

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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

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

Others Present: Karyn Powers-Recreation Superintendent, Katie Rosenberg, Craig McEwen-County Board member and Rothschild/Schofield Aquatic Center representative, Shawn Osterbrink-Weston Aquatic Center representative

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 Director Polley at 4:30 p.m.

2. Public Comment – none brought forward

3. Introductions - Members introduced themselves and gave reasons why they were interested in being members of the City Park and Recreation Committee.

4. Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair – The Director opened nominations for Chair. Larson nominated Kilian and Kilian accepted the nomination. Neal nominated Peckham and Peckham accepted the nomination. Nominations were closed and paper/electronic voting took place. After the votes were tabulated Peckham took over as Chair of the Committee. Nominations for Vice Chair were opened. Motion by Neal, second by Larson to nominate Kilian for Vice-Chair. Nominations were closed and a unanimous ballot was cast to elect Kilian as Vice-Chair.

5. Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Neal, second by Larson to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft March 2, 2020 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

6. Discussion and Possible Action Postponing the Opening of the Wausau Pools – Polley said that staff is looking for direction about the Wausau pools and noted that there were representatives from the Rothschild/Schofield and Weston pools present. They have all been working together and the best way for this to move forward would be as a joint discussion. If some pools stay open and some close that will increase the numbers on the open facility(s) which is a safety concern. Polley discussed the Wisconsin Badger Bounce Back Plan and said the Safer At Home Order expires May 26th. Phase One allows for no more than ten people maximum in any one area. The Wausau pools require ten guards up at a time minimum to open so the City cannot open pools during Phase One because no public would be allowed. Phase Two stipulations are for no more than fifty people in any one area which would mean thirty-five public people in the pool at a time. One idea is to allow thirty five people for a two hour time-slot with a reduced fee. If concession stands are not open, that staff could help with extra cleaning between time-slots. Staff had discussed postponing the opening of the pools until July 1st which would allow for a couple weeks to better follow what the State requirements will be. Waiting to open could cause a potential loss of seasonal staff. Polley also explained that the mechanics of the pool would have to be started in early June for the pools to open by July 1st. Staff also has to know how they are going to meet the cleaning and physical distancing requirements. The lifeguards are trained to watch instances on the water and not to watch whether or not people on deck are too close together which would be a distraction for them. When staff had discussed postponing to a potential July 1st opening date it was with the thought that this Committee would have to make that decision by their June meeting.

Budget wise, some expenses will go down because of not opening in June and concession revenues may go down if those aren't opened but there will still be all of the utility charges, chemical use, and staffing costs for the rest of the summer. There will be a reduction in revenue from opening later, from not offering season pool passes, and from limiting the hourly rate that is charged. Staff has also discussed how they could continue swimming lessons with the physical distancing requirements. Neal commented that people try to set timelines but the virus doesn't have a timeline and even if they get to a downward slide of cases there are still issues about social distancing and safety. He thought they may have to look at not opening pools this summer. Larson thought it was reasonable to wait and look at this in three weeks and evaluate it then. Watson also like the idea of setting a tentative timeline and keeping open the possibility that the pools could open July 1st. She questioned what would have to go into sanitation. Polley didn't know exactly what that would entail other than that the restrooms have to be cleaned regularly. Powers said there are surfaces that are constantly touched like handrails, ladders and the decks. She said about sixty percent of people in aquatic center are out of the water at any one time which is a lot of the social distancing issue. The lifeguards need to be watching the water versus watching the people on the deck. Staff still needs to find out what the Health Department requirements will be for tracking people who come to the pool in the event of a case there. Guidelines will come from the County Health Department through the State which is the governing body that licenses the pools in order to operate so those things will all play into the roles of how daily business is done. Peckham wondered what attendance would look like.

Powers did not have a sense but thought some would attend and not worry while some would attend and expect a very safe environment.

Polley discussed the Badger Bounce Back Plan and said staff's opinion is that if the pools aren't opened by July 1st it would not be feasible to open them and that is even with the idea of a maximum of fifty people occurring for the entire swim season. They will also have to follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and physical distancing and none of that has come out yet. Mayor Rosenberg commented that the Badger Bounce Back Plan looks not just at Marathon County's numbers but at the numbers State wide so new cases elsewhere in the State affect us here. She felt it was a very important summer activity and understands preparation needs to take place but felt Polley has a good plan and is willing to wait three weeks.

