



**New Brighton Parks, Recreation, and Environmental Commission  
Agenda  
Upper Level | Conference Room  
New Brighton City Hall 803 Old Hwy 8 NW, New Brighton , MN  
6:30 PM February 4, 2026**

Members of the Parks, Recreation, and Environmental Commission will attend the meeting in person unless eligible to attend remotely per MN Stat. 13D.02.

To participate in this meeting, members of the public may:

- **Attend the meeting in person.**
- **Watch the meeting electronically.** Tune into CTV Channel 8023 (CenturyLink) or Channel 16 (Comcast). To observe the meeting as a livestream or a webcast, visit [NBMN.info/View-A-Meeting](http://NBMN.info/View-A-Meeting)

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

Chair Julia O'Rourke

Commissioner Irie Haig

Vice-Chair Abe McEathron

Commissioner Kristin Hicks

Commissioner Pauline Alfors

Commissioner Becky Slabiak

Commissioner Gary Bank

Commissioner Laura Sokol-Kraft

**III. Approval of Agenda**

**IV. Approval of Past Minutes**

- A. 2025.12.03 25 PREC Minutes

**V. Business Items**

- A. Discuss Brightwood Hills Clubhouse Redevelopment Proposals  
B. Discuss Proposed Dedication of the Hansen Park Neighborhood Center

**VI. Informational Items**

- A. Low Income Tree Removal Program Pilot

**VII. Announcements**

**VIII. Adjournment**





## MINUTES

### Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission December 3, 2025 City Hall 6:30 p.m.

#### I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

#### II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Commissioners Pauline Alfors, Gary Bank, Kristin Hicks, Abe McEathron, Julia O'Rourke (Chair), Becky Slabiak (attending remotely), and Laura Sokol-Kraft.

Members Absent: Sebastian Fallas and Irie Haig.

Also Present: Director Jennifer Fink and Councilmember Graeme Allen.

#### III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by McEathron, seconded by Bank to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

#### IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Bank, seconded by Alfors to approve the October 1, 2025 minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 6-0-1 (Commissioner Hicks abstained).

#### V. Business Items

##### A. Introduction of Shared City Campus Concept

Director Fink stated following the City's recent facilities assessment, the City Council directed staff to continue exploring long-term facility needs and potential opportunities for improved service delivery. As a next step, staff have been asked to work with Kraus Anderson on a high-level feasibility analysis, including preliminary site considerations, conceptual scenarios, and broad community engagement to understand values, priorities, and barriers. At this early stage, the Shared City Campus is simply a concept. Staff are beginning the work of gathering foundational information, identifying what community members expect from their civic spaces, and evaluating whether a more coordinated or co-located facility model could support accessibility, efficiency, sustainability, and a stronger civic identity. The potential timeline for this project was further discussed. The purpose of this introduction is to familiarize the Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission with the direction from Council, share the approach to step two analysis, and invite initial feedback as the discovery phase begins. The pre-design potential vision for Block B was

reviewed with the Commission. It was noted staff was seeking initial thoughts, questions, concerns, and values the Commission believes should guide future assessment and engagement.

Discussion included:

- Councilmember Allen commented on the constraints of building on Block B.
- Staff discussed the baseline survey that would be completed for this project.
- It was noted the City was beginning the planning process for this facility in order to better plan for the future needs of the community.
- Staff commented on the numerous ways the City would be reaching out to organizations in the community in order to receive feedback on this project.
- The Commission supported the new Community Center having three gyms.
- The Commission recommended the new space have good lighting and windows for natural light.
- The Commission was interested in learning more about the future park area.
- The Commission recommended the entire development be pedestrian friendly. Staff discussed the trail connections that were proposed.
- Staff discussed how the current Community Center and City Hall space could be redeveloped if the City Center were moved to Block B.
- The difficulty for pedestrians crossing I-694 was discussed.
- The Commission encouraged the City to continue to advocate for improved pedestrian crossings over I-694.
- Councilmember Allen indicated the City was working with the County to improve pedestrian connections as County projects are completed in New Brighton.
- The Commission recommended conversations be held with current stakeholders within the Community Center in order to understand their future needs.
- The Commission recommended space be created for the farmers market if the Community Center were to relocate.
- It was noted the Public Safety Department would remain at its current location.
- Staff commented on how Freedom Park was considered for the City Center, but there was not enough land.
- The Commission suggested moving the post office to Block B. Staff reported this was a use separate from the City and she was uncertain if this would be possible.
- Staff indicated a swimming pool and ice arena would not be possible on this property due to the soil conditions.
- The Commission asked if the land adjacent to Block B could be developed into additional park space in the future. Staff reported this parcel was currently under option by Abbott for potential expansion in the future.
- Staff commented on the amount of parking that would be needed if a City Center were pursued on Block B.
- Councilmember Allen stated there may be other community organizations that would be interested in renting space within a potential future City Center.
- The Commission supported the City further exploring a potential City Center on Block B.

