

**CITY OF LINO LAKES
ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MEETING**

DATE:	March 26, 2025
TIME STARTED:	6:30 p.m.
TIME ENDED:	9:10 p.m.
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Alexander Schwartz, Julia Nelson, Lindsay Buchmeier, Jonathan Parsons, Elizabeth Larkin, Mary Jo Stevenson
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Shawn Holmes
STAFF PRESENT:	Michael Grochala, Thomas Hoffman, Marissa Ertel

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Schwartz called the Environmental meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on March 26, 2025.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Schwartz declared open mike at 6:31 p.m.

Mary Kay Sell, 564 Lonesome Pine Trail, addressed the treatment of a City pond in her neighborhood. Ms. Sell and her neighbors have had conversations with a local treatment company, Lake Management, Inc. out of Stillwater, and would be interested in treating the pond for duckweed to reduce the smell. The cost would be covered privately by the residents of the neighborhood.

Carol Featherstone, 631 Andall Street, had concerns about the proposed construction of a road and walking path. Ms. Featherstone also had concerns about the preservation of trees and of natural wildlife.

Sharon Crickmer, 583 Andall Street, expressed similar concerns about the construction of the road along with Natures Refuge. Ms. Hartmar would like the Board to consider the safety concerns of residents in the neighborhood.

Chair Schwartz closed public comments at 6:38 p.m.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented. There were no additions or deletions to the presented agenda.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Buchmeier made a motion to approve the February 26, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Mr. Parsons. Motion carried 6-0.

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. Birchwood Acres Pond Treatment Proposal

City staff has received feedback from concerned residents regarding the aesthetic quality of storm pond RLA-010-B located in Birchwood Acres Park. This pond treats stormwater runoff from nearly 70 properties located primarily on Hawthorn Road and Lonesome Pine Trail in the Park Grove development.

Communication has gone back several years to deal with concerns of vegetation, smell, and stormwater management.

The main concerns include the vegetation that covers the surface of the pond and odor. The vegetation present on this pond is primarily duckweed, which provides water purification by incorporating nutrients. It is also an important food source for wildlife. The odor is primarily due to decomposition of plants and algae.

Residents have expressed interest in treating this pond, citing the aesthetic quality of two ponds on private land nearby that receive treatments with algaecide and herbicide. These are storm pond RLA-013-A, located south of the Red Hawk Trail cul-de-sac, and an unnamed pond located directly north of Birchwood Acres Park ballfield.

Residents have petitioned 100% of the adjacent private property of the pond and agreed to share in the cost of treatments privately. There would be no cost to the city for the residents to privately treat the pond.

Ms. Nelson was curious as to why this has become a problem in the past five years and was wondering if this had to do with the recent drought. Mr. Hoffman stated this would potentially have to do with the environmental conditions. Previous testing has not shown anything out of the ordinary.

Ms. Nelson stated there are studies online showing that adding bacteria could be added to help with this issue. Mr. Hoffman stated he has reached out to the City of Savage since they have used this system in the past. The City would be interested in testing the bacteria to see if this could be a potential solution. Mr. Hoffman believes more testing would be needed.

Ms. Larkin wondered if there was an aeration system that would not cause the sediments on the bottom of the pond to rise. Mr. Hoffman stated any pond aeration system would not be recommended. Ms. Larkin also mentioned floating wetlands and whether this could be an option for this pond. Mr. Hoffman stated that most likely you would need a floating wetland the size of the pond to help with the smell. Tamarack Nature Center currently has a floating wetland but also had to use an aluminum treatment along with the wetland to reduce the smell.

Mr. Schwartz has stated that he had this issue with the pond near his property. He had used less fertilizer and vegetation removal. These treatments have helped.

Mr. Hoffman stated the City would want to do more testing and investigate different treatments, but the cost would be substantially higher than using chemicals.

Mr. Hoffman stated that the Board recommends the need for more information about the proposed treatment, further research into other treatment options, the chemical composition of the treatment, water testing before the treatment occurs, and recommendations from the City attorney. The Board would also like to see this come back before bringing this to City Council.

Ms. Buchmeier moved to approve the recommendations. Chair Schwartz seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

B. Natures Refuge North PUD Preliminary Plan/Preliminary Plat

Natures Refuge North is a proposed residential subdivision on approximately 59 acres located north of the Natures Refuge development on Main Street. The Environmental Board first reviewed a concept plan for the project at the October 25th, 2023, meeting. Since the initial review the developer, M/I Homes, has been working through advisory board, City Council and neighborhood comments to further explore the feasibility of the project.

