

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: March 7, 2016 at 5:15pm Location: Board Room, City Hall

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

Members Excused: Robert Mielke

Others Present: Bill Duncanson–Director, Peter Knotek–Assistant Director

Aaron Ruff, Andy Lynch, Matt Block, Tom Atwell, Randy Lackman, Mallory McGivern, Autumn Prazuch, Cheryl Schroeder, Doug Diny, Josh Reismann, Joe Bartram, Seth Carlson, Pat Peckham

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 – Cheryl Schroeder 1010 E Crocker St. – She was interested in the history of the park and if it was originally intended to be a neighborhood park. She is concerned about the loss of the far-east walking paths and believes if there was an outer edge trail that would negate some of the concerns. The eastern trail is in a densely wooded area that would be hard to replicate in the rest of the park that the walkers would miss. She would have added her name to the petition had she known it was circulating. She asks that Committee consider the miles and quality of walking trails they are looking to displace and consider how they would replace that. She did not believe it was fair to ask walkers to give up something they have been able to enjoy for years and ask them to do two loops around a smaller trail in order to make up for difference for area or length of trail that they are losing. She thought an outer loop would make most people would be happy.

Aaron Ruff – 627 Bertha Street – Wausau City Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. He is an advocate for the bike polo project. This would grow the sport by creating a venue that can host tournaments, games, and activities with teams and clubs throughout the State. It will help increase the community’s awareness of bike safety in general and will improve the bike friendly status of Wausau. He said the Sylvan Hill community bike park has the potential to become the premier mountain bike destination for children and families in central Wisconsin. Some of the features the park will have are going to be unlike anything the area currently has. Community bike parks with pump tracks and skill development areas are popping up throughout the country and in communities like Duluth, Minnesota they have seen a huge growth in youth physical activity and families spending time outdoors. He asks Committee to approve both proposals and move them forward according to plan.

Andrew Lynch – Wausau Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. He said bike polo is a great community asset. There is a lot of skill in the handling of the bicycles which translates into confidence on bikes when biking with traffic and other instances. The Sylvan Hill proposal is a great community resource which will build skills of all riders. He has children himself and would like to take them to Nine Mile but that has more intermediate and advanced areas. There are not a lot of introductory areas for them and Sylvan Hill could get a lot of children introduced in a safe controlled environment. It will be a great asset and he looks forward to using it in the future.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Nutting, second by Neal to approve the Park and Recreation Committee February 1st, 2016 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Sylvan Hill Bike Park - Discussion and Possible Action on a Petition Expressing Concern That The Planned Sylvan Hill Bike Park Does Not Adequately Protect Existing Uses – Neal said Committee had always been talking about this in terms of ensuring sufficient mixed use, peaceful co-existence and access to the trails. It is not going from one form of recreation to another but accommodating as much use as they can. Duncanson pointed out that in the copy of the updated conceptual plan a couple of changes were made that reflect the Committee’s determinations to retain the existing recreation types of opportunities. Every piece of trail in every location may not be kept but they do want to retain hiking and skiing. It is not staff or CWOCC’s intent to make hiking and skiing go away. He discussed some of the language incorporated into the plan addressing usage concerns. Concerns about overlap are being worked on and the original area of bike impact on the map has been overstated. The bike park is not going anywhere into the tubing hill area and doesn’t extend as far north as originally shown on the map. The main downhill trail does not go all the way to the eastern edge so there is plenty of room to continue the pedestrian trail as staff had anticipated. The pedestrian trail would form a perimeter trail around the entire area and other trails would be available. Staff has identified that there would be two crossings of pedestrian trail and

the bike trail. One is where the three downhill trails come together and continue a bit to the north. That could easily be handled by putting a bike bridge over the pedestrian trail. The second spot where they would intersect is closer to the chalet. The bike trail would be on an uphill slope which is highly visible from the pedestrian trail and bikes would be moving at a slower speed. Staff believes it would be safe to cross at grade there. On the very northern end of the park there are some existing user made walking trails that would be formalized as ski/pedestrian trails. Block commented that to displace walking or other uses is not ideal anyway because the children could ride while the parents walk so it makes it more versatile for everyone to use. There could be mixed use in certain situations but, for example not on the downhill flow trails. Nutting questioned if the bike trail allowed for two lanes. Duncanson said the bike park perimeter trail is intended to be a bit wider.