## **VI. Informational Items**

### **A. Introduction of New PREC Member and Update on Commissioner Fallas**

Director Fink reported Student Commissioner Irie Haig would be joining the PREC Commission. She noted Commissioner Sebastian Fallas had moved out of the community and would no longer be serving on the PREC Commission.

**VII. Announcements**

Councilmember Allen provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. He explained the Council has been working on the 2026 budget and tax levy. He noted the levy was proposed to have a 6.37% increase at this time. He indicated the Council would be voting on the final budget and tax levy on Tuesday, December 9. He thanked the Parks and Recreation Department for hosting the Pumpkin Walk again this year. He reported the Council has been discussing the Brightwood Hills Clubhouse replacement or redevelopment and was considering a public private partnership for this venture. He stated the Council was also working on a housing action plan in order to consider how to best utilize the City's LAHA dollars.

Chair O'Rourke thanked staff for all of their efforts on the Pumpkin Walk. She encouraged residents to considering attending the winter park discovery event at Freedom Park on Thursday, December 4 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She commented on the winter clothing drive that was taking place at City Hall, Public Safety and the Community Center through Sunday, December 28.

Director Fink stated the Brightwood Hills Golf Course closed on Monday, November 24 and she was happy to report the golf course hit 30,000 rounds this year. She noted registration was open for spring programs. She indicated the gnomes were hidden in Hansen West Park beginning on Tuesday, December 18. She noted the City began putting water down for the outdoor rinks and it was her hope Freedom Park would have skateable ice tomorrow. She explained the Community Center would be setting a record for attendance this year and was on pace to have 532,000 visitors in 2026.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Motion by Bank, seconded by Hicks to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Fink  
Director of Parks and Recreation



<b>Agenda Section:</b>	<b>Business Items</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>February 4, 2026</b>

**REQUEST FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ITEM DESCRIPTION: Discuss Brightwood Hills Clubhouse Redevelopment Proposals**

<b>Action Requested:</b> <u>Discussion</u>
<b>Form of Action:</b> <u>N/A or Other</u>
<b>Votes Needed:</b> <u>N/A</u>

