

**ROSEVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES FOR
MARCH 3, 2026 6:30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Arneson, Beckman, Botzek, Boulton, Donaldson, Harris, Her, Huntley, Kooistra, Matts-Benson, Penny.
ABSENT:
STAFF: Johnson, Olson, Taylor.

1. ROLL CALL

Roll Call Commissioners: Arneson, Beckman, Boulton, Donaldson, Harris, Her, Huntley, Matts-Benson, Penny.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Commissioner Her moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Harris seconded.

Roll Call

Ayes: Arneson, Beckman, Botzek, Boulton, Donaldson, Harris, Her, Huntley, Matts-Benson, Penny.

Nays: None.

Abstain: None.

3. RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT

No general public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Penny moved to approve the February 5, 2026 meeting minutes. Commissioner Arneson seconded.

Roll Call

Ayes: Arneson, Beckman, Boulton, Donaldson, Her, Huntley, Matts-Benson, Penny.

Nays: None.

Abstain: Botzek, Harris.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a) FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES UPDATE

Parks Superintendent Jim Taylor introduced Zoe Olson, Natural Resources Stewardship and Forestry Supervisor, who has been with the City for approximately six months. Olson provided an overview of the City's Forestry and Natural Resources programs and recent efforts.

Olson noted that the City manages approximately 340 acres of woodland, prairie, and wetland areas. Natural resource management efforts are a collaborative process involving City staff, maintenance teams, consultants including Stantec, contractors, and volunteers.

Staff provided a recap of the Natural Resources Master Plan, noting that initial efforts began in 2012 as part of the Parks Renewal Program. The first Natural Resources Master Plan was launched in 2014 and implemented through 2023, with a focus on removing invasive species and improving overall ecological quality. An updated Master Plan was completed at the end of 2024, introducing updated vision, goals, policies, and best management practices based on new field assessments.

Staff also highlighted that the City was awarded a \$500,000 CPL Grant, which will support implementation efforts from fall 2025 through spring 2028.

Staff outlined key implementation strategies, including:

- Refining previously restored areas to ensure long-term sustainability
- Prioritizing larger restoration areas early to allow for future evaluation
- Sequencing projects to maximize the limited growing seasons within the grant period
- Integrating volunteer efforts strategically to complement contractor-led work

An example of implementation at Materion Park was provided, where approximately 9.5 acres are being actively managed due to buckthorn regrowth and inconsistent native seed establishment. Staff reviewed recent and planned restoration activities, including contractor work, volunteer events, and future treatment and monitoring efforts.

Since the Master Plan implementation began, staff reported:

- Over 250 volunteer hours contributed
- Awarding a grant contract to Stantec
- Planning efforts spanning 23 parks and approximately 170 acres of natural areas
- Completion of 33 acres of restoration work during the current winter season

Staff reviewed the primary policy goals of the Natural Resources Master Plan, including:

- Preserving, restoring, and maintaining natural resources as integral components of the park system
- Promoting community involvement in natural resource management
- Prioritizing both short- and long-term planning and strengthening partnerships

Staff also identified ongoing challenges, including building on past restoration successes, engaging new volunteer audiences, and improving communication and storytelling efforts.

Forestry program updates were also provided, including two primary focus areas:

- Diseased and Hazard Tree Management, with most removals completed by contractors
- The Accelerated Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Program, which is entering Phase 3

Staff noted that Phase 3 of the EAB program is supported by a \$250,000 Met Council Community Tree Planting Grant and will focus on the removal and replacement of approximately 200 hazardous ash trees located along trails and near park amenities. The program includes partnership with Tree Trust for removals and plantings, as well as volunteer planting opportunities.

Staff noted that Phase 3 efforts will prioritize areas including Tamarack, Reservoir Woods, Pioneer, Willow Pond, Rosebrook, Oasis, Langton Lake, Applewood, and Applewood Overlook, with a focus on census blocks that rank high in social vulnerability or land surface temperature. Replacement trees will be planted to fill canopy gaps in both parks and boulevard areas.

Staff also provided an update on the annual public tree sale, noting that the City will host its 5th annual sale in 2026. Approximately 150 trees are sold annually at \$40 per tree, with the program now funded through the Tree Preservation Fund. The City continues to partner with Tree Trust for distribution. The sale opened online on March 1, with distribution scheduled for June 6.

