



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

February 5, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
Conference Room 330, City Hall

I. Call to Order

Chair Streitz called the meeting to begin at 6:02 PM.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Judy Gibbs, John Lindgren, Mike Raichel, Mike Schrage, Nancy Schuldt, Andrew Streitz

Commissioners Absent: Lori Dando, Pam Foster, Tiffany Sprague

City Staff Present: Kate Kubiak, Bronwyn Bauer

III. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Lindgren made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner Schrage.
Unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of the December 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Schrage made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Commissioner Raichel.
Unanimously approved.

V. Old Business

A. Tischler Fish Kill Update (City Staff)

Kubiak had no update. Tom Johnson told her a report will not be available until possibly summer.

B. Advocacy (Chair Streitz)

To focus the City's attention on the importance of Natural Resources and procuring more money for them, Chair Streitz contacted Sue Henke, President of the Duluth Public Library Board, to find out how her board was able to become better advocates for the library, to administration. She was able to give some suggestions that worked for them and explained the process they followed during a board meeting, so as not to put staff into a difficult position. One thing that they did is contact the City Councilor liaison for the library. Chair Streitz asked who the liaison is for the NRC. Bauer found out from the City Clerk's office that the NRC does not have a direct liaison, or member on the board, but that City Councilor Tara Swenson is the representative for Recreation, Libraries, & Authorities, which includes the Property, Parks, & Libraries Department. Sue Henke said that after they met with their Councilor, they were able to get meetings with the mayor and administration, which led to small increases for the library. During the advocacy agenda item during board meetings, staff would leave the room until that portion was concluded. Secretary Gibbs asked if the NRC would continue to have this on the agenda. Chair Streitz said he would like it on next month's agenda to discuss next steps. Vice Chair Schuldt asked how a working group could meet without breaking any open meeting laws. Secretary Gibbs said that we could post any small group meetings. Kubiak said that a working group could meet if there is not a quorum of commissioners at the meeting, and, if it is not a regularly scheduled meeting, it doesn't need to be posted.

VI. New Business

A. Arrowhead Bowhunters 2024 Hunt Summary (ABA Board Members)

Brian Borkholder and Phillip Lockett from the ABA gave a presentation of the 2024 City bow hunt, which was the 20th year. There were 317 registered hunters, and 166 deer harvested, which is 10 less deer than the previous year. The City hunt produced a half deer per hunter this year, which is much better than the state statistic of one deer per hunter over five years. They did not have the Earn A Buck program again this year. There are 40 zones throughout the City, and a few hotspots, which are areas not included in a zone, but have



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a high number of deer reported by private landowners. One hot spot was Hawk Ridge, for the second year, but there were no deer harvested this year and they do not think continuing in this area is worth the time. Secretary Gibbs asked if we can get bow hunt statistics from the insurance companies, but Borkholder explained that the insurance companies code by county, not city. Locket said that there is a cap of the number of hunters allowed, by land available, but they only had to turn hunters down once in 20 years. Commissioner Raichel asked if there were impediments to hunting in the Magney-Snively area, as he heard at a meeting that morning that deer were a problem there. Locket said there were many hunters in this area, and many deer, but one impediment is that Skyline Parkway is closed down during this season, so it is more difficult for hunters to access. Commissioner Schrage said he lives near this area and has seen evidence of a decrease in deer there.

B. Resolution Supporting Work to Advance the Recommended Code and Policy Amendments from the City of Duluth Green Infrastructure Code Audit - MOTION

Commissioners were given a copy of the resolution, initiated from Commissioner Sprague after she and her colleagues presented at the December 2024 meeting.

Commissioner Raichel made a motion to approve the resolution as written; seconded by Commissioner Schuldt. Unanimously approved.

The next step is to bring this to the Planning Commission for approval.

C. Duluth Designated Natural Areas Program (DNAP)– Background (Kate Kubiak)

Kubiak presented some general background information about the DNAP, which currently includes three areas: Hartley, Magney-Snively, and St. Louis River area. A fourth area is being proposed for Amity Hawk Ridge by four partners - Soil & Water Conservation District, Hawk Ridge, Trout Unlimited, and MN Land Trust. The program provides protection for these areas through a City Council Ordinance that would need a super majority, or eight out of nine, City Councilors to change. The areas included have special and unique ecological or environmental significance to the community, and include five criteria: significant native plant communities, special species, important bird congregation areas, natural water features, and geologic landforms. Secretary Gibbs said that the area only needs to meet one of these criteria, but Kubiak said Amity meets all of them. The designation starts with the NRC and Parks & Recreation Commission, then is approved by the Planning Commission, then final approval by the City Council. The management plan must be prepared by a qualified professional(s). Kubiak stressed that it is very important for the NRC to have a good understanding of the DNAP.

VII. Staff Reports

A. Natural Resources Coordinator's Report (Kate Kubiak)

- Continued coordination of Section 111 MN Point Study.
- Support of Amity Hawk Ridge DNAP nomination process.
- Working with Hartley Nature Staff to solve flooding and white crack willow problems on Tischer Tributary.
- New Park Hill Acquisition property – ash stand replacement and buckthorn removal is complete – planting in spring.
- Working with UMD on researching invasive white crack willow's impacts on trout streams.
- Meetings/Coordinating future forestry work with MN Land Trust, Nature Conservancy and North Shore



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Collaborative.

- Writing City Forestry Plan with Clark – to be presented to NRC, hopefully in March.
- Held second meeting for the Magney-Snively Management Plan Update Advisory Committee – draft will be presented to NRC at upcoming meeting.

B. City Forester's Report (Clark Christenson)

Over the past month we have had more snow removal duties than the rest of winter combined. Which, in many ways, is a good thing but it still takes away from the limited time we have to work on trees. Otherwise, we have been removing the highest risk ash trees across town.

We are in the process of hiring a forestry aide for the summer. This position will update and expand our street tree inventory, help with all of our other management activities, and hopefully give someone great experience in the field.

C. Director's Report (Jim Filby Williams)

None.

VIII. Announcements

Chair Streitz announced that Diane Desotelle will be giving a presentation with the Arrowhead Natives group at Hartley Nature Center on February 25, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

IX. Public Comment

None.

X. Adjournment

Vice Chair Schuldt made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Raichel seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:07 PM.

Next Meeting – March 5, 2025 at 6:00 PM Conference Room 330, City Hall.