

***REGULAR NATURE PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING
OCTOBER 12, 2022
MINUTES***

Prior to the Regular Meeting, the Commission conducted a walking tour of the Maple View Nature Preserve beginning at 5:00 p.m.

The Regular Meeting of the Andover Nature Preserve Commission was called to order by Chairperson Kim Kovich at 6:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners present: Jonathan Gwinn, Erik Lindberg, Ryan Ingebritson, and Jamie McGowan

Commissioners absent: Jim Olson and Jen Vedadi

Also present: Kameron Kytonen, Natural Resources Technician

RESIDENT FORUM

No one wished to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 10, 2022

Motion by Commissioner Ingebritson, Second by Commissioner Lindberg, to approve the minutes of August 10, 2022. Motion passed 5-0.

The Commission discussed the website and potentially updating some of the photographs of the preserves. It was also noted that photographs could be shared on social media to make more residents aware of the preserves.

Commissioner McGowan also suggested that option to create a hike with a Commission member event during the dry months of the season to increase awareness of the preserves.

Chair Kovich suggested that someone take a photo in a preserve and post it on the community page on social media that the group could review at the next meeting.

DISCUSS STATUS OF POTENTIAL CROSSING AT DALSKA WOODLANDS

Mr. Kytonen stated that this item moved forward to the City Council on September 20th with the recommendation from this Commission not to accept the grant. He noted that Commissioner Ingebritson attended and spoke on behalf of the Commission and the Council supported the recommendation of the Commission to not accept the grant funds.

Commissioner Ingebritson provided a summary of the action and discussion at the Council meeting, noting that he provided additional information on why the Commission recommended not to accept the grant. He stated that the Council did understand the input of the Commission that this would be overdesigned for the preserve and could damage the preserve during installation. He stated that Councilmember Holthus even mentioned that perhaps a floating crossing would work better in that environment. He asked what the options would be going forward.

Chair Kovich stated that the Commission was able to walk across during dry conditions and perhaps staff simply cuts a trail across to provide access. He stated that in speaking with the City Administrator he was made aware of a potential issue of liability in making a trail in an area that may become inundated with water but noted that concern has been resolved and could be addressed through signage.

Mr. Kytonen commented that he walked the area with the Parks Supervisor the previous week and they were able to walk across under the dry conditions and therefore it is likely they could cut a path to the south side and perhaps eventually make a trail through the southern portion. He stated that they would add signage that the path would be “at your own risk” as it could become inundated with water under wetter conditions.

Chair Kovich agreed that it would be preferred to cut the path and potential trail on the southern portion as opposed to the overdesigned crossing.

Mr. Kytonen noted that could be a temporary option to provide access. He commented that staff would most likely wait for ground freeze or early winter to take the forestry mower across and make a trail on the southern portion, noting that they would first want to cut the path across.

Commissioner Ingebritson commented that once the trail is cut, it would be great to post that on social media to alert residents to the new trail.

Chair Kovich stated that perhaps the path would be enough and access during dry times would be sufficient. He noted that perhaps the group could go out in Dalske prior to the December meeting, weather dependent.

DISCUSS POTENTIAL FUNDING OPTIONS FOR ACQUIRING MORE PRESERVES

Mr. Kytonen recapped the ideas brought forward by Commissioner Gwinn for potential funding options which was presented to the City Council at a workshop in August.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that he believed his presentation was well received, with an unknown direction of where this could lead. He stated that it seemed more members favored a system similar to park dedication rather than a referendum. He stated that it was mentioned that perhaps the question be posed to the community in a survey next year, which would help to provide guidance.

Mr. Kytonen commented that there will be a community survey and a question will be placed on that survey related to the potential of purchasing more property. He stated that will help to provide the Council with direction on the next steps. He noted that the Mayor was potentially in favor of another referendum.

Chair Kovich commented that perhaps Commissioner Gwinn could assist staff in development of the related survey question(s).

Commissioner Lindberg asked how the survey would be administered to residents.

Mr. Kytonen believed that the survey would be mailed and available to all residents.

Commissioner McGowan asked for more input on the temperature of the Council towards the potential funding ideas.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that while the Council generally seemed receptive, but some members wanted more time to think about it. He stated that there were some concerns with the challenge of finding properties to purchase. He noted that there were a variety of thoughts and input, recognizing that this would be an initial step in the process.

Commissioner McGowan asked if prior to the survey, would there be interest in determining if there is land available for purchase.

Mr. Kytonen commented that there was concern with the availability of land. He noted that in his opinion there is still a lot of land out there. He stated that when the group was initially formed, the property was ranked.

Chair Kovich stated that the group also only worked with willing property sellers and therefore not all highly ranked properties were available for sale at that time. It was noted that a member of the Holasek family spoke at a recent meeting related to potential property that could be available for sale for this purpose.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he will keep the Commission updated as the creation of the survey questions are developed and potentially the Commission and/or Commissioner Gwinn could provide input on the preserve question(s).

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Ingebritson asked if the kiosks in the preserves could be used to provide details on ash trees, encouraging residents to treat their trees.

Commissioner Lindberg asked if any of the trees in the preserves are treated.

Mr. Kytonen commented that very few would be worthy of treatment.

Commissioner Lindberg stated that perhaps the kiosk would be a great place to put educational material on ash trees and why some are not being treated.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he does include information in the City newsletter, Facebook page and website each year on EAB. He confirmed that there is space in the kiosk if that of information is desired. It was noted that perhaps information on oak wilt, or Dutch elm could be provided as well.

Commissioner McGowan agreed that would be helpful information and perhaps a City staff member could be listed for questions as well.

Commissioner Ingebritson agreed that he could work on developing a flyer for the group to review at the next meeting.

Commissioner Lindberg referenced a previous discussion when the group walked Martin's Meadows about potentially having an area where kayak access could be provided. He asked what would be necessary to move forward on that.

Chair Kovich commented that they would need to speak with the Parks Department as that is actually park property adjacent to the preserve.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he could follow up with parks staff about that potential.

a. Next Meeting: December 14, 2022

Chair Kovich stated that he can touch base with Mr. Kytonen prior to the meeting to determine if the group would like to walk Dalske prior to the meeting.

Mr. Kytonen asked and confirmed that the Commission would like to hold a joint meeting with the Council in 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Gwinn, Second by Commissioner Ingebritson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kameron Kytonen
Natural Resources Technician

Drafted by:
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary