

City of North Oaks
Natural Resources Commission Minutes
January 18, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Chair Bob Larson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Chair Bob Larson; Vice Chair Kate Winsor; Commissioners Dan McDermott (via conference call), John Murphy and David White; NOHOA Liaison Diane Gorder

Staff: Recording Secretary Mary Mullen

Absent: City Administrator Mike Robertson; City Council Liaison Marty Long

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Murphy moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner White seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Winsor moved to approve the December 21, 2017, NRC Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Murphy seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Tick Task Force Report

Commissioner White stated the Tick Task Force met recently to review and approve a draft of the third annual residents' survey. He added the draft survey is in the editing stages and requested the Commissioner's feedback and comments. Commissioner Murphy expressed his appreciation to the Task Force for their hard work on the survey. Chair Larson stressed the importance of obtaining a high number of responses from residents, to increase awareness of the City's best practices related to tick control.

Commissioner White stated responses to the first survey were excellent, but the number of responses declined in 2017. He added he hopes to increase public awareness of the survey and its importance, to encourage 100% participation. Commissioner White stated, regarding the number of reported cases of Lyme disease, the Minnesota Department of Health has provided data that is inconsistent with what has reported in the City of North Oaks. He added this is a chronic problem which makes it difficult to determine accuracy.

Commissioner Murphy stated the City of Roseville has begun culling deer after hearing about the work of the Tick Task Force.

Commissioner McDermott suggested the inclusion of a section on the survey that highlights the accomplishments of the Tick Task Force, and the high response rate in 2016. He added suggestions could be solicited for ways to get every North Oaks resident to take the survey.

Commissioner White stated the Task Force hopes to distribute surveys and receive responses soon, so the results can be reviewed at the North Oaks City Council and North Oaks Homeowners' Association meetings in April 2018.

Kate Winsor's Report

Vice Chair Winsor stated the recent "Flowers for Pollinators" Workshop, sponsored by the North Oaks Garden Club, was promoted on the City Facebook page. She added the Workshop, held at Waverly Gardens, was well-attended. Ms. Gorder stated the Community Room is being considered for future Workshops as it is a well-known location for residents.

Vice Chair Winsor stated she submitted an article to the North Oaks News reminding residents of the January 2018 Conservation Award. She added this month's category is Woodlands.

Commissioner Murphy requested an update on open Commission seats. Commissioner White stated a review of potential nominees was planned for the City Council's January 11, 2018, meeting, which was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. He added this agenda item will be moved to the City Council's February meeting. Vice Chair Winsor stated the NRC can appoint as many new Commissioners as they would like, as there is not a specific number of open seats.

City Update

Commissioner Murphy requested an update on deer. Commissioner White asked whether there is a resource for residents when they see deer. Chair Larson stated residents should call City staff to report deer sightings.

NOHOA/NEST Update

NOHOA Liaison Gorder stated the Garden Club's "Flowers for Pollinators" workshop was presented by the University of Minnesota Extension volunteer program. She added the February 20, 2018, Garden Club meeting will focus on invasive species, particularly buckthorn. She noted a rain gardens workshop is planned for the March 2018 meeting.

Commissioner Murphy stated information regarding these workshops could be forwarded to Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO). Vice Chair Winsor requested the Garden Club workshop dates and information be forwarded to her for inclusion on the City Facebook page. Ms. Gorder agreed.

Ms. Gorder stated free salt cups are available at the City Hall office. She added the cups are distributed by VLAWMO and can be used to minimize the amount of salt that is broadcast onto pavement and driveways. She noted VLAWMO's Education and Outreach Coordinator, Nick Voss, hopes to track how many cups are taken by residents for this purpose. Recording Secretary Mullen said she'd provide a cup count to Mr. Voss. Ms. Gorder stated an informational video about the use of salt cups is posted on the VLAWMO website and features Chair Larson in his driveway.

Ms. Gorder stated she attended VLAWMO's January 2018 Board Meeting, and project funding is available for a study of Deep Lake vegetation.

Ms. Gorder stated a 35-page Capstone Study has been completed by University of Minnesota Engineering students. The study document provides recommendations for ensuring the resiliency and stability of Pleasant Lake. She added she has condensed the Capstone Study into a 2-page summary that will be published in the February 2018 edition of North Oaks News. She distributed copies of the summary document to the Commission. She noted the Capstone Project focuses on Pleasant Lake soil quality, which is very sandy due to wind and wave patterns and could be having an impact on certain properties.

Commissioner Murphy expressed his appreciation of NOHOA's important and productive collaboration with the Saint Paul Regional Water Services and VLAWMO.

Commissioner White asked whether proactive measures will be taken regarding mitigation of environmental impacts on Black Lake, as development is imminent. Ms. Gorder stated the NRC can become involved in this issue. She added the City must be mindful of protecting the lake and ensuring that proposed development and trails are environmentally and strategically appropriate. Chair Larson stated the Planning Commission should be involved in this discussion. Ms. Gorder agreed to discuss this issue with Mike Robertson.

Vice Chair Winsor stated the City should make an official statement regarding the expectation that the developers will be mindful of environmental impacts to Black Lake in their development plans.

Other Business

Vice Chair Winsor requested an update on the Comprehensive Plan Process, and whether the NRC would have a chance to review the document.

Commissioner Murphy stated the Planning Commission intends to solicit comments and feedback from the NRC. He added the Comprehensive Planning process identifies many areas of focus related to natural resources.

Adjournment

Commissioner Murphy made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner McDermott seconded. Motion approved unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:37 p.m.

Next Meeting: February 15, 2018