

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)**

**May 28, 2025**

**Hybrid Meeting – MN State Capitol 120 & Zoom, pursuant to MS 13D**

**Call to Order:** Chair David Hartwell called the meeting to order at 08:32 a.m. [\(00:00:46\)](#)

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
David Hartwell (Chair)	Rep. John Burkel
Ron Schara (Vice Chair)	Kristin Eggerling
Suzanne Baird	Darrel Palmer
Sen. FOUNG Hawj	
Matt Kucharski	
Sen. Andrew Lang	
Tom Saxhaug	
Ted Suss	
Rep. Samantha Vang	

A quorum was present.

**1. Review and Approve Agenda: [\(00:02:25\)](#)**

Chair Hartwell proposed that the request for conversion/conveyance be moved from agenda item number 9 to number 8 to accommodate member schedules.

Councilmember Saxhaug made a motion to approve the agenda with this adjustment. –  
**Motion Prevailed**

**2. Review and Approve Minutes: [\(00:03:47\)](#)**

Councilmember Saxhaug made a motion to approve the minutes from January 3, 2025  
– **Motion Prevailed**

**3. Conflicts of Interest Reported:** (00:04:50) No conflicts of interest were reported.

**4. Chair's Comments:** (00:05:07)

Chair Hartwell welcomed new Councilmembers Kucharski, Palmer, Suss, and Rep. Vang and allowed the new members present to introduce themselves.

**5. Discussion/Action:** Council Executive Officer Elections (00:08:54)

The Council discussed holding executive officer elections at this meeting or postponing until a later date. The Council agreed to hold elections at this meeting.

**Action:** Councilmember Ron Schara made a motion to nominate David Hartwell for the position of Council Chair. Mr. Hartwell accepted the nomination.

No other nominations were made for the position of Chair.

A roll call vote was taken.

<b>AYE:</b>	<b>NAY:</b>	<b>ABSENT:</b>
Hartwell		Rep. Burkel
Schara		Eggerling
Baird		Sen. FOUNG Hawj
Kucharski		Palmer
Sen. Lang		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

**Action:** Councilmember Kucharski made a motion to nominate Ron Schara for the position of Council Vice Chair. Mr. Schara accepted the nomination.

No other nominations were made for the position of Vice Chair.

A roll call vote was taken.

<b>AYE:</b>	<b>NAY:</b>	<b>ABSENT:</b>
Hartwell		Rep. Burkel
Schara		Eggerling
Baird		Sen. FOUNG Hawj
Kucharski		Palmer
Sen. Lang		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

**Action:** Councilmember Baird made a motion to nominate Kristin Eggerling for the position of Council Secretary. Councilmember Eggerling was absent and unable to formally accept or deny the nomination.

No other nominations were made for the position of Secretary.

A roll call vote was taken.

<b>AYE:</b>	<b>NAY:</b>	<b>ABSENT:</b>
Hartwell		Rep. Burkel
Schara		Eggerling
Baird		Sen. FOUNG Hawj
Kucharski		Palmer
Sen. Lang		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

**Action:** Vice Chair Schara made a motion to nominate Suzanne Baird for the position of Council Treasurer. Ms. Baird accepted the nomination.

No other nominations were made for the position of Treasurer.

A roll call vote was taken.

<b>AYE:</b>	<b>NAY:</b>	<b>ABSENT:</b>
Hartwell		Rep. Burkel
Schara		Eggerling
Baird		Sen. FOUNG Hawj
Kucharski		Palmer
Sen. Lang		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

**Action:** Vice Chair Schara made a motion to nominate Sen. Andrew Lang for the position of Council Legislative Member. Sen. Lang accepted the nomination.

No other nominations were made for the position of Legislative Member.

A roll call vote was taken.

<b>AYE:</b>	<b>NAY:</b>	<b>ABSENT:</b>
Hartwell		Rep. Burkel
Schara		Eggerling
Baird		Sen. FOUNG Hawj
Kucharski		Palmer
Sen. Lang		
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

## **6. Executive Director's Report: [\(00:30:18\)](#)**

Executive Director Mark Johnson made the Council aware that the Omnibus Legacy bill, including the Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations as recommended by the Council, had been passed by the Legislature and signed into law.

Mr. Johnson directed the Council's attention to an attached memo from the Chair and Vice Chair notifying the Council that as a result of the February budget forecast, the funding recommendations were reduced according to the Council approved plan. Mr. Johnson noted a letter from the MN Department of Revenue sent to committee leaders noting that a Legacy fund distribution calculation had been identified and corrected, resulting in a reduction in funds for Outdoor Heritage Fund allocations.

