

**CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

January 11, 2023 • 6:00 p.m.

City Hall • 1101 Victoria Curve

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
 - a. December 12, 2022 Natural Resources Commission Work Session Meeting Minutes
 - b. December 14, 2022 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes
- 4. New Business**
 - a. 2023 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Schedule
 - b. Frozen Fun Fest Update
 - c. Staffing Update
- 5. Old Business**
 - a. 2023 Work Plan Draft Review
- 6. Commissioner Comments**
- 7. Adjourn Meeting**

**CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
Monday, December 12, 2022- 6:00 P.M.
Mendota Heights City Hall-Conference Room**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Coordinator Spreiter called the roll. Commissioners present: Fahnhorst, McCaslin, Husbands, Quick, Swank, Stein, Tupper. Student Representative Byrnes present. Commissioners absent: None. Staff present: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter and Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson.

3. New Business

a. 2023 Work Plan Discussion

Assistant City Administrator facilitated a SWOT analysis with the Natural Resources Commission.

The commission identified the following themes:

Strengths:

- Support from elected representatives
- Engaged community supportive of natural resources investment
- Natural Resources Management Plan
- Small city allows for agility and responsiveness to natural resources needs
- Mixed resources and wildlife, existing green space

Weakness:

- Limited community knowledge on issues and concerns
- Limited budget and resources to respond to needs
- Limited staff capacity to manage grants and projects
- New commission is still learning and gearing up

Opportunities:

- Partnerships with cities, Dakota County and other agencies
- Mendota Heights as a Leader in Natural Resources
- Educating and Empowering residents
- Ordinance and Policy opportunities
- Coordination with other city commissions

Threats:

- Invasive Species
- Climate Change
- Perception of optional investment in natural resources
- Some degraded natural areas
- Potential future reduction of investment

Coordinator Spreiter reviewed goals defined in previous work plan discussions to identify specific action items the commission was interested in pertaining to each goal. The goals identified were:

1. Ordinance Policy and Development
2. Education and Outreach
3. Urban Forestry Awareness and Opportunities
4. Green Steps
5. Sustainability

4. Adjourn

Auxiliary aids for persons with disabilities are available at least 120 hours in advance. If a notice of less than 120 hours is received, the City of Mendota Heights will make every attempt to provide the aids. This may not, however, be possible on short notice. Please contact City Administration at 651-452-1850.

**CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 14, 2022- 6:00 P.M.
Mendota Heights City Hall-Council Chambers**

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission was held on Wednesday, December 14, 2022, at Mendota Heights City Hall; 1101 Victoria Curve.

1. Call to Order

Chair Swank called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. Roll Call

Coordinator Spreiter called the roll. Commissioners present: Fahnhorst, McCaslin, Husbands, Swank, Stein. Commissioners Absent: Student Representative Byrnes, Commissioners Quick, Tupper. Staff present: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter and Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Husbands, second by Fahnhorst.

Motion passed 5-0.

4. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Approve meeting minutes from the November 10, 2022 Natural Resources Commission Meeting

Commissioner Husbands asked for clarification regarding an item included in the minutes but had not included in the work session.

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson clarified that the December work session did not have capacity to include the conversation on the site visit but that staff would bring that discussion forward to the commission at a future date.

Motion to approved the minutes by Stein, seconded by McCaslin

Motion passed 5-0

5. New Business

- a. 2023 Community Event Calendar

Coordinator Spreiter presented a community event calendar that pertains to the work of the Natural Resources Commission.

Commissioner Stein asked for clarification on the Spring Lake Park hike, Coordinator Spreiter clarified that that event is hosted through Dakota County.

Commissioner Husbands asked how the event calendar would be posted

Coordinator Spreiter shared that the city posts city events on the city calendar. Assistant City Administrator Torkelson added that the city's new website will include capacity to highlight Natural Resources specific events.

Chair Swank asked what events would be good to plan for tabling events for the commission. Coordinator Spreiter reviewed city events that would be potential options

for the commission to volunteer at. Assistant City Administrator Torkelson recommended looking at the city's legacy events as opportunities for the commission to table and do engagement with the community. Commissioner Stein also offered that the national night out event would also be a potential engagement opportunity. Chair Swank also shared that it would make sense to do something around arbor day. Commissioner Fahnhorst also wanted to do something at the city's tree sale event.

Commissioner Swank inquired if there would be an opportunity to be involved at Dakota County events. Coordinator Spreiter shared that staff would want to connect on specific opportunities with Dakota County Staff.

b. **2023 Potential Natural Resources Grant Opportunities**

Coordinator Spreiter reviewed a grant tracking spreadsheet including past grants the city has applied for or received.

Commissioner McCaslin was interested in continued tracking of the spreadsheet.

