



CITY OF NORTH OAKS

**Regular Natural Resources Commission Meeting
Thursday, January 16, 2020
7 PM, Community Meeting Room
100 Village Center Drive**

MEETING AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Approval of Previous Month's Minutes**
 - a. Minutes from December 19, 2019 NRC Meeting for Approval
[12-19-2019 NRC meeting - Final.pdf](#)
5. **Business Action Items**
 - a. Draft of Coyote Management Plan for Consideration
 - b. Environmental Commissions Gathering
[Environmental Commissions Gathering.pdf](#)
 - c. Discussion on Earth Day Activities
 - d. Review of Conservation Award Application/Process
6. **Tick Task Force Report**
7. **Kate Winsor's Report**
8. **City Update**
9. **NOHOA/NEST Report**
10. **Next Meeting: Thursday, February 20, 2020**

11. **Adjourn**

**North Oaks Natural Resources Commission
Meeting Minutes
North Oaks City Conference Room
December 19, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

Bob Larson called the meeting of December 19, 2019, to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Bob Larson, Commissioners Andrew Hawkins, Kate Winsor, David White, Damien LePoutre, NOHOA Liaison Diane Gorder, Mayor/Council Liaison Gregg Nelson

Absent: Commissioner Dan McDermott

Staff Present: Administrator Kevin Kress, and recording secretary Deb Breen.

Others Present: City Forester Mark Rehder

A quorum was declared present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner White requested to add discussion of the open meeting law to the agenda. Item 4, Approval of the Previous Month's Minutes, was tabled.

MOTION by Gorder, seconded by Hawkins, to approve the amended agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Coyote Management Plan

- City Staff Gretchen Needham was going to present a draft plan based on the one used in Calabasas, California. A draft has not yet been submitted.

b. Oriental Bittersweet Removal Update

- City Forester Rehder stated that former City Administrator Robertson had applied for a MDA grant and the City received \$2,750 for treatment and \$1,000 for in-kind services. As the City forester, he was asked to conduct a survey in North Oaks looking for this invasive species. He surveyed the North Oaks Road and Pheasant Lane area and found a fairly extensive area of dense mats. Rehder mentioned it is very difficult to differentiate from native bittersweet and it also hybridizes with the Oriental species. Next spring, they will continue to go after the larger areas on 3 properties that were identified. Due to onset of early cold weather, the Grant has been extended until June of 2020 for completion of work. They may be able to use volunteers with this project.

NOHOA Representative Gorder asked about the cost, and was told the cost for Forester fees are not part of the grant. Rehder was asked about the next best way to attack it, and mentioned that he must speak to the homeowner before he can complete the removal. Commissioner Hawkins suggested a ribbon color to indicate Oriental bittersweet.

Forester Rehder will continue workshops in conjunction with the City and NOHOA to educate residents on what it looks like on properties. There was discussion on whether forester has the authority to eradicate immediately upon removal. Mayor Nelson and Administrator Kress will look into whether an ordinance is needed, or if we can proactively remove it since it has been deemed a noxious weed and MN department of agriculture mandates its removal. NOHOA representative Gorder suggested a letter be sent to the homeowner first to alert and give them a chance to remove on own, before we remove it for them and bill them for the cost.

Commissioner LePoutre suggested an article in the paper as well as the City e-blast. Rehder reviewed the protocol used by Forester staff when visiting the residents. He mentioned that we may be able to get more funding from Department of Agriculture. It was suggested we ask for \$10,000. Commissioner Hawkins asked if there was an application deadline. Rehder said that this would be an addendum by June/July so not a brand new grant.

MOTION by Hawkins for Forester Rehder to contact the Dept. of Agriculture inquiring about additional funds for oriental bittersweet removal, seconded by White. Motion carried unanimously.

c. Introduction to New Administrator

- Each NRC member introduced themselves to the new City Administrator Kress. Liaison Gorder mentioned that she is turning over her responsibilities as NOHOA Liaison to Forester Mark Rehder.

d. Conservancy Area

- Commissioner LePoutre asked who takes care of and maintains of the Conservancy area within North Oaks. Mayor Nelson mentioned that the North Oaks Company manages the Trust on behalf of the Hill Family. Administrator Kress will inquire with North Oaks Company to see how that will transfer when the build out is complete and the Company exits North Oaks. It was mentioned that the biologist recently hired North Oaks Company may be involved in this.