Kilian was concerned about the economic fallout and wanted to make sure that their decision doesn't have a disparate impact on children who are already facing tough economic circumstances so that they aren't excluded from any potential things that do occur and then if they could find even more safe activity opportunities in the future for them. Powers discussed how the Department was working through Community Connections to provide five weeks of activity packs for children which will include some information on water safety.

Polley said they need to make a decision based on the reality that more than likely they won't reach the fifty people maximum until maybe July and that would be for all summer but should they take the stance now that they are going to close the pools or do they postpone the opening until July 1st and make a decision at their next meeting or a special meeting based on where the Badger Bounce Back Plan is at. McEwen and Osterbrink discussed their concerns about opening their pools and hoped something could be worked out for all of them because of the importance of being consistent County wide. **Motion** by Larson, second by Neal to postpone the decision until no later than the June 15 meeting for opening the pools on July 1st. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

7. Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Request to Contribute Funds to a Water Feature within JoJo's Jungle Playground – Organizers of JoJo's Jungle successfully raised over \$2 Million dollars to construct a very special inclusive playground for the community. The original goal for fundraising was \$2.4 Million dollars. A decision was made last year to reduce the scope of the project slightly to get the project budget plus a contingency within the funds raised. One of the items taken out of the project was a spray area and water labyrinth totaling approximately \$162,817.00. Now that the project is almost complete funds set aside as part of the contingency were not needed and account for all but \$25,000 of the funding needed to add the water features back in to the project. Mr. Patrick Hoerter who has led the fundraising and planning of the playground is asking the City to consider contributing \$25,000 to the project to add the spray feature to the playground. The playground will be a City playground and the water features are an added amenity for the community to enjoy. As part of the project the City Council budgeted \$100,000 from TID 7 funding to add ADA accessibility to the parking lot at Brockmeyer Park. The cost to update the parking lot has come in significantly lower than expected and approximately \$70,000 will not be utilized. A recommendation was asked to be made to the Finance Committee, to utilize the unused funds allocated to Brockmeyer Park parking lot as a contribution to the completion of JoJo's Jungle Inclusive Playground. **Motion** by Neal, second by Larson to approve the reallocation of the unused budgeted parking lot TID 7 funds to contribute the \$25,000 to the completion of the JoJo's Jungle Inclusive Playground and to look into the possibility of a city bus stop being added to the park. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

8. Educational Items

A. Dog Park Special Committee Update – The Dog Park Special Committee has not met recently. The Committee will be working on signage and will plan additional fundraising events for the future. Work on the dog park has not yet begun due to a wet site. Grading and over seeding will take place first followed by work on the parking lot, water line installation and fencing installation.

B. Project Update

JoJo's Jungle Playground is nearing completion. The playground companies are completing the equipment installation. Poured in place surfacing is scheduled for mid-May. The playground will remain closed until all playgrounds can be reopened.

Neighborhood Park Playground Installation – Oak Island playground will be installed as the site dries out and staff will complete the installation of Pleasant View Playground throughout this summer. Playgrounds will remain closed until all playgrounds can be reopened. Gilbert Boat Launch – asphalt work will be completed and rip rap will be installed along the shoreline. Oak Island Park and Scholfield Park boat launches are open. Memorial Park boat launch will be open following the paving of the road. Park and Trail Maintenance – Water systems in all parks are being assembled for summer use, staff is working on park cleanup including soil and turf work. Fencing along the River Edge Trail is being worked on and the plants

for the downtown planters are growing well in the department greenhouse. Tree planting for the spring will begin soon and routine trimming, removals and stump grinding continues.

9. Future Agenda Items – Opening pools, beaver control, fencing options to separate Riverside Park from the western industrial properties, Riverside Park testing results

10. Next Meeting Date – June 1, 2020 at 4:30 pm in Council Chambers at City Hall.

11. Adjourn – **Motion** by Watson, second by Kilian to adjourn at 6:00p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.