

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: September 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Location: Council Chambers, City Hall
Parks and Recreation Committee Members Present: Dawn Herbst (c), Lou Larson, Tom Kilian, Carol Lukens, Sarah Watson
Others Present: Jamie Polley-Parks Director, Andy Sims-Parks Operations Superintendent, Thomas Johansen, Aaron Kowalski-Kowalski Masonry

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 at 6:11pm.
2. Public Comment or Suggestions – none brought forward.
3. Approve Minutes – August 7, 2023 – **Motion** by Larson, second by Lukens to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft August 7, 2023 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.
4. Discussion and Possible Action of Petition Submitted for Repair of Stewart Park – Staff had been asked to provide more specifics from the petitioners and then the estimates. Tom Johansen, 917 McClellan Street, spoke about his concerns regarding the cracks in the amphitheater wall. He felt petitioners wanted the wall to look nice, like the way it was, and not get too deteriorated. He discussed the \$4,600 quote from Kowalski Masonry and thought it was a good idea. Johansen felt that the wall should be evaluated every year. He mentioned the possibility of grant funds available through the Community Foundation. Polley said that staff does some work on the wall and relies on Kowalski Masonry for larger work. If larger projects don't get funded, anything under \$30,000 can go on a small project list through the Department's budget. Staff reached out to Kowalski Masonry who provided two quotes. Aaron Kowalski said the \$4,600 quote would do some masonry repairs to the wall and seal it up to prevent any more water from going into the caps. The wall would go through a freeze/thaw cycle and then should be re-evaluated in the spring. The cracks will be monitored to see which way they are moving. He didn't think there was any foundation issue but they did find that water drains towards the wall on the east side. The wall has tubes through the bottom where water is supposed to drain but there is some vegetation between the concrete and the wall. The vegetation could be cleaned out, but as a secondary safety net the Department could run drain tile which would prevent water from hitting the wall. Johansen thought if drain tile was sufficient, people would appreciate the hasta plants being left there. Kowalski noted the higher quote was for a complete wall rebuild. Polley said at this time the recommendation from Kowalski is to the \$4,600 worth of work and then evaluate the wall in spring. Most likely a cap will be recommended. That request will need to come from Committee but shouldn't be made until the wall is evaluated in the spring for the actual recommendation. Polley said there are enough funds in the Department's small projects budget to complete the work for \$4,600. **Motion** by Watson, second by Lukens to approve funding \$4,600 out of the Park Department's small projects budget. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.
5. Discussion and Possible Action Supporting Ice Arena Feasibility Study – Polley explained that one component of the Westside Masterplan is the County ice arena. The original sheet of ice in the arena was built in 1974 and at that time the refrigeration equipment and hockey boards were bought used from Eagle River. Nothing new was added when the second sheet was put in other than the refrigeration extension. The original compressors are still running both sheets and the Department limps along every year to make the ice and keep the arena going. The ice arena is a very important venue to the community, the area schools, Marathon County Youth Hockey, and the Cyclones. It brings in teams, spectators and visitors to the area. It's a larger community asset then just a County building and also benefits the City.

The first step of a new arena is to do a feasibility study. The study will look at the needs of the community, talk to all current users, look at potential future uses and economic impact. It will also look at whether the County or a different user group should be doing the ice arena. The cost of the feasibility study is \$32,500. The completed study will have a recommendation, a possible rendering of the facility, and a cost estimate. It will then be decided whether or not the County will build it. The County Board has been very clear if this facility moves forward it would have to be a public/private partnership because it doesn't have the means to fund 100% of a facility like this. For the feasibility study Polley has a \$5,000 commitment from youth hockey and \$5,000 commitment from the Wausau School District.

It's being brought to this Committee because there are City and County gift accounts which is money that comes to the Department that is not levy funded. Some of it is earmarked for specific projects that donors have given for. There is also trust fund money given that is marked for enhancements of parks facilities within the County and City. Polley usually doesn't need authority to spend money in this account. Polley received support for this from the County Park Commission, Environmental Resource Committee, and the Human Resources/Finance Committee to use around \$10,500 from the County gift account. It was not going to go to County Board until after the school district and this meeting. She is asking for this Committee's support to use \$6,000 or possibly more from the City gift account. Polley wanted to know whether Committee supported using the funds, she doesn't need authority to use them but if they didn't support it she would try to find the funding elsewhere. Lukens said she would support this from an economic development standpoint and it may also help give local youth something to do. Kilian supported Polley's efforts and thought it could be an asset to the City but felt the County wasn't always willing to step up when it could to assist the City with certain needs so he had a hard time with putting City money towards this County effort. **Motion** by Larson, second by Lukens to support the ice arena feasibility study utilizing the City gift account. Motion **carried** by voice vote, 4-1 with Kilian as the dissenting vote.

6. Educational Items

A. Park Updates – Barker Stewart Island – goats are back for their second round and already have made a big impact on the invasive species on the island. They have been enjoying the buckthorn. Vandalism – there continues to be a high frequency of illegal dumping within the parks. A few dumpsters that are utilized seasonally have been removed. Also, the restrooms by the farmers market are temporarily closed due to damage and people trying to stay in the restrooms. Skate Park – contract is complete, and Spohn Ranch will be finalizing the construction plans and bid documents. The goal is to determine the ability for contractors to complete the work yet this year or to see if it will be a Spring 2024 project. Great Pinery Heritage Waterway Trail – the Wausau & Marathon County Parks and Recreation Foundation has developed a water trail on the WI River. Each kayak launch/boat landing will contain a sign with historical information of the area and a map of the trail and current segment of the trail. The first of these signs has been installed at Riverlife Park. Ball Diamonds – Irrigation installation is in progress at Schulenberg and Memorial Parks (private funding) Pleasant View – New shelter roof is substantially complete. Sylvan – Exterior of shelter has been repainted and new carpet was installed on the tube hook-up area. Whitewater Shelter – New roof has been installed. Vistas Clearing – will be starting soon throughout the city.

7. Future Agenda Items – Riverside Park Remediation Summary

8. Next Meeting Date – The next regular scheduled meeting will be at 4:30pm on October 2nd in Council Chambers at City Hall, 407 Grant St., Wausau WI 54403.

8. Adjournment – **Motion** by Watson, second by Lukens to adjourn at 7:10pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.