

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: August 3, 2015 at 5:15pm

Location: Board Room, City Hall

Members Present: Gary Gisselman, Robert Mielke, David Nutting, Tom Neal, David Oberbeck (c)

Others Present: William Duncanson–Director, Blaine Peterson – City Forester, Eric Lindman – Public Works Director, Pat Peckham – City Pages, Patrick Hoerter

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 Oberbeck at 5:15pm.

Public comments – Hoerter gave an update on JoJo’s Jungle. He said they have received responses from major vendors and are working to stay within the budget they had forecasted. They would like to discuss the shape of the playground with staff as the poured rubber foundation really affects the price. They are interested in finalizing their numbers because potential donors are interested in the budget detail items. They are also identifying utility locations. Duncanson said they may want to move the playground area a little further away from the parking lot for safety reasons and to create a better defined entrance area.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Mielke, second by Neal to approve the Park and Recreation Committee July 6th, 2015 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Street Tree Site Management - Discussion and Possible Action on Reviewing and Enhancing Street Tree Site Design and Management to Optimize Benefits – A short video was presented on a nationally renowned urban street tree program in Milwaukee where they try to preserve trees during construction. Sidewalks go around trees and are raised over larger tree roots instead of just chopping the roots off. By saving trees it saves homeowners money in cooling costs, pollution abatement, and groundwater treatment. Oberbeck would like the City to plan and coordinate streets and sidewalks with the trees to create a better environment. Neal felt that straight line chopping of roots is done here and they don’t look to save any individual trees. Lindman said the inspectors mark sidewalks they receive complaints on for possible replacement. Nothing is in place now to look at trees to see if some can be saved. They cut through all trees to get everything to the same grade. Duncanson said it’s a matter of working to the current standards the City has and Committee is wondering if the standards could be improved. Neal felt the City should deal with the sidewalk slabs that really need attention and not automatically mark a certain number of slabs falling within the contracted amount for sidewalk maintenance. Peterson said that the Councilpersons have to set the policy and involve the Public Works Department. He has been listening to presentations from Milwaukee’s Jim Kringer for years. The forestry division knows what to do but they have to have the department doing the construction buying in and utilizing the information. Lindman said starting in 2016 once they delineate construction projects they could take their standards on one of those major projects and stake where everything is going to be and at that point Peterson could walk through with the engineers and give suggestions about keeping some of the more mature trees. This would be well before final design. Lindman said with the entire sidewalk project they work with the contractor about the sections of the City they are working in and will pick ten different blocks or so and the inspectors will mark those. Nutting said at that point in time a judgement about a tree could be made so the contractor would know about it. Lindman agreed and thought it was something they could implement. Oberbeck felt it was a good opportunity now with the Emerald Ash Borer causing a lot of the ash trees to be replaced. Peterson noted that about 20 percent of street trees are ash. The Riverview area is heavily populated with ash trees. They are salt and drought tolerant and were a major replacement tree on thoroughfare streets in the City. He also mentioned that Wausau has a tradition of real narrow boulevards. Duncanson said there are many difficult situations throughout the City because in some of the older sections, prior to the City having a street tree program, trees were planted by homeowners and they weren’t good street trees so it takes more to deal with those. It’s not just street construction, sidewalk, curb and gutter it’s utility construction also. Duncanson said implementing better standards would cost more money initially because there is the time needed to do workarounds, more fill, different equipment, and contractor education but in the long run the trees would have a longer life span. Currently the City tree crew cuts parts out of declining trees more frequently so the City is exposed to a higher risk as these pieces and parts come down. There are cases where Blaine has planted multiple trees in sites that weren’t good sites. They need to make a decision on what appropriate planting sites are for construction and design