In April of 2024, the Environmental Board, staff and developer discussed a potential collaborative effort to address tree mitigation requirements. That discussion centered on the idea of restoring/establishing the native plant to resemble historical conditions. This would include developing a long-term management and stewardship plan for the open space.

In August of 2024, the Environmental Board reviewed another concept plan of the area. Due to concerns over support, uncertainty over the restoration outcome and measurement of success, along with neighborhood desire to preserve a more intact wooded area, M/I Homes refocused design efforts on minimizing impacts. The revised plan prioritizes open space preservation, minimizes the development footprint and results in a substantial reduction in tree removal.

Ms. Nelson would like to better understand where the street connection to Andall Street would be and had questions about the safety concerns of residents. Residents would like to see the road be created for emergency vehicles only. Residents are also concerned about the loss of trees that would incur if the road was put in.

Ms. Larkin had questions about endangered trees being in the area and whether those could be moved towards the park. Mr. Hoffman stated there are some endangered trees and the City has been working with the DNR along with M/I Homes to make sure that the endangered trees are able to be moved or preserved.

Ms. Larkin wanted to know if the developer would be able to work around the older trees to try to preserve as many as possible. Mr. Hoffman stated it would be hard to hold the developer to that and that most trees would be disturbed.

Ms. Larkin was curious if the developer would be creating a trail system to the existing park in the area since there will not be a park in this development. Mr. Hoffman stated that there are plans for a future development to the North to have a park. Mr. Grochala stated that there are talks about plans to enhance the existing park in the area and that the developer would be paying in to a park dedication.

Mr. Schwartz had questions about the storm water ponds and wetlands in the area and whether the City would oversee those areas of water or the development. Mr. Hoffman stated that the H.O.A. would be responsible for the ponds.

Ms. Buchmeier made a motion to approve the recommendations. Ms. Stevenson seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

C. Wilkinson Waters PUD Preliminary Plan/Preliminary Plat

The applicant, Wilkinson Waters LLC, is proposing a master planned development located on North Oaks Company Inc. property located south of County Road J/Ash Street/CSAH 32, west of Centerville Road/CSAH 21 and north of Wilkinson Lake Boulevard. The development contains 4 parcels totaling approximately 76 gross acres and consists of mix of residential housing types and commercial development. The proposed development is called Wilkinson Waters.

The Environmental Board reviewed the concept plan at the September 25, 2024, meeting. Recommendations for a series or treatment train of stormwater bmp's was proposed. Screening of the adjacent county roads and taking into consideration the existing topography and elevations.

There were 196 trees surveyed on the site. Tree species present include maple, cottonwood, whit spruce, crab apple, boxelder, pussy willow, aspen, oaks, red pine, and elm. There is a diversity of trees scattered throughout the site based on topography and past land uses.

Trees that are planned for preservation will require tree protection fences installed in accordance with the City Tree Protection Fence detail. Include a list of species to be planted and number of each species to be planted. Current plans just show large, medium, and large tree totals and aren't broken down to species.

Mr. Schwartz had questions regarding the lighting in this development. Mr. Grochala stated that the development will have to meet City standards to reduce light pollution.

Ms. Larkin had concerns about the gateway aspect of this development, since this is an area where multiple cities converge. Ms. Larkin wonders if there is a way we can make Lino Lakes stand out and be made distinct. Ms. Larkin would also like to make sure that the development green space is maintained and not just in front of the buildings but also at the back of the buildings as well. Mr. Grochala stated there are

multiple plans to make this development stand out as Lino Lakes, including the City logo on the bridge. Gateway signage would also be incorporated.

Ms. Stevenson had questions about the height of the apartment buildings. Mr. Grochala stated they will be three stories, with one of the buildings being four stories although the developer would like to see this building be five stories.

Lauren Grouws, North Oaks Company, was present to answer questions about the height of the buildings. She stated this would accommodate the higher ceilings that are desired by renters.

Mr. Schwartz would like to see more screening for the lake and would be more open to the height of the buildings if the City approves of the screening.

Ms. Nelson made a motion to approve the recommendations with amendments regarding screening. Ms. Buchmeier seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

i. Wilkinson Water Tree Removal

Mr. Nelson informed the Board that the City is in favor of allowing mitigation of trees on site before there has been a final approval of the PUD Preliminary Plan/Preliminary Plat.

Mr. Schwartz motioned to approve the staff recommendations. Ms. Buchmeier seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Recycling Updates

Mr. Hoffman provided recycling updates to the Board.

B. Earth Day Event Volunteers at Wargo April 19th

Mr. Hoffman informed the Board that an Earth Day event will be held on April 19, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and encouraged Board members to attend.

8. ADJOURN

Ms. Buchmeier made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Mr. Parsons seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Marissa Ertel – Office Specialist