

DRAFT
CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: September 13, 2021 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, Mai Choua Vue-Administrative Manager, Mark Dorow-Recreation Superintendent, 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. A quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by Chairman Peckham at 4:30pm.

2. Public Comment – none brought forward

3. Approval of Minutes – August 2, 2021 – **Motion** by Neal, second by Watson to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft August 2, 2021 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

4. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department 2022 Budget – Polley explained that the budget originally submitted was at a 7.63% increase but is now down to a 5.7% increase. The budget include a 3% full time wage increase, 6% increase to health and dental insurance premium rates which is still yet to be finalized. The addition of a .6 FTE Recreation Coordinator and a .9 FTE Urban Forestry Specialist has been included in the budget per the Park Committee’s recommendation at the July meeting. There are also some wage and salary savings to offset the cost of the new positions from back filling three FTE vacancies around mid-range while the incumbents were at the higher end of their positions pay range. Some increases in the budget are for the elevator maintenance contract at Athletic Park, the annual fee for the new recreation software, water, motor vehicle maintenance, supplies, and an additional porta-potty at Woodson Park. Overall budgeted revenues increased by \$22,501.00. \$38,000 for the 2021 landscaping and mowing maintenance contract for Riverlife has also been submitted to be budgeted into the Room Tax Fund.

Polley requested feedback from Committee on the desire to try to keep one pool open for an extra two weeks if staffing allows. That will increase expenditures by \$12,500 and increase revenues by about \$3,700. Peckham and Larson spoke in favor of keeping one pool open longer. Members discussed whether to keep one central pool open or to rotate pools each year. Polley will keep Committee’s comments in mind but thought it could depend on pool maintenance requirements at the end of the season. **Motion** by Larson, second by Neal to extend the pool season for one pool by two weeks and have staff designate which pool. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

Polley requested feedback on the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan. When the borer was found in the City last year, Committee reviewed the plan with the Forester and had a goal of removing all the ash trees in a 12-15 year time frame. The cost each year to remove approximately 400 trees, treat one-third of the trees, and plant approximately 350 trees is \$251,000. Polley thought that was a substantial increase to the budget and worked with the forester to budget \$170,000 instead and increase the time frame of the plan. They would reduce the number of trees they remove this next year by 100 and reduce the number of trees they plant by 50 and would treat the same number of trees that they had planned to. If Committee wanted to stay with the initial 12-15 year time frame the additional \$71,000 could be added to the budget. Neal was in favor of having as long a time frame as possible for aesthetic purposes. Polley noted though that typically the bugs are in the trees for four years before a major decline is noticed. By pushing the plan out longer they run the risk of a faster decline and a dead canopy that would then have to be addressed and could not be pushed off. Questions were answered. **Motion** by Larson, second by Kilian to approve \$170,000 in the 2022 budget for the Emerald Ash Borer Plan. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

Motion by Neal, second by Kilian to support the budget as it’s been submitted. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

5. Discussion and Possible Action to Schedule a Parks Tour – Discussion took place about possibly having a tour of City parks in May after the election. It could be for a couple hours and a van could be taken.

6. Educational Items

A. Park Update - Playgrounds: Paving for the trail is scheduled next week at Forest Park. Paving was completed last week and turf renovation is in progress at Pleasant View Park. Paving is complete and turf renovations are in progress at

3M Park. Memorial Benches: Several bench pads and bench frames to install in the upcoming weeks. Sylvan Recreation Area Snow Making Mechanical Building: Plumbing of the water supply lines and booster pump installation will allow operation of multiple snow guns at the same time. Athletic Park: Post season maintenance work is almost complete; aeration and topdressing is scheduled this fall. ADA Study Barrier Corrections: Staff continues on corrections for ADA guidelines. Small correction levels include small plumbing fixes, fixture and grab bar relocations in restrooms, tree path obstructions, adding ADA approved picnic tables, etc. WIDOT Site: Staff and a few Committee Members walked the WIDOT site under the overpasses after the August Park Committee meeting. WIDOT has indicated concerns of use of this site in the winter due to ice and snow that could come off of the overpass. This site is also used by the County Highway Department for snow storage and is a much needed site for this purpose. If we continue to look into this site it may only be available for use in the spring (depending on snow melt), summer and fall. Thomas Street Trail Grand Opening: City Planning has set Monday, October 4, 2021 at 3:30pm as the Grand Opening for the new trail section. City Planning will also be working on developing a trail sign for the current sign opening. Questions were answered. Briq's is closed for the Season: Due to staffing issues of seasonal staff returning to school Briq's has closed the Riverlife location for the remainder of this season. Routine Operations / Programs: Mowing Operations; seasonal staff is almost gone so some routes will be combined for coverage. Urban forestry program; Ash tree injections (EAB), stump grinding, tree trimming, removals. Building and structure maintenance, shelter reservations and special events, equipment maintenance and repair, restroom maintenance, swimming pools, winterization procedures in progress.

B. Riverside Park Testing Update – No documents have been received as of yet. REI is hoping to have the draft report to city staff for review by September 10, 2021. Kilian asked that when staff receives the report that Committee members receive it as well so they have some time to view it before the next parks meeting, Polley will let Lindman know of the request.

C. 2021 Swimming Pool Season Review – Dorow reported about 70% of pool staff did not return from 2019. At the beginning of the season two pools were closed two days a week. Additional lifeguard and certification classes were held so more staff was able to be hired and the pool schedule increased so that each pool was closed one day a week. Swimming lessons continued the entire week at all pools and all pools were open on the weekends. Additions this season included opening pools 30 minutes earlier than previous years, lap swimming in the mornings at Schulenburg Pool, evening swim lessons and adult swim lessons. Memorial Pool closed August 7th, Schulenburg Pool closed August 8th, and Kaiser Pool closed on August 15th. Dorow gave details on different events which included Splash into Safety Day, Dog Gone Pool Party, and Library Swim Day. There were six private rentals. Swimming lessons this year increased from 336 in the past to 506 total students. A total of 622 pool passes were sold which was very similar to 2019. Dorow predicts future difficulty staffing the pools in upcoming years and would like to offset that by finding access to an indoor facility throughout the winter to continue to train lifeguards and keep them on staff. Closing the pools one day a week provided the ability for staff to do maintenance on the pools and there was not much negative feedback. If that is done again, he would find ways to offer private parties or other programs during that time. Some other programs he would like to add if possible include a recreational swim team at Schulenburg, a junior lifeguarding program, swim aid classes, Aqua Zumba, deep water aerobics, and youth diving.

D. EAB Update - There are currently 117 ash trees and stumps on a contractor list for removal this fall. Additionally, park crews have removed several ash due to storms, requests, or mortality. The treatment of ash trees has been completed for this year. At this time, all ash that we wanted to treat (over 10" dbh) have had one application, approximately 1000. Second treatments will begin in the northeast portion of Wausau in 2022 in conjunction with removals in the same area to maintain our target of removal of all ash within the next 12-15 years.

7. Future Agenda Items – 2022-2023 fee schedule, update on Emerald Ash Borer status City and Statewide, update on kayak launches, future River District plans for Kickbusch Plaza stage and canopy, 400 Block stage repair

8. Next Meeting Date – Monday, October 4th at 3:30pm for River Edge Trail Ribbon cutting followed by regular meeting at 4:30pm at Riverside Park Shelter

9. Adjournment – **Motion** by Neal, second by Kilian to adjourn at 5:25pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.