HIGHLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Building a More Vibrant, Welcoming, and Safe Neighborhood

Community Engagement Committee (CEC)

Sept. 28, 2026

Hybrid Meeting- Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83775352007 Highland Park Community Center , 1978 Ford Parkway

Minutes

7:02 pm Call to Order – Elizabeth Seburg called the meeting to order

Roll Call – Steve Nelson, acting as Secretary. did the roll call. Present members: Chair: Elizabeth Seburg, Vice Chair: Mindy Johnson, Secretary: Youa Thao, Jordan Frank Shannon, Lindsay Shimizu, Steve Nelson, Kathy Carruth -Executive Director

Guests: Joan Haan, Kristen Madaus, Roxanne, Jennifer Menck

Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes – Approved with no changes

Community Garden Space at Mica Park – ***Joan Haan and Kirsten Madaus, Neighbors***

Kathy and Elizabeth recognized Joan Haan, Kristen Madaus and Roxanne, neighbors representing a project to establish a Community Garden at Mica Park in the Highland Bridge Development.

Joan introduced the project, distributing a proposal and budget. The plans for the garden call for 12 plots, but with room to expand to up to 20. She noted that a community garden had been proposed in the area's development plan early on and her group of neighbors are currently trying to turn that idea into reality.

Approaching staff from St. Paul Parks and Recreation, the neighbors were told that Community Gardens in St. Paul need to have an established nonprofit organization to function as a fiscal entity which would include signing a contract with Parks to accept responsibility for the garden.

Kathy noted that HDC has served as a fiscal entity for some past projects but had not taken on responsibilities to the extent of what was listed in the Parks contract. She and Elizabeth suggested the HDC Board would be open to considering signing on as the fiscal agent, but thought there would be concerns about signing the current draft of the contract with Parks and Recreation. Kathy said she would inform the HDC Board President about the project and our conversation.

They suggested meeting again with Parks staff to determine flexibility regarding aspects of the contract and finding out who could sign, other than HDC. Lindsay suggested HDC might be willing to participate to help cover liability insurance needs if another group signed on as managers of the garden. The committee discussed possibilities of establishing a Friends of Mica Park group or partnering with other similar organizations around town. Committee members suggested looking at the community garden near Edgcumbe/Snelling for ideas.

Kathy also encouraged the neighbors to apply to HDC for commercial corridor funding to help cover expenses related to establishing the garden. HDC could potentially help promote the new garden in District communications. Committee members felt strongly that the new garden would be popular and plots would be claimed quickly.

New Committee Member Appointed: A motion to add Jennifer Menck to the HDC Community Engagement Committee was seconded and approved. Welcome, Jennifer!

HDC Events Recap and Update – *Elisabeth Seburg, Chair*

Elizabeth and Kathy gave recaps and updates on the following events:

- **NNO – August 4** – HDC reps attended about 20 parties in the neighborhood and based on feedback, reps felt there was a good opportunity to expand attendance with even more board members.
- **Walking Tour of West 7th** – Kathy said this was successful and attended by reps from MnDOT, the Mayor's office and police. Among others. The group crossed the street at some non-controlled intersections and Kathy said it was an eye-opening experience for many of the participants. MnDOT suggested they were working on ideas to adjust traffic flow design at the West Seventh and St. Paul Avenue intersection as well as others.
- **Music at Wandering Leaf** – August 13 6:00 PM – Kathy noted this was the busiest and most successful event ever at Wandering Leaf, including the Drum Circle, bouncy house and great music.

- **Music at the Bridge** – Kathy called this one of the smoothest such events ever, weith beautiful weather and three food trucks. She remarked the events there felt like good community builders.
- **Help for Seniors** – This was an offering to help people transport items to discard from their resident to curbside. No signups this year, partially because other resources were available. Kathy noted there was a pilot project with Ramsey County to collect hazardous waste curbside. She would be meeting with officials to get more information.
- **Litter Cleanup on West 7th -**Oct 3 9:00-11:00 am
- **HPCC Bonfire Night** 6:00-8:00 pm – including food trucks, bouncy castle, costume exchange
- **Candidate Forum** Monday, Oct 12 7:00-8:30 pm at Keg and Case

Survey Update – 201 responses so far to survey**.** Lots of open-ended comments. In order to get more participants from rentals, HDC is doing a postcard mailing to Cleveland Ave Highrise with an incentive from Highland Café and Bakery**.**

Student Liaison Applications - *Elisabeth Seburg, Chair –* Elizabeth reported there were five applicants. – One from Nova Academy and four from Highland Park Senior High. CEC is developing an orientation for the liaisons – hoping to format it for higher participation.

SMART Goals – *Elisabeth Seburg, Chair –* Committee went over Smart Goals and members agreed we were making good progress in each area.

New Business

HDC retreat on Oct. 26 at Lumen Christi. All HDC members and committee members invited.

A Board Demographic Survey will soon be distributed. Kathy encouraged participation.

Development of new SMART goals for next spring will be starting and will be brought up at our November meeting.

Watch for more information on a Holiday Party in December.

Adjourn - *Elisabeth Seburg, Chair – adjourned at 8:20 pm*

HDC Volunteer Sheet: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/176b7INJy2YhAGdMijzcCLxzCnWXBLWAOUmQ96MlT_2g/edit?usp=sharing