

**REGULAR NATURE PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING**  
**MAY 4, 2022**  
**MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Andover Nature Preserve Commission was called to order by Chairperson Kim Kovich at 6:05 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Prior to the meeting the Commission completed a walking tour of Martin's Meadows Preserve at 17101 Navajo Street NW.

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 – March 9, 2022**

**Motion** by Commissioner Ingebritson, Second by Commissioner Lindberg, to approve the minutes of March 9, 2022. Motion passed 5-0.

**DISCUSS STATUS OF POTENTIAL CROSSING AT DALSKA WOODLANDS**

Chair Kovich stated that he attended the workshop of the City Council the previous week.

Mr. Kytonen stated that an engineering firm was hired to do a study and analysis on boardwalk options.

Chair Kovich commented that there was agreement on the wooden boardwalk, but the cost was still twice the cost of the land itself. He stated that the opinion of the Commission was expressed as a dislike of the cost of the proposed options, but that would be the decision of the City Council. He noted that he visited the preserve the previous week and walked through, at most eight inches of water. He stated that perhaps residents are encouraged to bring their boots in order to access that area.

Mr. Kytonen stated that the water level varies depending on the weather conditions. It was noted that the City is going to attempt to obtain grant funds for the boardwalk. He recognized that the Commission would be supportive of a less costly, simple option for the boardwalk, but it will ultimately be the decision of the City Council.

Commissioner Gwinn asked if there are alternate options to provide access to that area.

Mr. Kytonen stated that there are no other access options at this time. He noted that although the property to the south could have provided access, that property was sold, and a home was built. He stated that perhaps there could be access from the east if there were an easement. He stated that in order to be eligible for the grant, the plans also had to include class five gravel to be placed to provide the access to the boardwalk in order to provide ADA compliant access. He commented that the City could do that work in-house, but it does add additional cost and time.

***UPDATE ON STATUS AND FEATURES OF THE NATURE PRESERVES***

Mr. Kytonen stated that about \$20,000 is left on the grant for Mapleview, therefore more management will be done in the preserve and provided an overview of the work Great River Greening will be doing in terms of planting, prairie restoration, and volunteer events.

Commissioner Lindberg asked and received confirmation that if the grant funds are not fully used, the remainder would need to be returned. He asked the cost of the plantings.

Mr. Kytonen estimated about \$10,000 for the plantings. He commented that there is additional work that could be done to use the funds within the allotted timeframe.

Commissioner Lindberg asked what else could be done with the grant funds.

Mr. Kytonen commented that invasive species management could be done.

Commissioner Lindberg asked if educational signs could be added to use the funds and educate the public.

Mr. Kytonen commented that the grant funds run through 2023 and he will keep the group up to date on the activity within the preserve. He stated that he could check to see if educational signage would be an eligible expense for the grant funds.

Mr. Kytonen moved to Martin's Meadows and Chair Kovich commented that it is in really good shape noting the group visited the preserve prior to the meeting tonight. Chair Kovich provided background on the problems that were being caused by snowmobiles and the fencing and signage that was installed to deter that activity.

Mr. Kytonen moved to Northwoods and noted that it is in good shape.

Chair Kovich noted the new access that was provided. It was noted that this is a unique preserve as it has three access points.

***DISCUSS STATUS OF PROMOTION IDEAS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE NATURE PRESERVES (“GET OUTSIDE” CAMPAIGN)***

Mr. Kytonen stated that this was initiated by Commissioner Vedadi. He stated that the smaller committee has met a few times with Davinci Academy and provided an update noting that the school will bring a group of students to Northwoods and then to Mapleview.

Commissioner Gwinn commented on the different activities that the school will be doing in the preserve.

Mr. Kytonen welcomed any Commission members that would like to attend and participate noting that it will occur from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Gwinn asked if there is data on the number of users for the preserves.

Mr. Kytonen replied that they do not have that data.

Chair Kovich commented that he has never encountered anyone at Dalske when he has been there but there are a lot of users at Martin’s Meadows. He stated that he typically notices vehicles near the entrance of Northwoods as well.

***DISCUSS POTENTIAL FUNDING OPTIONS FOR ACQUIRING MORE PRESERVES***

Commissioner Gwinn reviewed the range of benefits provided by the preserves. He reviewed his proposal which would create a fund that would be used to purchase land to continue the preservation of open space. He noted that there would be a sliding fee that would be used to determine a contribution by developers. He stated that this system would not raise taxes for this purpose but would place that upon new development. He asked if the Commission would support this type of proposal.

Chair Kovich noted that the presentation compared Andover to Blaine and asked for more information.

Commissioner Gwinn noted that the City of Blaine dedicates 35 percent of the park dedication fees towards open space and trails. He recognized that may not work in Andover as the park system has a need for their park dedication funds and that is why he proposed the alternate calculation. He noted that this would be a method to obtain funds without using a referendum.

Chair Kovich asked if there were other communities that use this type of funding method, other than Chicago as that does not really compare to Andover.

Commissioner Gwinn stated that he did not find such model. He noted that some cities have a requirement for a percentage of land to be dedicated.

Commissioner McGowan asked who would pay the fee, a developer or homeowner.

Commissioner Gwinn replied that the developer would pay the fee, similar to park dedication. He recognized that the fee is then passed on to homeowners in the ultimate cost of the home, similar to other infrastructure and development costs.

Commissioner McGowan asked who would control the fund.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that it would fall to the City Council ultimately, with the Commission providing recommendations.

Chair Kovich commented that developers always complain about the cost of lots and asked the comparison of pricing for development fees in Andover compared to other communities.

Commissioner Gwinn stated that he spoke with the park department and found out that park dedication for Andover is higher at \$4,500 per unit while the metro average is \$3,100 per unit. He commented that this would add to that cost if the open space calculation were added as well. He stated that they would have to ask whether adding an additional \$1,400 per home would push developers away, even if there was the added benefit of open space preservation. He did not believe that it would, noting the high use of the preserves that are adjacent to developments. He noted that wooded lots, or wetland view homes are sold at a higher premium and therefore preservation of open space would provide premium lots as well.

Mr. Kytonen asked and received confirmation that the intention would be to model something similar to what Blaine does.

Commissioner Gwinn confirmed that but noted that he did not believe that parks would be willing to share a portion of the park dedication as their current plan for the parks relies on those funds. He noted that Blaine used part of that funding to create a wetland bank which provides benefit to the community and environment but was also used to gain money as the credits can be sold to developers.

Commissioner Lindberg commented on the impressive presentation and noted that he would be in support of this as it is an outside of the box idea that would not increase taxes for existing residents and would put that burden on new developers. He did not think that the cost of \$1,000 to \$2,000 would break the bank on the cost for a new home in Andover. He commented that many people choose Andover because it is more open, and this concept would help to preserve that. He stated that perhaps there would be some developers pushed away, but that would help to appeal to the residents that do not support the current rate of growth Andover is experiencing.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that this would be one way to help provide balance between development and preservation of open space.

Chair Kovich stated that before he would support this, he would want to see more information. He stated that perhaps comparisons to other communities would be helpful.

Commissioner Gwinn reviewed some of the park dedication rates of other communities.

Commissioner Ingebritson commented that Commissioner Gwinn did a phenomenal job on this presentation and proposal. He did not think a developer would have much pause over a cost of \$1,400 but recognized that those funds could add up quickly to purchase undeveloped land to be preserved. He thanked Commissioner Gwinn for his work.

Mr. Kytonen also thanked Commissioner Gwinn for his work on this. He noted that if there is general support from the Commission, they could take this further. He suggested perhaps bringing this to the Andover Review Committee which is composed of staff and could provide additional input.

Chair Kovich agreed that would be a good step as they could provide great feedback and the support of that group would be important before going to the City Council. He noted that group could help to provide more justification for the calculation.

It was the consensus of the Commission for Commissioner Gwinn or Andover City staff to bring this forward to the Andover Review Committee to gain additional feedback.

