

# NORTHEAST PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD  
ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 18012 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55418-0012

Park Board Commissioner Billy Menz  
2117 West River Road N  
Minneapolis, MN 55411

4/25/2022

Dear Commissioner Menz,

As the organization appointed by the City of Minneapolis to represent the people in Northeast Park neighborhood, the Northeast Park Neighborhood Association (NEPNA) comes to you with deep concerns about the conditions at Lake Hiawatha and Lake Hiawatha Golf Course. One of our main concerns is pollution at Lake Hiawatha that is exacerbated by the city storm water runoff system. Minnesota's bodies of water are vital to our state, and the environmental decisions we make today will have impacts for generations to come. We ask that you work with your colleagues on the Park Board to gather more information and understanding regarding what is happening in this area and work with the City to create a better plan to separate the trash from the storm water. Your decisions regarding Lake Hiawatha will affect all of Minneapolis and the surrounding communities.

Moreover, we are keenly aware of the important history at the Hiawatha Golf Course for Black golfers. We support all your efforts to highlight this history. It is understood that if the golf course is turned into a 9-hole course, revenue might be lost due to the inability to hold tournaments that require an 18-hole course. We encourage you to seek waivers for these tournaments so that the golf course can continue to host events. Although the number of holes would be reduced, the course would become more difficult because of the increased water hazards. This could be used as a rationale to allow for waivers a decrease in hole numbers, but an increase in difficulty. Historically, some club and tournament rules were created to intentionally exclude groups of people. NEPNA supports a reevaluation of the rules to encourage a more equitable playing demographic.

We also encourage interested partners to develop relationships that highlight the history of this area, the future, and the community. For example, what are Native community members and neighboring Tribal Nations saying about the importance of this lake, the wetland, and the future? What are Black environmentalists saying about the pollution in this lake, the diseased wetland, the future of this space, the

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wildlife? What do these communities think could be a way forward for everyone to get something desired and form a compromise leading to partnership? What would it look like if the future of Lake Hiawatha and Hiawatha Golf Course with the Solomon Hughes Sr. Clubhouse collaborated on Black and Indigenous History to that land and eco issues to protect the environment? We know this is a very complex issue, but also trust that multiple truths can stand at once. How do we compromise?

We appreciate your efforts on this issue and are eager to see healthy, equitable, and holistic choices moving this project forward.

Respectfully,

September Luitjens on Behalf of the NEPNA Board

