

**REGULAR ANDOVER OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 14, 2021
MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Andover Open Space Advisory Commission was called to order by Chairperson Kim Kovich at 6:04 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners present: Erik Lindberg, Shelby Holubiw, Ryan Ingebritson, Jim Olson, and Jen Vedadi
Commissioners absent: None
Also present: Kameron Kytonen, Natural Resources Technician

RESIDENT FORUM

No one wished to address the Commission.

Commission member introduced themselves.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 11, 2020

Motion by Commissioner __Ingebritson__, Second by Commissioner __Olson__, to approve the minutes of March 11, 2020. Motion passed 6-0.

WELCOME TO NEW COMMISSIONER HOLUBIW

Chairperson Kovich welcomed the new Commissioners.

REVIEW PURPOSE/MISSION OF OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION (OSAC)

Mr. Kytonen stated that the mission of the group is posted on the website and he thought it would be a good time to have a refresher and provide the information with the new member.

Commissioner Olson stated that when the group was originally created there was a different mission statement. He recognized that the focus of the group has changed over time and the mission statement was most likely updated along with that. He asked how this mission was developed.

Mr. Kytonen commented that a previous member of the Commission provided a draft mission statement and the group provided input to reach this current mission statement. He agreed that the mission of the group has changed as the purpose of the group has evolved away from purchasing properties and towards the management of those areas.

Commissioner Olson asked if the Council has reviewed this mission statement.

Mr. Kytonen stated that it is posted on the website but was not formally approved by the Council. He stated that this could be something that is presented at the joint meeting with the Council.

Commissioner Holubiw asked how the group is tied to this mission and how it checks in to ensure the work continues to align with the mission.

Commissioner Ingebritson asked for information on how residents can reach out to the group. He stated that it would also be nice to see measurable actions that align with the mission.

Chairperson Kovich noted that a lot of ideas were discussed at the last meeting, including ideas on how to communicate with residents. He stated that in the past FunFest has been a great way for the residents to communicate with the Commission, along with the information posted on the website.

Commissioner Vedadi suggested that perhaps on the next agenda there should be an item to provide more structure and guidance for the work the group will prioritize over the next 12 months.

Chairperson Kovich recognized that the group has not met for the past year and therefore if a more structured meeting schedule can be followed, it would provide opportunity to identify priorities for the next year.

DISCUSS MAPLE VIEW GRANT (PARTNERSHIP WITH GREAT RIVER GREENING)

Mr. Kytonen stated that the City is partnering with Great River Greening on management and invasive species control activities within Maple View Preserve. He stated that the next project will be to complete a planting on May 15th which will focus on native shrubs and wildflowers and provided additional details. He stated that while Great River Greening will bring volunteers, it would be nice to solicit local volunteers as well. He encouraged members of the Commission to participate as well if available. He believed that the grant expires in one or two years and noted that he could verify the date on the contract.

DISCUSS MARTIN'S MEADOWS VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Mr. Kytonen commented that Martin's Meadows is the oldest of the preserves with the most diverse in terms of ecosystems. He stated that the City has received grants for this property in the past and continues to complete more management this year. He provided background information on the previous conditions of Martin's Meadows, the work that has been completed and planned management activities for this year. He stated that he would advise the Commission on when the prescribed burn may occur and noted that perhaps QCTV would be interested in providing coverage as well. He confirmed that the City does have educational signage that it could use.

Chairperson Kovich asked which funds would be used for the activity, as there is not an active grant on this property.

Mr. Kytonen commented that he has a Natural Resource Preservation Fund that he will be using.

DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR CROSSING AT DALSKA WOODLANDS (I.E. BOARDWALK)

Chairperson Kovich stated that there is water channel that basically cuts the preserve in half and prevents access to the other side in most times of the year. He stated that the need for a boardwalk has been discussed and plans were developed. He commented that the plans were more elaborate than the actual needs for the preserve. He provided the example of the wetland crossing at Kelsey Park, which would seem more fitting for the preserve setting.

Commissioner Olson agreed that the vision for the preserve is to remain natural and more primitive and therefore an elaborate boardwalk would not fit well into that setting.

Mr. Kytonen stated that the proposed, recommended design took into account safety, longevity, and whether it could support equipment. He noted that the preserve is not an area that receives heavy traffic or equipment.

Chairperson Kovich agreed that he would support a lesser design and cost, as he would not feel it appropriate to spend \$100,000 on a boardwalk crossing for the preserve.

Mr. Kytonen commented that trails and management would be needed on the southern side of the parcel. He commented that the more natural area and dead/fallen trees do make good habitat for wildlife.

