

1. Agenda Docs

Documents:

ITEM 1. PARC AGENDA 012226.PDF
ITEM 1.C. DRAFT MINUTES 12-4-25.PDF
ITEM 4. MCC UPDATE PAR UPDATE JANUARY 2026 TH REV..PDF
ITEM 4. MONTIARTS PARC DECJAN 26 UPDATE.PDF
ITEM 4. PARK DEDICATION JOINT MEETING UPDATE.PDF

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
PARKS, ARTS & RECREATION COMMISSION
JANUARY 22, 2025 – 8:00 a.m.
Academy Room – Monticello Community Center

- 1. General Business**
 - A. Call to Order
 - B. Approval of Agenda – *Items may be added for discussion purposes or approval.*
 - C. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - Regular Meeting Minutes from December 4, 2025
 - D. Citizen requests and comments.

- 2. Regular Agenda**
 - A. Interview PARC Applicant Erin Stein

- 3. Discussion of Added Items**

- 4. Updates**
 - A. Director’s Update (TP)
 - B. MCC Update (SC)
 - C. Park Maintenance Update
 - D. Park Dedication Joint Meeting Update (draft minutes)
 - E. Shade Tree Update (TP)
 - F. MontiArts Update (EW)

- 5. Next Regular Meeting February 26, 2026**

- 6. Adjournment**

DRAFT

**MINUTES
PARKS, ARTS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025 - 8:00 A.M.
ACADEMY ROOM – CITY HALL**

Members Present: Julie Jelen, Janine Kopff, Adam Leiferman, Maria Onnen, Council Liaison Charlotte Gabler, Danielle Murdoff, Stephen Peterka

Staff Present: Tom Pawelk, Beth Green, Josh Berthiaume, Erica Witzmann

1. General Business

- A. Call to Order: Chair Jelen called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.
- B. Approval of Agenda – *Items may be added for discussion purposes or approval.*
 - Add: Appoint PARC rep to serve on the Bertram Chain of Lakes Advisory Council to the Regular Agenda as Item B.
 - Schedule joint meeting to review Park Dedication Ordinance.
 - COMMISSIONER ONNEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE ADDED ITEMS. MOTINO SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KOPFF. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- C. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - Regular Meeting October 23, 2025, COMMISSIONER MURDOFF MOVED TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 23, 2025. MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KOPFF. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- D. Citizen requests and comments.

Director Tom Pawelk reported receiving an email request for an RC car crawler park featuring varied terrain (rocks, hills, etc.), which would require limited space and generate less noise than a racetrack. If PARC wishes to proceed, Director Pawelk will meet with the requestor to gather additional details and evaluate potential locations, with consideration given to a community park with a parking lot. Councilmember Gabler expressed a preference for a location within city limits to improve accessibility for youth. Commissioner Leiferman noted the benefit of having an electric power source available for battery charging. PARC reached consensus to gather more information, and Director Pawelk will report back at a future meeting.

2. Regular Agenda

A. Consideration of commission renewals.

- Julie Jelen: 2026-2028
- Steve Peterka: 2026-2028
- Adam Leiferman: 2026-2028

COMMISSIONER KOPFF MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPOINTMENT RENEWALS FOR PARC COMMISSIONERS JELEN, PETERKA AND LEIFERMAN FOR A 3-YEAR TERM FROM JANUARY 1, 2026 – DECEMBER 31, 2028. MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ONNEN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Consideration of appointing a PARC member to serve on the Bertram Chain of Lakes Advisory Council.

COMMISSIONER ONNEN MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER LEIFERMAN TO SERVE ON THE BERTRAM CHAIN OF LAKES ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM. MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PETERKA. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Election of officers for 2026.

COMMISSIONER LEIFERMAN MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER JELEN AS THE PARC CHAIR AND COMMISSIONER KOPFF AS VICE-CHAIR. MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ONNEN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Consideration of recommending approval for the Joint Powers Agreement with Wright County for the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park.

Director Pawelk presented the amended and restated Joint Powers Agreement, which establishes the legal and operational framework for shared governance of the Bertram Chain of Lakes Regional Park between the City of Monticello and Wright County. The agreement outlines responsibilities, guiding principles, and collaborative processes to ensure long-term cooperation, resource protection, and enhanced recreational opportunities.

