



**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION AGENDA
MENDOTA HEIGHTS CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**Wednesday September 13, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission was held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at Mendota Heights City Hall; 1101 Victoria Curve.

1. Call to Order

Chair Swank called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Adopt Agenda

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

Motion passed 6-0.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of August 9, 2023 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes by Tupper, second by Husbands.

Motion passed 6-0.

5. Public Comment Period (for items not on the agenda)

6. New Business

a. Oak Award Program

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter shared draft criteria developed by the Education and Outreach committee for the Oak Award program. She shared different levels of the proposed award program. She noted the award nominations will be accepted each fall and awarded each January.

Commissioner Tupper shared additional information on the criteria, structure and examples. Commissioner Fahnhorst asked if there was a limit on a number of awards given each year. He recommended the allowance of multiple awards each year.

Commissioner Knosalla asked what the award would look like.

Commissioner Tupper will look into different options of plaques and other structures.

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson advised the commission to determine a set number of recipients so that it could be budgeted for accordingly.

Commissioner Stein suggested featuring the winners in City publications.

Commissioner Tupper noted that the project should occur within the City.

Commissioner Fahnhorst noted that several volunteers just appreciate the recognition, if a monetary award isn't feasible.

Motion to recommend the Oak Awards program to the City Council by Fahnhorst, second by Stein.

Motion passed 6-0.

b. Natural Resources Commission Site Tour

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter noted the upcoming tour at Valley Park, and the several projects they hope to view. The tour will happen after the meeting tonight.

c. Natural Resources 2024 Preliminary Budget Request

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter noted a few preliminary budget line items that were removed and replaced for the 2024 preliminary budget, as well as an additional preliminary budget line item that was added by the City Council. She also noted a few preliminary budget line items that were not changed. For 2023, the Natural Resources total budget was \$253,300. For 2024, the Natural Resources total preliminary budget requested is \$316,800.

Commissioner Stein commented that he likes to see the preliminary budget line item for maintenance.

Commissioner Husbands appreciates the cohesiveness of the preliminary budget resources and think this will allow the commission to be better stewards.

7. Old Business

a. Student Commissioner Recruitment

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson noted the City has opened the applications for the Student Commissioner seat, as a non-voting member of the Commission. It's been promoted with the School District as well as social media.

Commissioner Stein suggested sharing this information with the school's "Live Green" club.

b. Partners in Energy

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter provided an update on the status of the program. Staff plans to apply by the October deadline, and she shared a copy of the application with the Commission. Coordinator Spreiter is asking for any Commissioner's feedback via email on some of the application questions.

c. Committee Reports – Workplan

- **Ordinance and Policy Development**

Commissioner Fahnhorst reminded the group of an upcoming worksession to continue work on the ordinance.

- **Education and Outreach**

Commissioner Tupper is excited to recommend the Oak Awards program to the City Council.

- **Urban Forestry**

Commissioner Husbands noted the plan of spraying, burning, spraying again, and seeding with a Savannah mix, then planting overstory as well as understory trees, pollinator shrubs and forbs for the savannah demonstration project in Marie Park.

- **Green Steps**

The committee is waiting on direction as to which activities to prioritize to get to Step 3.

- **Sustainability**

Commissioner Stein thanked Coordinator Spreiter for the work on the Partners in Energy application.

8. Staff Announcements

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter noted a volunteer tree planting event on October 5 at Friendly Hills Park.

9. Commission Comments

NA

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Husbands, second by Knosalla.

Motion passed 6-0.

Vice-Chair Tupper adjourned the meeting at 5:33pm.