<b>Summary Statement:</b>	<p><b>Background</b>  As part of the City’s ongoing evaluation of long-term improvements at Brightwood Hills Golf Course, staff issued a request for development interest related to the potential redevelopment of the existing clubhouse site along Silver Lake Road. The intent of this effort is to explore opportunities that support reinvestment in golf course facilities, enhance the user experience, and align with broader City goals related to land use, housing, and financial sustainability.</p> <p>In response, the City received two redevelopment proposals. These proposals are being shared at a high level for informational purposes and to support preliminary discussion. No action is requested at this time.</p> <p><b>Overview of Proposals</b>  Both proposals include a combination of a new Brightwood Hills Golf Course clubhouse and market-rate multifamily housing. Each concept is intended to allow the golf course to continue operating while modernizing</p>
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	<p>facilities and introducing new development on a portion of the site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Equinox Development</b> submitted a proposal that includes two conceptual options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Concept A</i>: A new standalone clubhouse building paired with a market-rate apartment building</li> <li>– <i>Concept B</i>: A clubhouse integrated within the first floor of a market-rate apartment building</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Both concepts include approximately 120 market-rate rental units, surface and structured parking, and new indoor and outdoor golf-related amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Beard Group</b> submitted a proposal titled <i>Brightwood Flats</i>, which includes approximately 139 market-rate apartments and a new standalone clubhouse facility. The proposal incorporates underground parking, surface parking shared with golf course operations, and expanded clubhouse and practice amenities</li> </ul> <p><b>Common Elements Across Proposals</b></p> <p>While the proposals differ in layout and scale, both include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of a new golf course clubhouse</li> <li>• Continued public ownership and operation of the golf course</li> <li>• Market-rate housing as a mechanism to support reinvestment</li> <li>• New or improved golf amenities and event space</li> <li>• Phased development timelines that allow for continued seasonal golf operations</li> </ul> <p>Both proposals also contemplate public-private partnership structures and identify the need for further financial, operational, and policy discussions with the City.</p>
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<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>	<p>This item is intended to provide the Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission with a preliminary overview of the submitted proposals. Staff will provide an in-person presentation to walk through the concepts in greater detail, including site layout, clubhouse programming, and anticipated next steps.</p> <p>Future discussion will focus on community priorities, operational impacts to the golf course, financial considerations, and alignment with City plans and policies. No decisions are being made at this stage of the process. Rather staff will gather feedback that will help Council determine if</p>
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	proposals move forward.
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<b>Applicable Deadlines:</b>	
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<b>Community Impact:</b>	<p>The proposed redevelopment concepts for the Brightwood Hills Golf Course clubhouse site represent an opportunity to thoughtfully reinvest in a long-standing public asset while responding to evolving community needs. At a high level, both proposals aim to balance continued public use of the golf course with reinvestment in facilities, land efficiency, and long-term sustainability.</p> <p>From a parks and recreation perspective, the proposals prioritize the replacement of aging clubhouse infrastructure with modern, accessible facilities designed to enhance the golfer experience, expand year-round use, and support public programming and events. New indoor and outdoor amenities have the potential to strengthen Brightwood Hills as a community gathering place while preserving the golf course as a valued recreational resource.</p> <p>From a community and land use standpoint, the concepts introduce market-rate housing on a portion of City-owned land in a location that is already served by transportation, utilities, and nearby services. This approach aligns with broader goals to use existing infrastructure efficiently, diversify housing options, and support a mix of uses without expanding development into undeveloped or environmentally sensitive areas.</p> <p>From a financial and operational lens, both proposals explore public-private partnership models intended to reduce long-term capital reinvestment pressure on the City while maintaining public ownership and control of the golf course. Any future consideration would require careful evaluation of financial impacts, operational responsibilities, and public benefit.</p> <p>Importantly, these proposals are conceptual in nature. Continued engagement, policy review, and refinement would be essential to ensure alignment with neighborhood context, City values, and long-term plans. No decisions have been made, and the purpose of this discussion is to understand potential impacts, tradeoffs, and opportunities before</p>
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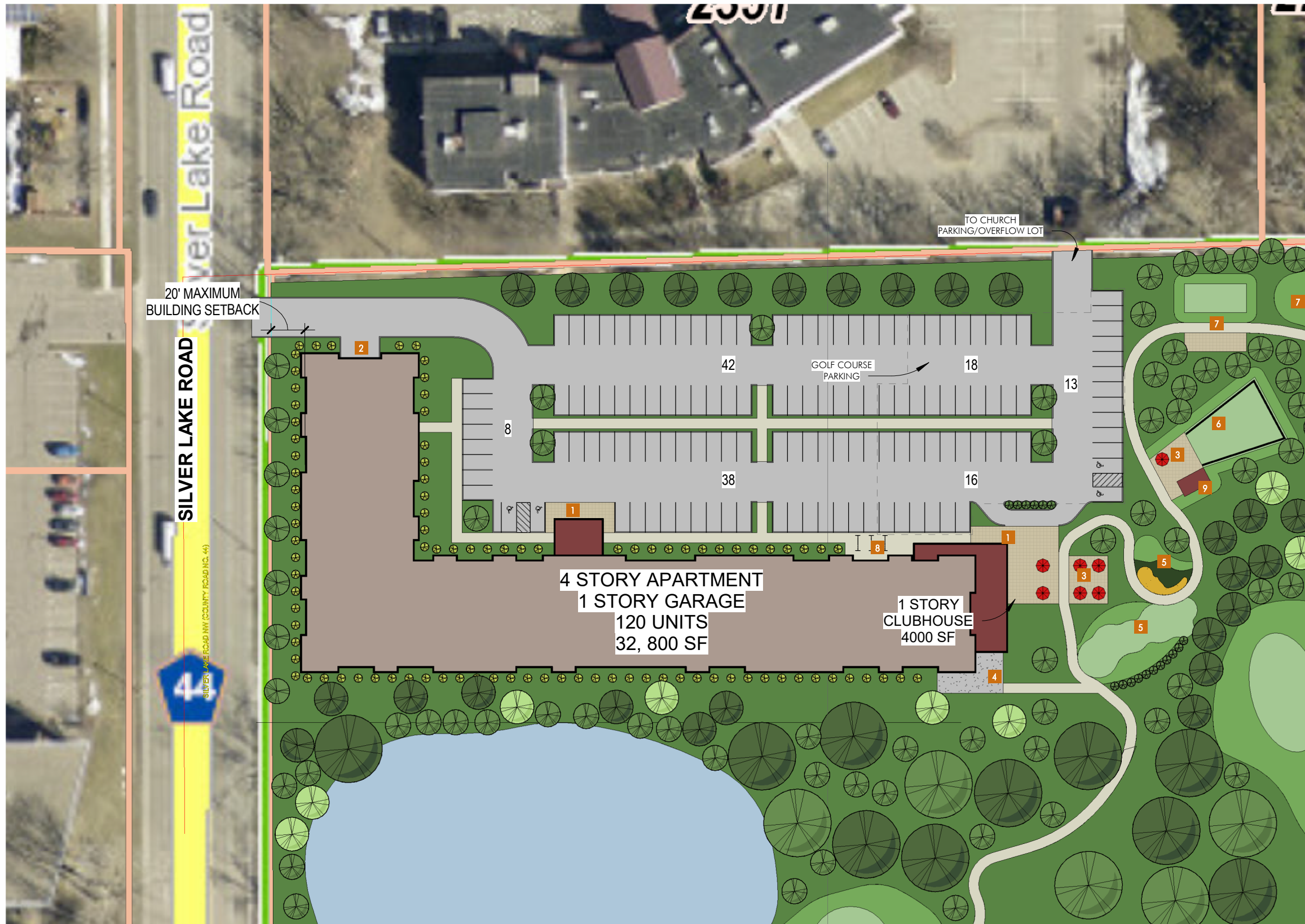
	advancing further.
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<b>Legislative History:</b>	
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<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<u>Economic Development</u>
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<b>Fiscal Impact:</b>	<b>Financial Consideration?</b>	<u>No</u>
	Revenue/Expenditure Amount:	\$
	Financing Source:	
	Notes:	

