

***REGULAR NATURE PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING
MARCH 22, 2023
MINUTES***

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, Ryan Ingebritson, Margaret Miller, Jamie McGowan, and Liliya Ustimchuk
Commissioners absent: Erik Lindberg
Also present: Kameron Kytonen, Natural Resources Technician

RESIDENT FORUM

No one wished to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 14, 2022

Motion by Commissioner McGowan, Second by Commissioner Gwinn, to approve the minutes of December 14, 2022. Motion passed 4-0 (2 present).

WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson Kovich introduced the new Commission members. He administered the Oath of Office to Commissioners Miller and Ustimchuk.

UPDATE ON STATUS AND FEATURES OF THE NATURE PRESERVES

Mr. Kytonen and Chair Kovich provided an overview of the Nature Preserves including features of note.

DISCUSS MAPLE VIEW GRANT (PARTNERSHIP WITH GREAT RIVER GREENING)

Mr. Kytonen provided an update on the progress completed thus far using the grant funds and the planned activities for this spring/summer. He noted that there may be opportunities for the group to assist with plantings if desired.

DISCUSS “PRESERVE PIC OF THE MONTH”

Mr. Kytonen stated that this concept was suggested at the last meeting. He provided an overview of the photos that were provided by Commissioners in January and February and shared on

social media and/or the City website. He stated that they would now want volunteers to take photos for March and April.

Commissioner McGowan volunteered for March and Chair Kovich volunteered for April.

OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Funding Sources and Properties***
- b. Community Survey***

Commissioner Gwinn provided an update on the process thus far noting that the next step would be to await the results of the public opinion survey.

Mr. Kytonen stated that the survey was intended to be released to the public in early winter but was delayed. He stated that the City Administrator would like to meet with the Council as well as the different boards and commissions to develop the questions for the survey.

Commissioner Gwinn noted a resident that previously addressed the Commission via open forum to provide details on her family farm property and interest in potentially working with the Commission to preserve parts of the property. He stated that they did reach out to follow up with the resident. He asked if there was an update for the land near the Rum River.

Chair Kovich stated that three parcels total 120 acres and he has had recent conversations with the City Administrator, Minnesota Land Trust, and Anoka Conservation District. He provided background information on the property which was previously proposed to the Commission for purchase but ultimately did not move forward. He stated that recently there has again been discussion about a desire for preservation. He noted that by default 60 percent of the property would be preserved because of the wetlands and floodplain. He explained how the property could be developed and provided similar examples within Andover. He stated that they have reached out to other agencies to determine if there are funds available to preserve the property, or portions of the property.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that he believes there are funds available specifically for property near the Rum River as well.

Chair Kovich stated that if the group were interested, perhaps the next step would be to invite the Minnesota Land Trust to attend the next meeting for further discussion.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that he is passionate about expanding and preserving natural areas and thanked Chair Kovich for his research. He supported continuing to bring this forward and learn more.

Commissioner Ingebritson agreed, noting that it was encouraging that the resident brought the concept of preservation forward. He appreciated the work Commissioner Gwinn has been doing

to pursue additional funding opportunities. He recognized that time is of the essence as Andover continues to develop at a rapid pace.

Mr. Kytonen noted that when multiple family members are involved there are often differing opinions on what should be done with the land.

Chair Kovich stated that they should not focus on just one property and provided some examples of other properties that could be of interest to the Commission.

Commissioner McGowan stated that while she was excited about the properties mentioned, she agrees with looking more broadly and continuing to look at different methods of funding.

Commissioner Miller asked if there is guidance from the city on a goal for preservation in the community. She commented that there is a lot of land that is not buildable because of things like wetlands. She asked if there is a balance between development and preservation.

Mr. Kytonen replied that there is not a set goal to his knowledge.

Commissioner Gwinn stated that basically thus far, the Commission used the funds from the referendum to purchase properties to be used as preserves.

Chair Kovich provided more historical context on how the preserves were purchased.

Commissioner Miller agreed that it makes sense to pursue additional funding sources.

Commissioner Ustimchuk agreed that it makes sense to pursue outside funding to preserve as much land as possible.

Chair Kovich recommended that the Minnesota Land Trust be invited to the next meeting to provide additional information on funding opportunities. He noted that this may increase the meeting frequency. He stated that the group previously discussed a potential canoe landing for Martins Meadows and has since discovered that should be a shoreline stabilization project.

The Commission and staff discussed recent and proposed development activity.

Mr. Kytonen noted the previously developed mission statement and felt it would be helpful to review the information with the Commission, given the new members that have joined.

Commissioner McGowan commented that she would still be interested in the walk with a Commissioner concept that the group previously discussed, and confirmed that the group is still interested once the weather improves. It was confirmed that the item would be added to the next agenda for further discussion. She also suggested adding a fun fact or educational component to the preserve of the month photos.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that he could assist with the additional information to go along with the photos.

c. Next Meeting: May 10, 2023

Noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Ingebritson, Second by Commissioner Gwinn, to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kameron Kytonen
Natural Resources Technician

Drafted by:
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary