West St. Paul Environmental Committee
Meeting Minutes
6:00 pm, October 1, 2025
West St. Paul Municipal Center- City Council Chambers

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call:** Committee members in attendance: Chair Joshua Przybylski, Kelly Gibson, Ashley Khondakar, Julie Lyford, Stephanie Moline
   Non-voting members in attendance: Liz Gillen, Jess Hall, Eric Weiss
3. **Citizen Comments:**
   The following person came forward to speak:
   Savannah Barry
   Weiss talked about having [student] youth representation on the committee. Membership would require council support and a by-law change. He will follow up on this endeavor.
4. **New Business**
   a. **Approve July 2, 2025 Minutes**- The minutes from the July 2, 2025 meeting, were corrected: Stephanie Moline was present at the July 2 meeting. With this correction, the July 2 minutes were approved.
   b. **Review City Tree List –** Weiss introduced Jess Hall. Hall was hired as the city's first Natural Resources Specialist. Hall will help with a variety of projects: pollinator spaces, developing policy, community education and engagement on environmental matters including water, soil, plants, air and transportation. She works interdepartmentally with Parks, Public Works and Planning Departments. She is also the new staff liaison to the committee.

      Hall discussed the city tree list project. The Americorp member started work on the list, and Hall is building this work. The previous tree list had only 30 species. Limited species can make communities more vulnerable to disease. The new tree list was developed with guidance from other Twin City municipalities, the University of MN and the Department of Natural Resources. It lists 114 species, (both native and climate adaptive). The goal is to develop specialized lists for different location scenarios.

      Committee members requested that the tree list worksheet be a more guided resource for different location needs and for the tree species to be prioritized. Hall said that she would share the tree list file with committee members so that they could comment on it.

5. **Old Business: NA**
6. **Updates**
   a. **Staff Updates**
      i. **Jess Hall**
         1. **Met Council Tree Grant-** Hall is working with street and park maintenance on the plan for tree removals. Next spring the city will plant 250 trees through the tree grant. The city is working also on a grant

application for education and outreach for tree planting on private property.

2. **City Hall Pollinator Project**- Two weeks ago, 47 volunteers worked on the hillside outside city hall and planted 1,320 native plug plants and 80 pounds of native bee lawn seed. Great River Greening led the event; Hall is now watering the plantings to keep them alive.
3. **Tree Sale-**The sale is still live online until October 3. Tree Trust is facilitating the sale. Pick up for the trees in on October 18. The tree species follow our tree guidelines. Mississippi Park Connection reached out to the city to give out free bare root tree giveaways as part of the tree sale. The free trees for higher need areas.
4. **Kennedy Park Tree Planting** The tree planting is scheduled with Tree Trust on October 11.

ii. Eric Weiss

1. **Kennedy Park Reconstruction**- Twenty-five trees are being planted at the park. There will be 14 tree varieties. The park reconstruction is going well, and the city is planning a grand reopening on Sat, Nov 1. It will be the Day of the Dead, and the city will try to find ways to celebrate the holiday.
2. **Smith-Dodd Concept Plans**- The plans were adopted by Council at its last meeting. The project is now moving forward into further design.
3. **150 Thompson Concept Plans**- The plans will be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Committee next week for approval. The 3-D renderings of the plans will be available for viewing soon.
4. **Holiday Décor Swap**- The swap will take place this Saturday at the Harmon Park Neighborhood Center.
5. **City Cleanup Day**- The fall cleanup will be on October 11. The cleanup is city-wide. The supply and donut pick-up will be at Harmon Park at 9:30 am. The 150 Thompson area is of especial concern. A group of volunteers will kayak in the lake picking up garbage.
6. **Volunteer Appreciation Dinner**- There is an appreciation dinner for Environmental and Park's Committee members on Tuesday, November 18. Please let Eric or Jess know if you plan to attend.

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b. Landscaping Subcommittee- Khondakar reported that the subcommittee met on August 15 and discussed putting together pamphlets, bookmarks and yard signs as possible deliverables. The focus is education on invasive species. The yard signs would feature humorous themes like "Most Wanted," or "Outlawed," and identifiable images of the invasive species plant. The subcommittee also talked about having a QR code that would lead to the tree planting list and pamphlets on each park describing its amenities and attractions.

The subcommittee discussed the plantings in traffic roundabouts and the need to plant more native plants in the roundabouts for the city to lead by example. Another topic of

discussion was the problem of garden maintenance in city parks. They talked about the possibility of community gardens, and partnerships with master gardeners and neighborhood residents to maintain the park gardens.

c. **Parks and Recreation Committee-** Weiss reported that the Parks Committee recommended for approval the Albert Park and Plaza and Officer memorial plans. The plans were approved unanimously in September. The Parks system plan was also approved unanimously. It is ninety-eight percent done and Weiss is working on the final details. City Council will review it at the October 27 meeting.

d. **Planning Commission-** Gillen said there was no new news to report.

e. **City Council- NA**.

7. **Other** -NA

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield