



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

**Wednesday August 9, 2023, 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission was held on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at Mendota Heights City Hall; 1101 Victoria Curve.

**1. Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Tupper called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**2. Roll Call**

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter called the roll. Commissioners present: Husbands, Stein, Tupper, McCaslin, Knosalla, and Fahnhorst. Commissioners Absent: Chair Swank 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 Stein, second by Fahnhorst.*

*Motion passed 6-0.*

**4. Approval of Minutes**

a. Approval of July, 12, 2023 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Minutes

*Motion to approve the minutes by Husbands, second by McCaslin.*

*Motion passed 6-0.*

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

N/A

**6. New Business**

a. New Commissioner Introduction

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson introduced Lori Knosalla as the newest member to join the commission. Her term will expire on January 31, 2024 and could be reappointed after that time if she re-applies.

Commissioner Knosalla is a new Mendota Heights resident, originally from Minneapolis. Her educational background is in Natural Resources Science and Management, and currently works in the field of Forestry and Responsible Resources.

The commissioners welcomed Commissioner Knosalla.

b. City Hall Adopt-a-Drain Naming

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter shared information regarding the Adopt-a-Drain program, noting the purpose is to reduce the amount of debris entering surface waters via storm drains.

The City is a program partner through the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization. The City has adopted a drain at City Hall. Residents who adopt a drain can name their drain. The City is looking for input as to a name for the drain at City Hall.

Vice-chair Tupper suggested using Social Media to encourage engagement. Similar to the MN-DOT snowplow naming, residents can share input.

Commissioner Knosalla suggested pairing this community feedback with the new rollout of the City's new Instagram account.

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson noted that the hope is that residents will name their own drains, and that the City sets the first example. She suggested that the commission name the City's drain.

Commissioner Fahnhorst suggested "The Grate One".

Vice-chair Tupper suggested "Clean Water Heights", "Little Levine", and "Small Town, Big Drain".

Commissioner McCaslin suggested "Midnight Drain to Georgia" and "The Name Your Own Drain Drain".

Commissioner Knosalla suggested "Join the Name a Drain Train".

Vice-chair Tupper asked if all the drain names need to be unique.

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter will return with an answer, and noted you can look online and see the current list of drain names.

Commissioner Stein suggested "Purple Drain".

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson asked the commission how they'd like to proceed.

Commissioner Fahnhorst suggested selecting a name tonight and voting for three to whittle it down.

*Motion to nominate "Clean Water Heights" as the City Hall's drain name by Husbands.*

*Second by Fahnhorst.*

*Motion passes 6-0.*

C. Fall Tree Planting Event

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter shared information regarding the initiative of hosting a tree planting event. Staff is asking the Commission for feedback on their level of involvement in completing this event this fall. Coordinator Spreiter offered a few date suggestions.

Commissioner Husbands asked for clarification on the details of the event.

Coordinator Spreiter shared that the Commission can determine the location and the number of trees. She added that the City would open this event up to volunteers.

Commissioner Husbands noted there are three dead trees in Marie Park and suggested this location to plant new trees.

Commissioner Fahnhorst noted the work session in September should be a priority and doesn't want to overload the commission.

Vice-chair Tupper suggested October as a good month to do a tree planting and supports moving forward with the event.

Commissioner Stein agrees that it's a good idea to hold this event, and to use the trees that the City has in the gravel bed.

Vice-chair Tupper polled the Commission and most of them agreed that October 5 would be a good date.

Commissioner McCaslin commented that the tree species should be what determines the planting locations.

## **7. Old Business**

### **a. Cliff Timm Memorial Fishing Derby Report**

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter provided a recap of the event that was held on July 20<sup>th</sup>. The City holds this event annually and this year there were around 90 attendees. Natural Resources staff provided interactive exhibits on stormwater education. Recycling Coordinator Selstad provided interactive exhibits on recycling.

### **b. Natural Resources Commission Site Tour**

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter asked the commission to offer dates for a site tour.

Vice-chair Tupper reminded the commission that this tour could also be open to the City Councilmembers and other City Commissioners; not open to the public.

The commissioners each offered their availability. Commissioner Husbands suggested the idea of replacing the September Commission meeting with the Site Tour.

Commissioner Knosalla noted that removing the commission meeting would hold up the work proposed for the tree planting event.

Coordinator Spreiter suggested finalizing details of the tree planting event over email.

Vice-chair Tupper asked if an item regarding the structure of the awards program could be added to the work session agenda.

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson replied that the work session agenda is full.

Vice-chair Tupper suggested another option of holding the site tour prior to the September Commission meeting. She added the option to bike the tour.

Commissioner Husbands asked what the goal of the site tour is.

Vice-chair Tupper replied that it's an opportunity to visit City parks, to see what projects have been completed or could be completed, and to network with other commissioners.

Coordinator Spreiter commented that the tour could encompass two sites within Valley Park that are budget items. This could be done in about an hour.

Commissioner Husbands asked how this tour would compare to the site tour that the Parks and Recreation Commission holds.

The commission came to the consensus of moving the September Commission meeting to 5:00pm with a site tour to follow around 6:30pm.

Staff will communicate with other City Commissions to invite them to join.

#### C. Committee Reports

- **Ordinance and Policy Development**  
Commissioner Fahnhorst will incorporate suggestions given by fellow commissioners regarding the ordinance document draft.
- **Education and Outreach**  
Vice-chair Tupper noted the committee hasn't met yet regarding the draft award categories program. They plan to meet prior to the September commission meeting.
- **Urban Forestry**  
Commissioner Husbands noted they discussed a potential space in Marie Park that's available for rehabilitation. She shared some details on recommendations received by Coordinator Spreiter. A potential rehabilitation project could be funded by the tree city budget line item yet this fall.

Commissioner McCaslin mentioned a few similar programs used by the City of St. Louis Park that could be used as good examples.

Commissioner Husbands would like to give trees away to residents in an effort to plant trees along public roads but on the private property side of the boulevard.

- **Green Steps**  
Staff are waiting until the City Council reviews budget recommendations before bringing an update back to the commission and next steps.
- **Sustainability**  
Commissioner Stein noted they've been discussing the Xcel Energy "Partner in Energy Program" and determined that the estimated staff time for Coordinator Spreiter would be five to ten hours per week. They'll bring that up at the September work session to determine the priorities with this project.
- **Workplan**  
Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter read the goals for quarter three in the workplan.

Vice-chair Tupper asked for a plan to integrate Commissioner Knosalla into one of the committees.

Coordinator Spreiter replied that she asked Commissioner Knosalla which committee she'd be interested in joining and will inform the commission when the final decision has been made.

**8. Staff Announcements**

Natural Resources Coordinator Spreiter noted the annual Parks Celebration will be happening all weekend with plenty of events. The master gardeners and Recycling Coordinator will be at the Open House event at Mendakota Park on Saturday. The City will host a mattress recycling event on August 19<sup>th</sup> at Mendakota Park.

Assistant City Administrator Torkelson stated the City has launched a new Instagram account using the handle @MendotaHeightsMN. She also stated that Student Commissioner Byrnes has completed her term and the City will be looking for another Student Commissioner soon.

**9. Commission Comments**

Commissioner Stein recognized ISD 197 for receiving a 2023 Energy Efficient and Healthy Safe Schools award from several agencies.

**10. Adjourn**

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

*Motion passed 6-0.*

*Vice-Chair Tupper adjourned the meeting at 7:04pm.*