

DRAFT
CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: November 7, 2016 at 4:30p.m. Location: Board Room, City Hall

Members Present: Joe Gehin, Gary Gisselman, Tom Neal, David Nutting, Pat Peckham (c)

Others Present: Bill Duncanson-Director, Dan Fiorenza-Park and Recreation Manager, Mayor Robert Mielke, Becky McElhaney-Councilperson District 6, Elizabeth Field-Wausau River District, Logan Wenger-WSAU, Brad Bodner, Steve Miller

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 – Becky McElhaney, Councilperson from District 6 said she represents many residents in Riverview who would like the ice rinks back. She said there was a statement this past summer that the Wausau School District facilities indicated they preferred not to have ice rinks at Riverview School and at this point they can't find anyone in the District to corroborate that. She said that Steve Miller has spoken to Andy Place, the current principle at Riverview, and he requests the ice back. Miller has spoken to other principals both former and current who said there was no indication from school administration that they did not want ice at these schools. So it's kind of a conundrum to her where that came from because they have people denying that ever happened. She asks if there is any way to get the ice rinks back. As a community member they always try to market their community and as a Council they continue to work on how they can get their community to be marketable. They have done neighborhood pools which were a great cost but they felt that was great for the quality of life and a great pulling point for Wausau so that is all great and they should also do winter ice rinks. It is disproportionate to pools in the terms of cost, it helps school kids with obesity, school kids can use it during the day, there are families and kids that would much rather walk to the ice rink in late afternoons, evenings and school breaks than get in the car and go to the 400 Block. She asks that Committee look into bringing the ice rinks back.

Brad Bodner thanked the members for their service. He said he moved to Wausau because of the development of the park and recreation programs. He moved to the Riverview area specifically because of the neighborhood and the ice skating area. In the spring he went to principal and asked if he could do improvements to the rinks himself and was informed they might not have ice rinks. He has found nothing but positives so far of having skating at Riverview School and it needs to stay. He felt there were some complexities with having a parks department facility on school property but the two can work well together and they already have good support from the school which is not against it in any way. He spoke to Andy Place this morning and he is not against having ice there. Bodner said the area already has level grounds, lighting, a warming house, ample parking, and water access so the continuation of ice skating would be minimal in cost. Bodner said that Principal Place has expressed some concerns about the facility in general and one of them is safety because ice in schools is an issue. He has lost a significant amount of playground due to the expansion of the 4K buildings. The Riverview facility only has so much property there and with the expansion of the building there is significant playground that is gone. It is an appropriate concern and in the past they had two areas for skating. One was for hockey with boards and one was for recreational skating. He has requested that we reduce that to one sheet of ice that can be shared. The principal has expressed concern about the height of the boards because kids like to go and hide behind the boards. If the boards are the only reason not to have skating Bodner said he was fine with not having boards and he spoke to the principal about dramatically reducing them and mainly having boards behind the net area. He said Place thought those were a great solution. Another issue was about how long the boards remained up. Last year the boards were not taken down until late spring and there was some damage done to the grounds from vehicles. With much smaller boards they would be easier to remove and could be carried if they were under two feet tall. Bodner said he would modify the boards and would help in any way he could to make this move forward. He hopes the rink can continue and felt it would be a shame to let them go without fighting to keep them.

Steve Miller said his history goes back to 1982 and he has been around ice and the ice business in the Wausau community since then. He had conversations with Boden and others in the neighborhood and came up with items in a handout he distributed titled SCORE - Save Community Outdoor Rinks for Everyone. He asks what it is that the Park and Recreation Committee can do to keep as many ice surfaces available in Wausau as possible. He understands the importance of the 400 Block and it is a tremendous asset in terms of winter activity. Their main objective is to keep ice surfaces in Wausau to the greatest extent possible and he said his handout reflects what people have given to him over the last couple days. He along with Bodner and others appreciate what the Park Department does and he knows how full their hands are. He is

here to advocate for ice surfaces and echoes that in terms of quality of life. He thanked Committee for their time and said he would do whatever it took even flood the rink by hand if it would help.

Approval of Minutes – Motion by Neal, second by Gehin to approve the Park and Recreation Committee October 3rd, 2016 draft minutes with the correction that the 400 Block sign be described as an “internally” poster kiosk instead of a “backlit” poster kiosk. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 4-0.

