

League of Women Voters *Duluth* • 32 East First Street, Duluth, MN 55802 •

In keeping with years of tradition, there will be a Legislative Roundtable, albeit in Zoom format, prior to the start of the 2021 Legislative Session.



**2021 Legislative Roundtable
Sunday, January 3
1 - 2:30 p.m.**

Format: Some prepared questions on issues that LWV is currently focused on and some from the audience.

Confirmed: Senator Jen McEwen, Rep. Jen Schultz, Rep. Liz Olson
Asked - Not yet confirmed: Rep. Mary Murphy

See page 2 for Zoom information.

SAVE THE DATE!

**23rd Annual Citizens In Action Virtual Workshop
Friday, January 29, 2021, 9:00am-10:30am**

"What is Redistricting? What is Gerrymandering? What can you do locally?"

Minnesota will be redrawing our district voting maps. Learn about the impact of redistricting and how to be more involved in the mapping process. This will be an opportunity to learn how district maps impact issues we care about and how individuals and organizations can make a difference in this mapping process.

Speakers:

Paul Huffman: Census and Redistricting Coordinator/ League of Women Voters of Minnesota

Nick Harper: Civic Engagement Director/ League of Women Voters of Minnesota

This year we will provide an opportunity for our League of Women Voters of Duluth members, co-sponsoring organizations, and area elected leaders to learn more about the Redistricting process and how to engage in another piece of our democratic puzzle!

More information will be coming soon through our LWV Duluth E-News on registration and additional background information.

Any questions please feel free to contact:

2021 Citizens In Action Planning Committee LWV members:

Rosie Loeffler-Kemp, Ellen Wiss, Candy Winkler, Stacey McKune DeRoche

**"Overview of the St. Louis River Area of Concern"
Thursday, January 14, 7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom**



Presentation by Barb Huberty,
St. Louis River Area of Concern
Coordinator for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

See page 2 for more information and the Zoom link.

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Our Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Officers

Co-President	Candy Winkler
Co-President	Sandy Grandmaison
Secretary	Gwen Thorson
Treasurer	Nancy Aldridge
Editor	Julie Seidelmann

Calendar

January

- 1-3 Legislative Roundtable
- 1-4 Membership Committee Meeting
- 1-9 Cross Cultural Committee Meeting
- 1-11 Natural Resources Committee Meeting
- 1-14 St. Louis River Area of Concern
- 1-28 LWV Duluth Book Club
- 1-29 Citizens in Action

February

- 2-20 "A Good Time for the Truth"
- 2-25 Women of Influence

Upcoming LWV Duluth Events in February

"A Good Time for the Truth" Saturday, February 20, 10:00 - 11:00 am via Zoom

Discussion of *A Good Time to Tell the Truth: Race in Minnesota*
More information on page 4

Virtual Women of Influence Event Thursday, February 25, 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Guest speaker, Meg Litts, Current Director of YMCA
More information on page 3

St. Louis River Area of Concern

*Projects in partnership to restore the river
and revitalize the community*

"Overview of the St. Louis River Area of Concern" Thursday, January 14, 7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom

In 1987, the St. Louis River Area of Concern (SLRAOC) was listed as one of 43 areas within the Great Lakes Basin that suffered significant environmental degradation from practices that were allowed before environmental regulations existed. Millions

of dollars are being spent to address nine specific "beneficial use impairments". Do you know what the impairments are, what work is being done to address them, how much it is costing, and who is paying for it? Do you know how much work has been completed and what work remains before the AOC can be delisted?

A program is being planned for members of the League of Women Voters of Duluth to learn the answer to these questions from 7-8 pm on Thursday, January 14th via Zoom. The "Overview of the St. Louis River Area of Concern" presentation will be given by Barb Huberty, St. Louis River Area of Concern Coordinator for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Here is the Zoom link for Barb's presentation re: St. Louis River Area of Concern on January 14 at 7 pm.

