



Our Mission is to Provide Quality Public Services in a Fiscally Responsible Manner in Partnership with our Community.

NOTICE OF MEETING

**City of Lake Elmo Parks Commission
3880 Laverne Avenue North
July 21, 2025
6:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approve Agenda
4. Approve Minutes – April 21, 2025 & May 19, 2025
5. Public Comment
6. Lions Park Pavilion
7. Lions Park Playground Replacement
8. Star Gazing Event 2025
9. Communications
10. Adjourn

****Note: Every effort will be made to accommodate person or persons that need special considerations to attend this meeting due to a health condition or disability. Please contact the Lake Elmo City Clerk if you are in need of special accommodations.*

City of Lake Elmo Parks Commission Minutes
April 21, 2025

Members Present: Commissioners Kastler, Barrett, Hoelscher, Sturtz and Esch

Absent: None

Staff Present: Assistant Public Works Director Swanepoel, Senior Planner Jensen

The meeting was called to order by Hoelscher at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Agenda

Agenda approved by consensus; no discussion.

Approval of Minutes

The March 17, 2025 Parks Commission Minutes were approved as presented by consensus, no discussion.

Public Comments

None

Clear Lake Concept Plan

Senior Planner Jensen presented the proposed plan for a single family home development and reviewed the proposal for park dedication funds.

Esch motioned to recommend the acceptance of fee in lieu of land for the Clear Lake project with up to 25% park dedication credit for a trail along Keats Ave based on the findings listed in the staff report. Barrett provided a second. Motion passed 5-0.

Bob and Holly Kress Donation

Assistant Public Works Director Swanepoel reviewed the proposal from Bob and Holly Kress for donation of funds to be used to purchase and install a bench in Sunfish Lake Park

Barrett motioned to recommend to the City Council to approve the donation from Bob and Holly Kress to purchase a bench, placard and installation materials not to exceed \$1650 and to be placed in Sunfish Lake Park. Kastler provided a second. Motion passed 5-0.

2026-2035 Parks CIP

Assistant Public Works Director Swanepoel presented proposed additions and adjustments to the 2026-2035 Parks CIP. Discussion was held on each item in the Parks CIP and adjustments were identified for recommendation to the City Council.

Esch motioned to recommend the 2026-2035 Parks Capital Improvement Plan to City Council including all staff recommendations for adjustments except keeping project 046, “Outdoor Fitness Park” and improving the distinction between outdoor fitness parks and fitness equipment situated along trails and moving trail additions to year 2027 and adding court resurfacing and protective

liner for Lions Park ice rink for 2026 with priority 1 for \$30,000 and moving invasive species management to item 2030 and increasing Lions Park playground equipment replacement to \$275,000. Kastler provided a second. Motion passed 5-0

Communications

- a) Portable toilets have been placed for 2025
- b) Parks mowing will begin this week
- c) Ballfield maintenance
- d) Pebble Park parking lot construction update
- e) K leis Park playground installation update
- f) Sunfish Lake parking lot expansion update
- g) Bike trail closure discussion
- h) Downtown plantings discussion

Sturtz motioned to adjourn the meeting; Barrett provided a second. Motion passed 5-0.

Hoelscher adjourned the meeting at 8:03 PM

Respectfully Submitted
Julie Johnson, City Clerk

City of Lake Elmo Parks Commission Minutes
May 19, 2025

Members Present: Commissioners Barrett, Hoelscher, Sturtz and Esch

Absent: Commissioner Kastler

Staff Present: Assistant Public Works Director Swanepoel, Senior Planner Jensen

The meeting was called to order by Hoelscher at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Agenda

Agenda approved by consensus; no discussion.

Public Comments

None

Reid Park Parking Lot Improvement

Assistant Public Works Director Swanepoel presented proposed expansion and renovation of the parking lot at Reid Park to add an additional 11 parking stalls. Swanepoel noted that the bids received were in line with funds budgeted for the project.

Esch motioned to recommend to City Council to approve the bid from Miller Excavating to reconstruct the parking lot and trail at Reid Park not to exceed \$227,120. Barrett provided a second. Motion passed 4-0.

Park Service Level and Staffing

Assistant Public Works Director Swanepoel opened discussion on staffing and service level expectations for the city's parks. Discussion was held regarding potential for programming in the parks, website updates, new funding sources for parks, future funding needs for parks and staffing. Commissioners reached a consensus to email thoughts and suggestions to Director Swanepoel for further discussion prior to the joint meeting with the City Council in the fall.

Communications

- a) Park reservations
- b) Park review

Sturtz motioned to adjourn the meeting; Barrett provided a second. Motion passed 4-0.

Hoelscher adjourned the meeting at 7:32 PM

Respectfully Submitted
Julie Johnson, City Clerk



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 06/21/2025

Motion

TO: PARKS COMMISSION

FROM: Assistant Public Works Director – Adam Swanepoel

AGENDA ITEM: Park Pavilions

CORE STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrant, inclusive, connected community | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient, reliable, innovative services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsive, transparent, adaptive governance | <input type="checkbox"/> Balanced Finances now and future |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Managed Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Resilient Infrastructure |

BACKGROUND:

As part of the 2025- 2034 CIP, commissioners recommended installing five new pavilions within the city parks over the next five years. This recommendation came after numerous trees have been removed due to storm damage, Emerald Ash infection and Oak Wilt. Placement of these pavilions will not only provide shade-but also provide a place for visitors to congregate at sit while visiting the park.

