

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: July 5, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. Location: Council Chambers, City Hall

Members Present: Dawn Herbst (c), Carol Lukens, Tom Kilian, Sarah Watson

Members Excused: Lou Larson

Others Present: Jamie Polley-Parks Director, Becky Binz-MSA Project Manager–(via-webex)

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 Chair Herbst at 4:00pm.
 2. Public Comment – Gary Gisselman, 319 Park Avenue, gave a copy of the tree planting preservation and specification manual that was passed by Committee in fall of 2019 to Herbst. Herbst will put this item on the agenda for next month.
 3. Approval of Minutes – June 20, 2022 – **Motion** by Watson, second by Lukens to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft June 20, 2022 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.
 4. Discussion and Possible Action on City Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Update – MSA Professional Services has been contracted to assist the City in updating the next five-year Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Becky Binz, MSA Planner said the plan is used to guide the City’s annual budgeting process and Capital Improvement Plans. She explained that it’s a requirement by the DNR to have a current plan to be eligible to apply for grants. MSA will be working off the previous plan looking at parks, trails, and recreational programming. They will also use the Marathon County Outdoor Recreation Plans, individual masterplans, and the State Outdoor Recreation Plan. They have done some mapping and profile of prospective park users looking at the demographics of who is living within ten minutes of parks. Their quantitative analysis will look at the total amount of parkland and park amenities that Wausau has and compare it to cities of similar size. They will then get public input through a survey and following that will combine the information into some preliminary recommendations. They will update the goals and objectives from the last plan, go through the analysis of park needs and demands, analyze some numbers from the survey which will all build up to their recommendations. They will make recommendations for new parks and new trails. They will then look at funding and how that relates to the recommendations. The recommendations will be pulled together with cost estimates and prioritized. They will go through the typical funding options like fees and parkland dedication. MSA will meet with Jamie and then come back to Committee in November to go through the entire plan. If everything is good they will get Committee’s recommendation and take it to Council for adoption.
- Kilian wondered if they could incorporate more demographic data like the percentage of the population under age five and the percentage of low-income residents in the census block group area that a park resides in. Also, if they could get some sense of what the linguistic isolation data is in a certain census block group area so that if it is high they might need multilingual materials for example. Binz will check into those requests. She explained that the public survey would be available on-line July 14th through August 11th. Survey outreach will include press releases, the school district, City website, e-blasts to organizations, physical flyers and others. Polley said members could still provide comments to her about the survey until July 11th. Binz discussed two maps showing park service areas using the parks within a 10-minute walk standard. She discussed the quantitative analysis looking at total parkland acreage and using the previous plan where they used a standard of 10.5 acres per thousand residents. She discussed some key findings on various percentages of perspective park users. Binz asked that Committee members tour the parks and look at the needs and wants at each City park. She asked members to consider the strengths of the park system and what the next big park project they would like to see. Polley said members could provide park information to her until August 1st. She will bring back updates to Committee.
5. Discussion and Possible Action on Invasive Species – Jared Mader-Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Water Resources Technician said his job involves restoring vegetation in riparian areas, promoting better management practices in upland areas, providing technical assistance to riparian owners and repairing damaged wetlands. Barker-Stewart Island was identified as a good place to do a restoration project because it is overrun with invasive and undesirable species. A long-term goal is to remove and replace them with more native species that will provide better habitat and shoreline health. It was also chosen because the Wausau Bird Club has done some native tree plantings on it. The project will take place in the northern and southeastern area of the island. Chris Hamerla from the Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council commented that Barker Stewart Island is a perfect area because of the accessibility to walk there for people working in the City and because it’s along the river’s edge. If it is improved, the quality habitat will have high

diversity of species not only during the summer but will also provide habitat and food in the winter. He discussed the definition of invasive species and information about the laws regarding invasive species. He gave information on restricted and prohibited species and their required management. Common invasive species include Japanese Knotweed, Bohemian Knotweed, Giant Knotweed, Common Buckthorn, Glossy Buckthorn, Phragmites, Purple Loosestrife, and Garden Yellow Loosestrife. He noted Wild Parsnip and Giant Hogweed can cause severe rashes and blisters when it comes in contact with skin in the presence of sunlight. He discussed how they treat some of these invasives by removal or through bio-control programs. He asked that if the public come across invasive species they take photos, note the location, and contact the local DNR. He said if using equipment, it's important to clean it and to not move things around. Moving forward in the parks it's important to know what is out there. Questions were answered.

6. Educational Items

A. Wausau Whitewater Park Dedication - After 9 years from inception to finish the Wausau Canoe and Kayak Corporation believe that Wausau now has the finest whitewater park and competition course in the World. They want to encourage our young people to stay or return to our community and this is one feature of WaUSAu to help make that happen. Park staff has also been doing a great job with the fine touches on landscaping and is providing the club with information to help them replant the dyke with native, no maintenance, plants and flowers. They are also working with the Wausau Chamber on the West Bank improvements. They will be handing out some State awards to some of the major local companies who made this happen. Committee members are encouraged to attend the dedication at 9:00am on Sunday, August 21, 2022.

6B. Park Updates – (tabled) From the summary in the agenda packet - City Pools: Memorial Park Pool was closed for a few days this past week for repairs to the slide matting that came loose from the bottom of the pool. Dog Park: Park is substantially open with just a few areas fenced to allow for turf to be established. The entrance and one interior gate were vandalized last week and staff is working to get them repaired. The shelter is planned to be installed by the end of July. Forestry: Major storm clean up from the storm on June 15th has continued. Both boulevard and park trees were impacted. We do not have a total count of damaged trees however it is anticipated to be over 100. Planting is underway with anticipated completion of spring planting by early July. Eau Claire River Conservancy: Three boardwalks have been constructed for areas where people have made crossings. They will now be installed. The Wausau Bird Club graciously donated \$700 to the project. 400 Block Q-Server: The server for the fountain has been repaired and the fountain is up and running. General Maintenance: ADA compliance work has been ongoing per the recent audit. Routine Operations/Programs: Building and structure maintenance, shelter reservations and special events, equipment maintenance and repair.

6C. Riverside Park Remediation Update – There is no update at this time.

7. Future Agenda Items – tree planting preservation and specifications

8. Next Meeting Date – August 1, 2022 at 4:30 pm in Council Chambers at City Hall, 407 Grant Street, Wausau, WI 54403.

10. Adjournment – **Motion** by Watson, second by Kilian to adjourn at 5:16 pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.