

# Winona County Parks & Environment Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday February 7, 2023 - 4:30 p.m.

Location: County Office Building

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Committee Members Present:      John Howard                              George Howe  
   Matt Neil                                      Amanda Gentry  
   Kristin Dieterman                              Sadie Neuman  
   Beth Stanford                                      Dave Eastep  
   Chris Meyer

Staff Present:                              Kay Qualley                                      Aaron Lafee  
   Lew Overhaug

### **1.0 Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chair Amanda Gentry.

### **2.0 Introductions and Welcome New Members**

All committee members introduced themselves and welcomed new members.

### **3.0 Election of Officers**

#### **A. Chair**

Kay Qualley, Planning & Environmental Services Director, as Acting Secretary, called for nominations for Chair. Amanda Gentry nominated John Howard. Hearing no further nominations, the Parks and Environment Advisory Committee voted on John Howard for the Chair position. Vote: Yes – All.

#### **B. Vice Chair**

Chair John Howard called for nominations for Vice Chair. Sadie Neuman nominated Kristin Dieterman; seconded by Amanda Gentry. Hearing no further nominations, the Parks and Environment Advisory Committee voted on Kristin Dieterman for the Vice Chair position. Vote: Yes – All.

### **4.0 Approval of Agenda**

On motion by Amanda Gentry and seconded by George Howe, the Parks & Environment Advisory Committee voted to approve the agenda. Vote: Yes – All.

### **5.0 Approval of Minutes of November 1, 2022 Meeting**

On motion by Matt Neil and seconded by Beth Stanford, the Parks & Environment Advisory Committee voted to approve the minutes. Vote: Yes – All.

## **6.0 Apple Blossom Park Update**

Kay Qualley gave a PowerPoint presentation which included a short history of Apple Blossom Park, mapping exhibits, along with enhancement work to the park since 2017 and proposed work plans for 2023. A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Grant opportunity was presented to the Parks Committee to be used for obtaining and installing a recreational structure (picnic shelter), creating educational signage, paving the parking lot, and creating an ADA-accessible paved path to the structure. The project would start the Fall of 2023, or later, depending on the approvals from the MN DNR. All work must be completed by June 30, 2025. Discussion about park sub-committees ensued to help care for park upkeep and utilized potentially as a match for the grant funds.

On motion by Matt Neil and seconded by Kristin Dieterman, the Parks and Environment Advisory Committee voted to approve creation of an application for this grant to the MN DNR which will be sent to the Winona County Board for approval to apply. Vote: Yes – All.

## **7.0 Farmers Park Update**

Kay Qualley's presentation included a short history of Farmers Park, and recent park work completed at Farmers Park. Aaron Lafee gave an update on the zip line equipment that arrived damaged, which had been ordered the end of 2022. Additionally, Aaron Lafee gave information regarding the difficulty of finding contractors to give estimates for pavilion repairs at Farmers Park.

Amanda Gentry presented a grant opportunity, to be submitted by the Winona County SWCD, for prairie or native plant installation through the BWSR HELP Grant and shared a map of the proposed areas in Farmers Park for the plantings. A. LaFee asked that plantings not be too close to pavilions or obscure the entrance or prevent walking along the creek. Positive input was provided by members. On motion by Kristin Dieterman and seconded by Beth Stanford, the Parks and Environment Advisory Committee voted to support the SWCD application for Winona County Farmers Park. Vote: Yes – All. The idea of park subcommittees arose again to support grant requirements and provide volunteer hours.

## **8.0 Stone Point Park Update**

Kay Qualley's presentation included Stone Point history, photos of the park and information about the increased rate for marker gardener plots approved by the County Board for the 2023 Fee Schedule. The Natural Resources Conservation Partners Legacy Grant request for bids for work will move forward as the Conservation Corps has declined to do work due to lack of staff.

Kay shared recycling and solid waste updates, in response to inquiries. The Environmental Planner staff opening for helping with parks, recycling and sustainability is not yet posted.

## **9.0 Area Trails Update**

No area trails update were given by members or staff.

**10.0 Member Updates**

Sadie Neuman shared the “Dinner on the Bluff: Towards a Minnesota Driftless Hiking Trail” to be held Saturday February 11, 2023, at 5:00PM at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center in Lanesboro, MN.

Kristin Dieterman shared buckthorn removal work done by Rec Alliance. She recommended collaborative work with them.

**11.0 Next Meeting Date: April 4, 2023 at 4:30PM**

Kristin Dieterman requested a couple future agenda items: discussion regarding developing a park plan for Farmers Park and discussion about Community Garden policies. As the One Watershed One Plan develops, members inquired if there anything the Parks and Environment Advisory Committee would have the opportunity to weigh in on.

Sadie Neuman shared the idea of forming a subcommittee or volunteer committee for Community Gardens. Additionally she shared details about the Midwest Climate Summit to be held February 21 – 23, 2023 for individuals.

John Howard shared that in March 2023, there will be a watershed informational seminar.

**12.0 Adjourn**

On motion by Matt Neil and seconded by Amanda Gentry, the Parks Committee adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anne Schwertel, Administrative Specialist

Signed by: John W. Howard  
Committee Chair/Vice Chair

4-4-23  
Date