### ***DISCUSS TREE ORDINANCE IDEAS***

Commissioner Gwinn reviewed the current minimum tree requirements of Andover, which has not been updated since 2002. He stated that since that time, many communities have updated their requirements related to tree preservation and planting. He provided a proposal with potential revisions to the current Andover Code related to tree preservation and minimum tree requirements.

Chair Kovich asked how this compares to the requirements the City currently has.

Commissioner Gwinn reviewed the current regulations for residential development and noted that his proposal would strengthen those requirements by adding one tree to the current regulations. He stated that there would be additional trees required on lots that are heavily wooded prior to development.

Mr. Kytonen stated that currently there are no penalties to removing trees prior to a development proposal.

Commissioner McGowan asked why Maplewood was chosen for comparison.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that he used Maplewood and Blaine which are both stricter than Andover and attempted to find a balance between those two.

Commissioner Ingebritson asked how this proposal would apply to this Commission and its mission.

Commissioner Gwinn noted that many residential developments are near preserves. He stated that his attempt was to gain input from the Commission on this topic even though this may not

fall under the purview of the Commission. He stated that this could however help to preserve nature in the community and not just within the preserves.

Commissioner Lindberg asked if the known percentage of tree canopy in Andover is known.

Mr. Kytonen was unsure of the percentage at this time.

Commissioner Ingebritson stated that while he likes the idea, he was unsure how this would directly relate to the Commission with the exception of the mentioned fund contribution.

Chair Kovich stated that his first thought was that this would be outside of the purview of this Commission and would fall more under the realm of planning and zoning.

Mr. Kytonen thanked Commissioner Gwinn for his work on this topic and suggested this also go forward to the Andover Review Committee for input. He noted that if support is gained at that level, it could then go forward to Planning and Zoning, and ultimately the City Council.

Commissioner Lindberg commented that while he did not think this falls under the Commission, he does support it as a resident.

Commissioner Ingebritson agreed that although this does not fall under the Commission, he would also support it. He noted that when making presentations to the other groups that would be tasked with this duty, it could be said that the Commission supports this concept.

#### ***DISCUSS NATURE PRESERVE COMMISSION INVOLVEMENT IN PASSIVE PARKS***

Mr. Kytonen stated that this concept came forward from a City Council member and was discussed by the Park and Recreation Commission, which had varying opinions. He provided examples of passive parks. He noted that passive parks are undeveloped, unimproved property dedicated as park and mostly left in their natural state.

Chair Kovich asked if staff could provide a map with the passive parks in Andover before the Commission would make a decision.

Commissioner Gwinn stated that Coon Creek Park/Tom Anderson Trail is about 40 acres and is need of management of invasive species. He stated that he would be in support of this.

Commissioner Lindberg stated that he would see this as a benefit where the Commission can provide insight.

Commissioner McGowan asked why this came back to this Commission.

Mr. Kytonen stated that there was a desire to have a decision made from this group before moving it onward in relation to the Park and Recreation Commission and then City Council.

**Motion** by Commissioner McGowan, Second by Commissioner Lindberg, to proceed with the passive parks proposal. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Kytonen recognized that there are a lot of unknowns at this time that would be worked out with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Chair Kovich asked if a map of the passive parks could be provided to this group at its next meeting.

***OTHER BUSINESS***

None.

***a. Next Meeting: August 3, 2022***

Noted.

Commissioner Gwinn commented that if positive feedback is received from the Andover Review Committee related to the proposed funding option for preserves, he would prefer to keep that moving rather than have it delayed by the limited meeting schedule of the Commission.

Chair Kovich noted that staff can also send out information to the Commission to keep them updated.

Commissioner Gwinn stated that he would prefer to have a formal motion of support from the Commission if this were to move forward to the City Council.

***ADJOURNMENT***

**Motion** by Commissioner Lindberg, second by Commissioner Ingebritson to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kameron Kytonen  
Natural Resources Technician

Drafted by:  
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary