

REGULAR NATURE PRESERVE COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 17, 2023
MINUTES

Prior to the regular meeting, the Commission met at Martin's Meadows located at 17101 Navajo St. NW to conduct a walking tour of the preserve.

The Regular Meeting of the Andover Nature Preserve 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: Jonathan Gwinn, Ryan Ingebritson (arrived at 6:12 p.m.), Erik Lindberg, Margaret Miller, Jamie McGowan, and Liliya Ustimchuk
Commissioners absent: None
Also present: Kameron Kytonen, Natural Resources Technician

RESIDENT FORUM

No one wished to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 22, 2023 and April 25, 2023

Motion by Commissioner McGowan, Second by Commissioner Lindberg, to approve the minutes of March 22, 2023 and April 25, 2023. Motion passed 6-0.

DISCUSS MAPLE VIEW GRANT (PARTNERSHIP WITH GREAT RIVER GREENING)

Mr. Kytonen stated that they are in the last phase of the grant partnership at Maple View which will include planting aggressive shrubs. He stated that they began the prep work by tilling the reed canary grass area but had some issues and the tiller got stuck. He stated that they will not be able to complete the tilling and will instead spray before planting the shrubs. He noted that the grant expires at the end of June.

Chair Kovich asked if the funds would be used by the end of the grant period.

Mr. Kytonen confirmed that they would be using the remainder of the funds through the planting. He noted that additional work would be done in the prairie area with spraying and native wildflower plug planting.

Commissioner Ingebritson arrived.

Mr. Kytonen stated that Dalske is on hold for mowing and trail cutting because of the wet conditions.

DISCUSS “PRESERVE PICS OF THE MONTH”

Mr. Kytonen stated that they implemented this program over the last few months and noted that it seems to be well liked. He confirmed that Chair Kovich would be handling this month.

Chair Kovich commented that he will be taking photos in Northwoods Preserve. He asked for a volunteer for June.

Commissioner Miller volunteered to do Maple View in June and Commissioner Ustimchuk volunteered to do Martin’s Meadows in July.

Commissioner McGowan volunteered for Dalske in August and Commissioner Gwinn volunteered for Northwoods in September.

DISCUSS FUTURE LAND OPTIONS (MINNESOTA LAND TRUST)

Chair Kovich commented that he met with Mr. Kytonen the previous week to discuss the options provided by the representative from the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT). He stated that there was a question at the listening session as to whether the City has conservation easements over the preserves.

Mr. Kytonen stated that in talks with Mr. Dickinson an easement would not be necessary as the preserves would continue in perpetuity because the referendum dollars were used to purchase the land.

Chair Kovich referenced the Schmelzer property and stated that part of the property is already encumbered by the scenic river restrictions. He noted that while that portion of the property would not be buildable, it still remains private property compared to the preserves which have public access. He stated that if a development were to come forward, there would then be the question of who would control the undevelopable land. He noted that if an HOA were to possess the open space or park, there still would not be public access.

Mr. Kytonen noted that while in the past the group did not pursue land that was not developable, there are portions of the existing preserves that would not be developable if the land were still privately owned.

Commissioner Gwinn asked if that land could be deeded to the City rather than remain in the possession of an HOA.

Mr. Kytonen provided more information on options that would be available for negotiation should a developer come through with a Planned Unit Development (PUD). He noted that the ultimate decision will be of the Schmelzer family as they own the land.

Commissioner Ingebritson stated that perhaps Mr. Dickinson should be informed that the Commission is going to continue to look at financing options and would like to stay involved should the parcel come forward with a development proposal.

Chair Kovich confirmed that he could meet with Mr. Dickinson as a follow-up. He reviewed some of the funding sources that were mentioned by the representative from the MLT.

Commissioner Gwinn noted another option that could be available to conserve land through density transferring, which would allow a combination of development and preservation of land. He stated that if they are waiting for the results of the resident survey to determine whether a referendum would be an option, perhaps they should also focus on creating some zoning tools that could also provide preservation options. He stated that it appears that there is no direction at this time as there is a desire for additional land but no funding. He stated that perhaps they could reach out through a mailer to determine if there are willing sellers for this purpose and then if the resident survey results support a referendum, they would also know at that time if there are willing sellers.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he would have to check with Mr. Dickinson to determine if that would be within the allowed scope.

Chair Kovich commented that perhaps they could review some of the land to determine which properties should be included on the list.

Commissioner Ingebritson asked the status of the resident survey.

Mr. Kytonen stated that the intent was for that to be completed in late winter/early spring and was unsure what the hold up was.

Commissioner Gwinn stated that in the last update he received it sounded like there was a desire for a fall survey rather than a spring survey.

Chair Kovich asked when the next joint meeting would be with the Commission and City Council. It was noted as May of 2022. He stated that perhaps this would be a good time to schedule a joint meeting for the year.

Mr. Kytonen stated that with the group next meeting in September, perhaps it would be appropriate to schedule a joint meeting with the Council for October or November.

Chair Kovich stated that he will also plan to meet with Mr. Dickinson to gauge the level of support and information that would be helpful for discussions with the Council. He stated that he can also speak with the Conservation District to review their priority properties.

The group discussed the use of social media to gauge interest of residents.

Commissioner Ingebritson stated that he will work on some draft language that they could post using their personal pages to gauge resident interest in additional preserve land.

Mr. Kytonen stated that he will also obtain feedback from Mr. Dickinson prior to posting of that type of information.

OTHER BUSINESS

a. Martin's Meadows Canoe Options

Chair Kovich confirmed the consensus of the Commission with this site for a canoe landing. He commented that a paddlers welcome sign could be posted so that people on the river would be aware they could stop at that location.

b. Next Meeting: September 13, 2023

Noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Ingebritson, Second by Commissioner Gwinn, to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kameron Kytonen
Natural Resources Technician

Drafted by:
Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary