

**Roseville Public Works, Environment and  
Transportation Commission**

**Agenda Item**

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**Date:** November 22, 2022

**Item No:** 3

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**Item Description:** Approval of the October 25, 2022 Public Works Commission Minutes

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Attached are the minutes from the October 25, 2022 meeting.

**Recommended Action:**

Motion approving the minutes of October 25, 2022, subject to any necessary corrections or revision.

Move: \_\_\_\_\_

Second: \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_

Nays: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roseville Public Works, Environment  
and Transportation Commission  
Meeting Minutes**

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Tuesday, October 25, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.  
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive  
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

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1       **1. Introduction / Roll Call**

2       Chair Ficek called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. and at his  
3       request, Interim Public Works Director/City Engineer Jesse Freihammer called the  
4       roll.

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6       **Present:**       Chair Bryant Ficek; and Members Jarrod Cicha, Mike Collins,  
7       Edwin Hodder, and Allison Luongo

8  
9       **Absent:**       Member Michael Joyce, and Nancy Misra (Excused)

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11       **Staff Present:**   Interim Public Works Director/City Engineer Jesse  
12       Freihammer; Environmental Manager Ryan Johnson,  
13       Building Official David Englund and Finance Director  
14       Michelle Pietrick

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16       **2. Public Comments**

17       None.

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19       **3. Swearing in New Commissioner**

20       Chair Ficek read the Oath of Office and swore in Commissioner Luongo.

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22       **4. Approval of September 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

23       *Comments and corrections to draft minutes had been submitted by PWETC*  
24       *commissioners prior to tonight's meeting and those revisions incorporated into the*  
25       *draft presented in meeting materials.*

26  
27       Chair Ficek noted a change on line 176 which staff made.

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29       **Motion**

30       **Member Cicha moved, Member Collins seconded, approval of the**  
31       **September 27, 2022 meeting minutes as amended.**

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33       **Ayes: 4**

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**Nays: 0**  
**Abstain: 1 (Hodder)**  
**Motion carried.**

**5. Communication Items**

Interim Public Works Director/City Engineer Jesse Freihammer provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated October 25, 2022.

Member Hodder asked about County Road B, one half of the road has the gas line and he wondered what is going to happen to the other half of the road.

Mr. Freihammer explained as a part of the project the County replaced all of the concrete and put it back as asphalt so it looks different. The original plan was that next summer the County was going to finish the reconstruct and convert all of the asphalt but that project has been delayed one year and will look exactly as it is until 2024. In 2024, the project will get a reconstruct where the concrete will be replaced from Snelling to Lexington where it will match into the asphalt. The asphalt that was put in this year the County will do a mill and overlay to blend into that. The City will be doing a watermain project as a part of that project between Dellwood and Merrill, which will be on the North side of the road. Between Snelling and Hamline the City will also be doing the watermain.

Member Collins inquired regarding County Road B, at Dale and County Road B the County replaced the intersection in 2021 and put it back at a different pitch change in all the ADA area and he wondered if that will be addressed as well.

Mr. Freihammer indicated he will have to look at the plans but did not think the County will be going to the intersection. He thought it was planned to go to just short of the intersection. Dale street is up for a mill and overlay in 2024 and that will go from Como to Hwy 36. He noted the City has heard about that issue.

Chair Ficek indicated he had a question on the Xcel project that is finishing up. He asked if this was through the County because it is mostly on County roads. He wondered if Xcel had to get permitted by the County.

Mr. Freihammer indicated that is correct. Both the City and County signed off on the permits. It was mainly working through the County. The original plan was to go down a City road but the City pushed it back on the County and did not want to have that going through a couple of residential neighborhoods that had also been recently redone.

Chair Ficek thought in feedback to the County, their traffic control left a lot to be desired. Also, the sidewalks at times were blocked on both sides and a lot of kids use those going to and from the high school.

80 Mr. Freihammer explained the City worked with Xcel and was pretty good most of  
81 the time but he thought Xcel got very careless at the end trying to wrap the project  
82 up.  
83

84 **6. No Mow, Less Mow May Discussion**

85 Environmental Manager Ryan Johnson introduced Mr. Russ Henry, owner of  
86 Minnehaha Falls Landscaping, who made a presentation on the No Mow/Less Mow  
87 May conservation initiative.  
88

89 Mr. Johnson acknowledged the City received a comment from Mr. Fester, who was  
90 in support of No Mow May.  
91

92 Mr. Johnson asked the Commission to discuss this and consider options for No  
93 Mow/Less Mow May and provide recommendations to the City Council.  
94

95 Building Official David Englund summarized the complaints the City received in  
96 May of 2022 regarding No Mow May.  
97

