



AGENDA
PARKS, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING

March 4, 2026 - 6:00 PM
Lake Marion Conference Room

1. Parks System Master Plan Open House: City Council Chambers | 4:30-6:30 p.m.
2. Call to Order | 6 p.m.
3. Approval of the Minutes
 - a. February 4, 2026 Meeting Minutes
4. Citizen Comments
5. Discussion Items
 - a. Lakeville Area Arts Center Update
 - b. Draft Splash Pad Policy Discussion
6. Staff Notices
7. Adjourn

CITY OF LAKEVILLE
PARKS, RECREATION & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 4, 2026

Committee Chair Weberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Lake Marion Conference Room.

Members Present: Holly Weberg, Steve Henneberry, Vicki Schwartz, Pat Sauer, Dan Volkosh, Mark Engler

Members Absent: Saima Ali, Shahid Nadeem

Staff Present: Parks and Recreation Director Joe Masiarchin, Environmental Resources Specialist II Ann Messerschmidt

1. Approval of January 7, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Sauer made a motion, seconded by Volkosh, to approve the January 7, 2025, minutes as written.

Ayes: unanimous

2. Citizen comments

No citizens were present.

3. Environmental Resources Update on Ritter Farm Park

Ongoing prairie restoration projects have been underway at Ritter Farm Park since 2018. In 2018, staff applied for a grant through Great River Greening to complete Phase I of the project. The Phase I restoration included 10.1 acres of prairie and 6.8 acres of woodland. In 2021, the City applied for an LCCMR (Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources) Grant and was awarded \$36,000 for the Phase II portion of the project. The City matched the awards with a \$26,000 contribution and the funds were paid out over the course of three years. From late 2021 to fall of September 2023, a number of initiatives were completed:

- Prairie restorations and habitat enhancement
- Invasive woody control in woodland
- Native vegetation establishment

These initiatives were accomplished through a number of tasks:

- Seeding existing prairie and areas of woodland
- Removal of dead and downed buckthorn and other invasive vegetation
- Limited mowing operations
- Foliar buckthorn treatment in prairie, grassland, and woodland areas

Environmental Resources staff has worked with MnDOT on purchasing native prairie seed mixtures and is working on finding a mix that thrives at the park. Due to farmland operations, the soil can be unfavorable to new growth. Staff had also worked with other local contractors on seed mixes.

In 2023, staff applied for another grant through Great River Greening and LCCMR to restore 10.5 acres of shortgrass prairie and complete invasive tree removals on 1.25 acres. A total of \$62,500 was received in grant funding and the City matched with a \$30,000 contribution. Phase II of the project began in March of 2025 and is slated to be completed by spring of 2027. The primary goals of this phase of the project include:

- Shortgrass prairie enhancement
- Invasive black locust removal
- Native vegetation establishment

These initiatives will be accomplished through a number of tasks:

- Prescribed burns
- Forestry tilling
- Flail mowing operations
- Basal back black locust treatment
- Forb seeding
- Woody removals

A prescribed burn was completed in March 2025 and forestry tilling operations are ongoing. The prescribed burns have occurred in other seasons, staff is still determining what garners the best results. Fall burns have contributed to significant spring growth but the summer burn also had favorable results. The prescribed burns are completed by a contractor and are heavily dependent on weather conditions. Staff has already noted native vegetation growth and an increase in pollinators through a Bee Monitoring Program.

Phase III of the project is slated for completion by fall of 2029 and includes 7.3 acres of forest enhancement and 13.2 acres of prairie restoration. This phase of the project includes:

- Initial woody removal in prairie woodland
- Seeding of prairie and woodland
- Critical period cutting of invasive woody species in woodland
- Foliar herbicide application in prairie and woodlands, black locust girdling woodlands
- Foliar herbicide application in savanna woodland

Bee Monitoring with the University of Minnesota Bee Lab is taking place at Ritter Farm Park, nine species were surveyed in 2025 including the elusive rusty patch bumble bee! 759 bees were collected and released in 2025. There has been a steady increase of bees in the park since the monitoring program began:

- 2022: 207
- 2023: 384
- 2024: 244
- 2025: 759

The restoration of native vegetation has a significant impact on pollinator populations in the park.

Committee Discussion:

As trees are removed, is public education available? Staff has placed signage at the park with QR codes that link to the project story map, which includes project progress. Staff has partnered with the Communications Department to post information online and on social media platforms.

Are other non-bee pollinator populations, such as hummingbirds, monitored? They aren't currently monitored at Ritter Farm Park, but they are naturally expected to benefit from the native vegetation restoration, similar to the bees.

What resources, if any are available to residents for native planting education? Landscaping for Clean Water offers rebates for a variety of projects, including rain gardens, shoreline restoration, and pollinator gardens. They also offer a series of classes on these topics; the next series begins in mid-February.