standards. Peterson said that it wouldn't be that expensive to have Kringer do a local training. Oberbeck thought that the contractors and even some of the surrounding communities should attend the training if interested. They should outline a process of how to make the environment better by the policies that are set. Blaine discussed setbacks for tree plantings in areas without sidewalks. He said from what he has seen the construction behind the existing curb seems to be excessive and the curb will go in the same place and its all backfilled with road base. He said that Kringer works with construction people and he talks the language. They have adapted concrete layers pretty cheaply to lay curb real close to the existing. They pull out the old and put new curb in versus constructing 18" or 2 feet behind the old curb and putting curb in and backfilling. They lay extruded concrete curb around trees, put 2x4's in and push wet concrete up into place. Kringer has videos, power points and is very good. Neal wanted to recommend the pursuit of some kind of tree management system based on acknowledging their value and have Kringer come and do a presentation. He felt if the budget only has a certain number of dollars to replace a certain number of sidewalk slabs they should focus more on replacing just the real problem ones and do more to address saving trees. Oberbeck felt there would be long term benefits as far as cost savings. Duncanson said this is primarily in Lindman's jurisdiction. The Parks Department has tree professionals for the City and spends almost 20% of its total budget within the street right-of-way between street trees, boulevard mowing, and some sidewalk snow clearing. CISM needs to participate voluntarily in this. It is a street right-of-way issue. Oberbeck said that was the intent of this meeting to see about the possibility of starting to work together between Parks and CISM to create the environment they want. Neal would like Lindman to go to CISM based on a recommendation from the Park Committee to re-envision how sidewalk maintenance and tree management with regards to endangered trees are managed because of standard way we been doing it, to look at a hybrid approach. Lindman said he had tentatively put this item on the CISM agenda. Peterson said also in Milwaukee what seems to work is that the urban forestry department is part of the public works department. Oberbeck felt when a street goes through there should be a project team evaluating it before it gets to the final design stage. Lindman felt the tail end works but the front end needs more involvement. Peterson said he would find out what Kringer has available for training sessions.

Peterson and Lindman left the meeting at 6:10pm.

2016 Budget – Discussion and Possible Action on Park Operations and Maintenance Costs for New and Enhanced Facilities Completed in 2015 and 2016 – Duncanson said staff is discussing what it is going to take to manage some of the additional facilities being constructed in the City. He discussed the east riverfront development project. He said that the first project is being bid and staff recommends the landscape portion not be awarded with it. This work would occur late in the year and reduces the likelihood of success of the vegetation work. It would be better to bid it in November for 2016 construction along with the River Edge Trail. Staff is modifying the budget because it is looking at an August 16th takeover of the maintenance on the riverfront development. There won't be much landscape maintenance but parks will be taking over operation of the irrigation system, water features, trash, sidewalk clearing, snow clearing, paying for electrical bills for lighting, water pumping, etc. The restroom is a planned feature but is not being constructed at this time. Other features include the Sternberg Overlook which is in recognition of their million dollar donation to the River Edge Trail, the pedestrian bridge with bump-outs to look over the water, the wharf area with seating and accessibility to the water for kayaks, the "adirondack" area with seating and gathering areas, exercise equipment underneath the bridge and exercise equipment along the trail. This area is of a higher level development than the rest of the River Edge Trail and will take park staff more time and materials to maintain it. After inventorying the additional landscape items, hard space items, and systems including more contracted services like waste hauling, staff estimates that 1,450 additional manpower hours will be needed. That's an August 2016 takeover so the full annual cycle will take more than that. There is also more manpower hours needed because of the new additions to Athletic Park and the new pools. Other additional areas of deferred maintenance includes the 400 Block, which staff appreciates the funding it received for 2015, Paff Woods Nature Preserve, Lincoln Tot Lot, Stinchfield Boardwalk, and additional boulevards/areas to mow. Additional manpower hours are needed to complete basic maintenance tasks in a more timely and best practice manner. The department is requesting the addition of a full time laborer plus some seasonals. Gisselman questioned what budget the money was coming from for all the riverfront development. He understood the donation from Sternberg's was for the Rivers Edge Trail and he thought that was going to be built in 2015 and now it's pushed back to 2016. He was disappointed that the trail has to wait. He also thought the projects seemed very high level and asked if the City can afford the Parks Department additional investment in staff time for this development plan coming next year. Neal thought some of the features seemed like phased work. Oberbeck said