Staff reviewed next steps, including ongoing inspection and restoration work, continued watering of newly planted trees, and maintaining the gravel bed nursery. Mid- to long-term challenges include wood storage, continued pursuit of grant funding, updated Urban Forestry Master Plan, integration with broader natural resource efforts, and addressing hazards from private trees.

The Commission discussed how they can support these efforts, including volunteering, helping share information, and continuing community conversations.

Commissioner Harris confirmed that staff will be coordinating with other City departments and groups on overlapping or aligned projects.

The Commission and staff discussed the public tree sale, including pricing, availability of planting guidance, and whether outcomes of trees planted on private property are tracked. Chair Matts-Benson noted the importance of communication efforts to engage younger residents and encourage interest in trees and natural resources.

Additional discussion included invasive species such as jumping worms, historical tree removals, the pace of ash tree replacement, and the types of native or near-native species being planted. Staff noted that species are selected from the City's approved tree list and that buckthorn management continues to be a priority.

Commissioner Donaldson asked about the replacement of non-EAB trees removed due to age or storm events. Staff noted that funding is available within the Park Improvement Program (PIP) for tree replacement; however, due to the significant number of trees being planted through the Accelerated EAB Program, not all removed trees are replaced immediately to ensure proper care and establishment of newly planted trees.

Commissioner Penny suggested providing new Roseville homeowners with information on available resources for maintaining and caring for trees on their property.

Staff concluded by noting that the City has been very fortunate to receive grant funding. Staff emphasized that these awards are the result of strong support from the Commission, City Council, and residents, and reflect the City's demonstrated success as responsible stewards of natural resources.

Chair Matts-Benson noted that Commissioner Kooistra joined the meeting.

b) AUTUMN GROVE PLAYGROUND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY AND REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

Staff provided an overview of the planned Capital Improvement Program (CIP) updates for Autumn Grove Park, which include playground replacement, resurfacing of tennis courts, amenity updates (including picnic tables), and the addition of new pathways.

Staff noted that a 2010 concept plan for the park was developed but was never implemented. As part of the current process, staff is exploring the potential to broaden the scope of this project beyond simple playground replacement to include modifications to the north parcel layout to improve overall park cohesion and functionality, and the development of a preliminary master plan for the south parcel to guide future decision-making.

Staff shared engagement themes gathered from the community, which indicated strong support for replacing the playground, along with concerns about the current playground location related

to safety, convenience, and proximity to the building. There was broad interest in relocating the playground closer to the building, while also recognizing trade-offs associated with relocation. Additional feedback included interest in preserving natural and unprogrammed spaces, support for the bicycle pump track, and desire for additional walking trails or a defined walking loop.

Staff presented multiple concept options for the site, each with varying approaches to playground location, pathway connections, and site layout. The Commission discussed the concepts in detail, including considerations related to site use, preservation of ballfields, and potential elimination of the hockey rink.

Staff reviewed a preliminary budget for the project and noted that some concepts include additional amenities that are currently unfunded. Staff indicated that Park Dedication funds could potentially be used to support these additional items.

Commissioner Harris asked why the hockey rink would need to be removed under certain concepts if it is a movable feature. Staff responded that while lighting constraints could potentially be addressed, the grading required for the rink would be too challenging to achieve.

Chair Matts-Benson expressed support for taking a broader approach to the project and stated support for utilizing Park Dedication funds. Commissioners generally agreed that investing Park Dedication funds in this unique park space would be appropriate.

The Commission discussed the future of the south parcel. Chair Matts-Benson emphasized the importance of maintaining some non-programmed open space. Commissioner Boulton noted community feedback suggesting the inclusion of workout equipment like what is available at Central Park. Staff questioned whether there would be sufficient use to justify the cost of workout equipment at a neighborhood park.

Staff noted that, based on feedback received, they plan to check in with the City Council regarding a potentially broader scope for the project and that updates would be provided as the project scope and budget are further refined.

Staff provided a general project timeline, noting that the playground is anticipated to be completed in fall 2026, with pathways constructed in either 2026 or 2027, and overall project completion anticipated in summer 2027.

Commissioner Harris asked about potential safety concerns related to pathway connections leading into a potentially busier parking area. Staff acknowledged this concern and noted it will be further evaluated.