4. Staff Report

Staff will be providing an update on the Parks System Master Plan to the City Council at their February 17 meeting. This is a shift from the Work Session as the council is trying out a new meeting format. The community-wide survey results, needs assessment and story map will be presented for comment. Committee members are welcome to attend.

An Open House is scheduled for March 4 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. This is an opportunity for public comment and fulfills one of the planning process's public engagement initiatives. There will also be a table at the upcoming Home and Garden Expo with information on the Parks System Master Plan.

Staff is working on an LCCMR grant application to support a full-time naturalist and seasonal summer staff to offer nature education programs at the Environmental Learning Center (ELC). Staff is requesting \$800,000 that would fund three years of nature education costs at the ELC. This sum was figured based on current contractor and seasonal staff salaries.

5. Other Business

Henneberry made a motion, seconded by Egnler, to adjourn the February 4, 2026 meeting.

Ayes: unanimous

6. Adjourn

Meeting 7:07 p.m.



Memorandum

To: Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Committee
From: Joe Masiarchin, Parks and Recreation Director
Date: February 27, 2026
Subject: Lakeville Area Arts Center Update

Arts Center Manager Nicki Pretzer will be attending the meeting to provide an overview of programs, classes, concerts and shows happening at the Performing Arts and Fine Arts buildings.



Memorandum

To: Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Committee
From: Joe Masiarchin, Parks and Recreation Director
Date: February 27, 2026
Subject: Splash Pad Policy Proposal

With the anticipated opening of the splash pad at Grand Prairie Park, staff have been developing a user policy outlining opening and closure dates and times, best safety practices, and general usage guidelines.

The new splash pad is expected to be a heavily utilized amenity for residents and visitors to the community. A part of the anticipated usage includes schools, daycares, day camps, and other large groups. Staff has been working on the development of a policy that would address how these groups are accommodated while also providing an enjoyable user experience for neighbors and Lakeville residents. After consulting with surrounding communities and reviewing policies at other similar amenities, it was determined that limiting group access would be the best approach to ensure access to the splash pad remained open to all users and that staff could adequately accommodate large groups.

As you will note in the draft policy, staff is proposing that groups will only be permitted at the splash pad on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. 1 p.m. A day permit must be purchased with a fee based on the group's headcount (\$25 per increment). This approach would ensure that residents are always aware when groups might be at the splash pad and can plan accordingly. Additionally, knowing when high-volume use will occur at the splash pad will help ensure appropriate staff coverage.

Group permits will be available online via our reservation portal or by contacting the office. This has not yet been made public. Reservations for the surrounding picnic areas will not be permitted, and all use will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Staff will be responsible for monitoring group usage and promoting the proposed policy on social media and the City's website. Permanent signage will be placed at the splash pad as well with a brief outline of the park's group policy. Staff is not requesting formal approval at this time, but is seeking feedback on the draft policy.

Rules and Regulations for Grand Prairie Park Splash Pad

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the usage and standard operating procedures of the splash pad located at Grand Prairie Park.

Standard Operating Procedures

- a. The splash pad is expected to open daily from 10 a.m.-9 p.m. (or dusk) Memorial Day thru Labor Day, weather permitting
 - Closures will be posted to the City's website and on our weather hotline
- b. The City of Lakeville reserves the right to close the facility due to weather, overcrowding or other unforeseen circumstances
- c. The splash pad is not available for exclusive reservation excluding City facilitated or affiliated activities and programs
- d. Shelters, picnic areas and seating around the splash pad are available on a first come, first served basis

General Usage

- a. Use of the splash pad is at each user's own risk, there is no staff on duty
- b. The splash pad is open to the public
- c. Groups of 15 or more required to notify the Parks and Recreation office prior to arrival and obtain a usage permit
 - Tuesdays and Thursdays are designated group days. Schools, daycares, day camps and other organizations planning on visiting the splash pad must obtain a usage permit. Groups are required to reserve one quadrant per 20 people.
 - A \$25 fee is required for each quadrant
- d. The splash pad is not to be used during inclement weather
- e. No food, beverages, glass containers, tobacco or alcohol are allowed on the splash pad. Food and beverages are allowed in other areas of the park, alcohol is prohibited
- f. Pets are not permitted on the splash pad or in the water
- g. No rough play including running, hanging, swinging or climbing on the splash pad elements is permitted
- h. Bikes, rollerblades, skateboards or scooters are not allowed
- i. All participants must wear appropriate swim attire suitable for all ages
- j. Children in diapers must wear swim diapers
- k. Spitting, spouting water from mouth and nose blowing in the splash pad is not allowed
- l. No person with or suspected of having a communicable disease which could be transmitted through the use of the splash pad shall use the splash pad
- m. A person with considerable area of exposed sub-epidermal tissue, open blisters, or cuts must be warned that these may become infected and should be advised not to use the splash pad

Policy Enforcement

This policy will be enforced by City of Lakeville staff.