29. Jim also stated that if the Commission is interested in providing a recommendation letter for Parks Commission and City Council, it would need to be completed by the next NRC meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup> because on September 11<sup>th</sup> the Parks Commission will be discussing the alternatives and on October 9<sup>th</sup> they will hold an official vote to send before City Council in October.

Pat Collins, Natural Resources project lead for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, gave an informational presentation to the Commission on the 2019 Mud Lake Habitat Alternatives Analysis.

### Public Comment Period:

Dave Moore – Volunteer for the LSMR asked Pat several questions related to deep-water habitat, specifics on the ranking system, and best engineered solutions for each alternative.

Alison Clark – Citizen wanted clarity on who wants to get rid of the railroad. She commented that it was her opinion that the City Administration was looking to justify the removal of the causeway by using environmental analysis.

Mike Casey – Friends of Western Duluth Trails spoke of the economic, historic, and social importance of the LSMR railway.

## **Old Business:**

### **Forester's Report (Clark Christenson – City Forester)**

Clark continues to make progress on the EAB work utilizing a grant from the Department of Agriculture. In addition, he is working on boulevard tree plantings utilizing a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

### **Natural Resources Report (Diane Desotelle– Natural Resources Coordinator)**

Diane discussed the schedule for the upcoming Hartley Natural Area Management Plan. The first draft will be ready for the entire Commission by mid to late September. We will have a presentation of what to expect in the report at the Sept 4<sup>th</sup> NRC meeting. The October meeting will be used to provide comments before going on to the Parks & Recreation and Planning Commissions and City Council. The goal is to complete the nomination by the end of the year.

The Saint Louis River Corridor DNAP will follow these same steps and is just a couple months behind the Hartley plan.

Diane updated the Commissioners on a collaborative public lands project the City is working on with St. Louis County and the Minnesota Land Trust. The goal is to define lands to preserve as open space and re-align the management of those public lands. The City is currently working with the County to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for the project. She will continue to keep everyone informed of the progress.

A sub-committee of Commissioners will meet to draft a recommendation letter for the alternatives at Mud Lake on Tuesday, August 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM in room 155 at City Hall.

### **Adjournment:**

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54, M/S/C.