Commissioner Vedadi agreed that she would support the lowest cost option and would not support a crossing that costs \$100,000 and would be very out of place in that setting.

Commissioner Lindberg asked the potential for a trail on that section of the preserve if equipment can get on that side of the channel. He commented that some portions seem unusable in terms of trail potential.

Chairperson Kovich provided additional details on the conditions of that section of the preserve. He stated that there are existing deer trails that can be walked and could be made into more standard preserve trails. He commented that the area could also remain as it is with the stipulation that area is going to remain more natural, and people are welcome to explore that area if they are able to cross the water. He stated that it is a nature preserve and perhaps this is just a section that is kept in its natural state for wildlife and could be explored by those that can cross the water.

Commissioner Vedadi noted that the intent of the open space funds was to preserve open space areas and therefore preserving that area as natural would match that intent. She stated that she has not visited Dalske because it feels like you are driving on someone's personal property. She stated that of all the preserves, that preserve seems to be the least inviting.

Mr. Kytonen agreed and stated that they have worked with the neighboring property owners to make the drive more inviting to visitors of the preserve. He stated that the boardwalk/crossing is in the CIP for 2023. He advised of previous grant attempts and noted that could continue to be an option. He stated that there are other options for a crossing that can continue to be discussed with the Council.

Chairperson Kovich commented that he would support a crossing similar to what exists at Kelsey Park, but nothing above that scale. He confirmed the consensus of the Commission not to pursue the \$100,000 design boardwalk and instead recommend a rustic crossing concept or leaving the other side in its natural state with no crossing.

Mr. Kytonen stated that perhaps it would aim to plan for a joint meeting later in the summer and the group be prepared with some ideas to discuss.

Commissioner Olson commented that if the group is going to tour preserves this year, perhaps that would be the best location to begin.

Motion by Commissioner Vedadi, Second by Commissioner Holubiw, to recommend a more rustic and lower cost alternative crossing if viable and recommended, and if not viable the recommendation would be to not have a formal crossing. Motion passed 6-0.

DISCUSS UPDATES TO MAPS AND GUIDE SIGNAGE AT PRESERVES

Chairperson Kovich stated that the purpose is to get everyone on the same page reviewing what is there and determining what is needed.

Mr. Kytonen stated that currently they have updated Maple View and Northwood preserves. He reviewed the updated signage that has been installed.

Chairperson Kovich displayed pictures from the road leading to Dalske Woodlands Preserve. He noted that the private landowners have a right to post their signs but noted that there are additional signs from the DNR and the City to help guide visitors. He also reviewed different kiosk features.

DISCUSS MEADOWS AT PETERSEN FARMS AND NEW ACCESS TO MARTIN'S MEADOWS

Chairperson Kovich identified the main access to Martin's Meadows and the elements included in the kiosk. He stated that there is major development to the south of this area and the suggestion was made that perhaps the Commission should look to be involved when sites adjacent to preserves develop to look for additional opportunities. He noted that the development to the east is almost complete and includes a nice, potential entrance to the preserve with a chipped trail.

Mr. Kytonen commented that there was an intention to have the access to the preserve as part of that development and therefore the City Attorney is now involved. He confirmed that the locations marked with stars are where signs will be installed.

Chairperson Kovich commented that staff is doing a great job with signage and upkeep of the kiosks.

DISCUSS ITEMS FOR JOINT MEETING WITH CITY COUNCIL

Chairperson Kovich stated that a list of potential discussion items was included in the Commission packet as part of the minutes from the last meeting and provided an overview of those ideas. He stated that he would prefer to schedule the joint meeting after the Commission's next meeting to provide additional time to refine and discuss that list. He suggested that perhaps the next Commission meeting take place in June in order to allow discussion prior to FunFest.

Mr. Kytonen stated that if the groups desires, they could meet at a preserve prior to the meeting to complete a walk through the preserve.

It was the consensus of the Commission to meeting on June 16th and then in September.

Mr. Kytonen commented that perhaps the Commission would like to schedule the joint meeting to occur after the September meeting.

RECAP OF NATURE PRESERVE TOUR WITH QCTV

Mr. Kytonen provided background noting that the first rendition of this occurred in 2017 and a second rendition was completed in 2020 with the intention of showcasing the preserves. He commented that everyone did a great job.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

- a. Next Meeting: June 16, 2021*

Noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Lindberg, Second by Commissioner Olson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kameron Kytonen
Natural Resources Technician

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Drafted by:
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary