



Payne-Phalen

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Minutes for the Community Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Arlington Hills Recreation Center, 1200 Payne Avenue

1. Welcome: Introductions and Review of the Agenda 6:00 PM

Board Members: Rebecca Nelson, Janey Atchison, Patricia Enstad, Damian Schaab, Seanne Thomas, Ismail Khadar, Lynette Harris, Ramona Banks, Anna-Marie Foster

PPCC Staff: Jack Byers, Robin Horkey

Guests and Presenters: Maria Phelps, Melissa Lorentz, Eric Johnson, Don Lorr, and several other residents. Public Works staff: Lisa Hiebert (Public Information), Sean Kershaw (Director), and Nick Crudo (head of plowing operations).

Discussion Items:

2. New Snow Operations Pilot in Payne-Phalen 6:05 PM
Lisa Hieber, Sean Kershaw, Nick Crudo (St. Paul Public Works)

There have been lots of changes in the last 30 years, resident expectations, type of snow, resident compliance with snow regulations, number of cars parking on the street. We know the current system isn't working, so we're exploring options. The pilot operation we're testing is being used in Duluth. We're also working on a Vehicle Routing Optimization System (VROS) for 2025-26 to go from paper plowing routes to electronic routes.

Starting Feb. 2nd, in the pilot areas residents will follow weekly parking rules instead of the snow emergency parking rules. Parking will be on one side of the street for a week, using an even/odd system, then switch sides on Sundays between 3 & 9 PM. This allows for plowing both traffic lanes and the parking, or 3/4 of the street, then when parking sides switch the other side is plowed to curb. This allows us to get in more often and clear these streets. There are some streets, such as Arkwright, where this won't work because there is no parking on one side of the street. Cross streets can be used for parking. Instead of using a 'one-size fits all' process that we now have, we're looking for 'what works for most'. We're looking at the geography

of the streets, if there's a bump-out, different things, to figure out how we adjust parking in places where it doesn't work.

- *If everyone parks on one side for a week, what about trash & recycling pickup?* Sean K called Duluth and talked to trash haulers. They have to get out of their trucks to get carts if they can't get to them with the automatic arms. Under the new city trash hauler contract the haulers also have to get out of their trucks when they can't get close enough.
- *What about parking in St Paul Public School lots and church lots, can those places be asked?* Over the years we've asked and we always get a 'No, we want the lot for our people.'
- *We've had construction in our area for the last two years. Some people don't have driveways or garages, and some of the garages are too small for modern vehicles. We already don't have a lot of parking options and this is adding to it.* There is a punitive issue here. In 2023 over 20,000 tickets were issued, and we could have easily issued double that. That is enormously punitive. If you get your car towed you have to go to the impound lot and that's disruptive and expensive. We're looking for more compliance. It's a big change, but we have to try something. Everywhere in the city we have something that's a frustration. Also, Ramsey County courts have removed our ability to issue paper tickets, so to just ticket and tow, we can't. We have to try something new. We have to see what works.

We won't be ticketing and towing right away. There is a 2-week education period. We will rely heavily on the signs going into the neighborhood. We went a little over to specify the dates on the parking signs. Part of any new system will involve tens of thousands of sign changes. That's why these areas are smaller. There will be perimeter signs going into all the areas. We mailed every property owner and renter in the pilot areas. That's also why we will put flyers with parking maps on all the cars every day. Flyers are in English and will get translated. We just don't know what languages are needed in these areas to start. The maps are also on the City website and Google Translate works well.

- *I work in home care in the area and most of my clients are Burmese. They might have six cars because the whole family lives there. They don't know about snow emergencies unless someone tells them, and they won't know about this unless they're told.* One of the advantages of this is you don't have to speak English. The flyers are just pictures.

We need data to determine what works or if it's going to work. Our current model doesn't work on a large scale. Two years ago we heard from hundreds of neighbors that the current system doesn't work. Feedback on the pilot is important. On the website there will be a form for feedback and you can say this doesn't work on my street and why.

