

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, February 13, 2026

Members present: Tony Vavricka, Dorothy Dybvig, Dave Barsness, Elsie Laursen; Council Liaison Val Palmer

Members absent: John Gaede, Todd Sandell

Staff Present: Administrator Kathy George, Deputy Clerk Karry White, B&G Maintenance Elliott Crompton

Other: Daniel Fife (Fife Innovations), Sierra Kingen (Editor, *North Pine County News*)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:17 a.m. by Chair Dybvig.

Approve Agenda

Motion Barsness, second Laursen to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion passed 4-0.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion Barsness, second Laursen, to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2025 meeting. Motion passed 4-0. The Commission did not meet in January.

New Business

Commission Vacancy: Student Representative

This item will be deferred until next month's meeting due to the absence of Anna Smith, who has expressed interest in filling the seat.

Presentation: Daniel Fife – Walking Tour

Daniel Fife was present to bring the Commissioners up to date on the work he is doing for the Robinson Quarry Park Walking Tour. He has expanded the tour from the original 16 points identified by LHB to include much more of the geology and history of the property, along with the quarry operations and the recreational opportunities. Fife shared quite a bit of detail about how the walking tour will work; such as, once a person downloads the tour, items will pop up as the person moves closer to the areas selected for the tour. Commissioners expressed appreciation and anticipation in seeing the final product.

Service Contracts

Annual Service Contracts are up for renewal:

- Sandstone Flower & Garden Club \$500
- 210 Gallery & Art Center \$1,000
- Sandstone Royalty Program \$1,000
- Sandstone Festival Committee \$5,000

Motion Barsness, second Laursen to recommend the City Council approve the Annual Service Contracts. Motion carried 4-0.

Essentia Health: Johnson Park Project

Deputy Clerk Karry White has been working with Essentia Health on their desire to sponsor Johnson Park over the next three years, which includes a \$5,000 three-year pledge (\$15,000 total).

Prices have been received for two features that will nicely improve Johnson Park. The price for the one-piece whirl, including shipping, is \$10,568.09. The Public Works crew think they can install this feature. The price received for the tandem expression swing, including shipping, is \$2,347.89. Total of both pieces is \$12,915.98. The other swing(s) can be left for now – maybe they can be replaced if there are funds leftover. Essentia was fine with the City moving forward with these purchases now and applying their three annual payments to the project.

Motion Barsness, second Vavricka to recommend the City Council move forward with these purchases for Johnson Park with the understanding that the expenses will be reimbursed by Essentia Health’s three-year pledge of \$15,000. Motion carried 4-0.

Continuing Business

2026 Events

- Ice Fest – January 8-11:
 - Bock Fest at SandRocks was a hit.
 - The climbers reported over 350 attendees at Ice Fest
- City Skate & Slide – January 10
 - The weather did not allow ice to be made in time; however, the rink is up and running now
 - 395 people attended (were counted)
- Spring Park Clean Up – April 25th
 - Make flyer – advertise to the community
 - Include in the Spring newsletter
 - Ask Sirena to share through the Neighborhood Watch program
 - Connect with Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts
 - Provide donuts, pizza, water for participants
- Arts in the Park – (5) Tuesdays in June
 - Commissioner Vavricka - line up the musicians
 - Bring back Nathan Frazer and Crossroads?
 - American Legion Auxiliary, Dairy Association, Quarry Lions, Friends of the Library, 210 Gallery & Art Center will all be invited to participate
 - Everyone’s Table will sponsor the June 2nd date
- Quarry Days – August 7-8
 - booth on Saturday to promote the City Parks
- Mary Thorvig Memorial Tree Garden “planting” ceremony – August 9

- Robinson Quarry Park Clean Up – typically September or October
 - Commissioner Barsness will coordinate
 - Buckthorn Removal
 - This will be a 3-year project, starting on Upper Robinson
 - The forester (Christian) will be invited to an upcoming meeting

- Oktoberfest – September 26th / Band?
 - Stein Holding Contest (?)
 - Keg Throwing (?)
 - Hammerschlagen (?)
 - Pumpkin Carving Contest (?)
 - Pumpkin Bowling (?)
 - Bock Fest (?)
 - History Center Beer Stein Display

- Quarry City Christmas – November 28
 - Sip & Stroll

- Santa at Lions Hill – December 19

Various Updates

Robinson Quarry Park

There were no registrations for camping in December. In 2025, there was a total of 198 registrations for 271 days of camping. In January, there were 3 registrations for 4 days of camping, with \$60 collected.

Staff is working on getting all the new campsites entered into the reservation website so that we can start offering our campsites again. We have ordered new QR code reservation signs to go on all of the new camp site sign posts as well, they won't be installed until the website is up and running. In the meantime, only the 3 original campsites can be rented at this time.

