

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: February 3, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. Location: Council Chambers, City Hall

Members Present: Gary Gisselman, David Nutting, Pat Peckham (c), Dennis Smith, Tom Neal
Others Present: Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director, Robert Mielke-Mayor, Eric Lindman-Public Works Director, Tom Kilian, other interested parties

1. In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. It was noted that a quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by Chairman Peckham at 4:30 p.m.

2. Public Comment – none brought forward

3. Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Nutting, second by Neal to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft January 6, 2020 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

4. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Riverside Park Soil Testing – Lindman discussed how the City was waiting on the DNR's final response and said that all of the information is complete and in tonight's packet. There had been a news article that the City was withholding information which wasn't the case and he said all the information he is aware of they have seen. Neal said Committee had previously discussed delineating an area for possible test locations and Lindman's letter mentioned that REI had prepared four separate testing proposals for Committee to choose from. Lindman said those were the different scenarios that were presented previously over the last nine to ten months. Discussion followed on the approved ten testing locations along the railroad corridor. Neal questioned why some of the testing was being done immediately adjacent to previous testing. Lindman thought the DNR was trying to confirm as well as delineate out where that contaminate is and depending on what those tests come back at, the DNR may require the City to do more.

Peckham thought Committee should decide how many tests they want in the public use area of the park. He suggested starting at the center soil test that the citizens group had done and discussed how to possibly fan five tests out from there. It would give them tests in the area of the park that has been identified as having some level of contamination and they would have a good idea of the area that's most likely to be used by the public. Nutting questioned Lindman if that plan was relatable to any of the plans that REI had proposed. Lindman said REI had four different scenarios because there's not really anything that stands out as far as any testing. There's not a path like the railroad corridor that seems to show a pattern. REI had proposed anywhere from twenty some samples down to six and some were in that open area and some were along the base of the bank. Now they have the three tests on the base of the bank so it seems like as good a place as any to work out from the outfall of the culvert. Nutting thought they should use some of what the professionals had proposed. Smith thought that the Citizens for a Clean Wausau gave them some possible test sites and he wondered if those were going to be included. Lindman said the citizen group had six or seven sites and had tested three of those locations. The City could test the remainder of them if Committee would like. So far at the base of that hill there isn't any indication that additional testing would be needed there so maybe broadening out the testing locations might be a good idea to cover more area.

Tom Kilian, 133 E Thomas Street, spoke about what he felt was inconsistent handling of site investigation work plans of when they were given to Committee. He also referred to their group's tests and the letter in the packet that said it was typical for urban areas. He noted that that is geographic specific and gave reasons why. He said what their group would like to see is more tests done at the culvert inlet and outlet area again as well as the pathway that would go down into the park and hopefully a few more samples in that area where they did the limited sampling at both the true surface level and also at the base of the A-Horizon.

Neal thought further testing if done would be done in the general area around the central test that the Citizens for a Clean Wausau had done and possibly go towards the river from there. Peckham thought they should go east as the direction of the plume of the contamination from Wauleco arced that way and they want to test where the public goes. There is the old historic number of 87.7 at the culvert outlet and now the new number there is about a quarter of that old number. He felt Committee is charged with making sure the users of the park can feel safe there and can be told it is a safe area to recreate and bring their families. Neal thought they should recommend four tests in that general area following a logical possible arc towards the bike polo/parking lot area and he questioned Kilian's response to that. Kilian thought the number sounded reasonable but had a concern about the direction because all along with the park they had been concerned about storm water flow and runoff. He did not think the testing should go uphill, but rather they should follow the route from the storm water map. Nutting wondered if in rainstorms the contaminants from exposed railroad tracks and ties could make their way down the street and into the park. Neal asked Lindman to consider Nutting's concern when determining test locations. Peckham said if REI thinks that may be a

potential concern they could suggest it as an option. He noted that they are proposing four tests today and they may end up doing more depending what they learn. He hopes the levels are not of significant concern and they don't have to worry about remediation but if there are areas of concern he believed Committee is predisposed to continue working on this until they get a satisfactory solution.

Motion by Neal, second by Gisselman to approve adding four more test sites to the existing ten locations that are required by the DNR. The four sites should go on a downhill trajectory from the Citizens group tests and be brought back to Committee at the next meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

5. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Parkland Dedication for a Proposed Development – Polley discussed with Committee the concept of park dedication for a proposed residential subdivision off of 72nd Avenue. Chapter 21 of the municipal code provides information on park dedication requirements for residential and commercial developments in the City. Land can be dedicated for park purposes or cash in lieu of land or a combination of both. She recommended that Committee take some land in this development because in the adopted 2017-2021 City Outdoor Recreation Plan this new development and an existing development to the south are outside of any park service area. Based on calculations provided in Chapter 21, the amount of park land required would be 3.34 acres or \$33,980.00 in fees. Polley discussed some concerns she had with the map. She said there are mapped wetlands which she didn't want to take for all of the park land because their goal is to put in a playground and park area. The developer can still dedicate wetlands to the City and in this case the developer is recommending to do that. She also recommended that they not take park land around the perimeter of the development or the small wetland areas. If Committee supports requesting land for park dedication, staff would work with the developer to get as much buildable land in the middle of the development as possible for a park. They will look at what the acreage is that is not wetland and if it can total 3.34 acres then they have their parkland dedication and if they can't get that many buildable acres then the remaining amount would be taken in cash per the ordinance. There has been a trail connection added in the plan to get people from the development to the middle area.

Neal questioned having a park to manage versus having some natural area. Polley said the entire 3.34 acres doesn't all have to be manicured but based on the outdoor recreation plan, a goal of the City is to have a park within so many minutes or distance from a neighborhood. The two neighborhoods in this area are not even within walking distance of any park. A goal here would be to have an active park area of, according to park standards, not quite two acres but definitely over an acre and the rest could be prairie or trails. Polley believed that per the outdoor recreation plan they have an obligation for some sort of park area and the rest they can work with but they don't want all wetland and even when thinking about the size of the park to consider the future and potential land development to the east of the subdivision. Polley mentioned that a trail is being proposed to the north of the subdivision that would connect to Stettin Drive. She also noted that there is a heavily used snowmobile trail in the area that will need consideration. Peckham questioned whether they would accept more than 3.34 acres if some of it were wetlands that they intended to keep in its natural state. Polley said her recommendation is to accept as much open space and park as the developer wants to dedicate, whether it's manicured or natural area, but the minimum they want to accept is 3.34 acres.

Smith felt the project had history and some people were not happy because they felt running 68th Avenue through the development would put a lot of traffic on it and there were no sidewalks along there. He also thought it ran into some issues because of the wetlands. He thought Committee should wait until the project is approved first before they discuss park land. Polley said she is just asking Committee to support the recommendation that they do want the parkland dedicated. She wanted to make sure that the park doesn't get missed when it goes to Plan Commission so she wanted a recommendation from Committee first. Other suggestions by Committee members included access into the park area for other neighborhoods without having to use Stewart Avenue such as from the northeast corner of the subdivision; possibly a small strip of land along the north perimeter for a connection into the park; that the park is more central between the two developments; and sidewalks incorporated by the round-a-bout area. Polley said park staff recommends sidewalks go in for safety as the department does not maintain development's internal trails in the winter.

Motion by Nutting, second by Neal to request 3.34 acres of buildable land for potential use as a conventional park and to accept additional property that could be used as a natural area contingent on the proposed subdivision plan being approved by other Committees. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

6. Educational Items

A. Dog Park Special Committee Update – Polley reported that the Dog Park Committee has raised \$73,259.25 to date and an additional \$20,000 has been requested to be allocated from the City CIP budget. Neal said an individual has come forward interested in naming rights which will be discussed at tonight's Dog Park Committee meeting.

B. Project Update – Sylvan Recreation Area: Routine grooming continues on the tubing hills and cross country ski trail system. New wood chips are being hauled into and spread in the “bowl” runout areas of each hill for user safety. Ice Rinks: Rinks are maintained daily as use is ongoing and weather conditions are cooperating. Vista Clearing: Continuation-staff has been working on removing and/or reducing vegetation in designated vistas as time allows. Athletic Park: Prep work (snow removal and utility work) is underway for upcoming outfield light replacement and Phase IV construction. Routine Operations/Programs: Snow removal operations, urban forestry program; tree trimming, removals, stump grinding, building and structure maintenance, shelter reservations and special events, equipment maintenance and repair.

C. Program Update – Winterfest – Winterfest was held on Saturday, January 25th at the 400 Block. The Community enjoyed ice skating, snow man making, ice sculptures, wagon rides, hot chocolate and cookies and much more. The weather was great for the event. County Events: Chinese New Year – UW Extension organized the County’s first ever Chinese New Year celebration. Our department was a partner for the event and assisted with the facility and day of activities. The event was very successful with over 765 people attending and another 50+ vendors and performers. The event was action packed with performances, cooking demonstrations, Mandarin lessons, martial arts demonstrations and much more. Badger State Games & Ironbull Winter Triathlon – Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area hosted the 2020 Badger State Winter Games (BSG) Nordic Skiing on Saturday, January 25th and the Ironbull Winter Triathlon (also a BSG event) on Sunday, January 26th. Prior to each event the area received a great deal of snow so our grooming staff worked around the clock to make sure the trails were groomed and ready for the events. The events went very well and staff has received many nice comments on the quality of the trails. BSG Nordic Skiing offered 12 events for participants to compete in. According to the online results. 382 people participated. The first Winter Triathlon for Ironbull included Nordic skiing, fat tire biking and snowshoeing. There were 25 individual participants and 7 teams.

7. Future Agenda Items – Riverside Park Testing Locations

8. Next Meeting Date – March 2, 2020 at 4:30 pm in Council Chambers at City Hall.

9. Adjourn – **Motion** by Smith, second by Neal to adjourn at 5:45p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.