

Cambridge Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 14, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Cambridge Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission was held at Cambridge City Hall, 300 3rd Avenue NE, Cambridge, Minnesota.

Members Present: Commissioners Jeff Andres (Chair), Jeff Soderquist (Vice Chair), Adam Schorer, Katie Solar, Silas Peterson (Youth Representative), and Mark Ziebarth (Council Representative)

Members Absent: Christina Thayer-Anderson (Community Education Representative), Susan Blom (Isanti County Parks Board Representative)

Staff Present: Amy Norling, Community Development Specialist

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Andres called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Oath of Office

Commissioners Andres, Soderquist, Schorer, Solar, Peterson and Ziebarth read and signed their Oath of Office.

Approval of Agenda

Schorer moved, seconded by Ziebarth, to approve the agenda. All voted aye, no nays. Motion carried 6/0.

Approval of Minutes

Schorer moved, seconded by Soderquist, to approve the April 14, 2025 meeting minutes. All voted aye, no nays. Motion carried 6/0.

Public Comment

No Public Comment.

Unfinished Business

6A. Follow up from April 14, 2025 PTRC 'Commissioner Updates and/or Concerns' regarding signs at City Park for when the restrooms will be open for the reason.

Norling will discuss with Public Works the installation of signs to inform park users when the restrooms are closed for the season, when they are expected to be open and when they are open.

6B. Inquiry to Public Works regarding adding a crosswalk at 2nd Ave NW from boat access to Spirit River area.

Norling stated, Public Works responded that they refrain from putting in crosswalks mid-block. The crosswalk gives the pedestrian a false sense of security and could lead to serious injury if the car does not stop. Suggested that the people park in the City Park parking lot as it eliminates the need to cross 2nd Ave NW and also frees up parking at the boat ramp for boaters.

6C. Inquiry to Public Works regarding adding a crosswalk at 2nd Ave NW and Fern Street.

Norling responded, Public Works replied that they will install a crosswalk at this intersection.

New Business

7A. Parks update from Public Works Director, Todd Schwab

Norling presented,

- Sandquist Park has been very busy this summer. The State Baseball Tournament was held at Sandquist Park and Mann Fields this past weekend (estimated 2,000 people before the event).
- The Osprey relocation at Sandquist Park was a success. The pair is using the nesting platform.
- Public Works is trying to keep up with park maintenance. There was some vandalism in various parks, mostly tagging (graffiti).
- The Garland Street extension and Central Greens Parking lot was approved and should start soon.
- The 2025 Street Project has started including the new Main Street S Trail.
- The 2025 Street Project has started including the new Bike/Walk Trail Parking Lot located on Central Dr NE.
- A new 'mobile stage' has been made by our Public Works Dept for our Discover Downtown Concerts! It is 20' wide by 16' deep. It is built on top of a trailer so it can be moved from the Public Works building to downtown when needed. The sides fold down when in place and there are supporting feet that can be adjusted. Then there is a chain railing and removable steps. This will reduce Public Work's setup time and increase the band's setup time!

7B. 2025 Summer Parks Programming update

Norling continued, in our April 2025 Parks Programming update, we discussed how the kids' musical or theater performances were not drawing in an audience during our third Kid's Event when the bounce house and petting zoo events do so well. At that time in April 2025, we were working with a company to try and coordinate a battery-operated car event. With a new business vendor came many considerations such as site considerations and their liability waiver. We decided not to pursue this vendor due to the liability waiver and the concern that we would have 200 kids show up to the event and only 24 battery-operated cars and 1 Thomas the Train for toddlers. Instead, we decided to pursue an Art in the Park event for our third Kids' Event and have signed a contract with KidCreate Studio – North Metro/Anoka County chapter. KidCreate will have 3 art stations setup: glow-in-the-dark Aurora Borealis, clay candy creations, and a sensory play summer fun table for toddlers. Additionally, city staff will have a rock painting station setup. These art projects are a good variation of crafting, painting, and molding, so something for everyone and every skill. Currently, our Art in the Park Facebook event has 1.1k people marked as "interested." Our first Kid's Event was the Bounce Houses in the Park event, which we had to move to our backup location due to rain, which meant we could only setup 5 of the 7 bounce houses we rented. It did get crowded during a few parts of the event, but overall, it was a very successful event, and the parents did a great job supervising their children (because there was no place to sit down).

