

**CITY OF MENDOTA HEIGHTS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 8, 2023- 6:00 P.M.
Mendota Heights City Hall-Council Chambers
DRAFT Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 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, Tupper, Stein and Student Commissioner Byrnes. Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Quick. Staff present: Natural Resources Coordinator Krista Spreiter, Assistant City Administrator Kelly Torkelson, Parks and Recreation Manager Meredith Lawrence, Recycling Coordinator Courtney Selstad.

3. Approval of the Agenda

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

Commissioner Husbands shared that she had a comment from a resident about the downside of No Mow May and wondered if the item could be added to the agenda.

Assistant City Administrator shared that the commission is able to add items to the agenda, however staff do not have materials prepared for a conversation about Now Mow May at this meeting. Staff are planning to bring the item to a future meeting before the May meeting.

Commissioner Husbands requested to bring the item to the March meeting. Commissioner husbands sought clarification about the role of the commission in advising the city council.

Assistant City Administrator confirmed that the Natural Resources Commission is an advisory commission, but the city council gives direction about what they would like to commission to advise on.

Motion passed 6-0.

4. Approval of the Minutes

- a. Approve meeting minutes from the February 8, 2023 Natural Resources Commission Meeting.

*Motion to approved the minutes by Fahnhorst, seconded by McCaslin
Motion passed 6-0*

5. Citizen Comment Period

Chair Swank invited residents to come to attend the Natural Resources Commission meeting and to share thoughts with the commission. No one came forward for comment.

6. New Business

a. 2023 Commission Position Appointments

Assistant City Administrator shared that this is an annual action that is required within the Natural Resources Commission Bylaws.

Chair Swank said that she was open to serving as chair for another year, but thought that other should share in future years.

Motion by Fahnhorst for Commissioner Swank to continue as chair, second by Commissioner Stein.

Motion passes 6-0

Motion by Commissioner Stein for Commissioner Tupper to serve as vice chair, second by Commissioner Swank

Motion passes 6-0

b. Tree Sale Update

Coordinator Spreiter shared an update on the upcoming Spring Tree Sale. The city is partnering with Tree Trust for the sale. The city was able to provide twice as many trees this year that will be available for purchase. Tree Trust will be there to help load and the trees are able to be loaded into regular vehicles. Coordinator Spreiter reviewed the varieties of trees that will be available.

Commissioner Husbands asked about systemic pesticides in the trees that are being provided. Coordinator Spreiter has confirmed with Tree Trust that all of the trees are neonicotinoids free.

Commissioner Fahnhorst shared that he was excited about both the variety of trees and the number of trees that are available through the program.

Commissioner Stein asked how many of the species that are being included are native species. Coordinator Spreiter shared that all of the species are native, but some are hybrid native- technically making them not native. But some of them are pure native varieties.

c. Earth Day and Arbor Day Planning

Coordinator Spreiter shared an update that the city is hosting an annual Earth and Arbor Day Event. The event will take place on Friday April 28 and 29 and offering a citywide clean up event, educational opportunities and giveaways. Staff is looking for additional ideas or offerings that could be included in the event.

Vice Chair Tupper asked about the timeline for promotion and advertising. Coordinator Spreiter shared that we try to start promotion as soon as we have final details.

Commissioner Husbands asked about if there were vendors that we were working with and asked about what details still needed to be finalized. Coordinator Spreiter talked about how staff have looked at partnering with the raptor center, ordering tree seedlings for a giveaway, or having a speaker come in for the event. Staff would have to look into and confirm if these partners would be available. Commissioner Husbands

thought that the seedling giveaway initiative would be a great feature as a part of the Tree City initiative. Commissioner Husbands asked for clarification if the city is now technically a tree city.

Coordinator Spreiter confirmed that the city has completed all the steps for recognition, but it has not been formally approved by the program yet. Commissioner Husbands asked if we could have this be an announcement of the city's status as tree city.

Coordinator Spreiter clarified that it would depend how long the review of the city's profile takes to determine if we would officially be recognized in time for this event.

Chair Swank shared that it could be a good way to share that we have completed all the steps even if we are not officially recognized yet. She also shared that she thought the raptor center would be a great partner as well.

Commissioner Stein asked about the planting by the Mendota Heights sign, some kind of project around that would be a good thing to incorporate. It is nearby Commissioner Byrnes school which is a good connection with the commission.

Commissioner Tupper asked if the parks commission would be looking at this as well or if it was just the Natural Resource Commission that was being reached out. She wondered if the education subcommittee would be able to review and bring some ideas to discuss at the March meeting.

Staff will bring an update to a future meeting.

- d. Staff update: Recycling Coordinator
Assistant City Administrator introduced Courtney Selstad to the Commission. Recycling Coordinator Selstad reviewed her background and what she is working on in the city. Commissioners welcomed Courtney to the city.

7. Old Business

- a. Committee Appointments
Coordinator Spreiter reviewed the proposed committee appointments for the commissioners.

Assistant City Administrator added clarification that Student Commissioner Byrnes is not a voting member of the commission so her committee having four commissioners serving does not create a quorum at the committee.

Commissioner Husbands requested that staff refer to the goals with the content for clarification on what is being reviewed. Regarding the forestry committee could be helpful in the planning for Arbor Day and Earth Day as well.

Commissioner Tupper thanked staff for the time they are putting into, attending and organizing the committee meetings.

- b. Committee Reports
Assistant City Administrator shared that this item is going to be a standing item on commission agendas. This is going to be an opportunity for the commissioners to share if there was anything that the whole commission wanted the committees to engage on that this was the time for that to be shared.

Commissioner Husbands asked for some feedback on how the green steps committee update went.

Commissioner Tupper shared that the green steps committee reviewed the spreadsheet of where the status of the reporting was at this time and what the city needed to do to get to future steps. The spreadsheet will continue to be updated and working to understand what needs to be done in order to get to step three.

Commissioner Husbands asked for clarification about the frequency of the committee meetings. Coordinator Spreiter shared that it depends on what is slated for the work plan at this time.

8. Staff Announcements

Coordinator Spreiter shared upcoming events for Frozen Fun Fest and encouraged commissioners to review the city website for events. She reminded people about the rules of the Medallion Hunt, the medallion is not hidden in any native plantings, it is not at Oheyawahe, and it is not more than 5 ft off the trail. The online tree sale will begin before the next meeting. There are also some educational opportunities coming up.

Assistant City Administrator shared that the city is going to be hiring a parks and recreation intern. Coffee with the Council is also this upcoming weekend for people to come and share with the city council. In addition, the city has summer seasonal positions open.

Commissioner Husbands asked what the parks and recreation intern is going to be working on. Assistant City Administrator shared that the intern will be on a variety of initiatives. Parks and Recreation Manager shared that the new intern is going to be working on projects, sharing with the commission, and working with staff on projects to learn about the parks and recreation profession.

9. Commission Comments

Commissioner McCaslin updated that he was not able to attend the ice fishing event. Commissioner Tupper offered to fill in if the commission was wanting to do something specific.

10. Adjourn

*Motion to adjourn the meeting by Husbands, second by Stein.
Motion passes 6-0.*

Chair Swank adjourned the meeting at 6:43pm.

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