

**North Oaks Natural Resources Commission  
NRC Meeting Minutes  
Virtual Meeting via Teleconference or Electronic Means Only  
January 20, 2022 at 7 p.m.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Hawkins called the meeting of January 20, 2022 to order at 7:02 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

NRC members participated **by telephone or other electronic means** pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.021.

Present: Chair Andrew Hawkins, Commissioners Shannon Dunn, Bob Larson, Addison Motta, Paul Ellis, Penny Kianian, City Council Liaisons James Hara and Tom Watson, City Forester Mark Rehder, City Administrator Kevin Kress

Absent: Commissioners Damien LePoutre and David White

A quorum was declared present.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

City Administrator suggested add as agenda item “Assigning a Vice Chair “to New Business as item 6h. Councilor Watson suggested adding selection of Chair to that agenda item as well.

**MOTION by Dunn, seconded by Larson, to approve the agenda as amended.**

**MOTION carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

**4. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**5. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH’S MINUTES**

Administrator Kress mentioned that new members are eligible to vote for approval of Minutes even if they were not in attendance at the prior meeting.

**MOTION by Hawkins, seconded by Dunn, to approve the December 16, 2021 meeting minutes as amended.**

**MOTION carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

## **6. BUSINESS ACTION ITEMS**

### **6a. Discuss 2022 NRC Meeting Schedule**

- Watson mentioned that all City meetings fall on Thursday, which can be cumbersome for those council members and staff which must attend all of them. It was suggested that possibly shift NRC to another night.
- Hawkins mentioned that NOHOA meetings have changed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday's of the month.
- Hara suggested moving NRC to Tuesday or stacking with Planning Commission. Hawkins recommended 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Addison suggested Monday evenings would work best based on her schedule.
- Decision made to move to Monday's at 6 p.m. beginning in March. This will be reviewed again at the February meeting to confirm NRC members not in attendance are available for this new time slot.

**MOTION by Hawkins, seconded by Dunn, to adjust the NRC meetings to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 6 p.m. effective March 2022.**

### **6b. 2022 City Forester Annual Report**

- City Forester Mark Rehder welcomed and introduced himself to new members Motta and Ellis.
- Forester Rehder summarized highlights from his 2021 City Forester Annual report included in the agenda packet. The core focus of 2021 was on: shade tree disease, shoreland work, homeowner inquiries, new home tree mitigation, arborist workshops, seedling give away and other city events.
- Mary Johnson works with Mark and is also a City inspector and educator.
- Disease tree inspections, notifications and compliance checks are 80% of what they do following the established program in place since early 1970's.
- About 200 trees are marked for Oaks wilt removal each year, which is a reasonable number given the high overall number of trees in the community.
- Emerald Ash borer was found in North Oaks in 2019, with inspections occurring in the winter during leaf off conditions. This is insect based and takes several years for the tree to die. Guidelines are set by the department of agriculture, and they work with other communities and scientists to get their opinion on what is going on in the surrounding areas.
- Seven years ago, guidelines were put in place on how to manage diseased trees. About 25 ash trees have been marked for removal. The number of infected EAB trees is still fairly low in North Oaks.
- In 2022, looking to improve processes in notification, using GPS equipment to map disease trees and take note of any other issues on properties such as buckthorn, oriental bittersweet, etc. This information could also be helpful for DNR, NOHOA and others to apply for grants.
- He is grateful to work on behalf of the City of North Oaks.
- Hawkins pointed out the report states Oak Wilt gets orange paint around the bark. He asked when Fungi is appropriate to use on trees. Rehder stated red oaks can only be treated preventively. Burr or white oak are best to be actively treated when problems are found, this allows the tree to slow the symptoms

however does require periodic retreatment. Sampling is done on Oaks to help clarify what issues are affecting them as it can be difficult to visually distinguish.

- Hawkins thanked the City Forester for the useful handout materials at Farm Fest to help educate residents on shade tree diseases.
- The seedlings have been ordered for 2022 give aways to residents.
- Watson asked if programs have ever been put in place for large quantity of seedlings or larger trees to sell. Rehder stated DNR doesn't encourage selling of seedlings, but to give away. He indicated that to date, the City hasn't been involved in larger size tree sales. Rehder noted they can look at it, but it would take a larger effort.

