

Chairperson
Judy Lissick

Vice-Chairperson
TBD

Parks/ Recreation and Trails Commission

Kari Hauck
William Johnson
Erinn Robovsky
Brooke Thomson
Laura Eck
Alexa Farah
1st Alternate, Mark Otto
2nd Alternate, TBD

Katherine Doll Kanne, Council Liaison
Kevin Watson, Staff Liaison
Kaylin Clement, Staff Liaison
Katie Everett, Staff Liaison

The City of Vadnais Heights
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Vadnais Heights, MN 55127
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**MEETING OF THE
PARK, RECREATION & TRAILS COMMISSION
Monday, January 23, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.
VADNAIS HEIGHTS CITY HALL**

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Lissick at 5:01pm
Commissioners Thomson were not in attendance.

2. Approve the Agenda

Motion made by Hauck, seconded by Johnson.
Johnson wants Open to the Public to be included on the next agenda.

3. Approve the Minutes – November 14, 2022

Motion to approve as amended by Hauck, seconded by Johnson.

4. 2023 PR&T Commission Visioning/Elect Vice-Chairperson

Chairperson Lissick is energized to get beyond a rocky end to 2022, and enter 2023 with new City leaders in office, and a more clear focus for the Commission. Specifically a three-legged stool comprised of trails (new or connection opportunities), sustainability, and actions assigned to the Commission by Council. A “parking lot” list of items, not assigned specifically for future Council

consideration, will continue to be added to and discussed as needed as they are important to the Commission's overall vision and direction. Lissick asked that this list be distributed to the Commission by Asst. City Administrator Clement, so that Commissioners can look over the list and make suggestions/additions prior to the next meeting. Lissick also asked to have the CIP on an upcoming agenda to better prepare for the next budgeting cycle which will be here quickly.

Lissick nominated Brook Thomson for the Vice-Chairperson vacant seat, however she was not present at the meeting, and a motion to table this until the next meeting who she said was interested but being that she is not present this has been tabled, motion by Alexa, seconded by Laura.

5. Park Inventory Results – Commissioner Presentations

In late 2022, Commissioners were given 2-3 parks to examine and present opportunities, issues, etc. present at each park as part of determining the way to best spend the allocated \$50,000 to the Commission. Doll Kanne commented that 50k won't get us far, and the other council wasn't in favor but maybe a Parks Master Plan could be used for this money. Commissioner evaluations should not consider maintenance needs, but the evaluations can be grouped both with the \$50K in mind, as well as "bigger ticket items" for future recommendations.

Community Park – Trail connectivity/expansion needed here, pavilion replacement, skateboard park (big ticket items).

Bridgewood – Trail connectivity, three ways in, only one is marked clearly, also explore potential expansion along Thornhill Land and Heritage Drive, additional seating needed, pickleball has made the area very popular, shade structures would be a good addition, age inclusivity play options like gagaball or improvements to basketball hoops.

Berwood Park – Trail connectivity/expansion, liaison with townhome development to put a more permanent bridge over ditch and path to Parkside Drive, potential for connection to future Vadnais Blvd. Trail (if that goes through) add dog waste receptacles here.

Oak Creek – Not listed on Google maps, signage wasn't super clear for someone who isn't familiar, with the area.

Wolters – Limited access, no public parking, lots of homes with no connectivity, very small/old playground, open space options could be used for a dog park, rent parking from businesses that are adjacent, gagaball, or consider a musical park enhancement without replacing the entire playground. The large open space, if unused, should not be mowed. Is there a possibility to partner with and "rent" parking stalls from the adjacent business to allow for more access to the park.

Lily Pond – Good trail connectivity, dog park opportunity, reflective sitting areas where people can actually stop and enjoy the natural area and wetlands without having to walk the trails solely.

Westfield – An area where there are many parks, enhancement opportunities dog park, lots of parking already there, gagaball, Ninja course, bike/skate playground that can be moved when no ice for outdoor skating, outdoor game environment set up (horseshoes, jenga, cultural games) we could create the space and people could rent games from City Hall to play here. Playground needs trees, no shade, lacks benches and picnic tables.

Kohler Meadows – A light installed at the snow hill at the top for night activities, extend park hours, bonfire pit if possible. Pavilion here was in decent condition, large greenspace with opportunities for outdoor game area, like Jenga.

Bear Park – Great potential with the trail connection, native areas needed and opportunities for more landscaping, safety gates needed to keep the paved trails from inviting motor vehicle traffic.

Greenhaven – Woodchips may need to be evened out in the spring, there are two tables, no benches, no shade, no trees. Opportunity for picnic shelter, no bathroom, safety concerns, minimal shoulders, fast speed limit. A berm of native plantings was suggested to act as a divider between the green space and the street. Homeowners have complained about flooding, maybe a rain garden opportunity to address these issues. Question about contacting the private landowner adjacent to the park about allowing people to use their hill for sledding.

Morningside Park – Not used in the winter, it's called a "passive wetland" online, Johnson noted ongoing drainage issues here, often experienced during soccer in the summer. Educational series opportunity here, sustainability signage/features, benches. Decent parking lot, potential for dog park area to encourage year-round use, and/or bike park, gaga ball.

Elmwood – Small shelter but roof is needing replacement, table is in poor condition, new seating and shade is needed here. Play structure in generally good condition, picnic table and bench are in rough condition. Greenspace there, but no parking at all and no path to get from street to play structure, steep hill to the play structure. Council Member Doll Kanne confirmed this area is slated for a street project, and there has been talk of a three-stall parking area and ADA accessible ramp that would fully loop around the park to coincide with the street reconstruction. A portable bathroom, additional seating around the playground, trees for shade and native plantings to create a boundary between the homes and park area would be nice additions.

Heritage Park – The natural theme is loved here by Commissioner Thomson's submitted inventory assessment. There are no paved trails, there is an opportunity to play up that "natural" theme by

introducing educational signage perhaps. Benches were in poor shape, this may be a place to promote “park bench in memory” opportunities for residents.

Based on this inventory, Lissick recorded the top items discussed by Commissioners as part of this inventory exercise which equated to:

1. Park Benches/Picnic Tables/Park Shelters
2. Light installed at the sledding hill at Kohler Meadows
3. Plant trees for added shade – focusing on areas around playgrounds, seating areas, etc.
4. Bike park/RC track/Gagaball
5. Dog park

Asst. City Administrator Clement will provide rough estimates for picnic tables, benches and associated install costs. Public Works will also seek out a quote for the light option at Kohler.

6. Community Park Pavilion Discussion

Custom design (option 1 full size, option 2 reduced size vs. catalog pavilion

The Commission discussed whether or not the money could be better spent elsewhere, and if the pavilion is used enough to warrant its replacement of any option, outside of just the weekend of Heritage Days. Lissick reminded Commission that the direction of Council was to weigh the options of designed pavilion (full sized, or reduced size) with a catalog option. Robovsky said custom full sized is her opinion, that we have an opportunity to enhance the area with features already present there like VHC, which can also lead to solar, wind energy, EV charging stations – items to improve and encourage this as a community gathering place. Hauck agrees that if a pavilion is going in it should be custom over catalog. She likes the idea of a gathering place that could serve as a “showpiece” for Vadnais Heights. Hauck made a motion to approve recommending Custom Option 1, which was seconded by Lissick.

7. Updates

- Commissioners Updates
- Staff Updates

8. Set Next Meeting – February 13, 2023 6:00 p.m.

9. Adjourn

Motion by Eck seconded by Farah. Adjourned at 7:01 p.m.