The proposed amendments, highlighted in red, formalize current practices, including the shared maintenance facility, operational roles, insurance

responsibilities, and communication processes to ensure continuity over time. The agreement clarifies that the City will maintain the active use area (Bertram Chain of Lakes Athletic Park), while the County will maintain the passive use areas of the regional park.

COMMISSIONER ONNEN MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT WITH WRIGHT COUNTY FOR THE BETRAM CHAIN OF LAKES REGIONAL PARK. MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LEIFERMAN. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- E. Consideration of recommending approval for the Bertram Chain of Lakes Operation and Maintenance Agreement.

Director Pawelk noted that the Operation and Maintenance Agreement between the City of Monticello and Wright County provides a framework for governance, decision-making, and maintenance responsibilities for the Bertram Chain of Lakes- Regional Park. The summary of changes to the agreement is as follows:

- Clarifies responsibility split: City manages active recreation areas; County manages passive/natural areas.
- Establishes a shared maintenance facility for efficiency.
- Adds criteria for improvements including safety, staffing, noise, traffic, and natural resource protection.
- Strengthens guiding principles by distinguishing outdoor vs. active recreation and emphasizing inclusivity.
- Requires mutual review of building, utility, and construction plans by both agencies.
- Provides flexibility for concept development plan revisions with formal approval processes.
- Ensures consultation on remodeling/removal of improvements to avoid disruption.

COMMISSIONER ONNEN MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH WRIGHT COUNTY FOR THE BETRAM CHAIN OF LAKES REGIONAL PARK. MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KOPFF. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. Discussion of Added Items

- The joint meeting with City Council, Planning Commission and PARC will take place in January. Staff will send out an email survey for

commissioners to choose the meeting date/time that works best for them. This is for the park dedication ordinance review.

- Disc Golf at Pioneer Park: Commissioner Leiferman inquired about the status of installing disc golf at Pioneer Park. Parks Superintendent Josh Berthiaume said that he has met with the company to lay out the course and Pioneer Park is still the planned location. However, at this time there are too many budget constraints so staff will need to look at future grants or other forms of alternative financing before moving forward with it.
- Data Center Talk: Commissioner Leiferman asked about how data centers may affect park dedication in the future. It is noted that the ordinance review for how park dedication is calculated will be discussed at the upcoming Special Joint Meeting and that it will be covered at that time.

4. Updates

- A. Director's Update (TP) Tom said this is the leanest budget he's ever worked with. It's where we are at. To maintain what we have this is what we need to do.
 - Budget constraints. MCC will see a bigger increase this year in building costs, maintenance, and utility costs. Fee adjustment from 12% to 25%. Reality and recreational trends are changing. Really is unfortunate but we still will be cheaper than private industry. Will also be reducing the hours to the facility.
 - Cemetery: 30% increase in contract cost for excavation. That is a pass-through cost through the funeral home/families.
 - Increased shelter and facility rental rates: 10-20% and athletic fields 30%.
- B. MCC Update (SC)
- C. Park Maintenance Update (JB)
- D. Shade Tree Update (TP): Submitted grants to state for \$1M. trees marked on east side will start removing this winter. Downtown is part of the grant so will wait to hear on that in February for funding.
- E. MontiArts Update (EW): GlowFest 2/28 received a grant, fire dancers, DJ, puppet company to help with lanterns. Gearing up should be fun. Art sale going on right now.

5. Schedule for the Next Meeting

- Next Regular Meeting: January 22, 2026, at 8 a.m. will be held at City Hall.

6. Adjournment

COMMISSIONER LEIFERMAN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:29 A.M.
MOTION SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MURDOFF. MOTION CARRIED.

RECORDED BY: Beth Green

DATE APPROVED:

ATTEST: Tom Pawelk



JANUARY 2026

COMMUNITY CENTER

Memberships

- Our flash sale on Black Friday resulted in 66 memberships.
- The flash sale on New Year's Eve resulted in 186 memberships.
- We ended the year with 2,638 total memberships and 4,864 active members.
- New Year's Eve 2025 was one of our highest days in sales, grossing
- We are seeing a larger increase in Medicare supplemental insurance plan members, SilverSneakers, Renew Active, etc.
- Guest Services staff have done a really great job with all the flash sale memberships, general facility getting busier, and working for others that are sick.
- Carolyn has done a great job at keeping all the membership organized and reviewing them to make sure nothing was missed.