this is going to cost more as far as operating expenses and knowing where the budget is it will be a challenge. This development will not contribute towards the budget until the TIF is closed. There has to be a method to pay for the manpower to care for all these developments in the City. Duncanson said he is on the design/construction team and he doesn't know all the financing on this project. The prevailing philosophy from the economic development team is to set the level of development with these features to establish a standard for future development. As far as a TID district goes, it has been discussed that occupants of these properties will pay for some of the maintenance of these facilities. Nothing will happen until there is a partial build-out and until then it this area has to look good in order to sell. Members felt the first building there, the WOW building, should be the standard because other buildings will follow that. Gisselman felt all the high level elements will cost more as far as maintenance and he questioned if the City could afford it. Mielke said the City is looking at a 2.6 million deficit. Gisselman questioned if the end result would be closing parks to help pay for the maintenance of this development. Oberbeck said once this is built it has to be taken care of otherwise the City loses its investment. The best thing that could happen is it gets going and the TID closes as fast it can. Council should be asking questions and if there is no money for operational expenses then they have to find a place to get it and it might be at the expense of other departments. There are things that have been committed to and the budget can't go on the way it is. Priorities have to be discussed and from this Committee it would be to take care of the parks the way they should be. Duncanson said this is the basis in following the budget direction to continue what is going on. He wanted members to be aware when they see the parks budget come in bigger than last year he wants them to know exactly why. Oberbeck said Duncanson should present where the budget was and what has been added and that it's not an option that these are costs to continue. Mielke felt Groat should have a presentation on how it's going to be paid for. They have to have all those commitments upfront. Oberbeck said they will work through this. There should be some options on how it is going to be paid for. The economic development team brought this forward and should bring forth an operational budget, is it going to be through property tax or where its coming from. **Motion** by Neal, second by Mielke based on information presented and operational costs that they recommend the manpower hours are based on a cost to continue versus an added cost and be recognized as this. Duncanson noted this is staff's best estimate based on plans they are aware of today. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Event Management Report - Discussion and Possible Action on Summer 2015 Special Event Management Activities – Duncanson said a lot of events have been happening this summer. Just this past weekend there was a band event on the 400 Block, a triathlon and the ASA Girls National Championship at Sunny Vale Park, 24 Hours mountain bike race at Nine Mile, Fair set-up and all the other normal routine events. Duncanson discussed some of the cleaning costs after Chalk Fest incurred by the Park Department. He said the department had good had good cooperation with Wausau Events this year on event management. Duncanson said the upcoming Susan G. Komen race is a huge event. They do not fall under the Wausau Events umbrella but Duncanson is not sure how much they are being charged. They should be charged the electrical and sound system fee of \$750.00. Duncanson said staff did significant work for the Balloon Fest at Airport Park and they are also in early cleaning up early from routine events at the 400 Block. Staff is tracking their costs and as of July 18th have accumulated event specific costs of \$4,630 with some added contract costs. Duncanson said there was an increase in broken furniture this year, primarily the chairs at the 400 Block. People may be rocking on the back legs and weakening the welds. Increased police presence is a having positive outcomes at the 400 Block. Duncanson mentioned that the 400 Block is a park and while people can walk through it they should not be occupying it after midnight.

Project Update

Memorial Pool – Demolition and rough grading is complete. Work has started on the bath house foundations.

Stinchfield Creek – Boardwalk is complete, site clean-up and contracted asphalt work will be completed soon.

Athletic Park Phase 2 – Design work is complete, construction set to begin in mid-August.

Future Agenda Items – 400 Block and how events are being billed back, re-visit discussion of park mowing, Sylvan Hill Bike Park, updates on Brockmeyer Park

Next Regular Meeting – (tentative) Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at 5:15pm at Board Room, City Hall.

Adjourn - **Motion** by Neal, second by Gisselman to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.