

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: February 1, 2016 at 5:15pm Location: Board Room, City Hall

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

Others Present: Bill Duncanson–Director, Peter Knotek–Assistant Director, Pat Peckham–City Pages

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 – none brought forward

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Nutting, second by Neal to approve the Park and Recreation Committee December 7th, 2015 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Bird City Designation - Discussion and Possible Action to Forward a Resolution to the Common Council Supporting International Migratory Bird Day – Duncanson said the process has changed slightly because this year the Bird City designation reviewers are asking that municipalities have their governing bodies pass a resolution and proclamation separately instead of together. The language is pretty much the same except for the dates of International Migratory Bird Day. Duncanson requested that Committee direct staff to have the resolution prepared and taken to Council in advance of International Migratory Bird Day. Staff will coordinate with the Mayor’s Office as to his proclamation so everything happens on the same evening. Oberbeck recommends instead of coming back from the Mayor’s Office to the Park and Recreation Committee that it just begins at this Committee and goes there on an annual basis. **Motion** by Mielke, second by Nutting to approve and have staff forward the resolution for Council and Mayor to approve. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Irrigation Water Rates – Discussion and Possible Action on the Impacts of Increased Rates for Water Used for Irrigation or Fountains – Duncanson said the City had not adjusted their water rates for a considerable period of time and went to the Public Service Commission for rate adjustments. The Public Service Commission is doing a conservation mode in Wisconsin and has recommended that cities have an ‘irrigation’ class of rates which the City of Wausau adopted. Many of the types of customers getting the biggest hit from that type of rate are public entities. Duncanson gave prior year water rates and the increased water rates. The 400 Block has the greatest use because the fountain water goes to waste. When the fountain was designed re-circulation costs were looked at but it was much less expensive not to do that with the water rate history at the time. The majority of the cost then was \$1.16 per hundred cubic feet and it has jumped to \$3.00 per hundred cubic feet with no discount for large use so that cost has almost tripled. For water at the 400 Block in 2013 the Department spent \$15,560, in 2014 it spent \$14,006, and in 2015 it spent \$55,342. This bill was unexpected and the rate change came during the year after budgets had been set. The amount has been forwarded to the Finance Director as part of the 400 Block fund expenses that staff is tracking. Staff is looking at conservation measures and is reviewing the fountain programming, the hours of operation and the size of the jets. Duncanson doesn’t think usage can be cut by two thirds to get back to the previous expenditures without significantly reducing the effectiveness of the fountain for Wausau’s image. There are other locations impacted like Athletic Park but the dollars aren’t anywhere near as large. On the County side the Sports Complex took a big hit so staff is looking at the possibility of irrigating with river water. Staff is also looking into irrigating the east river front development with river water because there already is an intake for the river water going through the waterfall on the 1st Street Bridge. Nutting questioned if irrigation happened automatically even if it was raining. Duncanson said some of the systems are clocks and moisture systems could be added in which may save in the long run. Oberbeck questioned about controlling the fountain remotely. Neal questioned if the main corporate donor of the fountain would donate towards some of the water costs otherwise the City will have to take conservation steps and accept any negative impact to its image. The purpose of the fountains was to have something in a public space to draw the eye and activity. Is it the activity the City is interested in, do they want people to use it for hours as an ad hoc water park or is it more for come and go type activity? The sponsors may have wanted an interactive feature and the interaction doesn’t have to completely stop just be mitigated to a shorter time. It’s great for the people that enjoy it as a splash pad but some people might prefer to

enjoy it just as a fountain. He thought staff should make the operation more intermittent with more significant lapses in between during the day. Oberbeck said that it would be more of a special event when it is running. At night with the lights it's more for the ambience. Nutting is in favor of starting the fountain later in the day and shutting it down earlier at night. He noted that it should always be shut down during 400 Block concerts. Oberbeck said right now the expense is coming out of the parks budget even though it is going to the 400 Block fund. Duncanson said this has been forwarded as part of the 400 Block fund which is a separate expense fund. The Department had some vacancies toward the end of the year but this would wipe out anything that would be left in its budget. Neal requested that staff make a scenario for review that shows the steps of conservation would take to make the water usage budget neutral. Oberbeck said that would cut sixty percent of its running. Neal said that the other part would hopefully be getting some assistance from the fountain donor. Duncanson said before he would ask for that he would need to know if the money came from their Foundation or not because generally Foundations don't pay operation costs so he would like a motion to do that. Gisselman would be hesitant to do that he would rather see the conservation steps taken. Nutting agreed if they cut five or six hours of operation every day and add some breaks during the day that should help significantly. Duncanson said that staff will continue to look at the alternatives and should be able to give Committee some projections on reductions. Gisselman and Oberbeck would like to see the 400 Block revenues and expenses from 2015.