Aquatics

- Winter swimming lessons began and most classes are full.
- New signage has been installed in the locker room and pool displaying our rules.
- With lifeguards home from college we were able to offer extended open swim hours over the 2 week winter break.

Programs

- The Indoor Market with Santa on December 13 was popular. The January market was slow with fewer customers. The next market is February 14.
- Planning is underway for the outdoor market. Vendor applications for the outdoor market will be available in February. Opening day is May 14.
- Homeschool Swim and Climb is offered once a month on a Friday for 2 hours. Attendance has averaged 24 people per date. Pre-registration is required.
- Open Skate at the Moose Sherritt Ice Arena continues to be well attended. MCC

members can skate during open skate times.

- We are staffing the warming house at the outdoor 4th Street Ice Rink. Attendance has been steady, it's been a great season for skating. We haven't been able to open the rink much the past two years due to the weather.
- We offer over 40 fitness classes a week! Classes are filling to capacity and we are asking everyone to make a reservation online prior to attending class.
- Sponsorship information should be released soon so we can start soliciting sponsors and planning summer events.

Rentals

- The Chamber of Commerce used the Gymnasium for their annual banquet on December 5.
- Birthday parties on weekends continue to fill up, most time slots are reserved.
- Whiskey Club held their fundraiser at MCC for the first time. They normally have been at Nordic Brewpub but with their change of location was not able to hold the number of people that attend. It went really well and they are looking at booking next year.
- We held the Monticello Fire Depts banquet here at MCC.
- We had some regular users to the Miss Room book again for the 2026 year. They are renters that book monthly meetings. Kwik Trip (newer renter in 2025), Stellis Health, and CMMHC. We love having these repeat customers back.

MontiArts Dec/Jan Update

Glow Season is upon us!

MontiArts is very busy with all things Glow right now, including workshops, classes, and lantern making throughout the community. A group of Teen Interns has been revisiting their large Dragon lantern, working on updates and modifications from last year over the past month.

We are offering four free lantern-making workshops between now and Glow Day (February 28, 6–9pm at the MCC and West Bridge Park). These opportunities are made possible in part through a grant from the Central Minnesota Arts Board (CMAB).



MontiArts
Building GlowFest Together

GlowFest workshops are at the heart of what makes this event special. In the weeks leading up to the festival, community members of all ages come together to design, build, and create artwork that becomes part of GlowFest itself. From lantern-making to large collaborative pieces, these workshops are about more than learning new skills—they're about making something for and with the community.

Workshops Opportunities

Large Lantern Workshops
Join the FREE Large Lantern Workshops with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre to learn lantern-making techniques and help create a large community lantern for GlowFest—ages 14+
Tues/Thurs January 27/29 & Feb 3/5
*Potential extra sessions to complete the lantern

Family Make & Take- Troll hat workshop
Family or Team workshop (parents will need to help due to hot glue), join us for making GlowFest wearable art! Open house style, registration necessary for supplies and staffing
Saturday, February, 21st 9am-Noon

Family Lantern Make & Take Workshops
FREE Family Lantern Workshops with artists from In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre—create one glowing lantern per family team to carry at GlowFest!
2 sessions- Tues Feb 17th or Feb 24th 6-9pm

Tues Feb 17th or **Feb 24th 6-9pm**



MontiArts

IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST

The Large Lantern Workshops offer a unique chance to work alongside professional artists from In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre, a nationally recognized organization known for their large-scale puppets and illuminated community artworks. Participants will learn hands-on lantern-making techniques while collaborating to create a large sculptural lantern that will be carried together during GlowFest.

These workshops are FREE, made possible through grant funding, and are open to participants ages 14 and up due to the use of sharp tools and hot materials. The series includes four workshop sessions, with additional sessions added if time allows, offering a rare behind-the-scenes look at how large community lanterns are designed and built. If you're interested in learning new skills, working as part of a creative team, and helping bring GlowFest to life in a big way, this is an exciting opportunity to be part of something truly special. You don't want to miss this opportunity!

Tuesday and Thursdays, starting January 27th 6-9 Pm
Additional sessions may be added
Sign up here

Open Studio sessions and 2nd Saturdays/Open Mic Night continue to be well attended, reinforcing our mission of creativity connecting community and creating accessible opportunities for participation.