The city currently has pavilions at Pebble, Goose Lake, Carriage Station, and Ivywood Park. All but one of the structures are made of steel structure and have little maintenance

ISSUE BEFORE PARKS COMMISSION:

Would the parks Commission like to install a shade structure at Lions Park in 2026 and provide a priority list for the remaining pavilions?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

After numerous park visits and park reviews, commissioners have suggested placement of pavilions at; Reid, Tablyn, and Ridge Park. Staff has had numerous requests for additional shade at Lions Park since the ballfield was updated in 2017.

In 2026 the Lions Park is scheduled to undergo several improvements which include, court resurfacing, playground replacement, ADA trail updates and potentially paving the North East parking lot

If a pavilion is to be included in this section of the park, it would be cost effective and less disruptive to include this in the 2026 upgrades if the commission is in favor of it. Construction of the playground and courts, trails and parking lot area will disturb a large section of the park in 2026 and bunching these projects together in the same year would limit the amount of construction activity over several years near the playground area.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no financial obligation at this time. The cost of a pavilion with concrete was listed in the CIP at \$80,000. Staff has seen opportunities to seek different sizes or designs which could best suit the areas for the listed parks.

RECOMMENDATION:

Motion to recommend staff to seek proposals for a shade structure at Lions Park for installation in 2026.



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 07/21/2025

Discussion

TO: PARKS COMMISSION

FROM: Assistant Public Works Director – Adam Swanepoel

REVIEWED BY: Public Works Director -- Marty Powers

AGENDA ITEM: Lions Park Playground Replacement

CORE STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrant, inclusive, connected community | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient, reliable, innovative services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsive, transparent, adaptive governance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Balanced Finances now and future |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Managed Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Resilient Infrastructure |

BACKGROUND:

The Lions Park playground, installed in 2000, has surpassed its lifespan and is slated for future replacement, as discussed in the 2024 and 2025 capital improvement plans.

Survey results from the Parks Master Plan in 2024 showed 58% of those surveyed visited Lions Park. Lions Park was also listed as the #1 park most often visited by users. Survey results also showed playground use was the 2nd most common activity people used the park for.

The playground currently consists of a large playset and swing. Over the years several repairs have been made to correct broken or missing parts. The largest safety concern is the level of drop between the slides and the surface.

ISSUE BEFORE PARKS COMMISSION:

Does the Park Commission agree with the proposed outline for Lions Park Playground set replacement.

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

Lions Park is being considered for a number of possible upgrades in the next two years. Staff suggest replacing the existing playground set and implementing a play set for 5-12 year olds with additional teenage features within the play area. The park layout, conveniently situated near the south parking lot, makes access ideal from the asphalt trail or parking lot. The playground will retain traditional components like swings, slides, and climbing structures while adding ADA access, to better accommodate children with mobility challenges

Staff would recommend removal of the merry-go-round, fountain and bench which are outside of the play area. This would open the area up for a future shade structure. Staff also recommend safety chips within the play area. Poured in place cushioned surfacing is available but would cost \$30-\$60 per sq ft.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal impacts are outlined in the 2026-2035 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). CIP items are funded through the Parks Dedication Fund while Operations and Maintenance items are funded through the Public Works Budget. The current CIP has \$300,000 allotted to the replacement of the playground set at Lions Park.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is looking for the Parks Commission to support the above criteria set by staff and proceed with obtaining proposals to upgrade the Lions Park Playset.

“Move to direct City staff to gather proposals to updating the play set at Lions Park using the recommendations provided.”



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 07/21/2025

Discussion

TO: PARKS COMMISSION

FROM: Assistant Public Works Director – Adam Swanepoel

AGENDA ITEM: Sally Manzara Nature Center – Star Gazing Event

CORE STRATEGIES:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vibrant, inclusive, connected community | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient, reliable, innovative services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsive, transparent, adaptive governance | <input type="checkbox"/> Balanced Finances now and future |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Managed Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Resilient Infrastructure |

BACKGROUND:

The Sally Manzara Nature Center has been providing community programming since 2017. Programming provided by the center focuses on community activities related to outdoor life for all ages. Current programming is run by the center's program manager, Verity Davis, and includes summer camps, family nature day, buckthorn removal festival and an adopt a tree program. Along with programs the center provides, several exhibits and activities including bee, butterfly, tree, bird and aquatic life resources are also available.

Normal business hours for the center currently in the winter are 9am- 3pm. Sunfish Lake Park is open from dawn to dusk.

ISSUE BEFORE PARKS COMMISSION:

Would the Parks Commission consider recommending the Sally Manzara Nature Center to hold a star gazing event on October 11th

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

The Sally Manzara Nature Center is requesting to host a star gazing event to be held on site the evening of October 11th with (October 28th being the backup). The event would start around 7pm and would conclude at 10pm. Attendees would hear from the MN Astronomical Society about star constellations and be able to use telescopes in the prairie area for viewing.

Consideration for this event is being brought forward for the purpose of extending the hours of the park for the event. Currently the park closes at 9:00 p.m. and volunteers are requesting extension of the hours for their event. The Center is planning for approximately 20-25 people to attend the event.

The 2024 event brought out 40 people to the star gazing event. The event was shortened due to the weather conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the following motion:

“Move to recommend to City Council the request to extend Sunfish Lake Park hours until 10:30pm on Oct. 11, 2025, with Oct 17 being considered to host a star gazing event.”