League of Women Voters of Duluth is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: St Louis River Area of Concern Overview - January 14 at 7 pm

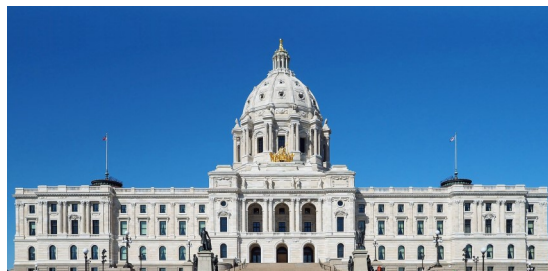
<https://zoom.us/j/97916023173> Call-in option: 1-312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 979 1602 3173

Legislative Roundtable, January 3, 1 - 2:30 pm Zoom Information

Join Zoom Meeting <https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/96634484263pwd=M3NNSIV4ZGZRZ3NOOFFCenRZV3BPQT09>

Meeting ID: 966 3448 4263 Passcode: 681315
Call in only: +1 312 626 6799

Looking forward to "seeing" everyone on January 3, 1 - 2:30 p.m.
Sally Munger and Jane Gilley, Planning Committee



LWV Duluth Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

League of Women Voters of Duluth realizes that creative and innovative policies and practices are forged out of diverse points of view. We believe that diverse perspectives are necessary for responsible and representative decision making. Let us pause to acknowledge our commitment to welcome and facilitate diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. We strive to include people from a mix of abilities and backgrounds in all of our activities

Women of Influence Virtual Event
Thursday, February 25, 2021
7:00 - 9:00 pm

Guest speaker, Meg Litts

Executive Director of Duluth YWCA and new member of League of Women Voters of Duluth
 The Zoom link will be sent prior to the event.

Time will be set aside for questions through the chat option of Zoom.

Meg Litts is the Executive Director of the YWCA Duluth. Since 1893, YWCA Duluth has taken a leadership role on changing issues facing women and their families: childcare, affordable housing, career development, after-school programming for academic success and leadership development, domestic violence, health, and racial and gender discrimination.

The YWCA's quest to be the most inclusive organization led to a leadership restructuring process. Starting in 2016 YWCA Duluth committed to examining power structures within our policies and operating procedures. This process has highlighted how this historical organization, like many others, has been existing in a white cultural framework, inadvertently suppressing voices of others. YWCA Duluth's focus on inclusivity is most prominent in the evolving structure and policies of the agency. As a feminist organization, we were operating in a hierarchical leadership model for over 120 years, placing an Executive Director in the organization's driver's seat.



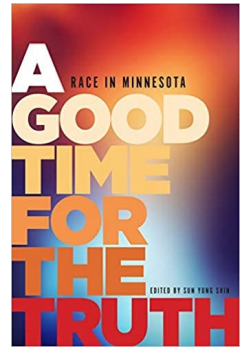
In 2016, YWCA Duluth Leadership, with support from the Board of Directors, shifted to a flatter leadership model with the intent of becoming a stronger organization better rooted in their mission across all programs. This process was rooted in recognizing the strengths of current and future staff, committing to an ethic of transparency, and including more voices in organizational development. The bottom-up decision-making process and structure were intended to provide opportunities for services at the ground level. This required including staff, community collaborators, and those served by the organization in the design, decisions, and organizational direction. In the years that this leadership structure was in place, there were turnovers in both board and staff leadership that caused a dip in momentum. We recognized that we needed someone to provide accountability and support in decision making. In 2019, the YWCA conducted an extensive search for an Executive Director, seeking someone who could provide leadership support through change while honoring a distributed leadership model.

At heart, Meg is an educator with a deep love of children, a passion for social justice, and dedication to making this world a better place for ALL, especially those most underserved. She was raised to believe that if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem, and to stand up against injustice. Her teaching experience ranges from Kindergarten to middle school to graduate students. She has two remarkable daughters by birth, three exchange daughters around the world, and is looking forward to welcoming her first grandchild into the world this summer. She also has the amazing fortune to have had two strong, intelligent, creative, loving women as mothers in her life and a remarkable father who believes in equality for women and raised her to be a leader for change. Taking on the position of YWCA Duluth Executive Director in August 2019 brought her to Duluth, though she had visited previously for DFL conferences. Since moving to Duluth, she has become active in the Duluth NAACP Political Action Committee, Vision Duluth, the League of Women Voters, participated in weekly face mask distribution and voter registration around the Twin Ports, and serves on the Facilitating Racial Equity Coalition for whom the YWCA Duluth is the fiscal sponsor for the 2021 Overcoming Racism Conference. She applied to serve on the Citizen Review Board when there was a position open. When it was filled, she applied to serve on the Human Rights Commission in order to hear and represent the concerns of the community with a lens to racial and gender justice. The YWCA was instrumental in getting the Human Rights Commission launched in our community, and the Y continues to be invested in this work.

