

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

July 20, 2026 5:30 pm
Edgewater Bay Pavilion

Members Present:

Amy Leach
Wende Taylor
Kent Rahn
Joe Staloch
Tom Jones
Whitney Sauer
Therese Salazar

Members Absent:

Ted Herman (Ex-Officio)

Staff in Attendance:

Cathy Malakowsky, Engagement and Enrichment Director
Ben Bangert, Parks Superintendent
Dani Bakken, Recreation Coordinator
Afton Wacholz, Recreation Administrative Assistant
Ian Rigg, City Manager

Others in Attendance:

Jill Bangert

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Amy Leach at 5:30pm.

Adopt Agenda:

Wende Taylor made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Tom Jones seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 7-0. Motion declared passed.

Approval of the Minutes:

Whitney Sauer made the motion to approve the minutes from the June 15, 2026 meeting and Wende Taylor seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 7-0. Motion declared passed.

Public Items:

None

Old Business Items:

None

New Business Items:

Support of disposal of Doreda Park parcel (108 Giles) –

The City Manager presented information as it relates to private ownership and in large part the Council's idea of selling/disposing the property. The City Manager requested either at this meeting or the following on, August 17th, the Park Board's expressed support or concerns in the form of a recommendation or communication to the Council. The RFP shows what the intent or action item for their review and that is simply adding a taxable lawn to neighboring properties that could potentially clear up zoning issues, create small building improvements and more all while not changing the visual aesthetic of the neighborhood. City Manager and Council have expressed they do not see a challenge in continuing access to public play spaces as there are 3 in no less than 3 blocks away west, east or south of the park space. The Community Development Director agrees that this aligns with the City's intentions.

The City does not want to undo the neighborhood aesthetics so this process would restrict what improvements can be done. The RFP process does not guarantee the homeowner would be awarded the property as anyone would be able to submit a proposal.

The advisory board asked about the significance of the Park name. City staff advised that there is still a need for more legal research into this question.

The advisory board chose to table this item until the August 17, 2026 meeting and requested more information on the additional research.

Review and comment on Strategic Plan –

The City Manager presented information as it relates to the Strategic Plan. The City Manager would appreciate in either this meeting or the following on August 17th the Park Board's expressed support or concerns in the form of a recommendation or communication to the Council. The City is asking all boards and commissions to have a chance to review the plan and provide feedback to the Council. There is no expectation of any significant changes or additions to the plan, this is more a chance to express any concerns or support.

There was no further discussion or action on this item.

Staff Report Discussion:

Cathy Malakowsky shared The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission recently designated the Songbird Trail as a regional trail, paving the way for future grant funding.

Cathy also updated the board on the Recreation Manager position. There were 32 applications this time around and there will be a second in person interview with a top candidate on Friday.

Staff Updates:

None

Board Member Items:

Therese Salazar – Inquired about the absence of signage for wildlife crossing on Bridge Ave just north of Eastgate Rd. on the east side near the bench and wildflower garden. Staff informed her that this would be in the County's jurisdiction.

Wende Taylor – asked about the status of the Senior Center. Staff discussed the conditions at the current location in Skyline Mall and the continued work on a design for a new location at the Jim and Duke's building (old Health Reach) on south Broadway.

Adjournment: Tom Jones made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting and Wende Taylor seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 7-0. Motion declared passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Afton Wacholz
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

Amy Leach
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Vice-Chair