<b>Attachments:</b>	1.	Equinox Brightwood Hills - Sketch Plans A & B 2026.01.14
	2.	Brightwood Flats Development Proposal 1-14-26 Beard Group



**SITE PLAN KEY**

- 1 PRIMARY ENTRANCE
- 2 GARAGE ENTRANCE
- 3 PATIO
- 4 CART MAINTENANCE AND PARKING
- 5 PITCHING/PUTTING GREEN
- 6 DRIVING RANGE
- 7 HOLE ONE TEE BOX
- 8 BICYCLE RACKS (AS REQ.)
- 9 MAINTENANCE BUILDING

**UNITS**

<b>Studio</b>	600 SF	24 Total	20%
<b>1BR</b>	775 SF	48 Total	40%
<b>2BR</b>	1100 SF	48 Total	40%
		<b>120 Total</b>	

PARKING	
Count	Type
92	Garage
88	Parking Lot
47	Parking Lot - Golf Course
<b>227</b>	

1.5 Parking Ratio = 180 Stalls  
 47 on Site Stalls for Golf Course

1 SD Site Plan  
 1/64" = 1'-0"





SITE PLAN KEY

- 1 PRIMARY ENTRANCE
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- 9 MAINTENANCE BUILDING

UNITS

Studio	600 SF	24 Total	20%
1BR	775 SF	48 Total	40%
2BR	1100 SF	48 Total	40%
		120 Total	

PARKING

Count	Type
98	Garage
82	Parking Lot
43	Parking Lot - Golf Course
223	

1.5 Parking Ratio = 180 Stalls  
 43 on Site Stalls for Golf Course

1 SD Site Plan  
 1/64" = 1'-0"







<b>Agenda Section:</b>	<b>Business Items</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>February 4, 2026</b>

**REQUEST FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ITEM DESCRIPTION: Discuss Proposed Dedication of the Hansen Park Neighborhood Center**

<b>Action Requested:</b> <u>Motion</u>
<b>Form of Action:</b> <u>N/A or Other</u>
<b>Votes Needed:</b> <u>N/A</u>

