

CITY OF WAUSAU - PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: April 1st, 2013 at 5:00pm Location: City Hall (407 Grant Street) – Board Room
Members Present: Jim Brezinski, Gary Gisselman, Robert Mielke, David Nutting, David Oberbeck (c)
Others Present: William Duncanson - Director, Peter Knotek - Asst. Director, Maryanne Groat – Finance Director, Anne Jacobson – City Attorney, Michael Loy – Human Resources Director, Pat Peckham – City Pages, Amanda Seitz – Wausau Daily Herald

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 5:00pm.

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

Aquatic Facility Project – Discussion and Possible Action on Selecting Which Swimming Pool to Reconstruct First – Duncanson said that on March 26th the City Council approved the CIP funding for designing the first of the three swimming pool reconstructions. Committee needs to select which pool is done first. Staff reviewed the reliability of the three pools and none is worse or better off than any of the others. The decision where to start first is based on how the best service will be provided to the City while the phased project is done. Staff recommends Kaiser pool be reconstructed first. It is centrally located and there will still be an east and west side pool while it is being constructed. Once Kaiser Pool is done the other two pools will be out of service the next year and Kaiser will be a centrally located larger capacity pool. Questions were answered. **Motion** by Brezinski, second by Gisselman to approve the recommendation of staff to start with Kaiser Pool as soon as possible. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Park Ordinance – Discussion and Possible Action on Updating City Park Ordinances – Duncanson said in a recent review of Wausau park ordinances it was noted that Ordinance 9.20.020 required some corrections. The primary change needed is to replace the term “park ranger” with “law enforcement officer”. This change is needed because Wausau stopped funding the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department’s Park and Visitor Protection program several years ago so park ranger services are no longer available. Duncanson said the County will take the City ordinance changes and adopt them so the City and County ordinances parallel each other. Oberbeck questioned if there should not be any reference to park ranger because there still were two other cases of that language in the ordinance. Duncanson said those two references were missed and should be taken out. **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Mielke to approve the ordinance with the two additional changes of park ranger taken out. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Wilson-Hurd Parking Lot Temporary Easement – Discussion and Possible Action on Annual Parking Lot Temporary Easement from Wilson-Hurd - Duncanson said it was time to renew the annual temporary easement with Wilson-Hurd for Athletic Park parking. The 2012 agreement had been given to members previously to review. He said that Wilson-Hurd had verbally agreed to offer the City the agreement for 2013. The only change from 2012 other than dates is in item two to add security lighting to the temporary improvements the City would have permission to make. Discussion followed. **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Mielke to approve the annual parking lot temporary easement from Wilson-Hurd. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Park Vegetation Management – Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed Vegetation Management Activities at Swiderski and Horgen Parks – Knotek said Swiderski and Horgen Parks both have pine plantations that are in need of thinning. The long term objective is to develop more of a natural character. The department has conducted such management activities in both parks before and it’s time to do it again. Part of the management activity is to inform the surrounding neighborhood of the planned activity. Staff will be mailing a letter to the residents explaining the need for the activity and some of the methodology.

Oberbeck questioned the possibility of linking Swiderski Park to Brockmeyer Park. Duncanson described the existing walking trail easements and sidewalks in platted subdivisions and said everything is in place to tie the area together internally. Duncanson questions if the City wants to expend the time and money to get an easement and construct a temporary walkway connecting Swiderski to Brockmeyer Park and then have it disappear when the subdivision is developed because when the roads come in the sidewalks will be built to provide permanent access. Duncanson noted

that internal connection of this neighborhood was undertaken because adjoining subdivisions are being built with only one way in and one way out and no connections. Oberbeck said it's a fast growing area and 44th Avenue has become a thoroughfare. He felt it was important to look at how some of those neighborhoods are connected.

Nutting arrived at 5:30pm. Loy left the meeting at 5:30pm.

Oberbeck said as other opportunities present themselves in different parks to make some pedestrian connections, that should be looked at rather than continuing with just streets as connectors. Brezinski agrees that it makes sense to look ahead. Knotek said as they thin the trees at Swiderski they will take into account where the anticipated paths will be. **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Mielke to approve the proposed vegetation management activities at Swiderski and Horgen Parks. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Emerald Ash Borer – Presentation and Discussion on Emerald Ash Borer Management – Knotek said as managers of the street tree program they realize it's just a matter of time before the Emerald Ash Borer arrives. It is now in thirteen Wisconsin counties. Staff is in the process of developing a management plan to get out in front of it so that the impact is spread over several years instead of all at once. He said twenty percent of the City street trees are Ash Trees. 750 have been removed since 2007. They are taking poor quality trees, trees under power lines, and trees that will be replaced with new driveways. Replacement of the 5,450 existing ash trees will be \$817,000 plus removal of existing ash will be \$328,400. There is an injection treatment and 200 street trees have been deemed as suitable for that. The City may want to look at saving some of these rather than cutting them down but it will cost almost \$11,000 a year. Staff recommends having a marshalling yard or multiple yards which will be required for storing City and private trees. The City will have to decide what to do with the wood. Possibilities include selling logs, pulpwood, or biomass but there will probably be a lot of surrounding communities dealing with it at the same time. Staff will continue to develop the management plan. Groat said in the southern part of the State they are doing a lot of outreach. Knotek said staff will have some public service announcements, newsletters, programs for public and give them resources. Discussion followed.

Winter Recreation Activities – Summary of Winter Recreation Activities – Duncanson said in a recent 'Silent Sports' magazine there was more recognition of facilities in the Wausau area. He noted that Sylvan Tubing Hill had a very successful season. They extended the season and had some increased revenue not only from that but likely from concessions as well. They did lose some rentals due to cold weather. A full report will be given at a later date. Duncanson said the ice skating rinks were a real challenge this year and some did not get built because there was a continuing freeze and thaw cycle. Sledding hills are still being used. Oberbeck questioned if there could be more winter recreation opportunities at Sylvan Hill. Duncanson thought there would need to be more parking and more chalet space before additional use could be accommodated. He noted that snowshoeing use is on the rise.

Future Agenda Items – budgeting overall costs for pools, budgeting costs for Emerald Ash Borer, River Edge Trail update – Bridge Street to Doctors Park, status of bike routes – how parks relate to bicycling, parks status, development and their maintenance needs looking forward.

Next Meeting – Monday, May 6th, 2013 at 5:00pm

Adjourn – **Motion** by Brezinski, second by Mielke to adjourn at 6:30pm. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.