SAINT PAUL
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MELANIE MCMAHON, DIRECTOR

City Hall Annex, 25 West 4th Street, Suite 1300
Saint Paul, MN 55102
Tel: 651-266-6565

June 29, 2026

TO: Saint Paul City Council

FROM: Nellie Jerome, City Planner

SUBJECT: Planning Commission Review of Golf Course Zoning Code Text Amendments

BACKGROUND

The Saint Paul City Council initiated amendments to the Standards and Conditions for Golf Courses in the Saint Paul Zoning Code, Sec. 65.230, to allow limited lighting use at night and to remove a ban on "pitch and put" miniature golf. These amendments were proposed in response to a request from the Department of Parks and Recreation as they prepare to update their operational plan for the driving range at the Highland National Golf Course. City Council forwarded the proposed amendments to the Planning Commission for review and report (required under MN § 462.357, Subd. 4).

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Saint Paul Planning Commission ("The Commission") discussed the proposed amendments to Sec. 65.230 at their regular meeting on June 26, 2026. The Commission discussed several aspects of the proposed amendments, including:

- alignment with the Comprehensive Plan,
- similarity with other outdoor recreational facilities,
- potential impacts to all golf course operations, and
- eliminating barriers to recreation.

The Commission agreed the amendments were supported by the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and noted that in addition to the policies noted in the staff report, policies PR-2 and PR-21 also support the proposed changes. The Commission recognized that the Zoning Code does not impose similar restrictions on other sports facilities or on illumination for other outdoor playing fields or recreation spaces. It was also noted that the

Need this translated? Call us at 651-266-6565
¿Necesita esta traducción? Comuníquese con nosotros al 651-266-6565.
Ma u baahan tahay tarjamadaan Nago soo wac 651-266-6565.
Xav tau qhov no txhais los? Hu rau peb ntawm 651-266-6565.

Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation has public processes for making changes to any recreation areas and operations, including any significant changes to lighting and operating hours at golf courses.

The Commission focused much of their discussion around Sec. 65.230 (d.), which regulates lighting, and stated that the proposed language was written in a way that could impose unintended restrictions on activities that occur inside of buildings located at golf courses or winter activities at golf courses. The Commission discussed revisions to make the clause clearer. Planning Commissioners noted a desire to prioritize access to recreation for all and removing historic barriers participation. For these reasons, they proposed deleting Sec. 65.230 (d.) altogether.

The Planning Commission recognized the Highland Park District Council resolution (attached) in favor of the original language proposed by Council, restricting night illumination and use to 10pm. However, they noted the hours of operation do not need to be in the Zoning Code and can be regulated by the Parks and Recreation Department as it does with other park activities.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission came to unanimous agreement on:

- removing the "pitch and putt" miniature golf restriction in subsection (c), as proposed by City Council; and
- deleting all of subsection (d) related to night illumination because such zoning regulations do not currently exist for other similar outdoor recreation land uses and can be regulated through general standards and Parks and Recreation Department operational processes. This was a change from the City Council's proposed amendments.

Zoning amendments recommended by Planning Commission are attached in Resolution 26-17.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Planning Commission Resolution 26-17
2. Highland Park District Council Resolution on proposed amendments
3. Planning Commission Staff Report for the 6/26 meeting