Submitted by Sandy Grandmaisson

A Good Time for the Truth

Mark your calendars for **Feb. 20, 10:00-11:00 AM on ZOOM** and join with other League members to begin an important discussion of *A Good Time to Tell the Truth: Race in Minnesota.* In this provocative book, sixteen of Minnesota's best writers provide a range of perspectives on what it is like to live as a person of color in Minnesota. They give readers a splendid gift: the gift of touching another human being's inner reality, behind masks and veils and politeness. They bring us generously into experiences that we must understand if we are to come together in real relationships. Minnesota communities struggle with some of the nation's worst racial disparities. As its authors confront and consider the realities that lie beneath the numbers, this book provides an important tool to those who want to be part of closing those gaps." (Minnesota Historical Society Press)



Sun Yung Shin writes in her introduction that the book is a call for us to listen and learn about one another's real lives in Minnesota. "It is time for this book. It is always a good time for the truth."

People of color are the fastest growing segment of Minnesota's population. But by many metrics, ranging from educational achievement to incarceration, Minnesota appears to be a state failing to deal with "race." Shin writes "Race continues to be very real in terms of its influence on the lives of Indigenous people and people of color. What are these influences and what do they mean for people's lives? This anthology begins to answer these questions."

Racism is a divisive issue in our nation. Fortunately, more and more Americans are recognizing the urgent need to have a serious conversation about race in this country. These essays are offered as contributions to that conversation and as a starting place for LWV Duluth members to learn what meaning these stories have for each of us and for our organization. On Feb. 20, we will discuss the introduction and the following two stories: "Discomfort Zone: Minnesota Born and Raised" by Sherry Quan Lee, and "People Like Us" by David Lawrence Grant. The remaining stories will be discussed at future gatherings.

Please RSVP to Gail Schoenfelder at gail4duluth@gmail.com for Zoom invitation and link to join the meeting.

A Good Time to Tell the Truth: Race in Minnesota is available from the Minnesota Historical Society Press, Amazon, Kindle, and locally at Zenith Book Store. Meg Litts is creating audio chapters. If interested, please contact Meg Litts at meg@ywca.org.

For the sake of the future for us and our children in Minnesota, your participation and input are important. Please make plans to read the book and attend the Zoom discussion, as the Duluth League seeks to participate in the process of healing from our country's oldest wound.

Submitted by Gail Schoenfelder



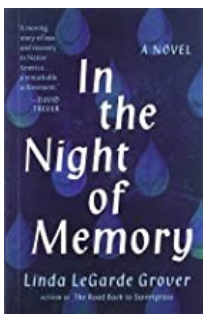
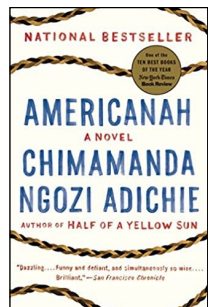
LWV Duluth "The Sisters" Book Club

**Thursday, January 28
6:30 pm via Zoom**

Americanah by Chimanda Ngozi Adiche

A book about a young Nigerian woman who immigrates to the US - her life in both countries.

Discussion Leader Polly Edmunds



Monday, January 18 via Zoom

AAUW's Book Group invited us to their discussion of Linda Legarde Grover's book : *In the Night of Memory*
It is a book about loss and recovery in Native America. The author will be a guest.

Questions: Gay Trachsel 218-728-5478

Zoom links for both events will be sent out closer to the event.

Joyce Benson



Joyce Benson, a longtime LWV Duluth member and past president, passed away on November 10, 2020.

As a member of the League of Women Voters of Duluth and Chair of its International Relations Committee, Joyce developed and coordinated programs funded by the Open World Leadership Center, an organization created by Congress. Through that Center, leaders from Russia, Ukraine, Guatemala, Brazil, Columbia and Tajikistan traveled to Duluth to learn about U.S. democracy, our election process and American culture. In 2008, Joyce was honored in Washington D.C. by the Open World Program for her outstanding work. Also, as a liaison with the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey Institute Fellows Program, she coordinated seminars in Duluth for hundreds of international leaders.

Joyce was an inspiration and mentor to women not only in Duluth but around the world. She was loved, admired and respected by everyone who knew her. She will be greatly missed.

Many members have made donations to League of Women Voters of Duluth in honor of Joyce totally \$1200.00 . We are still collecting donations through PayPal, or to Nancy Aldridge, 1000 Almac Dr Proctor Mn 55810. We are having hoping to have a special event(s) in memory of Joyce.

Click here to view Joyce’s obituary:

<https://www.duluthnewstribune.com/obituaries/obits/6760017-Joyce-Marilyn-Iverson-Benson>

Why I am Member by LaVerne Capan

I am happy and proud to be a member of the League of Women Voters of Duluth, a non partisan organization that educates and registers voters, does outreach, increases voter turnout, and advocates for and empowers its members and all citizens to study the issues and make informed decisions and take a position on today's critical problems.

A number of years back Gail Schoenfelder asked me a number of times to join the LWV, but I was working full-time and already was an elected Director on a political party’s Executive Board. When I retired early due to health issues and only worked part-time, I joined the League of Women Voters. I already knew quite a few of the outstanding members. I like how we work on issues that matter to everyone: social and economic justice issues, environmental and climate change, racism and cultural divides. I was particularly impressed by a program about the election of judges. It is an important and great service to LWV Duluth members that members of our Observers’ Corp attend, observe and take notes at our Elected Officials Board meetings and our City and County Commissions meetings. We must keep them accountable. The reports from the Observer Corps which are published in the Voter each month are very informative. The LWV Duluth is one of the best, most important, and oldest organizations in Duluth. I rely on the very well done Voter newsletter for much information.

Keep informed about LWV News and upcoming LWV Duluth events!

LWV Duluth
www.lwvduluth.org
LWVMN
www.lwvmn.org
LWVUS
www.lwv.org



**LWV Duluth
E-News Emails**

**Welcome New
LWV Duluth Members**



Annika Julsrud

Opportunities to Make a Difference; Become Involved in a LWV Duluth Committee
Check website at www.lwvduluth.org or E-News emails for updates.

Committee	Contact	Next Meeting Date
Voter Service: Registration & New Citizens	Ellen Wiss mewiss62@gmail.com Candy Winkler: candywinkler49@gmail.com	Meets with whole Voter Service Committee on as needed basis
Voter Service: Forums	Mary Faulkner: faulkner.marykatherine@gmail.com Pat Castellano Castellanop4@gmail.com	As needed
International Relations	Liz Taylor 393-0703 (cell)	Contact Liz about to talk about becoming involved.
Membership	Theresa O’Gara 724-4821 (home) Barb Johnson 218-879-1890	Monthly meeting, Monday, January 4, 10 am via Zoom
Citizens in Action, Friday, January 29, 2021 via Zoom	Rosie Loeffler-Kemp 341-2014 Ellen Wiss 612-310-9797	Meetings begin in November Contact Rosie
Natural Resources	Sally Munger 728-0711 (home) Gay Trachsel 728-5478 (home)	Monthly meeting; Monday, January 11, 5:00 pm via Zoom
Newsletter Mailing	Sally Munger 218-728-0711 Gail Schoenfelder 218-310-8678	Generally last Wednesday of the month @ place TBD. Call Sally for information
Observer Corps	Sue Henke 218-340-9383	Depends on Board or Commission
Cross Cultural	Janet Kennedy 218-349-8057 Gail Schoenfelder 218-310-8678	Monthly meeting, Saturday, Jan.9, 10 - noon . Discussion of “A Good Time to Tell the Truth” Contact Gail for Zoom link
Book Club	Gay Trachsel 728-5478 (home)	Thursday, January 28, 6:30 pm via Zoom. “Americanah” by Chimanda Ngozi Adichi.
Plant & Book Sale, Saturday June 12	Gail Schoenfelder Gail4duluth@gmail.com 310-8678 (cell)	Email Gail with intent to donate plants or books and/or to volunteer day of the sale
Communications	Julie Seidelmann 348-1209 (cell) Gwen Thorson 624-4756 (home)	As needed
Equali-TEA Possibly Spring 2021	Gail Nouska 218-206-4682 Newska519@hotmail.com Jean Farmakes 218-724-4186 jfarmake@yahoo.com	Contact Jean or Gail if you are interested in helping.
Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women of Influence • Holiday Social • Annual Meeting 	Sandy Grandmaison, 348-7589 srgrandmaison@gmail.com	Contact Sandy if you are interested in helping with any of the noted events.

Voter Service Committee



Did we make a difference? Did all our planning, work, and worry matter? The best answer is in the numbers. Despite all of the drama of the misinformation and mistrust surrounding the pandemic and the safety and security of the election:



We and our community partners hosted over 30 in-person events where we distributed Masks, Voter Registration Forms, Absentee Ballot Applications, SOS Fact Sheets, and stamped pre-addressed envelopes.

On Facebook, our “No Pants Required” PSA received 4500 Likes, 350 Engagements and 256 Reactions.

From our website, 421 folks viewed the taped Candidate Forums.

Duluth had very high voter turnout and saw an increase in all but the Kirby Hall polling place, possibly due to the absence of so many students -- 90% in Lakeside precincts, 89% in Piedmont Heights, and 86% in Duluth’s westernmost 34th Precinct. The number of votes cast in the underrepresented neighborhoods that we send packets of voter materials increased by an average of 10.75%.

51.8% of Duluth voters chose to vote by Absentee Ballot this year. An average of 57.62% of voters in the traditionally underrepresented neighborhoods that we identified voted by Absentee Ballot this year.

This is just a snapshot of our efforts. We are so fortunate to be part of an organization with so many creative and dedicated members.

While we can’t document and recognize all of your individual efforts, the results reflect them all. I think that Michael Wall from the MN SOS office said it best: **“This year, there wasn’t a lot of talk in Minnesota about keeping our First In The Nation status in voter turnout. The push was for letting every voter know their options for how they could vote safely and securely. But in the end, letting people know their choices and educating them on the process to vote- no matter the method they chose- brought us to the top of the voting pyramid once again.”**

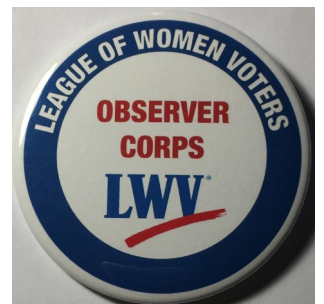
Submitted by
Mary Faulkner and Ellen Wiss

Opportunity for Involvement: Observer Corps

The new year would be an excellent time to become a LWV Observer at a government board, commission or council of your choice. Silent observers attend and create a brief report on city and county government meetings. During the pandemic, attendance is virtual.

Boards value and welcome LWV observers as community members interested in their work. Currently we have LWV observers for City Council, Human Rights Commission, Indigenous Commission, Parks and Rec Commission, Library Board and Natural Resources Commission. There is an opening on the Port Authority as well as many other boards and commissions that have not had an LWV observer in the recent past, including the School Board.

Please contact Sue Henke for more information (suehenke@charter.net or 218-340-9383).



See Observers’ Reports on pages 8 - 11
The Observers’ Reports are also posted on our website.

Observers' Reports

African Heritage Commission, November 16, 2020.

The African Heritage Commission met for the first time on November 16, 2020. The meeting was held virtually.

As the City of Duluth website states, "The purpose of this commission is to ensure that the views of the African Heritage community are incorporated in the decision making, future planning, and stewardship of the city of Duluth. The commission will endeavor to act as a guide in the development of public policy, planning and services so that the African Heritage community is adequately represented in these processes. The commission will also endeavor to increase understanding and acceptance of the African Heritage community and culture and to increase African Heritage community involvement in all aspects of community affairs in Duluth."

The Commission has seven members who may serve up to two terms of three years each. The seven members are: Antonio Carter, Verna A. Thornton, Bernice Pepper, Susie Green, Breanna Ellison, John A. Staine, Jebbeh Edmunds.

The Commissioners shared their perspectives on what niche the African Heritage Commission can fill in our community. Their suggestions and ideas included the following:

Establish a collaborative of groups to engage young people in music, the arts, dance, etc.

Recruit professionals to act as mentors and role models for youth; Work towards obtaining a space for African Heritage community to gather for programs, etc; Emphasize recruitment and retention of African Heritage professionals. Promote black businesses and restaurants and develop a network of black professionals so they stay in Duluth; Provide incentives for people of color to get outside and enjoy outdoor activities---provide programs and equipment; Solicit input (maybe with a survey) from African Heritage members of the community to include them in the Commission's decision making.

A permanent meeting date and time will be set at the next Commission meeting. Additional agenda items will include a discussion to determine the Commission's Bylaws and a process to adopt them at a future meeting.

The date of the next meeting is to be determined. This date will be posted on the City of Duluth's website: duluthmn.gov and click on African American Heritage Commission.

Submitted by Gail Schoenfelder

Human Rights Commission, November 12, 2020

Five members of the Commission along with Carl Crawford, the Human Rights Officer for Duluth, convened on November 12 for their monthly meeting. There are three seats vacant. Sixteen people have applied for the three positions. (The Commissioners were to discuss choosing three at the December meeting but that meeting did not take place.)

Kathy Hermes, Coordinator of the Together for Youth Program for LGBTQ2S+ youth at Lutheran Social Services spoke to the Commission about the unique challenges experienced by these youth during COVID-19 and distance learning.

Discussion followed:

There is a group working on a tool youth can use if they believe they are being targeted by someone for abuse.

Question raised about whether gender appropriate lockers are available to students in Duluth. Denfeld has two gender-neutral bathrooms on each floor. The School Board has asked East and Ordean to create those also. No problems have been reported.

A committee is working on updates to the HRC website to make language more inclusive.

There have not been many complaints filed this fall. Officer Crawford asked whether COVID may be affecting access to filing complaints.

A webinar, open to the public, followed the meeting. It focused on the makeup and goals of the Commission and how to file a human rights complaint.

Submitted by Polly Edmunds

Indigenous Commission, October 16, 2020

The local Rights of Nature group asked the Commission to help craft language for a petition stating the rights of the St. Louis River Estuary Water Trail to be part of the Duluth City Charter and go on the ballot for the next election. A National Water Trail designation would allow surrounding communities to engage with both local citizens and visitors to learn about its past, present, and future, as well as plan and implement restoration efforts--with a sense of urgency--for Mother Earth.

Continued on page 9

Observers' Reports

Indigenous Commission, October 16, 2020 (continued)

In Duluth, there is concern that People of Color are not using social services. A survey of 120 people was done by LISC Duluth (Local Initiative Support Corporation) under the categories of: age, gender, ancestry, employment, use of current services, to come up with what resources are needed and what to do with the information. WEES (Wealth, Entrepreneurship and Economic Sustainability) is looking at the results to make certain they use a good process, that racism isn't embedded in the services to meet the needs, and how to move forward to bring the homeless to the job world. The survey also showed that people do not know of the services available. The hope is that employers get to hear the stories. Pam Kramer, representing LISC Duluth, will come back to the Commission with the next steps they plan to impose.

Andrew Slade, of the Environmental Center, informed the Commission that a Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation grant is available to fund a Minnesota Environmental Partnership for natural resources in tribal communities.

It was suggested an Indigenous Culture Calendar be developed, representing treaty signing dates, etc., to educate the public on the Indigenous history and culture in the Duluth area.

Indigenous People's Day was celebrated on October 12th with an emphasis on ways that needed change, with ancestors being honored.

Homeless camps at the Point of Rocks Campground have been ordered to evacuate. Concern was expressed as to the need for places to place these individuals. Attention to this will include a rally at City Hall.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Indigenous Commission, November 16, 2020

Arc Northland wants to work with the Indigenous Community to enhance and increase services for people with disabilities, and people over 65.

The Human Rights Commission wants to work with the African Heritage Commission and the Indigenous Commission on a racism statement for Duluth. A subcommittee will work on this.

The Commission was asked to support a partnership with Loaves and Fishes, Hildegard House, Peace Church and CHUM on the homelessness in Duluth. A letter of support from the Commission will be drafted and voted on at the next meeting to request sites for the homeless: Sites to build yurts on; Dumpsters; Porta Potties; Accessible to bus lines. Councilor Renee VanNett brought forward the concern for 24-hour hygiene facilities for the homeless, which the City Council is working on.

An Indigenous Calendar is being developed with teaching tools regarding the history and meaning of being American Indian today.

Mayor Larson and City department heads will be invited to a Commission meeting to discuss the relationship and clarify the role of the Commission and the City and to promote the visibility of the Commission.

Skip Sandman has been named the Spiritual Advisor for Spirit Mountain. The Heritage Preservation Commission will work with the Commission on enhancing the relationship with Spirit Mountain, and preserving the Indigenous heritage of this location. Much appreciation of this relationship was expressed by the Commission members.

Opioid/AIM/Sweat Lodge/Sobriety Feasts are not happening during the pandemic time.