Commissioner Her asked whether the hockey rink could be relocated to the north parking lot. Staff responded that due to retained heat from the asphalt surface, ice cannot be reliably maintained in that location.

Staff also noted that additional playground replacement engagement meetings for Sandcastle Park and Applewood Park are scheduled for the week of March 23.

c) MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS CENTER UPDATE (STANDING AGENDA ITEM)

Staff provided an update on the Maintenance and Operations Center project, noting that space needs are being reviewed to ensure all required functions are incorporated into the design.

Staff discussed ongoing evaluation of Veteran’s Park as part of the broader site planning process, including consideration of whether the existing ballfield remains appropriate for the space. Staff noted that if the ballfield were to be removed, efforts would be made to relocate and replace it elsewhere, as it is currently utilized by local fastpitch teams. Staff emphasized that any potential changes to the park would include neighborhood engagement to gather input and incorporate community feedback.

Staff reviewed the current draft concept for the buildings and site layout, noting that designs continue to evolve and are being updated regularly.

Chair Matts-Benson provided additional context on the work of the advisory group, noting that the group is collaborating on potential site layout options and building façade concepts.

The Commission discussed the importance of ensuring that any park amenities removed from Veteran’s Park are replaced. The Commission also discussed potential future uses for the park. Chair Matts-Benson noted that a variety of creative ideas have been explored, with no specific amenities identified at this time, though the inclusion of a play structure has been regularly discussed due to the park’s proximity to high-density housing.

d) ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Commissioner Harris nominated Vice-Chair Beckman to serve as Chair of the Roseville Parks and Recreation Commission. Chair Matts-Benson seconded the nomination.

Roll Call

Ayes: Arneson, Botzek, Boulton, Donaldson, Harris, Her, Huntley, Kooistra, Matts-Benson, Penny.

Nays: None.

Abstain: Beckman.

Commissioner Penny self-nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Roseville Parks and Recreation Commission. Chair Matts-Benson the nomination.

Roll Call

Ayes: Arneson, Beckman, Botzek, Boulton, Donaldson, Harris, Her, Huntley, Kooistra, Matts-Benson.

Nays: None.

Abstain: Penny.

e) **APPOINTMENT OF ETHICS COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE**

Commissioner Boulton provided background information regarding the Ethics Committee meetings(s) and training.

Commissioner Botzek self-nominated for the position of Ethics Representative from the Roseville Parks and Recreation Commission. Vice-Chair Beckman seconded the nomination.

Roll Call

Ayes: Arneson, Beckman, Boulton, Donaldson, Harris, Her, Huntley, Kooistra, Matts-Benson, Penny.

Nays: None.

Abstain: Botzek.

6. **COMMISSION DIRECTION ON MEMBER INITIATED AGENDA ITEMS**

a) **LIST OF COMMISSIONERS SUGGESTED TOPICS**

The Commission reviewed the list of previously suggested topics.

Vice-Chair Beckman suggested adding the Harriet Alexander Nature Center's proposed nature play area to the list to allow for ongoing updates as the project progresses.

Commissioner Boulton suggested adding Veteran's Park to the list to ensure the Commission receives updates on any potential park changes.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

a) **DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

- The John Rose MN OVAL closed for the season on March 1, 2026.

- The John Rose MN OVAL was prominently featured in an international Honda television advertisement during the Olympic Games.
- A meet and greet with four-time Olympic medalist Lee Stecklein is scheduled for March 5 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Rose Room at the Roseville Skating Center.
- The Sweetheart Dance was held on February 20 at the Roseville Skating Center, with 60 couples attending the sold-out event.
- Summer program registration opened on March 3. Within the first 12 hours, approximately 1,900 registrations were completed, generating over \$178,000 in revenue. Staff noted that some issues were encountered with the new recreation software, which are currently being addressed with the developer.
- Additional playground replacement engagement meetings for Sandcastle Park and Applewood Park are scheduled for the week of March 23. Staff confirmed that this information will be e-mailed to the Commission.
- Arts at the OVAL is scheduled for March 14 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Olympic Room at the Roseville Skating Center.
- The Tapping Time event will take place at the Harriet Alexander Nature Center on March 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and March 29 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

b) OTHER NEW OR RELEVANT COMMUNICATION ITEMS

The Commission thanked Chair Matts-Benson for her time and service as Chair of the Commission.

8. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Christensen, Parks and Recreation Department Assistant