

Native American Parks Council Meeting Summary

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Indigenous Action Plan

June 18, 2025

3:00 - 5:00 PM

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)

In attendance: Carrie Day Aspinwall (MPRB consultant), Shelley Buck (Native American Parks Councilmember), Juanita Espinosa (Native American Parks Councilmember), Carol Hejlstone (MPRB), Maggie Lorenz (Native American Parks Councilmember), Marlena Myles (Native American Parks Councilmember), Samantha Odegard (Native American Parks Councilmember), Emma Pachuta (MPRB), Jennifer Ringold (MPRB), Dana Thompson (Native American Parks Councilmember)

Summary

This is a summary of the key themes, discussion topics and consensus items from the June 18, 2025 Native Parks Council meeting.

Key Themes

- **Naming Policy Update**
 - *MPRB update:* MPRB shared updated language within the draft Naming Policy based on feedback from Parks Council members and Minnesota Urban Indian Affairs Council.
 - *Discussion:* General agreement that the updated language responds to previous feedback.
 - Suggestion to add language addressing when it may be appropriate or not appropriate to name facilities within areas that are designated as a site of significance.
- **40th Street Park**
 - *MPRB update:* MPRB “unnamed” Sibley Park, which is now temporarily called 40th Street Park until a new name can be determined. MPRB would like to understand when and how to proceed forward with a new naming process – should MPRB wait until the Naming Policy is in place or proceed before then?
 - *Discussion:* It has taken a while to move this forward. Some community members have been working on this process a long time already; they should also be brought into the conversation about process and timing. Would probably make sense to wait until Naming Policy is updated before moving process forward.
- **Minnehaha Dog Park**
 - *MPRB update:* MPRB shared update regarding request from the National Park Service to add a fence along the property line of MPRB park property. Shared information and feedback received from the community and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to date.

- *Discussion:* Agreement from Parks Council members that the MPRB parcel is culturally significant and part of the Dakota Mne Owe Sni Traditional Cultural Place.
- Interest in site modifications and improvements to reflect and interpret the Dakota cultural history and significance of the site.
- Consensus from the group that an off-leash dog park is incompatible with this site's Dakota history and significance. Leashed dogs on the property would be considered acceptable. The group further suggested that MPRB staff should consider an alternate location for an off-leash dog park in the future.
- **Upcoming Parks Council 2026-2027 Term**
 - *MPRB update:* MPRB has learned a lot during the first two-year Parks Council term (2024-2025). Based on feedback from parks council members and Indigenous community members, we would like to ensure we evolve the structure to better support discussion and transparency.
 - Invitation to Parks Council members to participate in a "governance" work session this summer. Recommendations from the work session will be brought forward at September's Parks Council meeting.

Recommendations & Next Steps

- Naming Policy will proceed forward with the public approval process beginning in August. Anticipated approval timeline: December 2025.
- MPRB to support proactive communications with Indigenous community members about next steps for 40th Street Park renaming to determine timeline for next steps.
- Staff will share feedback regarding the Minnehaha dog park with commissioners.
- Staff will share governance work session invitation with all Parks Council members. Meetings will be planned for July and August with a report out at September's meeting.