<b>Summary Statement:</b>	<p>Staff is requesting approval to include a recognition plaque inside the new building at Hansen Park in honor of former Park Superintendent Chris Wolla. This request aligns with the City’s adopted Naming Policy and falls under the section on Recognition, which allows for plaques and dedications placed throughout City facilities with the approval of the appropriate Director and recommendation of the Council or Commission.</p> <p><b>Justification for Recognition</b>  Chris Wolla provided exceptional long-term service to the City of New Brighton and made a significant and lasting contribution to the Parks and Recreation Department. His leadership, work ethic, and character shaped both the physical condition of our parks and the culture of the department. Throughout his career, Chris championed improvements at Hansen Park, supported daily operations, and mentored staff across all divisions. His commitment was evident in every project he touched, and in the pride he took in creating outstanding spaces for the community. Chris passed away unexpectedly in 2023, and his absence has been deeply felt by staff and community members. Honoring him with a plaque in the new Hansen Park building allows the City to recognize his years of service, his</p>
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	<p>impact on the park system, and his role in building and maintaining one of New Brighton’s most widely used and beloved parks. Hansen Park served as a central part of his work, and staff regularly associate his leadership with this site, making this location uniquely meaningful for a dedication.</p> <p><b>Alignment with Naming Policy</b>  This request is not for the naming or renaming of the facility. It is for a recognition plaque under the “Recognition” section of the Naming Policy, which states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City may give special recognition to commemorate long-term service to the community or to a distinguished citizen, contingent upon Council review and approval.</li> <li>• Recognition plaques or dedications may be placed throughout the City by the appropriate Director with the recommendation of the Council or Commission.</li> </ul> <p>Chris’s contributions meet the policy criteria for recognition based on long-term service and exceptional contributions to both the facility involved and the community as a whole.</p>
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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>If supported, staff would draft a plaque dedication that includes his name, years of service, and a concise statement of his contributions. This would be brought forward to the to the City Council for final approval should PREC vote to recommend.</p>
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<b>Applicable Deadlines:</b>	
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<b>Community Impact:</b>	
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<b>Legislative History:</b>	
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<b>Strategic Priority:</b>	<u>Community Engagement &amp; Belonging</u>
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<b>Fiscal Impact:</b>	<b>Financial Consideration?</b>	<u>No</u>
	Revenue/Expenditure Amount:	\$
	Financing Source:	<u>N/A</u>
	Notes:	

<b>Attachments:</b>	
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# Low-Income Tree Removal Assistance Program Application Form

City of New Brighton

## Section 1: Applicant Information

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Contact Method:  Phone  Email

## Section 2: Ownership and Residency Confirmation

1. Are you the homeowner of this property?  Yes  No
2. Is this your primary residence?  Yes  No
3. Property type (check one):
  - Single-family home
  - Townhome
  - Condo
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 3: Tree Removal Request Information

4. Number of trees requested for removal:  1  2  3+
5. Tree location(s) (check all that apply):
  - Front yard  Back yard  Side yard
6. Tree type/species (if known): \_\_\_\_\_
7. Reason for removal request (check all that apply):
  - Dead/dying tree
  - Diseased tree
  - Storm damage
  - Hanging/broken limbs
  - Leaning/unstable tree
  - Root damage/heaving
  - Risk to home/garage/fence
  - Risk to sidewalk/street

- Risk to power lines (note: Xcel/utility involvement may be required)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe the problem and why the tree needs removal:

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**Section 4: Photos**

9. Have you attached photos of the tree(s)?  Yes  No

**Section 5: Contractor Quote (If Available)**

10. Do you already have a removal estimate/quote?  Yes  No

If yes:

**Contractor name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Estimated cost:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Attached quote:**  Yes  No

**Section 6: Income Eligibility**

11. Household size (number of people living in the home):  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8+

12. Eligibility verification method (check one):

- I am providing documentation that I participate in an income-qualified assistance program
- I am completing the self-attestation below and understand the City may request additional verification if needed

**Self-Attestation (if selected above)**

I certify that my household income is at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) for Ramsey County and that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 7: Program Acknowledgements**

Please initial each statement:

\_\_\_ I understand this program is subject to available funding and not all eligible applications can be approved.

\_\_\_ I understand the City may inspect the tree(s) before approving assistance.

\_\_\_ I understand that work may be completed by a City-selected contractor or through an approved quote process.

\_\_\_ I understand that any work completed prior to City approval is not eligible for reimbursement.

\_\_\_ I understand that participation in this program requires a replacement tree planting.

**Section 8: Applicant Signature**

**Applicant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Low-Income Tree Removal Assistance Program**

### **Program Purpose**

The City of New Brighton is launching a Low-Income Tree Removal Assistance Program as a pilot initiative to help income-qualified homeowners address hazardous, dead, or declining trees that present a safety concern. This program is intended to reduce financial barriers, improve neighborhood safety, and support responsible urban forest management.

