

DRAFT
CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: March 1, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. Location: Council Chambers, City Hall

Members Present: Tom Kilian-(via webex), Lou Larson-(via webex), Tom Neal-(via webex), Pat Peckham (c), Sarah Watson-(via webex)

Others Present: Jamie Polley-Director, Greg Freix-Assistant Director of Operations, Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Anne Jacobson-City Attorney

1. In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. 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 – February 1, 2021 – **Motion** by Neal, second by Larson to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft February 1, 2021 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

4. Discussion and Possible Action on Earlier Closing Times for Some or All of Wausau City Parks – Polley explained that the current park hours are 6 a.m. – 11 p.m. A citizen had brought up a concern about wintertime sledding until 11 p.m. at 3M Park. Staff’s perspective is that the current park hours have worked well and no other complaints about park hours have been received. The City park hours are consistent with County park hours and there is signage in every park. Larson understood the County parks staying open until 11 p.m. but wondered if it should be the same in neighborhood parks. Kilian thought the park hours were pretty standard in other municipalities throughout the State but thought Committee should keep this item in mind if any future concerns are brought up. Neal thought the City had noise ordinances so the police could be called if necessary and didn’t think it was that much of a problem in wintertime when people’s windows and doors are closed. Watson thought the current park hours were good for a lot of people who have varied work schedules. She questioned if the noise ordinance included time restrictions. Jacobson said there have never been any hour or decibel restrictions in the ordinances; that it just talks about unreasonable loud or unnecessary noise. If there are incidences in parks those could be addressed through a citation for violating the noise ordinance or disorderly conduct. Consensus of Committee was to keep it in mind and if a lot of future complaints from around the community are received to re-consider the item.

5. Discussion and Possible Action Updating the Name of the Bridge Known as Snake Bridge In Chapter 9 of the Municipal Code – During review of Chapter 9 at the February meeting it was noticed that in 9.21 Boating Regulations Section 9.21.050 (c) – Controlled areas it states “Under County Highway N Bridge commonly known as Snake Bridge;”. The bridge is no longer called Snake Bridge and is now called the McCleary Bridge. Discussion followed. **Motion** by Neal, second by Kilian that the ordinance is changed to strikeout the words “commonly known as Snake Bridge” so that the language just says “Under County Highway N Bridge;” Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

6. Discussion and Possible Action to Develop a Policy for the Lighting of the Riverlife Bridge – The lights on the bridge at Riverlife Park can change to different colors. It is believed that the intention of the City was for the City to determine the programming of the lights based on certain holidays or events. An original plan of the light schedule had been developed in 2018 and in working with the bridge lighting it has been recognized to be difficult to change the lighting quickly. In order to change the lighting color the driver must be physically removed from the bridge area and taken to CCIT for programming. Once programmed it then is reinstalled. CCIT does have the ability to preprogram the light colors all at one time.

The department also periodically receives requests from outside groups to change the lighting color for a particular cause and for various periods of time. The requests are becoming more frequent and it is only a matter of time until multiple requests for different colors are received for the same time period. Polley recommended that the City establish the events and dates in which the bridge lighting will be programmed to change and that additional requests will not be accommodated due to the complexity required to change the color and multiple requests each year making it difficult to determine priority. Also that the Badger Football and Green Bay Packer Games be removed from the

list as their schedules are subject to change and their games are played most of the time during the day when the bridge is not lit.

Mayor Rosenberg thought a possible idea would be to tie any changes to proclamations that are made by the City. There could be further restrictions if there are multiple ones during the same timeframe. Members discussed their preferences.

Neal thought they should change the lights a more finite number of times to keep the bridge special. Kilian supported any efforts to make things more efficient and less staff intensive. Polley will bring back a reduced list of significant days that consists of federal holidays and is open minded to City proclamations that occur. Staff could program the bridge once during the year and maintain some flexibility if something came up during the year.

7. Discussion Regarding the Establishment of a Naming Rights/Sponsorship Policy for the City of Wausau Parks and Park Facilities – Naming requests of facilities and parks are becoming more common as new parks are constructed and amenities are added. Sponsorships are also becoming more important as we look to additional revenue sources. At this time the City of Wausau does not have a Naming Rights or Sponsorship Policy of parks and park facilities. The County has a policy for naming, dedication and sponsorship of Marathon County facilities, rooms and open spaces however the policy exempts parks and park facilities. Having a policy for parks and park facilities will establish the purpose, guidelines and criteria that the Committee and Commission can utilize to make an informed, impartial decision on the naming of City and County parks and facilities. Polley noted that a sponsorship policy should have different criteria from a Naming Rights Policy. Naming Rights are usually in perpetuity and there should be an application process with elected official's feedback. Sponsorships are for shorter terms with different criteria and the Department could move forward with those on their own. Polley discussed a policy she had developed in her previous position along with what Marathon County's current policy is. Peckham discussed some minor modifications he would like to see in the policy that Polley had provided. Neal was interested in a more informal approach to naming rights and dealing with them on a case by case basis because he felt a multitude of things may have to be taken into consideration. Kilian and Larson agreed with some of Neal's concerns. Kilian also felt the naming application should not require that a person or family had to be widely recognized to be considered. Watson was interested in having a petition component for accepting a name.

Polley thought naming guidelines were necessary so that it was kept fair for everyone. Committee may never have to use them, but if it does come up then there should be some criteria to follow or else they could be in a situation of trying to explain why they chose one name over the other. Also Polley felt the way the policy reads is that any family that has been influential in the development of the city could apply and not that it has to be a family known to the community. A petition component shows up in the application where it asks the process used to come up with the name. Names could also be discussed at public meetings. With a policy in place, the Committee could consider anything put forward but would have criteria to base their decision on. Even if someone would apply and meet all of the guidelines it doesn't necessarily mean that their name would be approved. Polley will work on a policy for the Committee and also let them know what the Park Commission's comments were.

Polley also mentioned that something to consider for sponsorships is that it is worthwhile. She gave an example of the Marathon County Sports Complex whose sponsor did not renew after their five year agreement expired. There was a lot of signage and community recognition that came with that sponsorship so the length and cost of sponsorships need to be considered to justify the expense of new signage, etc.

8. Educational Items

A. Boy with the Leaking Boot Sculpture Update – The Boy with the Leaking Boot Sculpture that is currently in the food court of the Wausau Center Mall is a sculpture of the City. It is one of 25 such sculptures in the world and was dedicated to the City in the 1920's and placed in Hammond Park. After multiple vandalism incidents the sculpture was removed from the park and replaced with a sculpture called Willy's Dilemma. Willy's Dilemma has also since been removed and is in storage. The Boy with the Leaking Boot Sculpture was placed in the Wausau Center Mall in 1983 through a joint effort of the Wausau Kiwanis Club, Marathon County Historical Society, Wausau Area Chamber of Commerce and Wausau/Marathon County Parks Department. When the mall is taken down the sculpture will be returned to the City. The River District would like to help the City find a place for the sculpture where the sculpture

can continue to be enjoyed and remain safe of vandalism. As sites are identified the Park Committee will be kept informed.

B. Park Update (ADA Study Corrections, Routine Operations) – ADA Study Barrier Corrections – Staff is going through the consulting study recommendations for individual parks to make small corrections for ADA guidelines. Small correction levels include small plumbing fixes, fixture and grab bar relocations in restrooms, tree paths obstructions, adding ADA approved picnic tables, etc.

Routine Operations/Programs: Outdoor ice rink maintenance; snow grooming operations at Nine Mile Forest and Sylvan Hill Recreation Area; Snow removal operations on trails, sidewalks, roadways, parking lots; urban forestry program of tree trimming and removals; building and structure maintenance; shelter reservations and special events; equipment maintenance and repair; restroom maintenance (few).

C. Dog Park Special Committee Update - The Dog Park Special Committee met in February and a quorum was not present. The members present discussed the Open House event scheduled for February 6th. Due to the cold temperatures they chose to postpone it one week to February 13th. The 13th also was cancelled due to frigid cold temperatures. The Committee would still like to hold an Open Day at the Park as a fundraising event the first Saturday in March from 11:00am-3:00pm. There will be a suggested donation of \$5 per adult.

9. Future Agenda Items – Naming Rights Policy, Sponsorship Program, possibly there could be recommendations on contamination and clean up in Riverside Park

10. Next Meeting Date – Monday, April 5, 2021 at 4:30pm

11. Adjournment – **Motion** by Kilian, second by Larson to adjourn at 5:50pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.