Duncanson said Sylvan Hill was acquired as a winter sports use area or a special use park. It was meant to be a broader scale park that serves a broad part of the community. In the City's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan under the definitions some of the terms that apply to Sylvan Hill are that it's an active use area which means it's designed primarily for organized or non-organized active recreation of one or more age groups and can have a primary feature or combination of features. As far as type of use being a special purpose park, the definition this type of park emphasizes is a chief feature or features which are unique to the municipality. Examples of this type include children's zoos, marinas, fairgrounds, or historical features. Often the service area of this type of park includes the entire municipality and is sometimes regional as well. Conversely neighborhood parks are defined as being designed to provide active and passive short term recreation activities. The service area is one quarter mile radius, serves from 500 to 2500 population, and commonly range from five to ten acres in size. When they started to consider expanding Sylvan's uses there was recognition that this was a 70 acre park in the City that was underutilized for broad community uses. The neighborhood has had the luxury of having it there for all these years. The Committee decided it was appropriate to optimize this resource while at the same time retaining as much of the existing uses as possible. Nutting questioned if the trail conception accommodated winter biking. Duncanson said it may be a possibility but that is not a primary target at this time. That could cause more conflicts with the snowshoeing and cross country skiing. Also some of these trails would be a little steep for snow bikes. Oberbeck said some people at the public information session had been to Copper Harbor and were impressed about how the different users could co-exist. Duncanson said the Committee needs to be sure they are comfortable in moving forward with the design-build that they approved at last month's meeting. They have to decide if the design is responsive to the concerns of the neighbors and this should move forward or if there needs to be a slowing down and re-examination. Neal questioned if there has there been any financial support offered toward the project. Block said they had opened a project fund with the Community Foundation and have been awarded three grants totaling \$150,000. Neal said this project has been discussed in several meetings. He feels they have taken the right approach in considering everyone's concerns and addressing this emerging sport and believes this is something that will enhance activity and appeal to a broader range of people. It will bring people in to Wausau and improves quality of life so he supports it. Nutting said he leans heavily on staff's expertise and what works well for enhancing and preserving utilization. He felt it was helpful to know the difference between this 70 acre park versus a small park created for a particular housing community. This is a regional park that benefits the entire City as well as outlying areas. **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Nutting to keep moving forward with the new design, give staff the ability to move on, and keep the public informed. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Riverside Park Bike Polo Court – Discussion and Possible Action on Converting an Existing Parking Lot to a Bike Polo Court – Knotek said staff had been meeting with members of the bike polo group to find a site for their activities. They found that the south parking lot at Riverside Park would work well. The Department has almost a complete set of hockey dasher boards that could be repurposed to be used around the perimeter of the parking lot. After discussions staff would like to approach this on a one year trial basis to see if there is adequate utilization for the Department to maintain a facility like this and make sure there are no problems with the neighbors which he does not anticipate. Carlson showed a video about bike polo. He said it is like horse polo on bicycles and there are 237 clubs in America. Their club has 30 members and meets twice a week. He feels the club will get bigger if there was a designated place with boards. It is a growing sport and people are able to buy bike polo specific equipment now. They could use the space at Riverside Park for hosting tournaments which would bring in people from all over the region. Neal thought it looked like a low maintenance type facility. Carlson said with the expansion of the River Edge Trail eventually connecting into Riverside this would mean a bike polo court along a bike path which is pretty exciting. Atwell said although the sport looks complicated the members are very open to letting new people try it. There are many various skill levels and they are very welcoming. Carlson said the club would have dues and could rent a porta-potty. For tournaments they would book the Riverside

shelter. He said that most of the members bike to the venue. Gisselman thanked the bike polo people for coming and showing their support. **Motion** by Neal, second by Nutting to dedicate the south parking lot at Riverside Park for bike polo and review at the end of season. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

New Position Request - Discussion and Possible Action on Requesting a Full Time Management Position – Duncanson said there has been growth affecting the Department including the riverfront development, Athletic Park, Rivers Edge Trail, the 400 Block, etc. The Department was given an additional labor position to help with this work. Going into 2017 staff has identified the need for a management position. When a foreman retired a couple years ago the position was left vacant for budget reasons and additional tasks and responsibilities were given to other managers. As there is more change and growth in facilities and more demands at Athletic Park, Sunnyvale softball, Nine Mile, Sports Complex, the 400 Block, etc. the Department finds that facility managers are supervising maintenance and maintenance supervisors are supervising facilities which is not working well. This has been a long term trend and needs to be addressed. Duncanson discussed the organizational chart and the decrease of management and supervisors over time. The Department has done everything it can to improve its efficiency but cannot do any more. With emphasis in both the City and County on quality of life, recreation opportunity, sports tourism, and special events the Department has had to shift more people into doing that kind of work. Supervising employees has changed tremendously and supervisors now spend more time on pay for performance, developing progress plans, setting goals and objectives, training individuals, ranking and rating them. With the Organizational Culture program there is more of an administrative load, a much greater supervisory load, and there are many more facilities. Duncanson isn't sure what the position is going to be yet. Staff is working with the County Employee Resource Department and reviewing its overall organization. Quite a few retirements will be taking place in the next couple years and there will be a huge loss in institutional knowledge. Neal said they sure haven't been asking the Department to do less. It's growing, it's a priority, it's quality of life and an important aspect of the City. There is not a lot of room to save money but there is all kinds of room to add work. He approves of any needs they have organizationally to meet the need. Oberbeck agrees. **Motion** by Neal, second by Gisselman to approve the additional management position. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Brockmeyer Park – Report on Plan Development for JoJo's Jungle and Associated Facilities – Staff had met with Hoerter last week and he has scoped the project as far as the primary pieces. There will not be a splash pad but there will be a very low volume water course where children can open/close gates, change the course of water, and pump the water to make it work. Staff has advised Hoerter that it is time for him to engage a professional design firm so he is proceeding in that direction.

Irrigation Water Rates – Progress Report on Staff Efforts to Reduce Use of Water For Irrigation – Duncanson said staff is in discussions with fountain and irrigation companies about technology uses to conserve water.

Recreation Program Activities – Report on Winter Recreation Program Activities – Duncanson said the winter recreation programs have finished due to unseasonably warm weather and rain.

Project Update

Memorial Park Pool – The project is approximately 70% complete. The majority of the work remaining is pool decking, pool plastering, slide installation and other exterior items which will be completed once the weather warms up. Nutting is interested in historical type plaques at pools.

Athletic Park Phase 2 – The project is quickly coming to a close, the buildings will be substantially complete by March 30th. Ballfield repairs that include turf work and warning track repairs will occur prior to the season home opener on June 3rd.

Future Agenda Items – Airport theme at Alexander Park, Brockmeyer Park updates, tour of Athletic Park

Next Regular Meeting – Monday, April 4, 2016 at 5:15pm at Board Room, City Hall

Adjourn - **Motion** by Nutting, second by Gisselman to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. **Motion carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.