Commissioner Penny Kianian joined meeting at 7:30 p.m.

- Kianian asked about if there is need to look at Conifers within the community. Rehder noted that it is a much smaller representation within North Oaks, so focus is on the deciduous tree population.

#### **6c. Discuss Natural Resource Commission Priorities for 2022**

- Commission brainstormed what the community may consider highest priorities.
  - LePoutre recommended joint effort with NOHOA with priority on Buckthorn, which requires multi-year activity and plan. Use experts as resource if needed.
  - Hawkins suggested: Water Quality within the community, as well as Pesticides and herbicide use and the impacts of use of chemicals to control mosquito's and ticks. Important to share impact to the water table since most homes are on well water.
  - Dunn suggested education on what native plants are good to use in the community. It was noted this would be a great teaming opportunity with the Garden club.
  - Ellis noted that burdock is also a problem invasive species to educate residents.
  - Rehder thought it would be great to have North Oaks community stewards that are familiar with particular problems and could be used as resource for residents. Watson stated Master Gardner program is a good resource that could be promoted. The U of M may also have resources available.
  - Watson noted that education needs to be a top priority: how to live within the North Oaks Community with our nature, wildlife and water.
  - Motta mentioned a free app called I naturalist that allows you to geotime mark the area of natural plants, and then solicit community input for unknown. Suggests encouraging residents to join this app. There is a number of citizen science apps that could be relevant for our area.
  - Kress shared a good educational links:
    - <https://www.inaturalist.org/>
    - <https://extension.umn.edu/tree-selection-and-care/recommended-trees-minnesota>
    - <https://extension.umn.edu/invasive-species/identify-invasive-species>
    - <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/index.html>

- Kress suggested putting together a new video for education this year. In past we've done videos on Coyotes, forestry, invasive species, and water quality.
- Watson recommended we take a more active approach to encouraging planting of acorns and monitoring new growth to fill in sub canopy. Educating community on importance of regeneration.
- Dunn noted the importance of the Tick Task Force, which originated in 2015, to continue education.
- Pesticide committee would also continue on and be chaired by Kate Winsor.
- Watson noted a review of the Wetland ordinances and regulations.
- Wildlife Management (including but not limited to deer).

#### **6d. Status of Deer Management Program**

- Councilor Hara reached out to the Ramsey County person who does aerial survey, who indicated that there still isn't quite enough snow to take an aerial count yet. This will continue to be monitored.
- The DNR has shortened the list of approved removal contractors significantly which could make removal more difficult. The last aerial count was done in 2016. The new data will be used to determine if removal is necessary.

#### **6e. Brainstorm ideas for upcoming Education Articles**

Suggested topics included:

- Mobile Apps, and links to great educational resources
- Councilor Motta mentioned she's willing to take the lead to write some education articles as this is of particular interest to her. Kianian will work with her. Hawkins to send them the list of past articles put together by Winsor.
- Rehder mentioned he will continue to provide content to North Oaks news regarding when to prune, and a tree spot checklist.
- Hawkins will send the email from presspubs to Motta/Kianian, so they can request to be put on the list to receive deadline notifications for North Oaks news.
- Dunn mentioned ticks and garlic mustard which comes in Spring.
- Rehder mentioned the University of Minnesota woods link as a great resource that indicates when safe to prune.
- Kress mentioned an article on wild turkey, ducks and other migratory wildlife.
- Motta mentioned an article on wild edibles such as garlic mustard could be interesting.
- Ellis suggested article on pollinator gardens and butterflies.
- Hawkins suggested establishing communication initiative as a formal Education and Outreach committee.

**MOTION by Hawkins, seconded by Motta, to establish an Education outreach committee for the purpose of communicating to community.**

**MOTION carried unanimously by roll call vote.**

Hawkins will share the link to google file repository of NRC materials with Motta and Kianian. Encouraged sending of articles to North Oaks news, snippets for City Eblast, and any new material for NRC page on City website.

