

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: August 3, 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: Jamie Polley-Director, Andrew Sims-City Forester, Mayor Rosenberg, Gerald and Mary Kay Frickenstein, 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 – July 6, 2020 – **Motion** by Neal, second by Watson to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft July 6, 2020 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

4. Discussion and Possible Action Setting the September Meeting Date and Time Due to Labor Day – **Motion** by Neal, second by Kilian to reschedule the Monday, September 7th (Labor Day) meeting date to Tuesday, September 8th at 4:00pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

5. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding a Tree Removal Appeal for 1720 N. 1st Avenue – Gerald Frickenstein, 1720 N. 1st Avenue discussed his concerns about the tree including that the root base blocks the way the original drainage was designed, the roots are coming over into their grass and flower garden, the messiness of the tree, and the situation he felt was dangerous when backing out of the driveway because of the tree size and location. He discussed how the tree blocks his line of sight and mentioned there were also some mailboxes adjoining the tree as well. He wanted it noted that their street carries over 600 cars a day and many of them go well over the speed limit so he would like the speed limit enforced on their street. He discussed the neighbors two trees of the same type one of which had been taken down and the second one that was going to be taken down because it was rotten. He requested removal of the tree by this driveway and did not want it replaced.

Sims said the previous forester had previously assessed the tree as being in good condition and had the tree lifted. Sims mentioned that the rough annual benefit of a tree this size is \$131.00 and that the neighbors tree was removed for health reasons. His opinion is that this tree is in good health and condition and it would be up to Committee if the safety hazard coming out of the driveway overrides that decision. Larson suggested that if the tree is healthy that they move the mailboxes instead of removing the tree. Peckham didn't feel the tree was overly large and also didn't have any problem feeling confident when he backed out of their driveway so he would like the tree to be kept. Kilian felt that while he was not a fan of taking down healthy trees, thought this had been a safety concern of the Frickenstein's for quite a while and supports their request. Watson questioned if another tree would be planted if this one is removed. Sims said they would not replace it if Mr. Frickenstein did not want one. Neal was not a fan of removing mature healthy trees and felt it was their job to preserve the tree canopy throughout the City. He felt trees of this size and in this basic position off the curb and driveway were replicated thousands of times throughout the City. There also is parking on both sides of the street so someone could get further out of the driveway before they had to make a decision to back into the street. He thought moving the mailboxes would lessen the concerns and suggested that the Public Works Department help with that. **Motion** by Kilian to grant the homeowner's request to remove the tree. Motion **died** for lack of a second.

6. Discussion and Possible Action Requesting Funds for an Environmental Consultant to Prepare Recommendations to Test the Waters of the Wisconsin River – Peckham explained that the City's Environmental Engineer, Kevin Fabel, had informed them that they would not be allowed to disturb the river bottom and should test the water if they wanted to consider testing. Kilian appreciated Fabel's input but believed the DNR might assist them in taking some samples of the sediment if they were to coordinate a plan with them. He discussed some area historical information related to past surface water samples and said testing surface water samples was of little benefit. He saw more value in testing the sediment because that accumulates over time. He mentioned the Supreme Court decision about groundwater entering waterways through the subsurface and has contacted the DNR and the City Attorney's office about researching that decision. He asked for more time to look into this to see if the City has any recourse regarding the Clean Waters Act before they do anything. **Motion** by Kilian, second by Watson to table this item. Neal thought Committee needed to be more concerned about the park and that the river was beyond their purview. There were no approved beaches there and he did not support testing because if it came out relatively clean that may cause citizens to think it was safe to jump into the river which is not a good idea. He also did not support testing because they cannot deal with anything that would be in the sediment anyway. Larson said if they can't test the sediment why even bother testing the water because of its current. There was nothing provided to them that says if it's legal or not to test the sediment.

He would support tabling the item until they figure out the Supreme Court decision and its results. Peckham said he was a lot more concerned about the water that people come in contact with than whatever may be along the bottom. He thought if the testing found nearly undetectable levels of anything that it might alleviate other concerns raised at the meeting about what else they need to do. In order to address public concerns he felt they should hire a consultant to find out what the testing regimen would be and go forward. Kilian did not believe that testing some surface samples of the river was going to demonstrate that it was safe and could not support it. Kilian **withdrew** his motion to table the item and said he would vote against a motion tonight. Peckham said they were close to voting and thought a vote no on this is to say they do not want to know what's in that water and a vote yes is that yes they do want to know what's in the water. **Motion** by Kilian, second by Neal to request funds for an environmental consultant to prepare recommendations to test the waters of the Wisconsin River. Watson commented that she thought it was slightly unfair to say that a vote no means they don't care about what's in the water and a vote yes means they do. She thought it was just whether or not it's a good process and a good use of money to test it. Neal reiterated that he thought if testing would come out relatively clean that would encourage people to use the river for purposes it really shouldn't. He said the Milwaukee River was considered recreational and used by boaters but not by swimmers which he felt was the case with a lot of urban rivers that have a long history of industrialized use along the water. Motion **failed** by voice vote, vote reflected as 1-4 with Peckham voting yes, and Neal, Kilian, Larson, and Watson voting no.

7. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Plowing 3M Parking Lot During the Winter

Larson explained that he had been approached about parking issues along 5th Avenue during sledding season and questioned if the 3M Park parking lot could be plowed in the winter for this activity. Polley explained that currently the 3M Park north parking lot is not plowed due to minimal use. Community members that utilize the sledding area in 3M park currently park along S 5th Avenue which is a dead-end street or on Park Boulevard. Monitoring of the snowbanks along S. 5th Avenue and Park Boulevard is on the Parks Department routine snow removal list. The department removes the snow banks for more space for the cars and to reduce the need for people to climb the snow banks. The parking lot is approximately 350'- 400' from the top of the sledding area and there are no sidewalks or trails connecting the parking lot north. Users that would park in the parking lot would then need to walk on the street north or walk through deep snow. To date the department has no recorded calls regarding issues with parking or requests for the parking lot. In monitoring the street snow banks the usage of this area does not warrant additional plowing. If the plowing of the parking lot would be required it would require additional staff time and a one-ton truck. This area would be considered a low priority area at this time and would be completed after all other higher priority areas have been cleared. Neal said this hadn't been budgeted for but wondered if it was something that could be taken up by Public Works and the CISM Committee to look at in terms of alleviating street parking during the winter time. Polley mentioned that staff is open to taking a conscious look at it this year to see what the usage is and the need is depending on the amount of snow received. **Motion** by Neal, second by Watson to refer this item to the CISM Committee with a request that they plow the lot and free up some street parking in the winter. Peckham liked staff's idea of taking it under advisement and bringing it back next year. Larson said he would not support the motion because CISM could say it's not their responsibility as it's a park parking lot. Kilian wanted to support making whatever efforts are necessary to see that this occurs this year perhaps on a one year trial and see if it improves the situation. Motion **failed** by voice vote, vote reflected as 1-4 with Neal voting yes and Kilian, Peckham, Larson and Watson voting no.

Watson questioned the cost and if there were some funds available to help with it. Polley said currently nothing is budgeted for it so it would be an additional cost. Based on the snow removal routes now if it is added to the schedule it would be at the very bottom of the priorities because the usage hasn't shown that it's necessary. The parking lot is not close to the sledding hill so even if they plow the parking lot she felt people are going to park on the street unless they are told they can't and it's enforced because the street is closer to the sledding hill. **Motion** by Larson, second by Kilian for the Department to clear the lot on a trial basis for one year as time allows and re-evaluate it next year. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-2 with Kilian, Larson, and Watson voting yes and Neal and Peckham voting no.

8. Educational Items

A. Dog Park Special Committee Update – The Dog Park Special Committee met in July. The committee reviewed fundraising amounts and discussed signage. They will be working on the basic signage for the park. The park area has been reseeded in the bare spots and staff will continue to monitor these areas. The parking lot has been graded and the waterline for the drinking fountain will be installed sometime during the week of July 27. Following the installation of the waterline the Parks staff will install the concrete entrance pad and coordinate the fence installation. Public Works is coordinating the paving and additional concrete work.

B. Project Update – Pleasant View Park: Installation of the new playground is nearing completion (delayed: waiting on incorrect part replacement from vendor) Athletic Park/City Ball Diamonds: Baseball and softball diamonds are being groomed

and prepped daily. Oak Island Park: Contractor has just completed the playground installation and PIP colored safety surfacing. Site remediation (soil work and seeding) is complete. Pathways are next on the work plan. Forest Park: Electrical service and meter base is being installed for power and lighting. Playground equipment has been delivered. Yawkey Park: Installation of new water line and meter will be completed this week. Fountain and pergola are also scheduled for professional cleaning. Routine Operations/Programs: Mowing operations-all three mowing crews are in routine mode. Urban forestry program-EAB treatment in progress, tree trimming, removals, and stump grinding. Shelter reservations and special events; Equipment maintenance and repair; Restroom maintenance-increased maintenance (daily) and staffing due to Covid-19 recommendations.

C. Riverside Park Testing Update and Next Steps – Kilian explained that regarding the exceedance(s) found over by the culvert area in the park they are doing another round on Wednesday to delineate the extent of that area both vertically they are going to test down depth wise too to see how far that goes and laterally to see how wide that area is by the culvert. Once they know that he thinks they will discuss remedial options for the area they define.

D. JoJo's Jungle Grand Opening – Polley explained that after a five year process, Patrick Hoerter and his family got to see JoJo's Jungle open last week. The playground is available for the public to use and has been very busy. The water features are off for this year because it's hard to maintain social distancing in water features. It's a great asset to have in the community.

9. Future Agenda Items – Riverside Park Soil Remediation

10. Next Meeting Date – September 8, 2020 at 4:00pm

11. Adjourn - **Motion** by Neal, second by Kilian to adjourn at 5:35 pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.