

**DRAFT**

**CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Date/Time: June 6, 2016 at 4:30p.m. Location: Board Room, City Hall

Members Present: Gary Gisselman, Tom Neal, Pat Peckham (c)

Excused: Joe Gehin, David Nutting

Others Present: Robert Mielke - Mayor, Dennis Smith – Councilperson, Bill Duncanson–Director, Peter Knotek – Assistant Director, Mary Anne Groat – Finance Director, Patrick Hoerter – JoJo’s Jungle, Zach Hagenbucher – WSAU, Curtis Aderholdt – WAOW, Rebecca Cardenas - WSAW , Ron Zahrt

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 Peckham at 4:30 p.m.

Public comments – Alderman Smith would like to see about getting porta-potties for Reservoir Park and the Werle Neighborhood Park. He said both of those are great little parks with playgrounds and green areas but no restroom facilities. This item will be placed on a future agenda.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Neal, second by Gisselman to approve the Park and Recreation Committee May 2nd, 2016 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 3-0.

Emerald Ash Borer Planning – Report and Discussion on the Potential Impacts of Emerald Ash Borer on the City of Wausau and the Decisions That Will Have to be Made in the Near Future – Duncanson said the Emerald Ash Borer has been a threat for a period of time and is getting closer to Marathon County. The City needs to take the next steps in planning to be prepared because it’s going to cost money whether the City decides to treat or not treat the ash trees. Like in most other communities this will become a public process because there is a lot of interest in both public and private trees and how to handle this. Peterson said about 1000 ash street trees have been removed and there are 5200 ash street trees left. Most of the ones removed were poorer specimens or in undesirable locations. Peterson discussed how Emerald Ash Borer kills the trees and said it takes two to five years for the tree to die. Once the borer arrives, the number of dead ash trees will exponentially increase until it peaks and eventually declines as the only remaining ash are those being treated. He said currently the treatments for ash trees will last two years. The cost depends if the trees are treated in-house or not. Peterson said the costs would be considerably lower if the treatment is done by the Department but he wanted Committee members to realize that in-house treatment by staff would overwhelm our current workforce so a lot of other work would not get done. The treatments will have to be done the life of each tree.

Neal asked if communities can adopt a tree or have private trees treated through a City program. He also wondered if there was any kind of partnership whereby a third party could service homeowners and they could have a pool of buying chemicals. Duncanson said over the last fifteen years many communities have gone through this and there is not a good model of what to do. It is way too early for these types of discussions because first the City has to decide if they are going to save the street ash trees, let them all die, or select a certain number to save and if that’s the case, what are the cost and mechanics of that program. Groat mentioned that there is the possibility of using Community Development Block Grant funds to help defray some of the costs. Peckham questioned if any community is treating all the ash to keep them alive and if there was any collective wisdom of what to do. Peterson said Milwaukee is a bigger city that is treating all the ash and it is up to individual communities as to what they want to do. The 5200 street trees don’t include ash on parklands or other public properties so that will be a few thousand more. There may have to be different decisions made about dealing with ash trees in parks. Neal asked if there were any wasps that kill the borers. Peterson said there is some predation research using non-native wasps but he didn’t think the amount of predation will make a difference. Neal said they have discussed the values of trees and they are an asset that has to be protected. Peckham thought they should save a portion of trees. Duncanson asked Committee members what percentage they would want to save so staff could put together a scenario on the cost. Gisselman asked Peterson what he

thought a safe percentage would be to keep some ash culture realizing there is not funding for saving them all. Peterson said staff has already been identifying ash trees they do not want to keep because of their condition or location and that amount is about 25% so he thought a safe percentage to keep would be 70%. He mentioned some areas in the City like Riverview, the southeast area, and some west side subdivisions would get hit really hard. Peckham thought maybe saving over a certain size and replacing smaller ones was an option. Duncanson said there is a scenario where some communities treat most of ash and reduce the number treated over time. They do more replacement over time to reduce the long term investment in those that are treated. Another possibility is that a chemical may be created in the future that inoculates trees for longer periods of time so that the annual treatment costs drop. If 70% is an optimum target, then how low do they want to go with what the City can afford and what the community would accept? Neal felt they should look neighborhood by neighborhood and not decimate an area to the best of their ability. Peterson said the cycle of Emerald Ash Borer was first to eradicate it, then eliminate the ash, then treat some ash and remove some ash, and now the pendulum has swung to treating more ash so the management of the borer has changed over a dozen years and with the research going on there may someday be a better inoculation. Neal felt the public needs to be educated and good, solid, easy to follow information is needed. The costs of removal versus costs of treating, the real value of the trees, etc. should all be presented. Zahrt did not think the public has a perception of how wide the issue is and that it is coming down the road. Gisselman felt too that the average person may not even know they have an ash tree. Information could be provided to the public in the City newsletter. Members will formulate options at the July 11<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m. Park and Recreation Committee meeting and there will be a public meeting on August 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 p.m. following the regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Mielke, Peterson, Zahrt left the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

East Riverfront Redevelopment Project Park – Discussion and Possible Action on Accepting the Conceptual Design for the Park and Approving Negotiating a Single Source Final Design and Construction Specification Agreement with the Current Design Source – Duncanson said a minor change in the parkland conceptual design is consideration of expanding the net climber into more of a destination type climber. This is about the only significant change from previous graphics. The question today is how to proceed in going into final design on this parkland on the north end of the riverfront project. Staff knows there is a lot of specialty and background work that has gone into getting to this point in the conceptual designs. It is unique and blends in with items already being designed and in the process of being built on the riverfront. Based on this staff firmly believes the City would be further ahead in staying with the existing design firm in going forward with final design and construction specifications.