Community Impact:

So far this year, MontiArts has created over 230 opportunities for community participation, including classes, workshops, open studios, performances, volunteer roles, and teen internship experiences.



We are also beginning planning for summer programming and are currently writing grants for the Minnesota State Arts Board, CMAB, and securing community sponsors.

**We can't wait to see you at
GLOW! ✨**

DRAFT

MINUTES
SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL, PLANNING COMMISSION, PARC MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026 – 5 P.M.
MISSISSIPPI ROOM – MONTICELLO COMMUNITY CENTER

City Councilmembers: Mayor Lloyd Hilgart, Kip Christianson, Charlotte Gabler, Tracy Hinz, Lee Martie

Planning Commissioners: Chair Andrew Tapper, Vice-Chair Melissa Robeck, Rick Kothenbeutel, Teri Lehner, Rob Stark

PAR Commissioners: Chair Julie Jelen, Vice-Chair Janine Kopff, Adam Leiferman, Danielle Murdoff, Maria Onnen, Stephen Peterka

Staff: Rachel Leonard, Angela Schumann, Steve Grittman, Tom Pawelk, Bob Ferguson, Tyler Bevier, Beth Green

1. Call to Order

Mayor Hilgart called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Review Park Dedication Analysis and Discussion of Policy Direction

Community Development Director Angela Schumann introduced the item, noting that the City's subdivision ordinance and park dedication requirements are governed by state statute and require periodic review. She stated that the City last updated the park dedication ordinance in 2009 and that, with the City currently working with a consultant to develop an updated Park Master Plan, it is an appropriate time to reexamine park dedication policies.

Schumann explained that the City has contracted with Grittman Consulting to conduct a study of the park dedication ordinance. Steve Grittman stated that the purpose of the current discussion is to obtain policy feedback from the City Council and Planning & Parks Commissions on four key topic areas, which will guide the development of potential ordinance amendments.

- **Park Dedication in Planned Unit Developments.**

The City Council and Planning & Parks Commissions discussed proposed ordinance language changes to require park dedication from Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), whether or not they involve a formal subdivision. The intent is to close a loophole in the current code and better align park dedication requirements with the statutory purpose of assigning park demand to increased development intensity.

Steve Grittman explained that the current ordinance requires an 11% park dedication, either as land or cash, generally tied to subdivision activity. He noted

that increasing development density—such as smaller lots or higher unit counts—results in greater park demand, and park dedication can also be calculated on a per-unit basis consistent with the City’s master park plan. Mayor Hilgart commented that under the current system the City is not addressing development intensity increase without a subdivision.

Discussion included comparisons to park dedication practices in other cities. Grittmann stated that while comparative data exists, legal justification must be based on the City’s own comprehensive and park plans, not on what neighboring communities charge. Angela Schumann emphasized that the purpose of the discussion was to gather policy direction, which would later inform specific calculations and fee structures.

Commissioners and Council members discussed fairness and demand, noting that higher-density developments, such as apartments, generate significant park use. Staff estimated that Monticello’s park master plan draft illustrates approximately 12% of total land area devoted to parkland. It was also noted that developers have not recently challenged the City’s park dedication requirements, though the proposed change would increase obligations for some developments.

The key policy change discussed was adding PUDs to the ordinance language so that park dedication applies when land is developed without subdivision. Grittmann confirmed this would close the existing loophole by treating PUDs similarly to subdivisions for park dedication purposes. An example was provided comparing Block 52, which was subdivided and subject to park dedication, to non-subdivided developments that currently avoid dedication but would be covered under the proposed amendment.

- **Park Dedication for Multi-family Development.**

Steve Grittmann explained that under the current ordinance, multi-family development on land already zoned for multi-family use can occur without subdivision and therefore is not subject to park dedication. The question was raised whether park dedication could be imposed through rezoning; while this is legally possible, the City Attorney expressed discomfort with that approach. Requiring multi-family developments to obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) was also discussed, but staff noted this remains a zoning-based approach.

Grittmann stated that most defensible approach is to require all multi-family developments to obtain Planned Unit Development (PUD) approval, which would trigger park dedication requirements. As an example, a five-acre lot zoned R-4 could currently be developed as multi-family without paying park dedication. Questions regarding older lots of record were discussed, with staff explaining that such lots are presumed to have already contributed to the park system for one

unit. Developments requiring subdivision and PUD approval, such as Twin Pines, would continue to be subject to park dedication.

