



**South St. Paul
Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Minutes of September 9th, 2025
City Hall**

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Mr. Dippel at 5:59 p.m. at South St. Paul City Hall.

Members Present: Rich Dippel, Cretia Radman, Josh Regan, Sadie Patet, Lori Miller Nicole Hall

Members Absent: Kendra Sommerfeld

Others Present: Shannon Young, Heather Flock, Colin Trudgeon, Ryan Garcia, Lori Hansen, Pam Bakken

1. INTRODUCTIONS

None

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Ms Miller and seconded by Ms. Hall to approve Minutes from July 8th, 2025.

6 Yays 0 Nays

Item 4A. has been moved up to accommodate guest. (See item 4A)

3. OLD BUSINESS

3A. Aquatic Pool and Feasibility Study & Design Update

Ms. Young noted that the final design has been completed. JLG's next step is to finalize the pool operations budget. Once that work is complete, the city will be notified of the total project cost, which will then be presented to the council on October 6th

3B. Recreation Program Updates

Ms. Flock provided an update on the *Train for a Hero* event, scheduled for Thursday, September 11th, at Kaposia Landing. Mr. Trudgeon reported on the Youth Football program, noting the establishment of a new Girls Flag Football division this year, as well as the continuation of the 1st and 2nd grade flag football league and the 3rd and 4th grade tacklebar division. He further stated that the tackle division has transitioned from an in-house format to participation in the traveling football association, MEYFL, which includes a 5th grade team and a combined 6th/7th grade team. Championship games for the in-house divisions are scheduled to take place on September 28th at Ettinger Field.

3C. Doug Woog Arena Updates

Ms. Young reported that the front door replacement project is currently underway and is expected to be completed within the next few weeks. She also noted that tournaments have resumed on a regular schedule and will continue throughout the winter season. Ms. Flock added that she is still in the process of recruiting concession staff.

3D. CIP Updates

Harmon and Summit Tennis courts have been finished. New playground structures are on the way for Grandview and Summit Park.

3E. Wakota Trailhead/DNR Boat Landing Update

Ms. Young shared the DNR is still waiting on a mussel survey. The construction may be on hold till 2026..

3F. Commissioners Park Assignment Updates

The commission shared that the trees that have been planted all look great.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4A. Hardman Triangle Public Realm Concepts

Mr. Garcia introduced Matt from Urban Ecosystems, who has been brought in to assist with planning the redevelopment of the Hardman Triangle. Mr. Garcia explained that Urban Ecosystems is leading the design of the 20-acre site, which will incorporate key elements of South St. Paul's history. He emphasized that this is a long-term redevelopment initiative and that tonight's presentation was intended to share preliminary ideas for what the space could look like in the future. Mr. Garcia requested feedback from the Parks Commission, noting that the goal is to complement not compete with the existing Park Master Plan.

Matt provided an overview of the firm's approach, noting his extensive experience working with post-industrial redevelopment sites, which often present unique challenges compared to traditional park projects. He reviewed how the City has gradually acquired the Hardman Triangle properties and described plans for a variety of future land uses, including multifamily housing, retail, city park space, stormwater management, mixed-use development, and pedestrian areas.

Matt explained that the project aims to build upon the Park Master Plan by creating high-quality outdoor experiences, fostering connections between people and nature, establishing a cohesive open-space identity, and providing opportunities for community programming and historical interpretation. He highlighted key design considerations, such as remediation strategies, rainwater management, park usability, and preserving the site's industrial legacy.

As part of the presentation, Matt shared examples of other post-industrial properties successfully repurposed into public spaces. He discussed potential opportunities to relocate the historic Armour Gates to the Hardman Triangle and integrate them into a new public realm. Additional ideas included incorporating community gathering areas and adventure play spaces utilizing repurposed materials.

Matt presented three preliminary design concepts for the Hardman Triangle:

1. Citywide Destination Park
2. Riparian Forest and Pasture Meadow
3. Adventure Play and Discovery Park

Each concept featured unique elements and alternative placements for the Armour Gates. The City's preliminary preference leaned toward the first concept a citywide destination park while integrating features from the other two designs. Within this concept, Matt shared two variations with slight differences in layout and features. A key element of all options includes a 3.9-acre park designed to manage area stormwater effectively.

Following the presentation, Mr. Dippel opened the floor for comments and questions.

- Ms. Miller expressed support for the open-space concept and requested additional details on the proposed rainwater garden system. Matt explained how the design manages stormwater through integrated natural systems.
- Ms. Radman appreciated the inclusion of historical elements and asked about the potential for sledding on the hill feature. Matt noted that while the longer slope would be too gradual, one side could accommodate sledding.
- Mr. Dippel raised concerns regarding parking capacity given the proposed residential density. Matt clarified that residential parking would primarily be underground, and additional parking is planned on the west side of Concord Street.
- Ms. Patet favored the concept that provided stronger connections to Concord Street.
- Ms. Miller supported incorporating public art, highlighting the city's many talented artists.

When asked about preferences for the Armour Gates' relocation, Councilmember Hansen and Ms. Patet both expressed a desire for the gates to be placed where the public could walk through them, maintaining their historic intent. Mr. Garcia emphasized the importance of establishing clear design boundaries early and noted the urgency of finalizing a location due to a short relocation timeline. He added that project funding would not come from park funds but could be supported through the recently adopted TIF district.

Councilmember Hansen inquired about views of the river, to which Matt responded that several design elements include visual connections to the riverfront. Ms. Hall preferred locating the gates near the area with the highest pedestrian activity.

Mr. Garcia reiterated that the relocation of the Armour Gates represents the first phase of the broader project and that feedback from the Commission will guide future council discussions. Ms. Bakken stressed the importance of including current area businesses in the planning process. Mr. Dippel noted the challenge of not only developing a plan but also securing funding for construction and maintenance. Ms. Miller agreed but remarked that many successful projects, such as Kaposia Landing, began as concepts similar to these.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Archery Range is open.

6. ADJOURNMENT – Next Meeting: October 14th, 2025, @ City Hall Training Room.
Motion to adjourn by Mr. Dippel, first by Ms. Miller and second Mr. Hall by at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Colin Trudgeon