Groat said the City went through a competitive RFP process to hire Stantec on the riverfront project. They were looking for a firm that had a wide span of expertise because of the special issue of remediation and pollution mitigation on that site. Through that competitive process the City hired Stantec and has a master service agreement with the thought that as it progressed through the process there would be change orders which would be added over time as needs evolved and changed. The sole source looks at a number of criteria, one them being phased projects and the ability to have institutional knowledge that is gained. Staff believes in this situation both of those are true. The City went through a competitive process to hire Stantec and that they gained a lot of institutional knowledge regarding the site the pollution that's there, the criteria of the soils and the substructures as well as the work they gained in getting to know the property through all of the activities they have been involved in to date. Neal felt the concept and renderings have also been part of the selling job in people wanting to donate. Peckham said his understanding from the beginning was that when Stantec was chosen that the idea was they were going to be the one to take the City through this. Duncanson said the City is at a decision point in going to the next phase. The Finance Committee makes the decision that goes to the Council however as this is going to be a public park the Finance Committee is interested in this Committee's recommendations. Gisselman questioned what they were still negotiating. Groat said as part of Stantec's initial master service contract they quoted hourly rates which have remained in effect. Staff has asked them to provide the City proposals of not-to-exceed figures so they would have the worst case scenario costs of what the additional design and engineering work will be to take this part of the project to bidding. Duncanson clarified that discussions between staff and

Stantec are that costs can't be a direct percentage on everything so they need to discuss how much work they are going to do to put out the design and not base it on the expense of prefabricated materials that go into it. **Motion** by Neal, second by Gisselman to approve negotiating a single source final design construction specification agreement with the current design source and recommend this to the Finance Committee. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 3-0.

Smith and Groat left the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

2017 Capital Improvement Project (C.I.P) – Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed 2017 C.I.P. Projects – Knotek discussed the requested 2017 projects which are: Brockmeyer Park 2017 improvements which includes associated improvements as part of JoJo' Jungle; Memorial Park seawall replacement; playground equipment replacement program; park rolling stock; Stewart Park masonry repairs; and tennis court replacement program. Neal felt the “encourages revitalization, community aesthetics, or historic preservation” and “addresses critical health or safety hazard” project purposes boxes should be included for the Stewart Park masonry repairs project. Questions were answered. **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Neal to approve the 2017 capital improvement project requests as presented with the modifications for Stewart Park masonry repairs. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 3-0.

JoJo's Jungle Adaptive Playground – Report and Discussion on JoJo's Jungle Adaptive Playground at Brockmeyer Park – Hoerter said that they received their first grant for one million dollars last month from the B.A. and Esther Greenheck Foundation. This has opened up a lot of possibilities and he is hoping to hear from the Christopher Reeve Foundation in July. Their group still has a groundbreaking target of next May and is moving forward on finalizing a few aspects of the design.

Dog Park – Report and Discussion on Efforts to Determine the Location of a Dog Park - Duncanson said the site on Stewart Avenue between O'Malley and the Highway 29 on-ramp has fallen out of consideration. One reason is that in addition to the wet storm water detention pond, there are also dry ponds on the site that are wetter now with the return to more normal precipitation patterns. Also the City has entered into an economic agreement with O'Malley limiting tree vegetation in order to maintain clear visibility of the auto dealership from adjoining roads. The dog park needs shade so the City is going to continue looking for a different site. Dog park amenities were discussed. Duncanson mentioned that the City has some off-leash areas and also allows dogs in the parks on leashes so we are already more dog friendly than most communities.

#### Project Update

Memorial Park Pool – Grand opening scheduled for June 10 at 12:30 p.m. The pool will open to the public at 1:00 p.m. There will be no admission charge for opening day.

Radtke Park Bank Restoration – Bank restoration and the new staircase to the water are complete. Fencing is being installed. The project should be complete this week.

Schulenburg Pool – Construction is set to start the week of June 13<sup>th</sup>.

Future Agenda Items – Emerald Ash Borer options, restrooms in neighborhood parks, fee directive, drinking on the 400 Block

Next Regular Meeting – Monday, **July 11, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.** at Board Room, City Hall

Adjourn - **Motion** by Neal, second by Gisselman to adjourn at 6:10 p.m. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 3-0.