

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU - PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: February 4th, 2013 at 4:00pm Location: City Hall (407 Grant Street) – Board Room
Members Present: Jim Brezinski, Gary Gisselman, Robert Mielke, David Oberbeck (c)
Excused: David Nutting
Others Present: William Duncanson – Director, Peter Knotek – Asst. Director, Jim Tipple – Mayor, Mary Ann Groat – Finance Director, Mary Goede – Confidential Administrative Specialist, Mark Macdonald and Ryan Treu – WI Woodchucks

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 there was a quorum present and the meeting was called to order by Chairperson Oberbeck at 4:00pm.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Brezinski to approve the January 7th, 2013 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Athletic Park Agreement – Discussion and Possible Action on Amending the Agreement with Wisconsin College Baseball (Woodchucks) to Permit the Sale of Wine – Duncanson said the objective is to make it possible for the Woodchucks to serve wine at the games in the same manner that they are currently serving beer at the games. This would involve modifying the current Athletic Park Use Agreement in the concession section to add item number seven to limit the sale of alcoholic beverages to fermented malt beverages and wine and specify to use it for on premise sales. There is wording within the contract when dealing with this type of restriction because beer is served there already. If this Committee approves it the next step would be for the Woodchucks to go through the application process for the appropriate liquor license through the Public Health and Safety Committee. **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Mielke to approve the modification to the agreement. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Motion by Mielke second by Brezinski to go into Closed Session Pursuant to Sec. 19.85(1)(e), Wi Stats., for the Purposes of Deliberating or Negotiating the Purchase of Public Properties, the Investment of Public Funds, or Conducting Other Specified Public Business, Whenever Competitive or Bargaining Reasons Require a Closed Session, To Wit: Discussion and Possible Action on Potential Parkland Acquisition. Roll call vote was taken.

Motion by Gisselman, second by Mielke to Return to Open Session. Roll Call Vote was Taken. Possible Announcements Resulting from Closed Session – None.

Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Program Visioning – discussion and Possible Action on Preferred Future State of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Services in Wausau and the Actions Necessary to Achieve the Vision. – Oberbeck wanted to look at some initiatives that have been identified as far as pools, development, and planning for the future. Duncanson said the Committee could look at the issues already identified in CORP. They could see what has been accomplished and what needs to be worked on or if there are more important issues that should be focused on first. Under issue identification is 1.) Swimming Pools – the department is at a point to request funding to start the design process for three neighborhood pools, 2.) Hiking/Biking trails – there is strong support in the community for this and it is continuing one piece at a time. A vision issue is if the City wants to be a walk-able, ride-able community, 3.) Youth Recreation Programs – residents have expressed interest in expanding the recreation opportunities available. Duncanson said the programs have not changed significantly for many years. The City is cooperating more with the Wausau School District on the playground program, 4.) Bike Trail Signing – provide signing of bicycle routes and trails. Gisselman is interested in wayfinding signs directing people to parks and the Rivers Edge Trail from major arterial roads. Oberbeck said the City is joining a wayfinding study and the City parks should be part of this, 5) Emerald Ash Borer Action Plan – Duncanson said the City Forester has completed a draft plan which is being reviewed. He would like the elected officials to view a webinar so that they can understand the magnitude of what the City will be facing, 6.) Dogs In Parks – Duncanson said the Park and Recreation Committee is committed to a dog park and the property being considered is in the process of being transferred from the Department of Transportation, 7.) Winter Sports Opportunities – there is demand for a designated snowshoe course in the City. Duncanson said this has been identified in the Eau Claire River Conservancy Area and there are snowshoe trails at Sylvan Hill Park, 8.) Disc Golf – residents on Wausau’s west side have requested a Frisbee disc golf course be developed on the west side. Duncanson said there has been no action on this but there could possibly be one at Brockmeyer Park, 9.) The 400 Block – has been constructed. The City is talking more about types of activities that do and don’t fit in the area and working on modifications to fees, 10.) Sports Facilities – baseball, soccer. Duncanson said

