



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 June 3, 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

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 Dawn Mikkelson

Commissioner Laura Sokol-Kraft

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Approval of Past Minutes

A. April 1, 2026

V. Business Items

A. Interpretive Signage in New Brighton Parks

VI. Informational Items

VII. Announcements

VIII. Adjournment



MINUTES
Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission
April 1, 2026 City Hall
5:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Commissioners Pauline Alfors, Irie Haig, Kristin Hicks, Abe McEathron, Dawn Mikkelson, Julia O'Rourke (Chair) and Laura Sokol-Kraft.

Members Absent: Commissioner Sebastian Fallas and Becky Slabiak.

Also Present: Director Jennifer Fink.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Hicks, seconded by McEathron to approve the agenda as amended noting the meeting began at 5:00 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Alfors, seconded by Hicks to approve the February 4, 2026 minutes as presented. Motion carried 5-0-2 (Commissioners Haig and Mikkelson abstained).

V. Business Items

A. Results of the Shared City Campus Survey

Director Fink stated the City of New Brighton recently conducted a community survey to gather input on the future of City Hall and the New Brighton Community Center, following facility assessments that identified both buildings as aging and increasingly constrained in meeting community needs. The survey was conducted between February 9 and March 2 and promoted through multiple channels including e-newsletters, social media, the City website, and in-person engagement efforts.

Director Fink explained while the survey was not statistically randomized, it provides meaningful insight from residents who are most engaged with and frequent users of these facilities. Results indicate strong ongoing use of the Community Center, high interest in expanded amenities such as fitness, gathering, and flexible community spaces, and a desire for improved convenience and accessibility of services. The survey also explored preliminary

community sentiment regarding the concept of a shared “Civic Campus” that would combine City Hall and Community Center services. Initial results show that 47% of respondents are supportive of exploring this concept, with an additional segment seeking more information.

Director Fink reported key themes from open-ended feedback include a desire for informal “third spaces,” strong interest in programming and event spaces, concerns related to noise and traffic, and an emphasis on financial transparency and long-term planning. These themes closely align with the City’s 2040 Parks Comprehensive Plan goals related to community connection, access, and creating welcoming public spaces. This item provides an overview of the survey findings and is intended to inform ongoing discussions regarding future facility planning and potential redevelopment scenarios.

Director Fink explained this survey represents an important step in engaging the community in shaping the future of key civic spaces. The feedback highlights strong community investment in maintaining and enhancing accessible, inclusive, and multi-functional public facilities. Continued engagement will ensure that future decisions reflect community priorities, support evolving service demands, and strengthen New Brighton’s role as a connected and welcoming community.

Discussion included:

- Staff was pleased to see how the survey results aligned with the City’s 2040 Parks Plan.
- The potential for the City to generate new tax revenue if City Hall and the Community Center were moved was discussed in further detail.
- The Commission was interested in the City creating a potential downtown New Brighton area.
- Staff commented on how new gym space would provide the City with the opportunity to host tournaments in the future.
- The Commission saw value in having more gym space available for youth in the community.
- Staff provided the Commission with details on when the TIF District would decertify.
- Staff commented on how the existing City Hall and Community Center properties could redevelop if a new Civic Campus were built on Block B.
- The Commission encouraged staff to pursue grants for this redevelopment project.
- The Commission supported the City pursuing more courts within the Community Center in order to allow the City to host tournaments. Staff noted if this option were to move forward, the City could look into naming rights for the different courts.
- The Commission supported the City looking at environmentally friendly construction options if a new Civic Campus were pursued.

VI. Informational Items

Director Fink stated staff was working on hiring summer staff at this time. She reported the last winter indoor farmers market would be held at the Community Center on Wednesday, April 8. She indicated there would also be an open house for the downtown visioning study on this

same date from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. She indicated the results of the shared campus survey would also be shared with the public.

VII. Announcements

Director Fink stated the City had a Green Corp person working with the City through a grant with the MPCA. She reported this individual was working with the City Forester on forestry and stormwater issues and would be looking into a community garden for next year. She stated Tots and Tires would be held on Friday, April 17 at Hansen Park. She noted the summer activity guide was out and registrations were coming in from the community. She provided the Commission with further information on the potential redevelopment of the Brightwood Hills Clubhouse noting the Council directed staff to move forward on this project with the Beard Group. She was happy to report the Hansen Park building was now open for use and rentals. She reported the City would be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony at Hansen Park on Tuesday, July 21. She provided further information on the new staff members that were hired.

Chair O'Rourke reported she attended the community iftar dinner and noted this event was very well attended again this year. She noted the City-wide garage sale would be hosted Thursday, April 30 through Sunday, May 3. She indicated the New Brighton clean up day would be held on Saturday, May 16.

Chair O'Rourke thanked Commissioner Bank for his service to the PREC Commission and welcomed the new Commissioners to PREC.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by Sokol-Kraft, seconded by Mikkelson to adjourn the meeting at 6:06 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Fink
Director of Parks and Recreation



Agenda Section:	Business Items
Meeting Date:	June 3, 2026

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Interpretive Signage in New Brighton Parks

Action Requested: Discussion

Form of Action: N/A or Other

Votes Needed: N/A

Summary Statement:	<p>Interpretive signage is designed to tell a story, create a connection, and help visitors better understand the natural, historical, cultural, recreational, or environmental significance of a place. Unlike directional or regulatory signs, interpretive signs focus on education, engagement, and creating a sense of place.</p> <p>Currently, interpretive signage within the New Brighton park system is limited. The most notable examples are signs installed at Totem Pole Park (discussing the former totem pole) and through partnerships with the Rice Creek Watershed District, which help explain water quality, habitat restoration, and ecological features. As the City continues to invest in parks, trails, public art, environmental initiatives, and community gathering spaces, there may be opportunities to expand the use of interpretive signage throughout the park system.</p> <p>Staff is seeking Commission feedback regarding whether interpretive signage should become a more intentional element of future park</p>
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	development and renovation projects.
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Recommendations:	Receive information regarding interpretive signage, discuss potential opportunities within the New Brighton park system, and provide feedback regarding the desired role and future direction of interpretive signage in City parks and facilities.
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Applicable Deadlines:	N/A
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Community Impact:	<p>Interpretive signage can help transform parks and public spaces from places people visit into places where people learn, connect, and develop a deeper appreciation for their community. Well-designed interpretive signage can enhance the visitor experience by sharing stories about New Brighton's natural resources, history, public art, recreation amenities, and community partnerships. These signs can foster environmental stewardship, promote community pride, celebrate local identity, and create opportunities for self-guided learning for residents of all ages.</p> <p>As New Brighton continues to invest in its parks, trails, and public spaces, interpretive signage may provide an additional tool for communicating the value of these investments and strengthening connections between residents and the places they enjoy. Commission feedback will help determine the appropriate role, scale, and future direction of interpretive signage within the park system, balancing educational opportunities with considerations related to cost, maintenance, and preserving the natural character of park spaces.</p>
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Legislative History:	N/A
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Strategic Priority:	<u>Community Engagement & Belonging</u>
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Fiscal Impact:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Financial</td> <td><u>Not at this time</u></td> </tr> </table>	Financial	<u>Not at this time</u>
Financial	<u>Not at this time</u>		

	Consideration?	
	Revenue/Expenditure Amount:	\$
	Financing Source:	<u>N/A</u>
	Notes:	

Attachments:	
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