Mayor Mielke and David Nutting arrive at 4:45 p.m.

Small Format Event Venues - Discussion and Possible Action on Small Format Event Venues Including Whitewater and Oak Island Parks – Neal said he is checking to see if the City owns any stages and if they are adjustable. Mayor Mielke said the stage idea goes back to Wausau SOUP and would contribute to the uniqueness of Wausau which he is in favor of. The only concerns he heard were about keeping the music toned down. Elizabeth Field from the Wausau River District said she and other event organizers have concluded that the best and most versatile stage would be 20x16 and 18 inches high. They are checking into scaffolding that would mimic the trestles behind the stage and are waiting on quotes. Field said they are working on a grant offered through the Community Foundation for funding the stage. Originally they thought around twelve thousand dollars would cover the cost but it may be more around twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars depending on the materials. Wisconsin Public Service had told her a temporary stage would be fine because it needs to be able to be moved for access to the workings of the dam. Field said musicians would bring in their own lights and sound. Neal thought the higher estimate Field mentioned was beyond what kind of stage is needed there. He sees the total cost more in the ten thousand to topping off at fifteen to seventeen thousand dollar range. Neal said there are two different stage ideas, the one at the library plaza would be seasonal and could happen right away in 2017. The other permanent stage at Oak Island would take more planning and fundraising. Field mentioned that they were concerned with the temporary nature of the stage in terms of writing the grant. It has to be clear that it is going to be there year after year. They hope the City would be willing to store the stage if their group took it apart. She is looking into the possibility of having donated café tables and chairs on the stage for people to eat their lunch when it’s not being used by musicians. They are also thinking of adding a screen to the back of stage for bands to project up-lighting and maybe the library would also be interested in using the screen and stage. Duncanson felt eighteen inches high was a good height for the library plaza stage. WPS has to have access with a large crane to get underneath the Scott Street Bridge. They have to be able to put a big beam in place in case of a flood event. If the stage isn’t too big there should be room. Duncanson thought someone should talk with Wausau Benefits about the parking lot to make sure that it would be okay for this use otherwise events would have to utilize other parking. Neal said this stage area would support small events that would attract up to 40 or 60 people. Field said the jazz series is planned for Sunday evenings and Open Streets would be on a Sunday so those should not interfere during work days. Duncanson said the Wausau Kayak/Canoe calendar should be checked for any potential conflicts. Duncanson said staff reviewed a location for the stage at Oak Island proposed by Tom Neal that would be near the restroom facing towards the main shelter. They looked at the need to access the stage for parking and to bring in musical gear and for handicapped accessibility. Staff did a cost estimate on a permanent 20x20 stage about a maximum of two feet off the ground. The simplest design would be a monolithic concrete stage and power could be run from the restroom to support it. The cost would be around \$14,000 and of that \$2,500 is non-stage related to meet ADA requirements. This does not count the cost of a cover. This is targeted for typical activity of around 100 to 150 spectators. There are some scheduling limitations because of existing uses in the area. Youth baseball is heavy Monday through Thursday evenings from May through July 4th. There are a couple of special events like First Night of Summer and the Blues Fest. There is also the skateboard park, tennis courts, playground, fisherman, and other general park users plus the shelter reservations. Parking very close is somewhat limited on this site also. Neal felt a roof on the stage was very important to create a sense of place there and also to cover equipment in case of rain. Nutting asked if it in a floodplain. Duncanson said the area has been modified to be much more flood resistant than years ago. Gisselman asked if there was any consideration given to establishing something permanent on Fern Island. Neal said power was out there but it did not have other available amenities that Oak Island has like an existing restroom, playground, grill, dumpsters, or sidewalks. Gisselman asked about Stewart Park. Neal said the residences are close there and that venue lends itself to more sedate purposes. Gisselman asked if events at the shelter could go on simultaneously with events on the Oak Island stage. Duncanson said it depends on the size of the events. Any event of any size would conflict with parking. Neal said that stage could be a fringe venue for the Blues Festival. This item will be put on the agenda for next time. Gisselman wanted to know how much the Park Department will be involved with maintaining these two additional venues.