#### **6f. Discussion on update on Wetland Matters**

- Watson noted that the commission hasn't had time to synch up on this project since their last meeting. He shared the summary of what they have compiled from other communities. The Shoreview ordinances on Wetland is very broad with reference to DNR administrative rules. Arden Hills didn't have anything specific for wetlands. Vadnais Heights has a section on water management which identifies an inventory of wetlands. Lino Lakes code only references MN rules on stormwater, erosion and sediment control.
- In North Oaks, our Comprehensive plan is the most comprehensive document regarding this matter. Our PDA references the wetland conservation Act.
- Going forward, he suggests that Kevin, Shannon and Tom will meet again prior to the next meeting. Watson will send all of the materials they have gathered for the NRC to review and discuss if we want to develop an extensive new ordinance, or reference state materials. The Minnesota DNR administrative rules are quite extensive, and the Shoreview method of referencing this has value.
- Dunn has reviewed the material, and is pulling together with City material and comparing for any substantive references. The Comp plan and PDA references will be included in the summary for review.

#### **6g. Update on VLAWMO priorities for 2022**

- Watson noted VLAWMO re-strategizes every 5 years. As a board, they are beginning this process. Under 6 major priority issues, all participating communities were asked to rank in priority:
  - Threatened and impaired surface water
  - threaten or impaired groundwater quality
  - need for adequate data, analysis in order to meeting goals
  - need for education and involvement from citizens
  - localized flooding
  - AIS Management
- Next, each of the priority areas will be broken down into 3 or 4 subsets of goals. Next Wednesday, the board will have additional conversation to drill down on the detailed priority steps to achieve top goals.

#### **6h. Discussion of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Natural Resources Commission**

- Hawkins is aware of the concern his role on NOHOA board could be conflict with his position as Chair of NRC. He doesn't believe there is a conflict of interest since this is an advisory and education body only, however wants to be sure all feel the same. To meet these concerns, Hawkins feels he should step down as Chair, but would like to remain on the commission and serve as Chair as long as necessary. We are in need to select a Chair and Vice-Chair. Hawkins would be happy to serve as Vice-Chair to run meetings when needed.

- Watson mentioned that Natural Resources and NOHOA are both working towards same educational goals.
- There were no volunteers to be Chair at this time.
- Kress noted that since we are missing a few commissioners, that this issue be tabled until next month. Kress will put out more guidelines as to responsibilities of the position.
- Watson suggested that Commissioners reach out to Hawkins to discuss if they have any interest to reach out to him. He also noted that City council voted to adopt an increased Commission up to 9 members, with terms staggered every 3 years.

## **7. COMMISSIONER / STAFF REPORTS**

- a. Tick Task Force Reports
  - Hawkins had nothing to report as the Tick Task force hasn't met over the winter.
- b. Community Outreach
  - Nothing further.
- c. NOHOA Nest
  - Hawkins is now officially the NOHOA Nest liaison for the NRC. They had the first meeting of the year, but since the budget didn't pass, they are challenged to come up with a new plan. Move forward with 2021 budget, but short \$650,000 to do repairs and maintenance.
  - The NOHOA board meetings are shifting to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, with a closed Executive Board session the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the month. Three members of the board have been in the office working full time to assist the 2 full time office staff.
  - Committee assignments have been assigned to NOHOA board members for 2022.
- d. City Forester Report
  - Nothing further.
- e. VLAWMO Tech Report
  - Larson attended meeting, nothing new to share with the community at this time.
- f. City Report
  - All City Council members have been assigned 2022 responsibilities. Hara is still assigned as primary Council liaison for NRC, with Watson as back up.
  - Kress mentioned the City 2040 Comprehensive plan has been approved by Met Council. Sewer connection with golf course can now move forward.
  - City to begin work on Master Utility plan and Asset Management plan.

Dunn asked that we do introductions of Commissioners at the next Natural Resource Commission meeting.

**8. NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 7 p.m., with the March meeting taking place on Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

## **MEETING ADJOURNED:**

**MOTION by Dunn, seconded by Kianian, to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m.**

**MOTION carried unanimously by roll call.**

*Kevin Kress*

Kevin Kress, City Administrator

*Andrew Hawkins*

Chair, Andrew Hawkins

Date approved: 2-17-2022