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the 2025 Legislative Session, including an Outdoor Heritage Fund-related amendment that had been placed on the Legacy omnibus bill in the Senate, and offered an opportunity for Rep. Vang and Sen. Lang to speak to their experience bringing the bill through the legislature.

Mr. Johnson presented letters from MN DNR grants management staff scrutinizing disallowed reimbursements from Dakota County OHF projects as well as an update from the staff overseeing the Carp Barrier at Lock and Dam number 5.

LSOHC Project Analyst Manager Sandy Smith provided the Council with an overview of the information contained within the Status Update Report provided to the Council. This report summarizes progress made by all programs with open appropriations, including amount spent, leftover funds, and extensions by program. Ms. Smith also informed the Council of a recent staff visit to a controlled burn site on the Ordway Prairie Preserve on May 9, 2025.

Mr. Johnson notified the Council of his intention to retire in January of 2026 and encouraged the Council to initiate the process of hiring a successor.

**7. Discussion / Action:** Approval of 2025 Council Meeting Calendar [\(00:59:50\)](#)

The draft meeting calendar was presented to the Council, with an opportunity given to propose changes based on any scheduling conflicts for members. Chair Hartwell proposed that the Calendar be changed so that the proposal hearings in August take place on August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Noting no opposition, the calendar was considered approved, with no motion being required for formal approval.

**8. Discussion / Action:** Discussion/Action: Request for Conversion/Conveyance – ML 2021, First Sp. Session, Ch. 1, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 5(h) – MNDNR Trout Stream Conservation Easements [\(01:02:02\)](#)

Assistant Director Joe Pavelko provided background information on the request.

**Action:** Councilmember Saxhaug moved to approve recording of the Minnesota Land Trust easement on top of the existing protection granted by the MN DNR trout stream easement pursuant to MS 97A.056, subd. 15.

A roll call vote was taken.

<b>AYE:</b>	<b>NAY:</b>	<b>ABSENT:</b>
Hartwell	Sen. Lang	Rep. Burkel
Schara		Eggerling
Baird		Sen. Founj Hawj
Kucharski		Palmer
Saxhaug		
Suss		
Rep. Vang		

**9. Presentation / Discussion:** Restoration Evaluations Report – ML2023, Ch. 40, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 6(c) – Technical Evaluation Panel [\(01:18:14\)](#)

Wade Johnson, Restoration Evaluation Program Coordinator at MN DNR, presented details on the work of the statutorily required Technical Evaluation Panel within the last year. Council discussion followed.

**10. Discussion / Action:** Discussion/Action: Request for Request for Conversion/Conveyance and Permission to Record Notice of Funding Restriction – ML2013, Ch. 137, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 5(e) – Minnesota Landscape Arboretum [\(01:39:07\)](#)

Chair Hartwell gave background information on the conversion/conveyance request, which includes recording a notice of funding restriction with additional protection, a change to the right-of-way access to the OHF property due to road construction, and the typical process by which staff are able to grant approval for minor adjustments.

**Action:** Chair Hartwell moved to grant staff approval to make decisions on this particular request, so long as the request will generate additional acreage of restored, protected, or enhanced habitat and the existing right-of-way is abandoned and restored.

A roll call vote was taken.

<b>AYE:</b>	<b>NAY:</b>	<b>ABSENT:</b>
Hartwell		Rep. Burkel
Schara		Eggerling
Baird		Sen. Founq Hawj
Kucharski		Palmer
Sen. Lang		Rep. Vang
Saxhaug		
Suss		

7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 5 ABSENT – **Motion Prevailed**

**11. Presentation / Discussion:** Minnesota Duck and Pheasant Action Plans: Update [\(01:46:40\)](#)

Joe Stangel, Acting Regional Wildlife Manager, MN DNR, and Rob Baden, Detroit Lakes Area Wildlife Supervisor, MN DNR, presented on the recently updated Duck and Pheasant Action Plans. The presentation discussed the report writing process, updated priorities and information, and provided highlights from the reports. Council discussion followed.

**12. Discussion:** 2025 OHF Tours / Site Visits [\(02:18:16\)](#)

Assistant Director Joe Pavelko provided background information to the Council on the potential tour of OHF sites in the Fergus Falls area on June 24. Options were presented to the Council for this tour as well as the Council meeting planned for the following day.

**Action:** Chair Hartwell directed staff to poll Council members on the options available for the Council meeting.

No public testimony was heard.

Meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.