Norling explained, for our Concert in the Park series, we booked tribute bands for Elton John, Boston, and Taylor Swift. We included a small Facebook advertising budget this year to boost our Facebook event page views, and that certainly paid off by nearly doubling the people who marked "interested" in the concerts.

- Our first concert was the Taylor Swift tribute band, that received mixed feedback on the Facebook comments, but incredible turn out during the actual event. Grandparents, parents, teens, and kids were present in the most diverse audience staff has seen yet. The audience came with writing on their cars, in band t-shirts and blankets or wore sequins like Swift, and showed their support for the event by singing and dancing. Staff was approached by grandparents who brought their grandchildren as a surprise (Swift was their grandchild's favorite artist), parents who said it was such a fun event and asked that we have a Swift tribute band every year, and by the food truck operators who had a very successful event (one even sold out). Attached are photos from the event.
- Our July concert is Lookin' Back, a tribute to Boston. This event page has even more "interested" people on Facebook than the Swift tribute band. We are expecting a good turn out and a high energy

band.

- Our August concert is Benny & The Jets, a tribute to Piano Rock (Elton John, Billy Joel, and Lionel Ritchie, etc.) has the most “interested” people on Facebook in this year’s Concert in the Park series.

With these events growing like this, we will want to see more food trucks at the events and better parking signage.

Norling presented, during our April 2025 Parks Programming update, we discussed how staff wanted a set backup location in case of rain for Discover Downtown Cambridge Concerts. The Chamber of Commerce did agree to use the City Center Mall, so we were able to publish that information right in our brochure so our audience can take some of the guess work out and not have to look up the backup location before attending on a rainy day.

Norling explained, the first Discover Downtown Cambridge Concert had a slim chance of rain, and instead of moving the location and losing our audience (as we always take a hit in attendance if we go to our backup location) then we purchased a large tarp that could cover our new stage for the 5 minutes of light rain we had, then we pulled back the tarp and continued the show when the rain passed. This was accomplished with great flexibility by that night’s band and is not guaranteed in the future for passing rains. The first band was SongBlast, an interactive dueling guitar duo, who involved the audience in a song guessing game, ribbon twirling game, and had some playful songs for the audience.

Norling continued, the annual Arts & Craft Fair and Chalk Art Contest is set for August 16, 2025 from 10am-3pm. This event was previously held during a road closure at the intersection of Ashland St S and 2nd Ave W, but this year we moved the event to the City Hall parking lot to be closer to the Farmer’s Market and so that if it rains then we will be able to move inside of City Center Mall. In order to ensure that we have room inside the mall in case of rain for our craft/cottage food vendors, we had to limit it to 24 craft/cottage food vendors. The event is now full and we are no longer accepting vendors. The Arts & Crafts Fair vendors are coming from Apple Valley, Anoka, Braham, Cambridge, Elk River, Isanti, Isle, Lino Lakes, Minneapolis, Oakdale, Princeton, Shakopee, and Zimmerman. The Farmer’s Market is going to be separate, with their own vendor list and reserved area. They could add an additional 12-32 vendors on the day of the Arts & Craft Fair, but their vendors will not have access to indoors in case of rain and they did not contribute to the advertising or event costs of our event, but we are glad to share their customer base! It’s been a very successful year marketing the Arts & Craft Fair. We are already at 2.6k people interested in Facebook, which beats out last year’s 1.6k! Plus, we are trying the new Mobile Marketing option from Northstar Media which says it will reach 30,000 local online users (60% in apps and 40% in browsers) as a scrolling mobile banner ad linked to our event page. We will have a guitarist, Colter LeBeau, perform during the event and Northern Lights Bounce House Rentals has generously donated a bounce house to setup during the event. We do not plan on utilizing the spray paint Street Art/Graffiti area as previously discussed, primarily because this event only has 1 staff who will be managing the Chalk Art Contest. This year’s Chalk Art Contest currently has 6 sponsors, one of whom have donated enough coupons to hand out to each participant, so everyone will walk away with something, and the winner of each age bracket will win a prize basket.

