

DRAFT
CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: February 3rd, 2014 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: Bill Duncanson–Director, Peter Knotek–Assistant Director, Maryanne Groat–Finance Director, Tammy Stratz - Community Development, Romey Wagner – Alderperson, Pat Peckham – City Pages, Theresa Clift – 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 Mielke, second by Gisselman to approve the Park and Recreation Committee December 2nd, 2013 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Summer Playground program Alternatives – Discussion and Possible Action on Alternatives for Expanding the Existing Summer Playground Program – Duncanson said Committee had requested staff to see if there were ways to expand the summer playground program cooperating with the Wausau School District especially for full day programs. Powers gave history on the existing program and relationship with the school district. She said the school district has created the program “Community Connections” which includes an after summer school program managed by partners outside the school district. The Park Department is one of the partners and provides a program with the district for an average of about 70 kids on playground sites in the afternoons. She said that summer school has become more steeped in enrichment programs and has grown exponentially.

Powers discussed a budget for an all-day program which would run five days a week for 60 kids costing \$31,800. She said this estimate does not include the price of a school building and includes children bringing their own lunch. Staff could possibly use a park building but that would preclude daytime rentals on weekdays. Powers sees this as a supplement to the good partnership with the Wausau School District and would not recommend giving up that partnership in the afternoons. Before adding to the budget, she recommends finding children currently not in summer school like home or parochial schooled children who would want to come into the existing playground program.

Oberbeck questioned if there were some outlying school areas like Stettin that would benefit from an expanded program. Powers said she would check into. Duncanson said the proposal budget doesn’t include school facility rent. It is based on using one of our park shelters. Brezinski felt maybe prices wouldn’t be that unreasonable because the schools have someone in the buildings all summer long and this is a program for the community. Oberbeck thought the budget Powers proposed sounded reasonable and this would be feasible if there was a void somewhere. Committee would like staff to check with school personnel to see if there is an opportunity to expand the program.

Nutting arrived and Powers left the meeting at 5:30pm

Proposed Longfellow Tot Lot – Discussion and Possible Action on Creation of a Tot Lot in the Longfellow Neighborhood – Knotek said staff had previously worked with a neighborhood group in 2007 on this vacant piece of City owned property at Single Avenue and Prospect. There had been some issues that stalled the project but it’s now ready to move forward again. Stratz said they have some federal funds that were set aside for neighborhood revitalization in hopes they could get this tot lot developed. She said the Neighborhood Association would still like this to move forward. Wagner felt it was important to know that this area was promised as a trade off when the park on Grand Avenue was vacated. He said this property is too small for a house and is well located in the area. They are looking to serve 2-5 year old kids. It would be open three

seasons with no winter maintenance and no lighting. **Motion** by Nutting, second by Mielke to direct staff to create this tot lot in the Longfellow neighborhood area.

Duncanson said the tot lot is not in the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan so that should be amended. He said the larger question is where we are providing parks, at what density, and addressing maintenance of them. Brezinski said the tot lot has been on the burner a long time and this is an opportunity that should be taken advantage of.

Motion amended by Nutting, second by Mielke to add the Longfellow Tot Lot to the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Oberbeck asked if it fit with the overall concept of how parks are being developed within the City and taking on smaller parks. Nutting and Brezinski both felt this tot lot should be developed in this case. Gisselman also felt that they could look at the larger issue in the future but not to miss this opportunity to put in the tot lot for a neighborhood that wants it that and was promised to. Oberbeck said that every park that is created comes back as additional responsibilities and dollars to the park department and that should be considered. Wagner reiterated that there was a park area there before and in part of that deal another one would be furnished. Gisselman questioned if financing was in place for the tot lot. Stratz said there is money available to construct it. Brezinski said the motion had been amended and seconded and he “called the question”, second by Nutting. “Calling the question” **carried** by voice vote. Voice vote reflected as 5-0. Vote on amended motion to direct staff to create the tot lot in the Longfellow neighborhood area and amend the CORP Plan to reflect it. Amended motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Pool Reconstruction Project Report – Presentation and Possible Action on Redesign of Kiser Pool – Knotek discussed possible pool elements including water slides, interactive play structures, in-pool seating area, climbing wall area, walk across structure, shade structures, zero depth entry and a sand play area. Knotek discussed the building which includes a concession area, lifeguard station, mechanical room, restrooms, and changing area. He noted that concessions will also be able to be served to people that haven’t entered the pool area. Committee members thought the building looked a little stark and non-inviting. Duncanson said they had considered whether to make an architectural statement with the building or think about the setting of the neighborhood so they kept the roofline low and selected residential exterior materials. Lengthy discussion followed involving ideas for making more of a statement with the building. Knotek will make some improvements to the elevation.