Mayor Hilgart asked about remaining developable parcels, including a lot on Chelsea to the west, and staff confirmed that under current rules such a development could be exempt from park dedication if it met zoning requirements without subdivision or PUD.

Grittmann further explained that the proposal would shift all multi-family developments into a PUD classification. He noted that many multi-family projects already seek PUD approval due to unique design features that do not fit standard zoning. Grittmann stated that requiring PUD approval provides the City with the strongest legal position. He also noted that zoning code amendments would be needed to reinforce the PUD requirements within zoning districts, and that closing these gaps is a prudent step.

- **Park Dedication for Commercial/Industrial Development.**

The City Council and Planning & Parks Commission discussed the potential application of park dedication requirements to commercial and industrial (C/I) development, focusing on legal standards of nexus and proportionality as well as economic development considerations.

Steve Grittmann explained that a defensible mechanism would be needed to measure how commercial and industrial development creates demand on the park system and to rationally connect demand to an appropriate level of park dedication. He noted that while staff believe such a model can be developed, Monticello has historically chosen not to charge park dedication for C/I development as an economic development strategy, effectively shifting those costs to residential development.

Mayor Hilgart suggested that park demand from C/I uses should consider not only employees but also customers, noting that some businesses generate significantly more customer traffic than employee presence. He encouraged staff to explore available data sources to better capture this demand. Maria Onnen suggested that using parking area as a metric could account for both employees and customers and would align Monticello with a broader group of communities that assess C/I park dedication. She noted the importance of being comfortable communicating additional fees to developers.

Mayor Hilgart also raised the issue of park demand generated during construction phases, including contractors and construction workers, and questioned whether and how that temporary demand could be factored into calculations.

In response to questions about regional practices, Grittmann noted that the City of St. Michael charges park dedication for C/I development, typically as a percentage of land area, generally at a lower rate than residential development—often in the range of 3–5% less. Danielle Murdoff expressed support for St. Michael’s land-area-based model, noting that a straightforward percentage approach would be simpler to administer and reflect lower park demand. Angela Schumann added that the City could continue to collect data and periodically reassess the policy, such as every five years.

Grittmann emphasized that while specific calculations have not yet been finalized, there is a reasonable legal defense for pursuing park dedication for C/I development and building a local model to support it. He also noted that developers commonly inquire about park dedication fees for planning purposes and that such questions are typically informational rather than adversarial.

- **Park Dedication and Trail Development.**

The City Council and Planning & Parks Commission discussed proposed ordinance amendments related to trail construction and how trails are classified for purposes of park dedication. Staff explained that historically, trails have often been credited against park dedication requirements, which has contributed to park dedication funds being depleted by trail construction rather than being available for parkland acquisition and park amenities. It was noted that trails running parallel to roadways have sometimes been treated differently, despite non-motorized trails serving a transportation function.

Steve Grittmann explained that the proposed amendment would redefine trails as part of the City’s transportation and roadway dedication requirements, rather than as park improvements. This change would help preserve park dedication funds for acquiring parkland, natural areas, and recreational amenities, rather than primarily funding trail construction. A key challenge identified was determining the threshold at which a facility is considered a transportation trail versus a park trail.

Mayor Hilgart questioned whether trails could continue to be required as part of a PUD approval and noted that the City has historically taken a conservative approach to trail funding. Angela Schumann emphasized the importance of clearly defining the transportation component and questioned the rationale for offsetting park dedication for infrastructure that functions primarily as transportation. It was noted that while the City Attorney has expressed concerns, staff believes there is support for this classification from MnDOT’s complete streets policies.

Kip Christianson expressed concern about potential unintended consequences and suggested exploring a credit system for developers who construct trail connections that link into the broader trail network and improve park accessibility. Maria Onnen raised concerns that developers might build isolated or unnecessary trail segments solely to receive credit. Gritman responded that the City would retain discretion over trail location and design to ensure alignment with City plans.

No consensus or final direction was reached on this particular issue. The Council and Commissions agreed that additional review of options and best practices is needed.

3. **Adjournment**

Mayor Hilgart announced meeting adjournment at 6:01 p.m.

Adjournment

RECORDED BY: Beth Green

DATE APPROVED:

ATTEST: Tom Pawelk