Commissioner Stein asked how many grants staff would be able to pursue in a year. Coordinator Spreiter shared that it depended on the grant and the requirements pertaining to the grant. Currently she is managing 5-6 grants for the city.

Commissioner Stein asked if we have pursued federal grants. Coordinator Spreiter shared that the city has not applied for federal grants, but we did pursue a bonding request for Oheyawahe last year but that request was not including in the legislative bonding bill.

Chair Swank asked if we have pursued any grants through the Minnesota Historical Society. Coordinator Spreiter shared that we actually had applied for and received that grant last year for an interpretive plan for Oheyawahe and that staff would be pursuing that grant again for next year to continue the work. Chair Swank is interested in a site visit to Oheyawahe.

c. **2023 Preliminary Natural Resources Budget Information**

Coordinator Spreiter provided a budget update on the 2023 budget to the Natural Resources Commission.

Commissioner Husbands asked for clarification on if funding for invasive species management and native plantings has been allocated to specific tasks. Coordinator Spreiter shared that the natural resources management plan is directing the allocation of those funds. There are additional funds that would be available after the completion of the NRMP proposed projects.

Chair Swank commented that it was great that the City Council authorized a significant increase to funding for natural resources projects in 2023 and thanked staff for their work advocating for those changes in the 2023 budget.

6. Staff Announcements

Coordinator Spreiter shared that holiday light recycling is currently going on at City Hall and that commission applications are now open for other city commissions and a reminder of City Hall holiday hours.

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson invited commissioners to share advisory commission openings on social media. In addition, the city is still hiring for winter seasonal staff.

7. Commission Comments

Chair Swank acknowledged that this was the last meeting of 2022 and that the commission is just getting started.

Commissioner Stein shared that the commission held a buckthorn event since the last meeting and that the 15 volunteers that attended made significant progress in that event.

8. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting by McCaslin, second by Stein.

Motion passes 5-0.

Chair Swank adjourned the meeting at 6:37pm.

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DATE: January 11, 2023
TO: Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Kelly Torkelson, Assistant City Administrator
SUBJECT: 2023 Meeting Dates

Background

The calendar for the Natural Resources Commission 2023 includes the following meeting dates at 6:00pm:

- Wednesday, January 11
- Wednesday , February 8
- Wednesday, March 8
- Wednesday, April 12
- Wednesday, May 10
- Wednesday, June 14
- Wednesday, July 12
- Wednesday, August 9
- Wednesday, September 13
- Wednesday, October 11
- Thursday, November 9
- Wednesday, December 13

Note that there is one meeting date that is adjusted from the regular meeting schedule in November. This meeting date is bumped one day in the city calendar due to the Election taking place on November 7th.

Requested Action

Approve the Natural Resources Commission meeting dates as proposed.



DATE: January 11, 2023
TO: Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator
SUBJECT: Frozen Fun Fest Update

Background

The Commission has discussed potential involvement at City and community events in 2023. These events can be utilized as a way to engage with the community and community volunteers. The City is hosting Frozen Fun Fest, a free winter community event February 10th – 12th. The event offers opportunities such as a Cupid Crawl to local businesses in Market Square Park, a Puzzle Competition, Ice Festival, Snow Footgolf, and Youth Ice Fishing Contest. If the Commission wishes, it could participate or use an event such as the Youth Ice Fishing Contest to provide education on a topic such as Aquatic Invasive Species. Further details on each Frozen Fun Fest Event is attached.

Requested Action

The Commission should determine what Frozen Fun Fest event, if any; it would like to participate in.



MENDOTA HEIGHTS
FROZEN FUN FEST

FREE FUN FOR EVERYONE!
FEB. 10-12

FRIDAY, FEB. 10

CUPID'S VALENTINE CRAWL
4:30-6:30 P.M.
MARKET SQUARE PARK

Kick off your Valentine's week with a Cupid Crawl to local businesses, for the chance to win a prize! Then join us for music and crafts at Market Square Park.

***REGISTER TODAY!**

Some events require registration; space is limited, secure your spot today.

SATURDAY, FEB. 11

PUZZLE COMPETITION*
9 A.M.-NOON
FIRE STATION

Fun for all ages; teams of up-to four people race to finish a 500-piece puzzle and win prizes!

ICE FESTIVAL
4-6 P.M.

FRIENDLY HILLS PARK

Hit the ice to the music of a live DJ, grab a food truck dinner, watch live ice sculpting and warm up by the fire.

SUNDAY, FEB. 12

YOUTH ICE FISHING*
9-11 A.M.
ROGERS LAKE PARK

Learn to fish from experts who provide equipment and guidance. Ages 14 and under.

SNOW FOOTGOLF*
12-2:30 P.M.

PAR 3 COMMUNITY CLUBHOUSE

Bring the whole family, lace up your boots and play five holes of snow footgolf; tee times required.

