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**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS  
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2023, 5:30 PM  
ARDEN HILLS CITY HALL**

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**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Marie Hinton called the May 2, 2023 meeting of the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee to order at 5:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Marie Hinton, Committee Members Lacy Loosbrock, Kate Olson, Mark Kelliher, Kerri Seemann, Nancy Jacobson and Dan Dietz

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Recreation Supervisor Matt Johnson, Councilmembers Brenda Holden and Tena Monson

**ABSENT:** Committee Members Jill Anderson, Tim Nelson, Kristine Poelzer, and Emelia Rogers

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Committee Member Kelliher requested items 2 and 3 be removed from the agenda.

**A motion was made by Committee Member Kelliher and seconded by Committee Member Olson to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Removed

**3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Removed

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Buckthorn Management – Great River Greening**

**Chair Hinton** stated that the Mayor is asking what park or parks PTRC would like to start with and the fiscal amount estimate that the City would need to pay.

**Committee Member Kelliher** recapped the Special Council Work Session. The Council would like to know how the PTRC would like to proceed with Great River Greening. He gave a brief overview of the discussion with the Council. He stated that everyone at the meeting understood the grant application deadline and they needed to move quickly.

**Councilmember Monson** said the primary questions revolved around understanding the match and what it would be made of; funds or volunteers, which parks they recommended, and how the phasing would work.

**Councilmember Holden** asked what was the maximum dollar amount they could ask for at one time.

**Committee Member Kelliher** said they hadn't asked that question, it was more project focused. Great River Greening wanted to contain the initial project request to one or two parks, with Hazelnut and Floral being the top two candidates.

**Councilmember Holden** wondered if they ask for a grant one year if they would not give another grant the next.

**Committee Member Kelliher** said that didn't come up in the conversations. It was Great River Greening's recommendation to do a phased approach, so he had the impression that if they receive the first five-year grant, they could go forward with another grant application in the second year to create a rolling out of funds year by year.

**Chair Hinton** asked if Committee Member Kelliher would ask Great River Greening that question and report back before the next Council meeting.

**Committee Member Kelliher** stated the grants that Great River Greening typically tap into are the Minnesota Legacy Fund, with applications due May 26, and the Minnesota Lottery Fund, which they missed the deadline for. There are other smaller grant pools that they could possibly apply for at a later date.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if they knew the amount of staff time it would be to clear the buckthorn.

**Committee Member Kelliher** said it's as much as they want. It could be a turnkey operation by writing a check for the 25%, or they could do any combination of staff resources, volunteer resources and a check.

**Councilmember Holden** said the ICWC workers remove buckthorn and the City spends about \$9,000 a year for them.

**Committee Member Kelliher** discussed the cost for removing buckthorn and replanting with native species for each park, and in-kind options.

**Chair Hinton** asked if the City could see how many volunteer hours they could get in the first couple of years before the City had to put out any cash.

**Committee Member Kelliher** said it was possible that 100% of the City's portion could be contributed by volunteers and staff resources. They would need some of the City manhours to be applied for buckthorn pickup from the parks. Homeowners that have properties that abut parks can't have work done with the grant.

**Councilmember Holden** said they may not be able to use the ICWC money if they weren't working in the park specified in the grant.

**Chair Hinton** said they may need to borrow some City equipment.

**Committee Member Kelliher** said they have borrowed sprayers and Public Works provided herbicide, but they have brought their own chainsaws and protective equipment. Public Works has picked up the buckthorn but chips the branches off site.

**Committee Member Kelliher** stated the application can be amended but once the money is granted they are married to the park they choose.

**Councilmember Holden** said this will need to be in the budget, so what did they think the in-kind amount would be? She wondered if the landscaping fund could be used for this.

**Councilmember Monson** said she had asked the Finance Director about the landscaping fund and she was uncertain if that money could be used for this project.

**Councilmember Holden** felt they may want to amend the language of the fund to say taking up buckthorn or cleaning up the parks would be allowed with the fund money.

**Committee Member Kelliher** suggested that if Council wanted to be conservative, they could put in the largest amount, recognizing there could be a lot of buffer occurring with staff and volunteer hours.

**Councilmember Monson** felt that was an appropriate approach.

**Councilmember Holden** didn't want to put the maximum because it takes the pressure off of having volunteers. If they say the City will commit to an amount but they need volunteers to do X amount it drives the community.

**Committee Member Kelliher** thought the volunteers wouldn't pay attention to budgetary items, they'd do it because they want to get rid of buckthorn, not because of the budget. He felt they'd get volunteers over and above the scenarios he presented.

**Councilmember Holden** felt it helped draw volunteers from the community to say the City is paying for however much but they need volunteers to help with the rest. But she agreed they probably wouldn't have problems getting volunteers.

**A motion was made by Committee Member Kelliher and seconded by Committee Member Olson that the City Council engage Great River Greening for the upcoming grant cycle to mediate Hazelnut and Floral Parks.**

**Committee Member Seemann** wondered if they should add another park that ICWC workers could start on.

**Councilmember Monson** said they could add another park with the next funding cycle to use ICWC as in-kind.

Further discussion ensued regarding ICWC and coordination of workers.

**Committee Member Kelliher** noted that Perry Park was adjacent to County land and there is still quite a bit of buckthorn there. They could eventually coordinate removal with the County.

**Committee Member Jacobson** added that the City/County relationship could be strong, and the park is visible so people would see the transformation.

**Councilmember Holden** would rather have ICWC do work in the park first, and then use grant money to come in after that.

**Committee Member Kelliher** agreed.

**Committee Member Seemann** mentioned that the restoration isn't just about removing the buckthorn, there are other species that need management as well, as part of the grant.

**Committee Member Kelliher** stated the grant application wouldn't say they will eradicate buckthorn, it will say they will eradicate non-native species.

**A vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.**

**B. Fiscal Matching for City of Arden Hills**

**A motion was made by Committee Member Kelliher and seconded by Committee Member Olson that they recommend the City Council put an amount of \$8,725 in the budget annually to cover the cost of its share of the Hazelnut and Floral Parks, with the recognition that much of that could be offset by in-kind resources. The motion passed unanimously.**

**5. REPORTS**

**A. Sub Group Discussion for GRG**

**Recreation Supervisor Johnson** stated that Council Liaison Rousseau suggested they form a sub group to help Great River Greening move forward with the grant or answer any questions they may have.

Committee Members Kelliher and Seeman volunteered.

**6. NEXT MEETING**

**B. Tuesday, May 16, 2023**

The next PTRC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.