Submitted by Liz Taylor

Natural Resource Commission (via Webex), November 4th, 2020

Hartley Native Plant Community Management Plan Doug Mensing, of Applied Ecological Services, presented a PowerPoint overview. Detailed maps of existing vegetation, ecological quality, and past management were used to define nine management units. Draft recommendations prioritized three tiers (high quality vegetation, previous management areas, and connecting areas) comprising roughly half of the NA's 600+ acres. Work would include removal of buckthorn, reed canary grass and invasive cattail; pine thinning; weed pulling; and tree planting. A detailed draft proposal for phased implementation of 120 prioritized acres showed restoration and management subunit investments over 10 years at \$100,00 per year. Jim Filby-Williams expressed concern that only half of the "Natural Area" was part of the plan, suggesting that either a lower quality plan be added for the remainder, or the "Natural Area" be reduced. He also stated that the \$100,000 annual investment from the city was probably unrealistic, and could not be scaled to other DNAs. Doug presented a list of funding opportunities, and Commissioners and Hartley Nature Center Executive Director Tom O'Rourke added other possibilities.

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Observers' Reports

Natural Resource Commission (via Webex), November 4, 2020 (continued)

Several commissioners emphasized that Hartley is “special” (6% of Duluth’s green space, 200,000+ users annually), and that “showcasing” Hartley might be worth this “special” focus, resulting in many volunteers and community-wide education. Jim responded that \$800,000 over 5 years might be possible.

NRC will consider the plan over the next month, with possible finalization at their December meeting. For background, see the Minnesota Land Trust Nov 2019 [Management Plan for the Hartley Natural Area](#), one of several NAs which make up the Duluth Natural Areas Program.

Natural Resource Coordinator Diane Desotelle limited her report to the Hartley plan.

City Forester Clark Christenson noted:

- Pine Management Plan will be communicated next spring (too much data for zoom).
- An Urban Forest Management Plan is being developed.
- Ash removals continue, and show that Emerald Ash Borer is more widespread than expected. Clark recommends that if you have an ash in your yard, plan for removal - sooner rather than later.

Director of Parks, Properties, and Libraries Jim Filby-Williams announced that acquisition of \$7.4 million of tax forfeited land is nearing final steps. Funding is in place, and goals for parcel selection have been approved. Memoranda of agreement with the county to establish process should be concluded by the end of this month.

Submitted by Barb Akre

Reports from the Duluth Parks and Recreation August and September Meetings can be found on LWV Duluth website at <https://www.lwvduluth.org/observer-corps.html>

Duluth Parks and Recreation Meeting, October 14, 2020

Notes below are largely quoting from parts of Parks Department minutes of the meeting:
<https://duluthmn.gov/media/WebSubscriptions/95/20201119-95-12282.pdf>

Buildings and Facilities Update. Presented by Erik Birkeland, Property and Facilities Manager:

This winter only three buildings will be open: Morgan Park Community Center, Washington Center Gymnasium, and Portman Community Center as posted at

<https://duluthmn.gov/media/10396/letter-to-parks-building-users.pdf>

Commissioner Jenny Peterson questioned how the decision came about for the three facilities that will remain open. Erik Birkeland said that the volume of use played a key factor. Portman has hockey in the basement and hosts the opportunity for rentals. Washington Center has the gym. Parks and Recreation Manager Jessica Peterson mentioned that Morgan Park and Portman have serviced the Senior Program in the past in collaboration with AEOA, which provided meal service. Commissioner Peterson indicated she understands the rationales but wondered why we couldn’t have buildings in lower income areas. Jess Peterson mentioned that Grant Recreation Center had a tenant last year, but the tenant chose not to continue. Jim Filby Williams clarified that the public has been notified that Grant Recreation building will be demolished. Commissioner Britt Rohrbaugh stated that she feels like she is being punched in the gut when hearing that the Grant Center would no longer be available. Commissioner Rohrbaugh said she has attended many events at Grant Recreation Center. Commissioner Demmer indicated he is still confused why some structures are being closed.

According to Erik Birkeland, special requests are reviewed on a weekly basis. Commissioner Peterson said that the Park Point Community Club is worried that once winterized, the Park Point Center will not be revived. Erik Birkeland indicated staff routinely check buildings to make sure the furnaces are still running and that water is shut-off. Jim Filby Williams indicated that due to the pandemic a large number of workers were laid off, limiting ability to keep the buildings clean and sanitized. The city has called people back to work, but many had chosen other jobs due to their immediate needs. There are many unfilled positions. Commissioner Natalie Chin asked how the reservation system works and if it is a first come first serve basis. Jessica Peterson said reservations are on a first come first serve basis and that the Parks and Recreation Department will work with the community clubs to make sure they have a space to meet and work with the general public as well. In the event of high demand with not enough buildings, Parks and Recreation would discuss this with the city’s Property and Facilities Department.