3. Northern Iron and Machine Preparing for MPCA Permit Review Process

7:05 PM

Northern Iron says that MPCA is bullying them by imposing fines. In December MPCA issued a new set of fines that Northern Iron is contesting. The next hearing is on Feb. 12th. Several people were door knocking in the neighborhood over the past couple months and found out what folks are experiencing is much worse. There is a problem with soot on cars and windows. They wash windows and 2-3 days later it's just as bad. There are many different languages spoken within the blocks, and many were reluctant to report this (soot). We made a report to MPCA in early December and they sent folks out to collect samples. They've never investigated this type of complaint before. It's more complicated than they thought to draw connection between the facility and the soot. We are hearing real stories of people and families that are sick or have developed a skin condition since living in the area.

Patricia: ESEJ received \$500 from the Lion's Club. A dozen fans with filters were put together and given to residents we spoke with. Residents were very grateful to receive them. It's a positive process.

If soot is out of the MPCA norm, would this be something on the federal level? Could testimonies from some of the people in the neighborhood be entered in as evidence for the next court hearing? If someone would be willing and if you could find the right point in the court proceedings. Ideally there would be some way to collect stories from the neighbors, to get them into the court record.

Northern Iron has submitted an application for a new, updated permit, and MPCA is reviewing it and trying to determine an appropriate time for a public comment period. They want to hear from the community once they have a comment period. Maybe instead of a 30-day comment period it could be 45 or 60 days. They want to keep in mind the meeting schedule of the Community Councils so there would be plenty of time for the community to read it and discuss it.

What the Executive Committee discussed is basically to put some things on paper to the MPCA of what we would like to see, so they don't just have a phone call from us. There are four items we ask: 1) the MPCA to hold a robust public meeting notice, more than just a period where people submit comments but have a public meeting, direct mail, flyers, and door knocking within a five to ten block radius; 2) request the comment period open three to four weeks in advance of our meeting, so there's enough time for the community to read and review and digest the information available; 3) extend the period for comment; 4) if and when the permit is issued that it have an expiration date.

Motion by Seanne for Board members to make edits in a shared document (Google) by Friday the 31st, and once final share it out to the Board for a vote. Second by Anna-Marie. Motion passed.

4. Small Group Conversations (skipped due to time)

Regular Business:

5. Operations and Staffing Updates (Jack Byers)

A new staff person has been hired, Vivian Tran, and will start Monday. The position is Community Planner and Organizer. Primary work is funded through the federal Department of Energy and is about the expansion of EV on the east side.

6. Follow-up/Update: Request for Meeting Accommodations (Robin Horkey)

We had requests to make it easier to hear in the meetings, especially in the larger room. We're trying this smaller room and the sound shouldn't get lost. We're also looking at sound systems, something portable to transport to & from meetings and events, yet large enough to be effective in a large meeting room. For a traditional microphone and speaker system I recommend the JBL Partybox wireless two microphones and the Xtreme 3 Bluetooth speaker. The sales person said this size speaker is large enough for a medium to large room. The next larger size speaker is made for outdoors. JBL speakers are waterproof & dustproof. The other system is the Pyle Bluetooth wireless mic & speaker. It has four microphones and a separate receiver plus the speaker. The negative of this is the separate receiver is one more item to transport and set up. An alternative to these is a speakerphone, which is a microphone and speaker in one small device. Different brands have from three to six microphones in them. They are designed for using on conference calls and for small groups of people. For larger groups like we have we would need at least two that would be connected wirelessly to each other with one wired to a laptop. One question is how well would the speaker sound carry. The Anker PowerConf S500 is the brand I recommend.

Brief discussion followed. No decision made.

7. 2025 Work Plan for review and comment (Jack Byers)

Motion by Lynette to approve the workplan. Second by Seanne. Motion passed.

8. Approval item: 2025 Budget as recommended by the Executive Committee (Janey Atchison)

Motion by Lynette to approve the budget. Second by Ramona. Motion passed.

9. Approval item: Financial Reports for December 2024 (Janey Atchison)

Motion by Patricia to approve financial reports. Second by Ismail. Motion passed.

10. Approval item: Minutes from November 2024 meeting (Robin Horkey)

Motion by Patricia to approve the Minutes. Seconded. Motion passed.

ADJOURN

Next PPCC Community Meeting: Tuesday, February 25, 2025

Arlington Hills Recreation Center, 1200 Payne Avenue