e. Update on Septic Ordinance Committee

- Commissioner Hawkins attended the recent septic meeting on December 17, 2019. New people were in attendance so they reviewed what was discussed at kick off meeting, including; the amount of cesspools in North Oaks, the different types of septic system, mission of the committee, options of point of sale vs. a specific date and how to minimize the impact of sudden cost on residents. By State statute, the MN Department of Pollution now considers Cesspool (open bottom tanks) non-compliant. The next meeting is in January. Commissioner LePoutre asked if they had a target timeline for completion of their task. Commissioner Hawkins mentioned the objective is to come up with several options and put forth a recommendation to City Council, and they need to be thorough in their analysis. He stated it is up to each individual homeowner to test their wells, so it is hard to collect data on pollution. Every septic system, soil content and property is unique,

and there is no ordinance requiring well testing, which would give the scientific data. Commissioner Winsor asked if residents had the right to ask the City what type septic system their neighbors might have. City Staff confirmed this is public record. Commissioner White asked if Realtors were pushing back a septic ordinance. Hawkins stated that various realtors had attended both meetings and it seemed productive. Realtors generally seemed to be in favor of removing systems that affected public health. Hawkins indicated that the State permits Cities to be more restrictive in their septic regulations than State law. It is a misdemeanor to violate the ordinance.

Administrator Kress mentioned that stewardship to the land is important. He mentioned that there are a number of funding mechanisms and the state, EPA, and city could possibly offer low interest loans to residents to update their Cesspool system. In total, he estimates it could be \$1,000,000 to replace all the cesspool and septic systems.

f. Review of Stormwater Management Plan

- Administrator Kress indicated that we have nothing to review on this plan. This only relates to City owned stormwater ponds. If this doesn't relate to us, so we can remove from the agenda going forward. The Stormwater Management obligation only relates to storm sewers instead of natural run off. The City previously produced a Stormwater document to VLAWMO, comments were reviewed at the prior NRC meeting. Administrator Kress will find the stormwater plan and share it with the NRC as information.

g. Review of Conservation Award Application/Process

- Commissioner Hawkins mentioned an application that came in the fall, and asked for an overview of how the Conservation Award process works. Commissioner Winsor believes the City Administrator wasn't able to find a time for NRC members to do the onsite with the resident. Conservation applications are due August with the form and categories available on the website. There can be multiple winners in the year and winners receive a plaque given at the Council meeting by Mayor, and a write up in the North Oaks News. This will be put on the Spring March or April NRC agenda. City Staff will follow up with the Applicant to schedule an onsite visit in spring. Administrator Kress mentioned that the NRC has a budget of \$6,000 with \$1,655.50 used mainly for trees in 2019. There is money available for Awards.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Tick Task Force Report

- Commissioner White communicated an update from the October meeting. In attendance were Rick Kingston, David White, and Brooke More. Polco software updated group on Polco software. TTF will be using the Polco survey tool for the 2020 survey. The existing survey will be converted to Polco by City staff by mid-January, and links to educate residents on how to respond in North Oaks News, City e-blast, etc. Councilmember Rick Kingston to follow up with Polco on individual answers vs. household, asking for one responder per household. TTF will continue ongoing education including writing article on prevention, diagnosis, treatment, etc. The next meeting is January 21, 2020 at 7:00

p.m. Commissioner White will ask task force if they wish to have their committee minutes posted on the City website.

b. Kate Winsor's Report

- An article submitted for December 2020 North Oaks news as reminder for bird feeders height and regulations didn't get published as expected, possibly because it was a repeat reminder article. A New Year's resolution for the climate article has been submitted for the January issue.

She is also researching a movie screening of "Hometown Habitats, Stores of Bringing Nature Home" for viewing by the Community. She is working to line up partners with NOHOA/NEST and Garden club. There is no cost to partners, just helping to spreading the word and educating. The North Oaks Golf club has agreed to host the event, and waive the room rental fee. The Natural Resource Commission would pay for snacks, and she will work on the movie contract. March 4, March 25 or April 2 are movie viewing option dates, with the Committee choosing March 4 from 7 – 8:30 p.m. as the preferred date/time. She will submit for the grant to view and advertise the movie. This will be advertised via e-blast, Facebook and North Oaks news.

c. City Update

- Administrator Kress has been working with City council and Met Council to request a designation for North Oaks from "suburban" to "emerging suburban edge" which would change our density requirement in the Comp Plan from 5 – 1 to 3 – 1. Lino Lakes has an emerging designation, and this would apply to the outer ring of North Oaks not under the PDA restrictions. The Met Council asked for a density requirement which we have to acknowledge, but this does not mean we have to put it in our plan. This could impact potential Met Council funding for new projects, but this likely would not affect us. Kress is also spending time meeting with City staff and partners.