Submitted by Ron Regal, Lane Palmer, Tom Burns

Observers' Reports

Parks and Recreation Commission, November 18, 2020 via Webex

After Commission president, Amanda Crosby, called the meeting to order and took the roll, Jess Peterson, Parks Manager, introduced Senior Parks Planner, Cliff Knettel. Next Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator, outlined the natural resources management plan. Commissioner David Demmer stressed the importance for a city like Duluth with so much green space to have such a central plan. Jess Peterson asked how the Coordinator's position is funded, and Desotelle indicated that there were two sources of funding within the city's budgeting structure: the Parks Fund and the Facilities Management Division.

Next up, Jess again took the floor and presented an update on Lincoln Park and the status of Lincoln Park Drive, which the Commission had previously voted to remove in favor of having a trial only. It turns out that the National Parks Service challenged the city to come up with a plan that would keep the road in place. Commissioner Jill Joyce asked whether the costs of various suggestions were being included in the analysis process. Jess replied that making needed repairs would extend the road's lifespan.

The final item fell under "Old Business," as all would agree. Jim Filby-Williams, Director, presented an informational report on "Golf Budgeting and the Planning Timeline." President Crosby questioned why minimal maintenance at Lester would be kept as an option, since it was potentially to close regardless. Commissioner Jenny Peterson asked for an explanation as to the source of funding for Duluth Public Golf. Jess responded that the General Fund, hoping for future profits, had previously accepted the debt, but that those profits had never materialized. Jim Filby-Williams made clear that the city's cumulative subsidies to golf now approached \$3 million dollars, and that this commitment had reduced the funds available for other much needed projects such as city streets and utilities. He added that after two decades of support the city has suffered significant losses.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Submitted by Ron Regal, Tom Burns, Lane Palmer

Parks and Recreation Commission December 9, 2020 via Webex

The main agenda item was an informational presentation, the annual year in review for the Parks and Recreation department for 2020. This was presented by Parks Manager Jessica Peterson and Assistant Parks Manager Alicia Watts.

Overall, the department had to continually adapt to comply with new restrictions and refinements of government executive orders and CDC guidance, from masks and social distancing to closure of indoor facilities and programs. At the same time, interest and participation in dispersed outdoor activities such as walking and mountain biking in the parks grew substantially.

The number of reservations for indoor park facilities was down, from 244 in 2019 to 32 in 2020. Likewise the facility revenues fell from \$20,585 in 2019 to \$4,525 in 2020. There were 67 permits for weddings on park property in 2020, down from 95 in 2019, and permits for buskers (e.g., along the Lakewalk) were down somewhat from 40 to 35. Permits for activities involving alcohol consumption in parks and park facilities were down from 69 in 2019 to 22 in 2020.

The department had 10,400 participants in 35 different programs. Bayfront Park rink counted 1,193 skaters last winter. The number of Facebook followers grew from 5,300 in last year to 8,100 in 2020. For the most part, scheduled trail work and other park improvements were able to proceed as planned. This was considered especially important for projects funded by federal and other outside grant sources, so that requirements for timely project completion could be met. In the natural resources enhancement category, the department continued to remove invasive species and replace with native plants, and the St Louis River and Hartley Natural Areas were created.

A new City Code section (35-9.5) was adopted which will formalize the process of accepting and maintenance of memorials in the parks.

In other business, the Commission adopted a new schedule for meetings in 2021 which will reduce the number Commission meetings from twelve to seven (January, March, April, June, August, October and December). The rationale for this was to restrict meetings to those that require Commission action, and thereby make more efficient use of Commissioners' and staff time.

Submitted by Ron Regal, Tom Burns, Lane Palmer

League of Women Voters of Duluth
32 East First Street
Duluth, MN 55802

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MEMBERSHIP FORM/RENEWAL FORM
Membership Renewals due by Sept. 30

Date: _____

Name: _____ email _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____ 2nd Address: _____

Membership (Check one)

- Individual \$65
- Student/Limited Income \$20
- Full Scholarship \$0
- Household \$100 (2 members living at same address)
 - Name of additional household member: _____
 - E-mail of additional household member: _____
 - Phone number of additional household member: _____
- Additional support: \$20 \$40 \$60 \$100 Other Amount: _____
- I want to donate \$20 to sponsor a limited income member.

Total enclosed: _____

All members with an e-mail address will receive the Voter newsletter by e-mail. Do you also wish to receive a print copy of the Voter newsletter? _____yes _____no

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