



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Minutes - Final Park & Recreation Advisory Board

Monday, September 15, 2025

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Lauer called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Present: 7- Board Member Peder Jothen, Vice Chair Krissa Anderson, Chair Aaron Lauer, Board Member Russell Bauer, Board Member Adam Olson, Board Member Isaac Rich and Board Member Kathleen Holmes

Absent: 1- Ex Officio Member Kelby Rose and Youth Representative (non-voting) Luken Weitz

Also present: Andrew Tussing, Streets and Parks Manager and Staff Liason; Melissa Bernhard, Northfield City Schools Recreation Coordinator; Bruce Jacobson, landscape architect; Alisha Hayes, Meeting Associate/Administrative Associate for Streets and Parks.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Board Member Holmes, seconded by Vice Chair Anderson, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Board Member Jothen, Vice Chair Anderson, Board Member Olson, Chair Lauer, Board Member Bauer, Board Member Holmes and Board Member Rich

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Board Member Jothen, seconded by Board Member Bauer, to approve the July 21, 2025 PRAB Meeting Minutes The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Board Member Jothen, Vice Chair Anderson, Board Member Olson, Chair Lauer, Board Member Bauer, Board Member Holmes and Board Member Rich

1. [25-499](#) July 21, 2025 PRAB Meeting Minutes

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

REGULAR AGENDA

This was approve.

2. [25-500](#) Consider Motion approving Central Park Playground Improvements.

Summary of questions and comments following Bruce's presentation from the park board, but not limited to:

Bauer- portable toilet closure opening to the west, plans show it opening to the east. Better to change it back to opening to the west (flip it so parent's can see kids going in and out)

Holmes- concerned about "putting lipstick on a pig" and in constant repair if not replacing structures and will it created more long term maintenance.

**Needing to ensure that equipment is safe and meets code (fire pole has to too far of a gap for example) so making sure all equipment is up to safety standards set.*

Daily use by daycare center and age range of 2-5 year olds was the primary focus

Main play structure has "good shelf life yet" but need to jazz them up and add more challenges and more interest as most of the parks were built around the same time and have very similar features

Benches in container vs. out of container- needing them more accessible for everyone, harder to get to for some (especially seniors)

Need more dimension and challenge to climbing structures

Historical playhouse structure vs. traditional and functional "gets cute and stupid" when you try to make it more than it needs to be. Kids that are 2-5 know what a playhouse should look like and how to use it. Making sure to use durable materials with a lifespan of ~25-30 years or more.

Discussion following motion of Central park but not limited to:

Holmes- appreciate keeping the usable pieces of the structure in tact but supports the parents of the 6-12 age range so encouraging a more challenging climbing structure and making sure all elements appeal to more than 2-5 year olds and making sure recreation, health and accessibility remains the main focus.

When do kids start going places you don't know where they are? More exploration vs. playing in traditional playgrounds in the age range beyond five year olds.

Anderson- need more exciting features, suggesting replacing a standard swing with a different version, like saucer or tire swing. Making more options for older kids to play tag with climbing structures.

Comment made outside of PRAB to Bruce about protecting trees and providing shade areas for public

Considered a zip line structure but fall zone and staying within play container would cause conflict. "Not trying to dumb things down to make things easier", but more logistics of what is needed for a zip line per Bruce J.

Conflict with "fall zones" in more than one structure.

Appreciate paying attention to seating and accessibility and meeting needs of everyone

Responding to walls in the middle of the park---don't forget about those needing to be repaired/replaced

A motion was made by Board Member Holmes, seconded by Vice Chair Anderson to approve the Central Park Playground Improvements.

Yes: 7- Board Member Jothen, Vice Chair Anderson, Board Member Olson, Chair Lauer, Board Member Bauer, Board Member Holmes and Board Member Rich

3. 25-501

Consider Motion approving Dresden Hill Playground Improvements.

Summary of questions but not limited to the following:

Anderson- liking the Shoots & Ladders look, considering doing a wooden play structure vs. plastic as the main structure

Bruce will look into more options with vendor re: wooden structure. Mixing vendors and mixing materials (see what is "doable")--does it have the same life span on materials

Why the spider web since there are several close in other parks (John North and Greenvale)

**requested by primary audience of Dresden residents per Bruce J.*

Will Parking be an issue

Summary of comments but not limited to the following:

Bauer- curb appeal, new style is more inviting and accessible

Holmes- a bit more excitement and serves a well deserved/under-served community, strong organization and layout of accessing the playground

Anderson- fun, interesting and different

Rich- worked at Kid Venture over the summer, spider web good for older kids

Lauer- increase accessibility and direct access to Viking Terrace

Bathroom accessibility, close to a personal residence, possibly moving it

Olson- integrating hill into playground but safety first, little kids love playhouse structures, impressed with amount of play in such a small park

A motion was made by Board Member Olson, seconded by Board Member Bauer, to approve the Dresden Hill Playground Improvements.

Yes: 7- Board Member Jothen, Vice Chair Anderson, Board Member Olson, Chair Lauer, Board Member Bauer, Board Member Holmes and Board Member Rich

STAFF UPDATES

4. 25-502

Staff Reports.

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Anderson-push for wooden play structure and looking into vendors- more variety needed in all parks.

Holmes- budget and how that looks with Board and Commissions and which ones are critical for city operations, do we resolve the Park and Recreation Advisory Board? Will be discussed tomorrow night at Council work session on 9/16/2025. Andrew to send out email to PRAB with another update. An option to create a "task force" consisting of community members and engagement in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice Chair Anderson, seconded by Board Member Bauer, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. . The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7- Board Member Jothen, Vice Chair Anderson, Board Member Olson, Chair Lauer, Board Member Bauer, Board Member Holmes and Board Member Rich