Norling asked, if able, please attend events and provide feedback and input and help spread information about the events to your network/community.

Schorer asked if the band playing at the Downtown Event in front of Happy Productions was impromptu or planned. Norling answered that it was planned. Norling continued, the Discover Downtown Cambridge concerts are primarily coordinated by a Discover Downtown Cambridge Group in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Cambridge. These 3 entities run it together. The City of Cambridge primary contribution is the band and stage, the Chamber of Commerce goes thru the process of the road

closures, set up the business booths and coordinated the Grad Swing Band. Often times the Chamber of Commerce will try to plan something for the event. The event starts at 5:30 and the band planned by the City of Cambridge starts at 6:30. Often times the Chamber of Commerce will set up a different event, sometimes it is a dancer or small musical group. Soderquist asked if this is advertised and how do you know about it. Norling does not believe there is no marketing but knows of it as a Site Plan is provided to her because of involvement with the concert.

Discussion amongst the Commission Members regarding the Downtown 3rd Thursday Summer Series. Andres thanked Norling for all of her hard work on the events.

7C. 2025 Cambridge Area Pickleball Association (CAPA) letter.

Norling read, the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission (PTRC) received a letter from the Cambridge Area Pickleball Association (CAPA) on 6/16/2025 that is addressed to the PTRC, City Council, and city staff. This letter was provided to PTRC commissioners via email on 6/17/2025. CAPA discussed how they are celebrating 10 years of pickleball in Cambridge, provided a timeline, highlighted their progress, and discussed their donations.

Dick Welch and Mike Mueller from CAPA were present to answer any questions.

7D. Farmer's Market relocated to Cambridge City Hall

Norling stated that the Farmer's Market has moved from Mom's Co-op to the Cambridge City Hall parking lot. Shops in the mall did notice an increase of foot traffic during the event. The event is looking to expand in the future and also include Food Trucks.

Other Business/Miscellaneous

8A. City Council Update

Ziebarth mentioned that City Council has been busy with the various housing projects. Cambridge Cove in NW part of town will include a small park plus a development on the east side that will include a beach and a park with water. Possible housing to the north of the old Perkins. Attended the state-wide League of Minnesota Cities and had a conversation with other cities regarding Parks and Economic Development. Hwy 95 project planning is coming along. Construction starts in 2026. The rail spur will be changing and there will be less waiting at the railroad crossing. The South Main Project has reported issues with signage regarding the detours. The Bike/Walk trail will help connect our city residents. City Budget meetings will start soon.

8B. Isanti County Parks Board Update

Susan Blom is not present.

8C. Commissioner Updates and/or Concerns

Schorer went on a hike to the Spirit River Trail with Jeff and Liam from the DNR Forestry Service to get feedback on overall forest health. They gave resources on potential grants for buckthorn removal and tree removal due to Emerald Ash Borer.

Andres went to the UP and there are signs on the street lights with a picture of a veteran, what branch they service, awards and years of service.

Andres also toured a new 'Cadillac of a parks' in Sioux Falls in the steel mill district. The ground is rubberized, kite type tarps over all the play systems to keep the kids out of the sun and there is a splash pad.

Adjournment of Council Meeting

Being no further business before the Commission, Schorer moved, seconded by Soderquist, to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:47 pm. All voted aye, no nays. Motion carried 6-0.



Jeff Andres, Chair

ATTEST:



Amy Norling
Community Development Specialist