98 Member Collins asked what a food forest is.  
99

100 Mr. Henry explained the definition of food forest to the Commission. He noted this  
101 includes berries and an entire world of edible plants. He explained he will send  
102 links to the City regarding starting a food forest. He noted there is also a seventh  
103 step in the trajectory, the love forest, a term utilized to add some of the Minnesota  
104 peak ecosystems succession trees onto the property allowing them to grow up  
105 which stays as the underlayer.  
106

107 Chair Ficek inquired about the cutting and general rule of never cutting more than  
108 one third. He asked if someone does participate in the No Mow May and their grass  
109 grows ten to fifteen inches, whatever to get back down to the five inches, assumed  
110 this is done in layers, what is the proper way to do this if the person wanted to get  
111 down to the five inches.  
112

113 Mr. Henry thought most people will mow it all down at once but the proper way  
114 would be to mow a third at a time over a period of time. He indicated a person does  
115 not want to mow more than twice a week because of compaction and overgrazing  
116 of the plants. If it has gone No Mow for all of April and May the person would  
117 want to mow once at the tallest setting of the mower the first or second week of  
118 June and then maybe go to every other week mowing. He explained there are  
119 municipalities that have adopted managed natural landscapes.  
120

121 Chair Ficek asked if “good time Charlie” and dandelions were bad for bees. He  
122 noted this is what Mr. Fester indicated in his comment to the City.  
123

124 Mr. Henry begged to differ with Mr. Fester, in fact, food is important so if an animal  
125 chooses to eat from something, and animals have an innate wisdom and know when

126 and where to get their food and if that is the only food that is available, at least it is  
127 available.  
128  
129 Member Cicha asked if Mr. Henry could talk about the how to prep flower beds in  
130 the fall to make safe haven for pollinators and the purpose of not clearing the leaves  
131 off of them in the spring and not cutting old flower stems.  
132  
133 Mr. Henry explained he believes in leaving the leaves because different species of  
134 moths and butterflies lay their cocoons in the fall on the leaves. He encouraged  
135 people to leave some leaves in the flower bed but not on the lawn because leaves  
136 will smother a lawn. Leaving stalks up for bees is very important as well.  
137  
138 Chair Ficek thanked Mr. Henry for the presentation.  
139  
140 Mr. Johnson continued with a quick presentation on No Mow/Less Mow May.  
141  
142 Mr. Englund highlighted for the Commission the 2022 No Mow May complaints  
143 that occurred in June.  
144  
145 Chair Ficek asked what the Ordinance states regarding lawn maintenance.  
146  
147 Mr. Englund reviewed the City Ordinance with the Commission.  
148  
149 Member Collins asked if there is a reason why the Ordinance has a height set at  
150 eight inches.  
151  
152 Mr. Englund explained that is what the City Council decided on for the Ordinance.  
153 He was not sure what it is based on. He noted this is similar to other cities but there  
154 is a range out there for other heights.  
155  
156 Member Cicha asked if there were people that did not consider their lawn a lawn  
157 but rather a planet area, a garden space, instead of growing vegetables there would  
158 be an area within a parameter where a lawn would be grown up like a flower bed.  
159  
160 Mr. Englund indicated there are several properties in the City where in a front yard  
161 there is a lawn planting area. Ordinance is pretty specific on this. He reviewed the  
162 restrictions around sight lines and noted the front yard is not required to be grass  
163 but is yard cover to prevent soil erosion and things like that.  
164  
165 Member Collins asked if the front yard is yard cover it still needs to be maintained  
166 at eight inches or less, no matter what type of plant it is.  
167  
168 Mr. Englund indicated that was correct unless it is an ornamental plant or a specific  
169 exception in the Ordinance. There are several garden areas that people have.  
170