This pilot is also designed to help the City better understand the level of need in the community, develop an equitable process for assistance, and evaluate what long-term program funding and staffing may be required to sustain this work in future years.

### **Program Goals**

1. Improve resident safety by reducing risks from hazardous or failing trees.
2. Provide equitable access to tree removal support for homeowners with limited financial resources.
3. Establish a consistent, transparent, and replicable application process.
4. Document demand, costs, and outcomes to inform long-term program planning.
5. Improve canopy health by supporting appropriate removals and replacement planning when feasible.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible, applicants must meet all of the following requirements:

- Owner-occupied residential property located within the City of New Brighton
- Applicant must be the property owner and the home must be the applicant's primary residence
- Household income must be at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) using the most current HUD income limits for Ramsey County
- The tree must be located on the applicant's property and must meet program criteria for removal

### **80% AMI Income Limits (Ramsey County)**

- 1-person household: \$72,950
- 2-person household: \$83,400
- 3-person household: \$93,800

- 4-person household: \$104,200
- 5-person household: \$112,550
- 6-person household: \$120,900
- 7-person household: \$129,250
- 8-person household: \$137,550

***Implementation Note:** Income eligibility will be based on the most current HUD-published AMI limits available at the time the program is launched. If updated HUD income limits are released during the grant period, the City will apply the updated thresholds moving forward.*

### **Qualifying Trees (Removal Criteria)**

Trees eligible for removal assistance must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Dead or dying tree with significant decline
- Diseased tree or pest-impacted tree with poor prognosis
- Structurally compromised tree (major lean, cracks, root failure, or large hanging limbs)
- Storm-damaged tree presenting safety concerns
- Tree creating an immediate hazard to residents, adjacent structures, sidewalks, or nearby public space

Tree species is not restricted. Eligible trees may include ash impacted by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), as well as other species that meet program criteria.

### **Assistance Structure**

The program will use a tiered assistance structure to prioritize households with the greatest financial need while supporting as many qualifying residents as possible.

#### **Tier 1: Very Low Income Households (≤50% AMI)**

- Eligible for up to 100% of approved tree removal costs
- Assistance will be provided up to a program cap per address, based on available funding

## **Tier 2: Low Income Households (51%–80% AMI)**

- Eligible for 50% cost share of approved tree removal costs
- Assistance will be provided up to a program cap per address, based on available funding
- Homeowner is responsible for remaining cost share and any costs above the cap

## **Additional Program Parameters**

- Assistance is limited to one address per household per program year
- Priority will be given to trees that present an immediate safety hazard
- Funding is limited, and assistance is not guaranteed
- Approval is contingent upon City review and confirmation that the tree meets removal criteria

## **What Costs May Be Covered**

Approved costs may include:

- Tree removal by a licensed and insured contractor
- Traffic control or special equipment needs (if required and approved)
- Stump grinding (if included as part of the program scope and approved)

Costs not typically covered:

- Landscaping restoration beyond stump grinding
- Removal of brush unrelated to the approved tree
- Optional cosmetic pruning or elective removals that do not meet hazard criteria
- Work that has already been completed prior to program approval

## **Process Overview**

1. Resident applies using the City application form and submits any required documentation
2. City reviews eligibility (income + ownership)
3. City evaluates tree condition, which may include a site inspection
4. Resident receives approval/denial decision and an explanation of next steps
5. Contractor work is scheduled through City-directed procurement or approved contractor quotes
6. Work is completed and documented

7. Payment is processed according to program rules (preferred method: City pays contractor directly)

### **Verification**

The City will verify eligibility using program participation documentation and/or a homeowner self-attestation form with City review to reduce barriers for residents, while maintaining fairness and consistency.

### **Prioritization Criteria (If Demand Exceeds Funding)**

If applications exceed available funding, the City may prioritize based on:

- Immediate risk of hazard
- Severity of decline or structural failure
- Tree proximity to homes, sidewalks, or high-use public areas
- Resident vulnerability considerations (for example: fixed income, disability, or lack of other resources)
- Order received (first-come, first-reviewed after eligibility is confirmed)

### **Program Reporting and Long-Term Planning**

This pilot program will track:

- Number of applications received
- Number of households approved
- Number of trees removed
- Average cost per removal
- Resident-reported outcomes and barriers
- Geographic distribution of requests

This information will help the City evaluate program continuation, funding needs, and long-term operational feasibility.