Ice Rinks - Discussion and Possible Action on Winter 2016-2017 Ice Rink Locations and Operation – Duncanson said that the two proposed ice rinks for this winter would be at the 400 Block and Marathon Park. People are not recreationally ice

skating as much and to encourage people to skate it is being made more of a social situation where this is music and possible concessions. Hockey is the only other skating and it predominates in some areas. In working with the School District and with the reconstruction occurring at Riverview School, Larry Cihlar, head of building and grounds, asked park staff if there was way we could not do the rink there. Their playground is not that large and got smaller with the reconstruction. Part of the thought was in redoing what was left of the playground area because the rink kills the grass every year and the school district hasn't invested money in bringing the grass back every year. They haven't had that great of a playground and they were looking at investing in the balance of their playground so it would be in better shape the rest of the summer. So through discussions with him and with the knowledge that Riverview school used to have a program where faculty and parents would help get kids in skates and utilize the rink during school hours but that program has been gone for four or five years, the school actually prohibits the kids from going out on the ice during school hours, staff thought it was time to walk away from this and that was our basis for recommending not going back to Riverview this winter. In the three prior years before last year the rinks averaged about \$10,600 in costs and for the amount of use they receive, it is one of the more heavily subsidized activities. Peckham said he felt the John Marshall rink was lightly used and didn't think it would be missed very much, staff said Brockmeyer was not used much, but Riverview has a constituency so couldn't they have that one for another year and see what happens. Duncanson said there are mixed messages from the Principal at Riverview from last spring to now. Their building and grounds individual has been consistent in saying it would be better if we didn't do ice at Riverview so he needs to check with the School District. Peckham didn't think the Committee had time to wait and come back and decide and thought if Committee was interested they could offer to put a rink there and find out if the School District is okay with that or not.

McElhaney said what she hears is interesting because she hears the totally opposite of what is being said. She hears that Larry Cihlar was not against that, the principals said they were never told by the school districts administration that they were to drop the ice program that that was clear from three different people. She didn't know Andy Place's stand last year but right now he is saying he would like the ice. She thinks it's important at Riverview School they use that ice and there are constituents here who are saying they would be willing to make boards for this program. She doesn't think the Committee needs to worry that skating is dwindling because sometimes they have to do what the neighborhood wants. They can't back away when there are parents stating they would be willing to help because they have been doing that a little bit. She has had other issues where a neighbor has offered their help on things and were told they didn't need it. She feels strongly on this because she is a Riverview district parent and her kids used it every day and she thinks they would see a lot of use in it. She questioned if thirty five hundred dollars is too much and if the neighborhood had to get a fundraiser going or what could they do to make this happen. Nutting was curious as to how many people will actually use it and if it was worth the money to put it up and what kind of commitment would the neighborhood do to encourage its use. He uses the 400 Block rink and Marathon Park indoor rink. Even though the 400 Block is well maintained it is kind of dicey at times because the sun is on it. McElhaney said that is what she is asking Committee and she can't ask everyone if they will use it and when. She has had numerous calls requesting this since they have found out in the winter guide that it wasn't going to be here. There is a parent here stating that he would do whatever they needed him to do to get this program back out in Riverview. She doesn't know about calls to other districts but believes there is interest shown. She has to fight for her residents who are asking her clearly for the ice rink back. The 400 Block is nice it has music and lights but that means parents have to get in car and take them down and find parking. This is a neighborhood place where kids can walk to. She understands winter is dicey that's what people live with in Wisconsin. She is asking Committee what they require from them to make this a go this year. Neal was a little concerned about the mixed use of both hockey skaters and recreational skaters on the ice at the same time. He wondered if they would have to designate certain days for certain uses. Also the Committee could state its support for a rink at Riverview School but it is the schools property and their decision as to what happens there.

Boden said when there was ice at John Marshall School the recreational skaters and hockey skaters shared certain times during the day with each other and that was just worked out among the residents and worked well. He did not believe it would be a reason to not have the ice. The less structure that is there the better just simply to make sure they have the ice. Duncanson said the Marathon Park rink will be available as a pond hockey venue. It doesn't have boards but low, small goals so there are no slap shots. It's safer and more low key. Duncanson said they cannot do two rinks at Riverview School anymore because with the construction the playground has shrunk too much. He now has mixed messages from the school district so he has to find out what they would like and who makes the decision. Staff had been told it would probably be better if the rink was not there anymore. Miller said he had two conversations with Andy Place and talked with a retired principal from John Marshall and another current principal from another existing school in the district. Between Andy and his former colleagues there has been no directive given to them from the buildings and grounds person about taking ice out. He said Andy Place gave him permission to tell Committee that and he apologized for not being here

