

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: December 7, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. Location: Council Chambers, City Hall

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

Others Present: Jamie Polley-Director, Marcus Aumann-Asst Director-(via webex), Mayor Katie Rosenberg, Eric Lindman-Public Works Director, Matt Michalski-REI, Ken Lassa-REI, 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 4:30 p.m.

2. Public Comment – none brought forward

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

4. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Riverside Park Soil Remediation – Ken Lassa and Matt Michalski from REI explained that the data summarized in the tables was from their soil collections and the samples from three other soil consultants over previous years. There are individual compounds that have standards and also something called a TEQ which is cumulative displayed on the table. Michalski discussed TEQ standards and Lassa explained that the DNR wanted to see the data presented in the TEQ fashion. The map is highly interpretative as there are large areas identified with very few samples. There is a fingerprint of compounds that are detected which are all relatively similar in detections of individual compounds except for one particular sample that was indicated. Lassa noted that the DNR has not had a chance to review or respond to this information yet. He observed that the detections reflect an area of higher concentrations in the area of the culvert and it would seem to reflect that the cumulation of concentration in this area is driven more by runoff and not by aerial deposition although they have seen detections in shallow soils in a widespread area but those could be from a variety of sources including other burning, residential use of coal burning, things like that done historically in the past.

Peckham questioned if the toxics were breaking down and becoming less of an issue. Lassa said they haven't done any sort of statistical analysis to determine if there was a breakdown, they have only pulled all the data together into one set for display. Lassa and Michalski discussed the heat map that had been provided to Committee. Lassa discussed how cases are handled traditionally and that steps are taken before any kind of remediation plans are discussed.

Kilian discussed the p11 sample and said it had the highest TEQ level out of the entire set and exceeded State standards in a residential setting by almost four times. He wondered if some samples might be warranted in nearby residents yards. Lassa felt the DNR would make decisions on any further definitions. Neal questioned the slope of the land in an area near the railroad line as he was trying to think in terms of source for the contaminant. Michalski discussed the individual compound fingerprint taken in 2008 that didn't match anything else they had seen. Not knowing exactly where that sample was taken, if it was taken close to a fire pit or anything like that, it may have caused a source in that back yard. Neal also didn't think they had comparable data by the culvert that from the adjacent non-City property. He felt DNR will be looking at responsible party and the source of the contamination before they discuss remediation.

Kilian thought the responsible party letter that was first issued to the City was based on a railroad corridor attribution. Some of the samples that were almost immediately next to the railroad tracks came up significantly lower than samples that were quite a distance from the railroad tracks such as P11 for instance. Michalski said the responsible party letter started due to some samples taken on the railroad corridor to the east of the park and then there were samples also taken further that has led them to this new area.

Kilian thought the heat maps were interesting and beneficial. He discussed the NR720 standards versus less protective standards and questioned if they were considering using a non-standard level for dioxins and furans in this particular area. Lassa commented that at this point they are just reporting the data and whatever DNR and their conversation is will be conveyed to the City but they haven't gotten to that point yet. Kilian expected the same level of rigor in remediation as had been done in the area of the new trail to the south and east of Riverside Park.

Lindman explained that the data will be submitted to the DNR who will ultimately provide direction on where this will go. He thought there would probably be additional sampling recommended by the DNR to try to delineate some of these areas. He didn't expect a formal response from the DNR for 60 to 90 days and will suggest they review minutes and view the

video of this meeting to hear the exact conservations. He felt it would be appropriate for Matt Thompson from the DNR to speak to the Committee members. Lindman also mentioned that the data was sent to TRC who is the environmental consultant for SNE and Wauleco.

Neal wanted to make sure that the DNR had the topographical imagery for consideration of potential for run-off. Kilian raised concerns about the area immediately west of the culvert being a tough spot to test because it had been disturbed years ago to create a retention pond. Kilian also thought if the regulators were going to use TEQ in terms of defining the extent of remediation then PCB should be included so that they have a full TEQ calculation. **Motion** by Kilian, second by Neal to approve the relay of this to the DNR with the addition notation of the concerns that have been brought up today. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

Lindman, Lassa, Michalski left the meeting at 5:15pm.

5. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding 2021 Work Plan – Polley discussed some of the work that will be done in 2021. Work includes an update the City Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, complete a west side master plan, a sustainability plan, and a Rib Falls Park master plan. Playground replacements include Scholfield Park, Big Eau Pleine Park, 3M Park, and Dells of the Eau Claire Park. Other work will be to treat and remove Ash trees; plant 400+ trees; recruit staff members for Recreation Superintendent, Administrative Manager, and Maintenance Technician positions. County Forestry work plan includes to estimate and advertise 625+ acres of timber for sale and administration of 30+ timber sales. Acquire land and land, wildlife and recreation management. Develop a short term and long term CIP plan, implement recreation software, upgrade electrical at Big Eau Pleine Park, work on a bike/pedestrian plan for parks and County Highway Department. Some City small projects include to plan for safe opening of the pools, repairs of steps and wall at Stewart Park, self-watering flower baskets, renovate Brockmeyer Park west soccer field, Scholfield Park parking lot work and finish the Dog Park. Other tasks include developing a sponsorship and naming rights policy, and enhancing social media presence. Some County small projects include Dells high bridge decking and overlook, utility mapping at Marathon Park, rubber flooring in Ice Arena, and Big Eau Pleine road and horse barn repairs.

6. Discussion and Possible Action Considering Proposed Amendments to Chapter 9 of the Wausau Municipal code – Polley explained that the recreation deputies hired last January have given some clarifications that they would like to see in the ordinances to better allow them to regulate and educate the community about why certain rules are in place. She noted it has been past practice when the park ordinances are updated that they are kept consistent on the County and City side. All changes will be approved by legal entities before being brought back to the City Park and Recreation Committee and Park Commission. Polley also mentioned that Park Commission discussed drones and metal detectors in parks and recommended she look for language as to only allowing drones in public parks with a permit. The Department has some metal detecting guidelines and she will get legal opinions whether they should continue as policy or be put into the ordinances. **Motion** by Neal, second by Larson to approve the amendments for legal review and then come back to this Committee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

7. Educational Items

A. 2020 Year in Review - 2020 Year in Review - In 2020 the parks saw a significant increase in usage compared to other years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, citizens turned to our 3,401 acres of parkland and 29,848 acres of County Forest to recreate. According to a Google Community Mobility Report usage of parks in Marathon County was up 136% in July and August compared to an average year. 308.5 acres and 81,920 feet of trails were mowed which equals 7,676 hours of mowing; 402 trees were planted and 377 non-ash trees were removed; 1600 Ash trees were treated; the Emerald Ash Borer was found in Wausau; 195 family activity kits were distributed; new playground equipment was installed in four parks; new dasher boards, sound system and controller was installed in the Ice Arenas; Sunny Vale Softball Complex fields, fences, concession, etc. were updated; 200 acres of forest land were acquired; 4,417 boat launch, biking, and disc golf passes were sold. Camping had the busiest season in many years with a 35.6% increase in revenue over what was budgeted. Campers reserved 16,600 nights of camping this season. Many events and shelter reservations were cancelled due to COVID-19 but 566 still took place. Youth sports were delayed this year due to COVID-19 but 298 games were still played. Adult Softball was cancelled and the Wisconsin Woodchucks played 23 home games.

B. Dog Park Special Committee Update – Polley explained the group will meet tonight to discuss progress of the dog park and a possible fundraiser. The fencing has been installed, the turf is still being established and signage needs to be installed. The dog park should be able to open in the spring if the turf looks good.

C. Budget Update – Polley explained that most of what the Department requested was funded. In January, staff will be submitting a request to utilize funds not spent in 2020 for repairs to the skate park. Also two positions that were not funded will be brought back. One request will, with the Recreation Superintendents retirement, revamp the Superintendent position and add another FTE specifically for aquatics. Another request is a supplemental request submitted by the Director of Public Works for a Preservation Coordinator which would be a position that would work with Engineering and the City Forester on street, sidewalk and development projects to implement the new forestry specifications guidelines and work to preserve the tree canopy as much as possible. The position would specifically be focused on our infrastructure, tree canopy and landscaping.

D. Preliminary Pool Operation Plan – Polley explained that the plan is the same one that was put together last year. Staff feels that it's still very viable and meets a lot of the guidelines that have been put in place. It's preliminary and a lot of information will be forth coming from National Park and Recreation groups about what did and did not work at pools last year in relation to COVID-19. Questions were answered.

8. Future Agenda Items – report on winter activities

9. Next Meeting Date – Monday, January 4, 2021 at 4:30pm

10. Adjourn - **Motion** by Peckham, second by Neal to adjourn at 6:00 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.