171 Member Luongo asked if the City ever enforces anything in the backyard or is the  
172 enforcement for the front yard only.  
173  
174 Mr. Englund explained the Ordinance reads forty feet from the property line or forty  
175 feet from an occupied structure that has to be maintained at eight inches or less.  
176  
177 Chair Ficek inquired if someone were to mow the parameter of their lawn the  
178 middle would still need to be under eight inches according to the Ordinance.  
179  
180 Mr. Englund explained that was correct or the person would be in violation of the  
181 Ordinance.  
182  
183 Chair Ficek indicated he was in favor of this and would like to recommend  
184 something to the City Council but was not sure what a recommendation would  
185 consist of.  
186  
187 Mr. Freihammer indicated the Council did not have a discussion on this last year  
188 before No Mow May so the recommendation could be as simple as asking the City  
189 Council to do something similar for next year as was done in 2022, to relax the  
190 rules through May. Maybe there is a recommendation out of what type of no mow  
191 or modified No Mow May and could it extend longer or exceptions to the rules in  
192 the future.  
193  
194 Chair Ficek did like the No Mow or Less Mow because that could get more people  
195 on board. He would also like to include something like allocating staff time to get  
196 the education notice out there and really do this correctly to reduce some of the  
197 complaints that come in.  
198  
199 Member Collins explained he would like to get this out as soon as possible in the  
200 newsletter.  
201  
202 Mr. Freihammer explained that if this gets approved by the City Council in  
203 November, it could go out in the January/February and/or the March/April  
204 newsletters.  
205  
206 Member Collins thought changing the Ordinance to follow what the City is trying  
207 to promote. He thought they needed to look at the plan No Mow May, Less Mow  
208 May. He did not think a lot of people understood No Mow May last year. He  
209 thought less mow is good but he thought the City needed to look at the bigger  
210 picture. It is not just one month; it needs to carry on and maybe relax the Code  
211 violations all the way to July to allow people to catch up mowing their longer lawns  
212 without ruining them. He also thought the City could look at islands on the property  
213 that would not be in violation of the Ordinance.  
214  
215 Chair Ficek asked what the Roseville parks did for No Mow May in 2022.  
216

217 Mr. Englund indicated the parks still mowed in active areas.  
218  
219 Chair Ficek wondered if there were any City areas that could lead by example.  
220  
221 Mr. Freihammer explained that could be something looked at independently from  
222 this.  
223  
224 Member Hodder explained he liked the idea of less mow because it is a balance  
225 through the summer.  
226  
227 Member Luongo indicated she was in favor of this.  
228  
229 Member Cicha thought the Commission should recommend to the City Council to  
230 extend the moratoriums on Code Enforcement in April and May for 2023. He also  
231 liked the idea of mowing the edge of the lawn and leave the inside growing all year.  
232 He was in favor of making a recommendation to include that kind of relaxation of  
233 the Code.  
234  
235 Member Cicha indicated he would also be in favor of the City providing a source  
236 where residents could purchase seed for pollinator areas to plant.  
237  
238 Chair Ficek asked if last year there were yard signs indicating No Mow May.  
239  
240 Mr. Johnson explained signs were not used, but this year yard signs could be used  
241 and the City does have some money set aside for yard signs or window clings to  
242 promote No Mow/Less Mow May.  
243  
244 **Motion**  
245 **Member Collins moved, Member Hodder seconded, to recommend the City**  
246 **Council take a look at the City Ordinance regarding No Mow/Less Mow May**  
247 **and to relax the Code violation period before and after the event.**  
248  
249 **Ayes: 5**  
250 **Nays: 0**  
251 **Motion carried.**  
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253 **Motion**  
254 **Member Cicha moved, Member Collins seconded, to recommend the City**  
255 **Council to relax the Code enforcement for April, May, and mid-June 2023**  
256 **along with staff time to properly promote and educated along with yard signs**  
257 **for residents to promote what is being done and have the City look at non-**  
258 **active areas to lead by example.**  
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260 **Ayes: 5**  
261 **Nays: 0**  
262 **Motion carried.**

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**7. 2023 Proposed Utility Rates**

Mr. Freihammer introduce Finance Director Michelle Pietrick who updated the Commission on the 2023 proposed utility rates and asked for feedback and/or a formal recommendation to the City Council.

Chair Ficek asked if the City does not move forward with the increase in utility rates what is the negative outcome.

Ms. Pietrick explained that in the Water Fund the City will have severe problems. She reviewed the Water Fund projects with the Commission for upcoming years.

Chair Ficek asked, with the recommended rate increase, did staff have an average homeowner cost.

Ms. Pietrick indicated that is on page four of the Commission packet. She reviewed the information with the Commission. She noted, overall, the rate increase would average \$13.61 per quarter or \$4.51 per month.

Chair Ficek asked if there would be any reason to go higher or does this increase cover what the City is expecting for an increase.

Ms. Pietrick explained that, with the Ehlers review initially, the increase was significant but this increase is sufficient and will get the City where it needs to go.

**Motion**

**Member Collins moved, Member Cicha seconded, to recommend the City Council approve the 2023 proposed utility rates.**

**Ayes: 5**

**Nays: 0**

**Motion carried.**

**8. Items for Next Meeting**

Discussion ensued regarding the November 2022 PWETC agenda:

- 2023 Workplan
- Speed Limit Discussion
- Plowing operations on sidewalks and trails

**9. Adjourn**

**Motion**

**Member Cicha moved, Member Collins seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:28 p.m.**



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**Ayes: 5**  
**Nays: 0**  
**Motion carried.**

DRAFT