Eau Claire River Conservancy Master Plan – Discussion and Possible Action on Scheduling a Meeting to Gather Public Input on the Future Uses of the Eau Claire River Conservancy – Duncanson said they should set a date for the public to give their input on what they believe are the preferred uses for this community resource. Duncanson noted it should be a quiet, contemplative area. Some staff suggestions will be winter snowshoeing, hiking, kayak launch, nature study, and photography. **Consensus** of Committee is to schedule the date of the meeting for Thursday, March 13th, 2014 at 6:00pm at 212 River Drive.

Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department (PRF) Website Activity Report – Report and Discussion on 2013 PRF Website Activity and New Capabilities – Previous information had been distributed. It showed that there had been 60,565 visitors to various park department sites and 46,627 of these were unique hits. Duncanson noted that a lot of people visit the County website first and link over to the City site. The County park website is running about 120,000 unique hits. The department is now on-line with shelter reservations. On-line camping reservations are going well. It is an effective use of technology that provides good customer service and reduces clerical labor needs.

Report on Filling Vacant Position – Report and Discussion on Recruiting an Equipment Operator II to Fill a Vacancy – Duncanson gave history on a vacant position in the department. He said they are looking to fill the position at the level it was at as of last spring. Staff is making a request to Park Commission tomorrow and discussing it with Human Resources. The position is in the budget right now as an Equipment Operator II.

Report and Possible Action on 2014 Capital Equipment Funding – Duncanson explained that the City did not fund half of the Park Departments 2014 capital equipment. A portion was held back, as it was last year, for year-end funding. Groat gave some possible options to fund the remainder. Duncanson is concerned because parks is on a different footing for capital equipment funding than the rest of the departments in the City. Groat felt that one of the goals next year should be to transition parks into more of a motorpool type funding even if it's just the depreciation factor of their entire fleet. Duncanson said in looking at the total amount of money that the City puts into capital equipment the only department not fully funded is parks. All the other capital equipment is funded 100% at much higher amounts and parks with a much lesser amount is half funded through CIP. **Motion** by Brezinski, second by Gisselman to request the issue be brought before the next Finance Committee for funding of those items. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Groat left the meeting at 6:55pm.

2014 Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association (WPRA) Park Summer Tour – Duncanson said that the department will be hosting this summers' WPRA summer park tour. It will be held on July 16th, 17th and 18th. The focus will be on touring City and County park and recreation facilities. There will be a bus tour on the 17th and 18th. People that arrive in town on Wednesday will be able to either mountain bike at Nine Mile or kayak the Wisconsin River and then attend a "Concert on the Square". Some of the areas they will tour are Athletic Park, Kaiser Pool, Marathon County Field Sports Complex, Curling Club, Eau Claire River Conservancy, Shooting Range, Nine Mile, Big Eau Pleine Park, Rivers Edge Trail and Dells of the Eau Claire Park.

Project Update

Athletic Park Neighborhood Park – The park project is out to bid. Bids are due February 11th.

River Edge Trail – Dudley Tower – This project includes landscaping and access to the River Edge Trail west of the Dudley Tower. We are in the process of hiring a structural engineer to finalize the design. The project will be constructed summer 2014.

Future Agenda Items – Review master plan of Brockmeyer Park, River Edge Trail, swimming pool design

Next Regular Meeting – Monday, March 3rd, 2014 at 5:00pm

Adjourn - Motion by Nutting, second by Mielke to adjourn the meeting at 7:00pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.