there will be more soccer coming, 11.) Masterplanning – The City has parks yet that it has to masterplan, 12.) Water Access – excessive utilization. Duncanson said the number of boat launches hasn't changed but the City has increased kayak/canoe access, 13.) Access to Neighborhood Parks – traffic impeding access to neighborhood parks. Duncanson said they have worked to create some walkways to allow people to move around neighborhoods to get to parks. Knotek said every time subdivisions are done they look at this issue. Gisselman felt that Grand Avenue is a big barrier for the neighborhood east of there to be able to use Hammond or Oak Island Park. He would like to see the intersection designed so that is easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross. Oberbeck also liked the idea of creating access way to parks, 14.) Picnic Facilities – current demand exceeds availability of reservable picnic facilities, especially year-round facilities. Duncanson said the plans in place are that eventually Brockmeyer would be next in line for a year round shelter. 15.) Open Space Management – a coordinated community-wide approach to open space acquisition and management is needed. Knotek said there is not a coordinated effort at this time. 16.) Partnership / Cooperation with other agencies. Knotek said this issue dovetails with open space management. 17.) Excess Property – Knotek said Kelly Park and Brisbane Court were two that had been disposed of. There are a couple more that require decisions about what is going to be done with them. 18.) Neighborhood Park Concept – Knotek said this ties in a little bit with idea of linking parks together. If a person can walk to a park, does everyone need a pocket park? He believed that pocket parks add to the character of the downtown but maybe not so much in suburban areas. From certain aspects, the bigger the park, the more efficient the department is able to maintain it but the City would need linkages to get people to these parks. Duncanson said the current park system is based on neighborhood parks. They are places people can go and recreate and walk home and they don't have facilities for long term stay, like off street parking and restrooms. He said the question is if that still valid in this day and age and in the subdivisions that are being created. Many of the new subdivisions are single entry and exit and if the City isn't going to require subdivisions to have sidewalks why go to neighborhood parks when kids can't get to them without going on the street. It's a tough question if the City stays with neighborhood parks going into the future or if there are other kinds of parks that would serve better, 19.) Aging Population – Knotek said the most popular activity for adults over fifty is walking. He noted that pathways also bring young people to the City because they like to stay active, 20.) Minority population is growing – Knotek said the department should provide more outreach.

Oberbeck said as the City is developing the budget how do some of the priorities work into that. Knotek said some of these issues have minimal costs associated while some are much more expensive. Brezinski questioned Groat about the budget. In the past the City has benefitted from Act 10 and now that's going to be gone. Groat said they will still have implementation of the pay scale and the police and fire are increasing their contribution to the Wisconsin Retirement System each year so there will be some savings there. She said it depended on how the State handles things. The Governor will be requested to bring the funding levels for shared revenue back up and also to bring transportation aids back up so it will depend on how that's handled in the budget. She thought some of these ideas were great and if they could get revenues from other sources that would help relieve the resource competition in other areas. Oberbeck said things like the Rivers Edge Trail make a better community and the City has to look at what its return on investment is. Gisselman felt pedestrian/bicycling trails and signage within the City was important. Duncanson felt deciding on what types of parks the City wants to have in the future is important. Groat felt parks were an important amenity. Mielke concurred with Duncanson and also thought making some determinations as far as costs and effectiveness of types of parks. Brezinski liked the idea of cooperating with other communities. Oberbeck felt having a walk-able, bike-able community was important because when neighborhoods are connected that creates a strong community.

Future Agenda Items – budget and initiatives Groat wanted to note that regarding the budget the department could take a transfer from personnel to operating line items, the police department has done this on several occasions, but it would require full Council approval.

Next Meeting – Monday, March 4th, 2013 at **5:00pm**.

Adjourn – **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Brezinski to adjourn at 6:00pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.