



## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes November 1, 2023  
Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 155

---

### I. Call to Order

### II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: John Lindgren, Andrew Streitz, Mike Schrage, Judy Gibbs, Nancy Schuldt, Lori Dando, Tiffany Sprague

Absent: Pam Foster

Staff Present: Jim Filby Williams, Kate Kubiak

### III. Approval of the Agenda

**Commissioner Streitz made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Vice Chair Schuldt. Unanimously approved.**

### IV. Approval of the October 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes

**Commissioner Schrage made a motion to approve the October 4, 2023 meeting minutes; seconded by Commissioner Dando. Unanimously approved.**

### V. Old Business

#### A. Tischer Hartley Pond Feasibility Study – Bimonthly Update *[Kate Kubiak]*

Timeline with consultants is on track with final public informational meeting scheduled for November 21<sup>st</sup>. Mid-October meeting was mildly attended. Sent postcards to neighbors. This upcoming meeting is not for formal public comment. That kind of meeting will be first quarter of 2024. Hartley Nature Center Stewardship Committee will hear a presentation from the consultants next week. The Stewardship Committee has an interest in what the city wants to do and will make their recommendations to the Hartley Board. Chair Lindgren reminds commission that the report will not be complete until next year. Parks & Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, and Natural Resources Commission will receive presentations from consultants. The public can make their thoughts about it known at those public meetings. It is anticipated there will be additional media coverage and interest from the public at this phase in the process.

#### B. Land Acquisition Update *[Jim Filby Williams]*

Purchase agreement to purchase 52 acres of land in the upper reaches of Amity Creek was approved by council on Monday night. 100% paid by grants, and supported by non-profits and community partners including Isaac Walton League, COGGS, and Superior Hiking Trail Association. We redirected grants to purchase 75 acres, and re-submitted for new funding from granting sources to move forward with the Forest Hill 75 acres. In regards to the larger tax-forfeit land project, all Minnesota counties are on hold as a result of the Tyler v. Hennepin County Supreme Court case. We are working with St. Louis County to see if there are ways to proceed.

### VI. New Business

#### A. PFAS Study – Birds *[Speaker: Matthew Etterson, Research Ecologist, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Toxicology and Ecology Division]*

---



## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes November 1, 2023  
Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 155

---

Etterson's job is to design tools for risk assessments for chemical contamination and is leveraging the study in Duluth to determine risk assessments on birds. Support from Department of Defense, Hawk Ridge, Air Guard base, UMD, and USGS. Duluth's lab is more toxicological focused. PFAS are very persistent in the environment and do not occur naturally. PFAS are toxic to birds—reduce pipping success, increase embryo mortality, reduce nesting survival, and cause developmental effects. Study began at Hawk Ridge but also included sites at EPA, UMD, Boy Scout Landing, Martin Road, Rice Lake, Boulder Lake, Air Base, and the Lake Superior College Fire Fighting School. Data confirmed expectations that PFAS/PFOS would be highest in Tree Swallows and lower in Black-capped Chickadees. May change as sample size increases. Have completed the first year of three-year field study.

### VII. Staff Reports

#### A. Natural Resources Coordinator Report [*Kate Kubiak*]

- Planning for Annual Partner Meeting - Projects Review - for the Natural Resources Management Program
- Lands Exchange process details and coordination
- Grant-writing
- Summer invasives work wrap-up
- MN Point Coastal resilience group participation
- Forestry for Birds Conference in Ashland

#### B. Forester's Report [*Clark Christensen*]

As I write this on the 24th of October it looks like our string of glorious fall weather will be coming to an end. You are in a better position to decide this than I am now. I hope the Weather Service is wrong.

One of the broader realizations I am having about our workflow and the priority of mitigating EAB induced damage is that we have been unintentionally ignoring other needed maintenance. My intention is always to remove as many ash as we can during the spring and fall but that has been difficult this fall due to other requests about trees that we normally would have taken care of. Large silver maple losing large limbs have been a bit of a curse this year and have taken up a considerable portion of our time.

I continue to look at building a greenhouse but site preparation of the lot behind our shop has continued in a halting fashion. Putting the horse before the cart has proven to be more difficult than anticipated. Installing appropriate storm water control devices and grading are the needed steps but finding someone (and the money!) to do that on our timeline has been tricky. I anticipate that work will be done next spring and then we build a greenhouse.

Due to the dry summer, recent vacation of the forester and other priorities pushing their way to the top, we will finish planting the last of our trees today. Some will have to be overwintered but our success with that has been quite high. Those trees will be planted first thing next spring. In all we will have planted just short of 400 trees which is right on target...for now. Next year that will be ramped up considerably as we try to keep pace with ash tree removals.



## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes November 1, 2023  
Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 155

---

### C. Director's Report *[Jim Filby Williams]*

Duluth's North Shore coastal resiliency, north end of Park Point, and by the beach house are all being studied and we are hoping for some solutions.

On Congdon Blvd., there is chronic and severe erosion damages to public infrastructure. Looking for appropriate funding including NOAA and their resilient coastal program initiatives for Great Lakes communities. We are finding remedies for our north shore and some are complex. Will work on the relatively simple sites. Congdon Blvd. is a classic parkway, with wide areas of public green space, that are collapsing into Lake Superior, putting people and structures at risk. Congdon Blvd. goes all the way to McQuade harbor, and the rest of St. Louis County is experiencing similar issues further up the shore. The city was not invited to submit a proposal to NOAA for work on Park Point. Work with the Army Corps of Engineers on north part of Park Point is progressing very slowly. The ACE needed to expand the scope and needs a half million dollars, which takes at the federal level. Residents are anxious and looking for ways to speed up the process. Waiting for collection of hydrodynamic data and lake bottom sediments sampling in 2024 and proceed to model things differently in fall of 2024.

### VIII. Announcements

- A. December-May Temporary Meeting Location
- B. Some Commissioners are due to re-take the oath.

### IX. Public Comment

Diane Desotelle provided a comment in support of the NRMP and importance of taking action. Betty Greene provided a comment in support of the land acquisition initiatives.

### X. Adjournment

Vice Chair Schuldt made a motion to adjourn; second by Commissioner Schrage. Unanimously approved.

**Next Meeting** - Wednesday, December 6, at 6:00 PM.