



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes August 9, 2023**  
**Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 330**



**I. Call Meeting to Order**

President Crosby called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Present: Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Kala Pedersen, Josie LaPorte, Sarah Beehler, Hailey Sigafus, Dave Cizmas, Terrance Lovejoy

Not Present: Tjaard Breeuwer, Noah Hobbs – City Council Liaison, Annie Harala – St. Louis County Commissioner, Kelly Durick Eder – ISD 709 School Board Liaison

**III. Approval of the June 14 Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioner LaPorte motioned to approve the June 14 meeting minutes. Commissioner Pedersen second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.**

**IV. Presentations**

A. Hartley Nature Center (Informational) Tom O'Rourke, Executive Director

LaPorte questioned how the internship program works. O'Rourke stated that there is an environmental stewardship position in the spring which involves more scientific work. Stated there is a school year internship for 9 months, geared for people going into education field, whether outdoor education or classroom teacher. Stated there is a summer 3 month internship with camps.

Demmer questioned what the relationship is like with Hartley Nature Center and the trail user groups. O'Rourke stated that the Stewardship Committee holds a spring open house each year to meet with the trail groups. Stated that they are hoping trail project proposals will start to funnel through the Stewardship Committee.

Lovejoy questioned if their grant funding information is publicly available on their website. O'Rourke stated that all information can be made readily available on request, even if it is not on the Hartley Nature Center website.

Pedersen questioned if the parking on Old Hartley Road continues to be an issue. Peterson stated that the Hartley Mini Master Plan designates that as a level 2 trail access point, which gives it a small parking space. Stated that events are organized to start at the main trailhead. Stated that it sees more use in the winter, with cross country skiing. Stated that parking enforcement works with parks to monitor and enforce parking issues.

**V. Commissioner Committees**

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: Thursday, September 7 at noon, Parks Conference Room  
Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Kala Pedersen [Jessica Peterson, Bridget Erickson]

**VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports**

**VII. New Business**

**VIII. Old Business**

A. Hillside Sport Court Park Plan (Action Requested) Katie Bennett, Senior Parks Planner



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Lovejoy questioned if the actual construction would take place within the year of 026. Bennett stated that yes it is estimated to happen over that summer.

Beehler questioned if the required amount of limited funding would be around half of the total estimated cost. Bennett stated those numbers are likely fairly accurate.

Beehler questioned which funds would come from the city and which would be outside or grant funding. Bennett stated that city funding package is still being worked out. Stated the goal is to request a match grant for the amount of city funds. Peterson stated that other departments would be included in design and possible funding for collaborative elements of the plan. Stated that \$400,000 is currently slated for this project.

Beehler questioned where the pavilion falls in the priority order. Bennett stated that the limited funding items would be accomplished first. Stated that the pavilion is the first item in the additional funding category.

Beehler questioned if the park would be closed during construction. Peterson stated that for safety reasons, it would be closed during the project.

Pedersen questioned if the youth soccer programs would partner to use the space. Bennett stated that the space is allocated in the event that this is desired.

Demmer questioned how the community garden size in the plan compares to the original proposal. Bennett stated that the proposed size was most of the lower part of the park space. Stated that some of the elements in the original proposal are incorporated in other ways in the park.

Demmer questioned if the community garden could expand more into the open green space in the future. Bennett stated that a similar public process would be necessary before changing the use of the park in the future.

Demmer questioned how community connections will be promoted around the park. Bennett stated that some of this will be determined later in the process. Stated that in order to not have a retaining wall, there needs to be a specific grade of slope. Stated that if that is possible an access may be added at that point.

Demmer questioned if the ash trees are being removed due to Emerald Ash Borer. Bennett stated that this is the case. Stated that a phased removal and replacement could be an option to pursue.

Demmer questioned if the budgeted amount for the sport court includes full replacement and expansion. Peterson stated that it does, and it would be expanded to the east, including the area that is currently being used as a parking area.

**President Crosby motioned to recommend approval of the Hillside Sport Court Park Plan to City Council. Commissioner Cizmas second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.**

**IX. Division Report**

**X. Public Comment**

**XI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.



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**XII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 13 at 5:00 p.m., Council Chambers.