tonight or they could hear it from him. Miller said he doesn't represent the district anymore; he represents the interest of the neighbors and he has had a long positive history in that neighborhood. He would be happy to work with staff and flood and scrape the ice. He also said that when he worked for the district that the building and grounds person, Dennis Wald answered to the principals. He is not sure if that has changed with the change in leadership at MOB. **Motion** by Neal, second by Nutting that Committee voice their support for having a rink to the extent that its feasible at Riverview this season and to further determine if there are any other roadblocks that we can't control that would make that not happen. Peckham said so barring anything else, barring a flat refusal by the school district we are saying let's do this. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

McElhaney, Miller and Boden left at 5:45 p.m.

400 Block Event Sign – Report and Discussion on the Proposed 400 Block Event Sign – Peckham said that the original location on Scott Street and Third Street is pretty much off the table because they are thinking about moving it over onto the plaza area. Duncanson said the River District staff had done a space needs analysis over time and figured out when the majority of events are happening, their overlaps, lead time, etc. They figured out what the basic need is for the display area and after that the rest of it is just technicalities like what it looks like, how it's lit, and some rules on how it gets used. Field said what they tend to get dropped off in their office is the classic 11 x 17 poster size. They figured if they plan for that size and about three posters at a time, the sign would be scaled nicely to the size where they want to place it on the terrace area and it creates a real community intimacy in that space. A few details are still being discussed and she hopes this will happen in early 2017. Peckham said if they would like additional ideas on how the sign should look they could send out more Request for Proposals.

Field and Mielke left at 5:50 p.m.

East Riverfront Redevelopment Project – Discussion and Possible Action on Park Design and Report and Discussion on River Edge Trail Construction – Duncanson discussed some of the park playground and exercise equipment. He discussed the paved multi-use area and the Adirondack area. He said the net climber shown has an overhead enclosed suspension bridge and a double twist slide. The climbing wall will likely be concrete with a bunch of holes in it so that the climbing routes can be changed and it would be a managed area with a fence around it. Duncanson discussed the challenge course, looped walkway, seating area, and landscaping. He said Aspirus may be interested in sponsoring some of the facility so there would be naming opportunities for them. Gisselman hoped there would be enough parking. Duncanson said they assume some people will use the Rivers Edge Trail to get there, others will drive and there is some parking by the WOW building. Duncanson said Request for Proposals will be going out for the play equipment. Peckham thought the climbing apparatuses would be popular. Duncanson said there are also small boulders for children to climb on. Photos of the current east riverfront development were shown. Work is progressing on walkways, terrace areas, the channel area, and seating areas. He said it is hoped the trail segment from Third Street to River Drive and from the Eye Clinic up to the Barker Stewart Island Bridge will open soon. There were photos of the landscaping, bridge work, irrigation, and lighting work, seating area, bank treatments, the wharf area, plaza area, and flagpoles. If the weather holds they may get the first course of asphalt on more of the trail otherwise they would have to go with non-asphalt for this winter.

Project Update

Schulenburg Pool – Pool shell is 80% complete, pool plumbing is 90% complete, bath house masonry work and roof is complete, mechanical equipment is being installed, interior carpentry work is ongoing.

Sylvan Hill Bike Park – The first on site meeting with Progressive Trail Design is scheduled for November 28th.

Stewart Park – Leaning masonry columns on 10th Street have been enclosed in plywood forms and counter weighted to prevent toppling. Funding for repairing/rebuilding is not yet identified.

JoJo's Jungle Adaptive Playground – Report and Discussion on Design and Fundraising – Duncanson said staff is reviewing a set of preliminary plans from Rettler Associates. Staff is looking at how it ties in with the park functions like what they are doing, what the City is doing, where they intersect and staff is making sure it's a complete set of plans.

Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – Progress Report and Discussion on the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – Comments have been received from Committee members, public, staff, and interested parties. Staff is currently scheduling a meeting with Ayres Associates to review and evaluate comments. It's a matter of incorporating the comments and turning it into a final product to bring back for review.

Future Agenda Items – 400 Block sign, stage, update on airport theme at Alexander Park

Next Regular Meeting – Monday, December 5, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room, City Hall

Adjourn - **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Neal to adjourn at 6:30 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.