d. NOHOA/NEST Update

- Liaison Gorder and Rehder are working together on the pilot project on Pleasant Lake for Aquatic vegetation control since water quality is a benefit for all members. They are working with Steve McComas at Blue Water Science to come up with best practices and work towards a better experience on the beach. In effort to decrease the amount of swimmers itch, they plan to treat mid-June proactively around beach and remove docks to minimize geese droppings in water. They are also looking at clam raking to help rid of zebra mussels and Chinese mystery snail. This could be a Community oriented event which includes Boy Scout assistance as well. Forester Rehder will monitor water quality and take water samples to be tested regularly. Blue Water science will review vegetation in June, and determine how to make better sailboat and canoe access. NOHOA may reach out to residents who live along the lake and see if they'd like a 15 foot path cut for a fee, possibly \$200, to be done same time as clearing beach weeds. Gorder clarified that NOHOA owns both the beach and shoreline so feels this is pertinent to providing recreation for residents. The Ramsey county map system shows NOHOA property ownership within the various lakes. Rehder mentioned they feel confident in the vendor they have chosen to work with on this.

NEST Project – Representative Gordon stated the NEST committee has several priorities including: the overgrown Mary Hill park, applying for Level 2 VLAMO grant for entrance ponds, shoreline restoration and maintenance work. They are also collaborating with the Golf course on shoreline by hole #10, completing buckthorn removal and looking at new vegetation. Forest Rehder indicated the Emerald ash borer survey will take place in the winter. They continue to look where the hotspots are, let residents know, and remove trees where necessary to limit risk to people on trails and streets. Operation Clearview has removed a lot of dangerous brush adjoining roads. Commissioner Winsor asked about Purple Loosestrife with Rehder indicating he is keeping tuned in on it.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner White asked what the terms are for NRC members. Commissioner Winsor indicated that the terms are on the website. Administrator Kress will look to see if there are statutes or ordinance on Terms. White asked for more information on what they can and cannot do in regards to the Open Meeting law to maintain compliance. Mayor Nelson confirmed the Commission is subject to open meeting law and City staff will forward on additional reference material on this topic. White asked if we were covered by City insurance if need be, Kress mentioned this is typically the case but it is good practice to be aware of the regulations. Mayor Nelson mentioned that Council and Administrator will be looking at the appointment process going forward, and if there is need to put in more formal rules for NRC.

MISCELLANEOUS

Next Natural Resource Commission Meeting is Thursday, January 16, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURN:

**MOTION by White, seconded by Hawkins, to adjourn the Council meeting at 8:39 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Kevin Kress, City Administrator

Gregg Nelson, Mayor

Date approved_____



Please RSVP to JOIN US with 3 or more volunteers to help *Launch our Decade of Action!*

Environmental Commissions Gathering for Ramsey & Anoka County Cities –

Thursday February 13, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at

Ramsey County Library - Roseville 2180 Hamline Ave N, Roseville, MN 55113

Brainstorm ways our city environmental commissions can work together and with Ramsey & Anoka Counties to achieve our city's energy, climate and resilience goals!

Please RSVP <https://feb13environmentalcommissionsramseyanokaco.eventbrite.com>



Who should attend?

Commission Volunteers, Student Leaders and volunteers working to start environmental commissions

Agenda

6:00 p.m. **Student Commissioners, High School Environmental Club leaders** (pre event gathering)

6:30 p.m. **Updates from Cities** on their 2020 Environmental Commission work plans & on new resources from

- **Ramsey County** – organics recycling, energy & resilience, active living, food & nutrition
- **Met Council** – will give cities their community-wide GHG emissions data in June with annual updates

7:00 p.m. **Small Group Conversations** – brainstorm ways our commissions work together to meet our city's energy, climate & resilience goals by sharing sample ordinances, implementing projects and advancing state policy solutions (1) **Clean Energy** (2) **Efficient Buildings** (3) **Transportation** (4) **Resilience**

8:00 p.m. **Report outs from the Small Groups and Planning Our Next Steps**

8:30 p.m. **Networking** – new environmental commission volunteers can meet experienced volunteers

Plan to bring a team of 3 or more from your city. Please bring your own water bottle. Please RSVP for you and your team at <https://feb13environmentalcommissionsramseyanokaco.eventbrite.com>

Co-Hosted by Ramsey County and the Alliance for Sustainability



Alliance for Sustainability

Ecologically sound,
economically viable,
socially just and humane

For questions contact:

Sean Gosiewski, Executive Director,
Alliance for Sustainability
612-250-0389 | Sean@afors.org

Resilient Cities and Communities Coalition – We are cities and communities collaborating to achieve (and live) a resilient future by (1) Innovating Solutions, (2) Collaborating for Impact, (3) Engaging Community Stakeholders, (4) Shaping Public Policy, (5) Modeling Resilience to catalyze change

www.allianceforsustainability.com/resilientcities