Legacy Grant Projects

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Phase 2 Project

- The new small pavilion has been ordered. We held off on concrete for this pavilion until the pavilion provider submits the detail. Finishing options (roof color, kiosk wood stain & powder coating) have been submitted.

- Daniel Fife is working on the signage/tour.

- Jacob Mans, professor at the UofM, has his students preparing construction drawings (and models) for the chosen camper cabin design; and then Pine Tech students will

construction the cabins; Mans is looking into doing a design/build at the UofM for the bathhouse facility. He is also seeking funding for summer interns to help with construction.

- The scope amendment for adding the work in Upper Robinson has been submitted to SHPO, the DNR, and Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails for consideration. SHPO is recommending an archaeological survey in upper Robinson; Fred Sutherland (who conducted the survey in lower Robinson) has been contacted and asked for a proposal. This survey needs to be completed before SHPO will approve the project.
- We will work with Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails on a grant amendment, since the current grant closes out June 30, 2027 – just to make sure we don't run out of time.
- Dresel Contracting submitted a Change Order, adding \$1,311.70 to add electrical outlets in the panel near the stage and climbing wall. This work was done in preparation for Ice Fest.

New Monument Sign

- Erin Sandell created the graphics for a new sign at Robinson Quarry Park; which the Commission has approved
- The City Council has agreed that the stone sign structure located on TH 23 and Old Military Road can be repurposed for Robinson Quarry Park
- A price/estimate was received from Mike Johnson to move the stone sign: \$2,500
- Sandell's design needs to be shared with a sign maker to get a price to create the sign – Kathy met with a sign maker and is awaiting a proposal.

Miscellaneous Updates

- Sandstone Junction Trail Update:
 - Signs have been ordered: stop / yield signs, no ATVs, Sandstone Junction Trail (with contributors listed), etc. and will be installed this spring.
- Bark Park Signage
 - Commissioners would like a wayfinding sign along the road
 - Council held a work session to discuss wayfinding signage – next steps
 - Council members felt it would be best for the Bark Park to move forward with a new design for the park sign – not the wayfinding sign design, since other parks have their own unique signage
- Eagle Scout Project Update
 - In his absence, Sandell submitted an e-mail report, stating that a 4'x8' poly sign board is \$130, with an additional \$200 for shipping; or, for 2 half sheets the shipping cost would be \$50; for quarter sheets the shipping cost would be \$30
 - Perhaps this sign project and the Bark Park sign project could be combined to bring down the shipping cost
 - Sandell will contact the newspaper about doing an article about the new shed/project

- Skunk Creek Trail Update
 - The trail project can continue to Pine Avenue and the Skunk Creek Trail sign can now be installed
 - The sign on the Old Military Road side of the property will be installed
 - Additional trail marking signs have been ordered and will be installed throughout
 - Clearing is needed to create the defined parking area
 - Other thoughts?
 - Disc Golf –
 - Email received from Jeremy Kollmann
 - Refining draft layout
 - Provided an updated layout for the course
 - Provided an alternative tee design that is basically a short wood deck sitting on top of the ground with turf on top
 - All agreed that a subcommittee should work with Jeremy on the details; the committee could include Commissioners Vavricka, Gaede & Laursen, along with City Administrator George and Public Works Director Hiler
- Panther Park – Pavilion
 - Quotes received from Midwest Recreation are pretty high
 - We are putting out a Request for Proposals, hoping we receive better pricing from local contractors
- Pine County Trail Planning
 - The County was asked if members of the Sandstone Park Commission could join their park/recreation planning group.
 - County’s response: “We do not have regular meetings regarding parks and trails. If something comes up, we put it on the Land Committee agenda (the committee you had attended originally regarding the \$ for the bike path.). Typically, our committee meetings are not public meetings (invite only) and a majority of them do not have anything to do with parks/trails. I will keep in mind if we do anything formal in the future regarding parks and trails discussions.”
 - Commissioners directed Administrator George to persist with the County on engagement regarding County-wide park/recreation planning
- Lions Hill
 - Barb has officially resigned as Warming House Attendant due to medical reasons
 - See Barb’s journal notes

Other

Special Event Permit: American Legion Auxiliary Unit 151: ALA District Picnic at Train Park on May 16th.

Commercial Use of Robinson Quarry Park Permit: University of Wisconsin River Falls Falcon Outdoor Adventures on 2/17 or 2/19 and 2/21-22.

Administrator George reviewed an update to the Code of Conduct. Copies were provided to all present.

Adjourn

Motion Vavricka, second Barsness to adjourn at 9:20 a.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy George, City Administrator