MendotaHeightsMN.gov/FrozenFunFest



MORE FROZEN FUN!

MEDALLION HUNT
BEGINS WEDNESDAY, FEB. 8

Search for the Frozen Fun Fest medallion hidden in a Mendota Heights public park and win the grand prize! Daily clues posted at 8 a.m. on the City website and Facebook - see website for contest rules.

COLORING CONTEST
FEB. 3-10

Color a winter masterpiece for a chance to win fantastic prizes. Print your coloring sheet or pick one up at City Hall, then drop it off in the City Hall water utilities drop box by 11:30 a.m. Feb. 10.



Hosted by
Mendota Heights
Parks & Recreation



DATE: January 11, 2023
TO: Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Kelly Torkelson, Assistant City Administrator
SUBJECT: Staff Planning Update- Recycling Coordinator

Background

The Mendota Heights recycling coordinator is a full-time position is shared between Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, Lilydale, Mendota and South St. Paul. This position is partially funded through a grant from Dakota County. To support Mendota Heights in advancing sustainability initiatives, the city has increased the allocation of hours for Mendota Heights from 10 hours a week to 14 hours a week in order to add duties focusing on sustainability initiatives and the city's green steps program.

Courtney Selstad will be starting as the city's new recycling coordinator on January 17. She brings over 10 years of experience working in advocacy events and communications with three years of experience specifically in the recycling industry. She brings a passion for volunteering and reuse which will be a great benefit to the City of Mendota Heights. We are excited to welcome her to the city.

Requested Action

Informational Only.



DATE: January 11, 2023
TO: Natural Resources Commission
FROM: Krista Spreiter, Natural Resources Coordinator
SUBJECT: 2023 Draft Workplan

Background

A workplan can guide accountability and resource allocation for the commission and help to move through commission priorities. Included in the packet materials is a draft workplan for the 2023 calendar year. The draft workplan was largely created from discussion at the December 12th, 2022 Work Session. The main ideas from that work session were used to form the goals of the attached plan. These are:

- Goal 1: Ordinance and Policy Development
- Goal 2: Education and Outreach
- Goal 3: Urban Forestry Awareness and Opportunities
- Goal 4: Green Steps
- Goal 5: Sustainability

Each goal also includes suggested initiatives that correlate to that specific goal. The commission can use this as a guiding document and can choose to accept the suggested workplan; or it may choose to remove, edit, and add items through discussion.

Requested Action

The Commission should review the draft of the 2023 Workplan.

Natural Resources Commission Work Plan 2023

Timeline

Goal	Initiative	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Goal 1: Ordinance Policy and Development	Review peer community ordinances to identify gaps and opportunities for Mendota Heights NR ordinances	X	X		
Goal 1: Ordinance Policy and Development	Prioritize tree ordinance, landscape ordinance, weed ordinance, as well as any other ordinances the commission is interested in developing		X		
Goal 1: Ordinance Policy and Development	Review Planning Review Checklists to offer natural resources considerations		X	X	X
Goal 1: Ordinance Policy and Development	Coordinate with city staff to review and propose city ordinance(s) to city council			X	X
Goal 1: Ordinance Policy and Development	Review existing city ordinances to identify proposed amendments			X	X
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Develop engagement materials aimed at children to educate on natural resources topics: i.e. coloring book or puzzle to hand out while tabling	X			
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Volunteer at Frozen Fun Fest	X			
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Volunteer at Touch a Truck		X		
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	No Mow May		X		
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Volunteer at Park Celebration			X	
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Host site tour of natural resources site			X	X
Goal 2: Education and Outreach	Develop and administer award/recognition program for community stewardship efforts			X	X
Goal 3: Urban Forestry Awareness and Opportunities	Develop Tree of the Month program	X			
Goal 3: Urban Forestry Awareness and Opportunities	Buckthorn removal event		X	X	
Goal 3: Urban Forestry Awareness and Opportunities	Coordinate with Parks and Recreation Commission to identify collaboration opportunities between PRC and NRC		X		
Goal 3: Urban Forestry Awareness and Opportunities	Host tree planting event		X		
Goal 4: Green Steps	Update reporting measurements to reflect City's current step status	X	X		
Goal 4: Green Steps	Onboard new Recycling/Sustainability Coordinator to lead city Greensteps initiative	X			
Goal 4: Green Steps	Identify opportunities for step advancement		X		
Goal 4: Green Steps	Identify performance measurements and support structures necessary to prepare for Step 4			X	X
Goal 4: Green Steps	Advance to Step 3 in the Green Steps program			X	X
Goal 5: Sustainability	Review city energy usage to identify opportunities for improvement				X
Goal 5: Sustainability	Host residential energy saving education event			X	
Goal 5: Sustainability	Review peer community sustainability efforts to identify opportunities in MH	X	X		