Sylvan Hill Bike Park – Report on Developing a Final Design for the Sylvan Hill Bike Park – Duncanson said there is \$20,000 budgeted towards the next step in design for the bike park. After discussing how to do this with a variety of firms, staff feels that this is best done as a design-build. Design-build is pretty much the industry standard in doing this type of work. The Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) has been moving forward on fundraising since receiving approval on the initial plan and has been having a significant amount of success. They may have enough money available to do an initial stage of construction possibly even this year. Staff will be meeting with them and converting this to a design-build rather than a design then build because it will save on design funds and result in a better onsite job.

Brockmeyer Park – Report on Plan Development for JoJo's Jungle and Associated Facilities – no update

Alexander Park – Report on Request By Neighborhood Group to Redevelop Alexander Park With an Airport Theme – Duncanson explained that the neighborhood group came up with the concept of updating the park using an airport theme. They would like to put pathways in the park that look like airport runways, have aviation themed play structures, convert the shelter into an older style hangar type building named "Alexander Field", and make an earth mound for kids to throw gliders from. Staff believes this is doable and with the ADA playground update program the City has \$37,500 allocated for the park which the neighborhood group can use as seed money for the project. If the current jet at the VFW goes in the corner of the park it would be elevated so people can't get at it. Staff likes the theme idea, the neighborhood involvement, only one or two trees need to be removed, the educational component, and it works in with updating the park. Staff recommends the physical use features are dealt with first which are the play equipment and shelter. The runways and jet would follow. The jet doesn't add to the park as far as physical activity but is something in the community that people would like to stay here. There is a process for that because right now it is on loan from the federal government to the VFW. Maintenance agreements would have to be transferred to the City and Duncanson doesn't know right now what those maintenance obligations involve. He said there is an Air Force National Guard unit that possibly could move the jet at no cost because they would use it as a training exercise. Merrill Iron and Steel has made bases for airplanes so elevating the jet is possible although cost would have to be considered. Nutting wondered if they would consider donating the base and having their name put on a plaque. Duncanson said the neighborhood group knows about the seed money and also that the department would have an active role in the design of it. Gisselman said he could see the park being turned into a little bit of a historic site sort of like an outdoor aviation museum which would highlight the great history that the airport did for the City.

East River Redevelopment Project – Report on Facility Design Progress – Visual graphics had been previously distributed. There are potential donors for the bridge, seating area, and Adirondack area. No one has stepped forward on the wharf however there is commitment on the part of the City to name a feature for the Sternberg's who donated a million dollars towards the Rivers Edge trail. There will also be subsequent donation opportunities for park features, and the restroom/concession building. All the components will be completed this year except for

the park and restroom/concession building. Oberbeck asked about estimates of cost. Duncanson did not have those he said he had looked at the technical aspect to make sure that parts of the design are functional and maintainable. It was already brought back that it will take a full time additional person plus a seasonal there.

Recreation Program Activities – Report on Winter Recreation Program Activities – Duncanson said the tubing hill got a late start but is operating. The 400 Block ice skating rink also opened late. The ice wasn't safe to use at Sunnyside for the pond hockey tournament so a large rink was built at Marathon Park. The warming house was placed there and that rink is available for the public to use. No more ice rinks will be built this year. The tubing hill is running into staffing issues after the college kids went back to school so there is recruitment going on again. On the County side, Nine Mile is in tough shape and only a few snowmobile trails are open.

Project Update

Memorial Pool – Interior finishing work continues on the bathhouse. Pool mechanical equipment (pumps, filters, boilers, etc.) are being installed in the mechanical room.

Athletic Park Phase 2 – All concrete block work is complete. Glulam beams are being installed at the 3rd base concession building. Electrical and plumbing installation continues throughout the project.

Wausau Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – Four firms (Ayres Associates, Rettler Corp., SEH and Stantec) submitted proposals for the City C.O.R.P. The selection committee consisting of David Oberbeck, Brad Lenz, William Duncanson and Peter Knotek selected Ayres Associates at a cost of \$30,306 to prepare the Wausau 2016-2020 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Wausau C.O.R.P. RFP Rankings – 1. Ayres \$30,306, 2. SEH Inc. \$24,000, 3. Rettler Corp. \$17,500, 4. Stantec \$48,190.

Future Agenda Items – Brockmeyer Park, water and 400 Block, bike polo

Next Regular Meeting – Monday, March 7, 2016 at 5:15pm at Board Room, City Hall. (Mielke will not be able to attend)

Adjourn - Motion by Gisselman, second by Mielke to adjourn at 6:20 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.