

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: March 6, 2017 at 3:00p.m. Location: Council Chambers, 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, Robert Mielke - Mayor, Elizabeth Field-Wausau River District

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 Comment for Items Appearing on the Agenda – Sarah Werth, John Hattenhauer, Dea Thao, Nicole Guenther, members of the Southeast Side Neighborhood group all spoke in support of changing the name of Alexander Park to Alexander Airport Park.

Approval of Minutes – **Motion** by Neal, second by Gisselman to approve the Park and Recreation Committee February 6, 2017 draft minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Alexander Park Renovation – Discussion and Possible Action on Renaming Alexander and Airport Parks – Peckham listed some suggestions he received from an informal Facebook survey. Jan Langlois opposes a name change for Airport Park and is fine with a name change for Alexander Park, three votes for leaving the name Alexander Park the same, one vote for Aviation Park, one vote for Alexander Aviation Park, one vote for Runway Park, one vote for Corsair Park, one vote for swapping the names of the two parks, and a couple of people voted to name it Alexander Airport Park. Duncanson gave history that back in 1955 three parks were pared out of Airport property. There were two Alexander brothers who created the airport and made a deal with the City that after five years of operating the airport the City would take it over. The Alexanders were recognized when the current Alexander Park was created because that park was closest to the terminal. Duncanson did not have history on how Airport Park was named. He said to avoid confusion between the two, parks staff recommends changing the name of Alexander Park to Alexander Field Park and not changing the name of Airport Park. The second alternative is to change the name of Alexander Park to Alexander Aviation Park and change the name of Airport Park to Airport Fields Park. Neal said he was in favor of changing the name of Alexander Park to Alexander Airport Park because the airport was called Alexander Airport. Also the neighborhood group has been very much involved in the restoration of the park and their wishes should be given a lot of weight. He felt Airport Park could be renamed Airport Sports Park to differentiate the two parks. Gisselman agreed with Alexander Airport Park and wondered if they could rename Airport Park something else. Nutting agreed with changing Alexander Park to Alexander Airport Park which is what the neighbors desire and also leaves the historical aspect of the Alexanders and their contribution to the community intact. He also agreed with changing the name of Airport Park to Airport Sports Park. **Motion** by Nutting, second by Neal to rename Alexander Park to Alexander Airport Park. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0. **Motion** by Nutting, second by Neal to rename Airport Park to Airport Sports Park. Motion carried by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Bird City Status - Discussion and Possible Action on International Migratory Bird Day Proclamation and Bird City High Flyer Status – Duncanson said the City had achieved Bird City Wisconsin status about five years ago. It had also achieved High Flyer status because the City did additional things to promote songbirds in the community. This year the Wausau Bird Club will celebrate May 20th as International Migratory Bird Day at Monk Gardens. The Mayor will make a proclamation and the resolution will be modified for 2017. Duncanson noted that the High Flyer status is in jeopardy because the City passed the feral cat ordinance. One of the things that Bird City Wisconsin is adamantly opposed to is supporting the feral cat in Bird City municipalities. Neal felt that the trap, neuter, release program was a way to mitigate cat populations. It's a long term effort but inaction only keeps the cat population growing. He did not believe that a trap and euthanize program was something that the City or many of its citizens would want to become a part of. He felt it was counterintuitive to hold something like the High Flyer status over the City when the City has a program that it is encouraging as an effort to reduce the feral cat population. He understands there is an economic aspect that the Bird City involves but the City has a reason for having the cat trap, neuter and release program. Peckham said he wasn't an expert on the trap, neuter, release program versus other methods, but he believes the Bird City Wisconsin people believe that the trap, neuter, release program is more damaging to birds to allow those cats to

continue. Nutting asked about the benefits of the High Flyer status. He understands people are going to be passionate about both animals. Duncanson said it's recognition in the birding community that the City cares about birds. Approximately 1 in 5 people are birders and it is a high dollar recreational pastime. Gisselman said he had voted against the trap, neuter, release program and at that time he thought there was going to be a report coming back to City Council. Neal questioned if the City's High Flyer status would be maintained if the City had no policy and the cats were left to run wild. Duncanson said his understanding is that if the trap, neuter and release program were not in place the City would retain the High Flyer status. Neal reiterated his previous position. **Motion** by Gisselman, second by Nutting to mark May 20, 2017 as International Migratory Bird Day in the City of Wausau and all citizens are encouraged to celebrate this observance and support efforts to protect and conserve migratory birds and their habitats in their community and the world at large. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.

Peckham said he would ask the chair of Public Health and Safety Committee that a report be given to City Council about the trap, neuter, and release program. In the future Neal said he would like a statement given to Bird City Wisconsin about the City's position.

Parks, Recreation and Forestry (PRF) Department Logo – Report and Discussion on the New PRF Department Logo – Duncanson said the Department's recent reorganization provides increased capabilities to manage and promote Wausau and Marathon County's high quality outdoor recreation lands, facilities and programs so the Department's focus has changed in recent years. Accordingly, the time has come to re-brand the Department to reflect its current role. The existing logo may speak to the natural attributes of the parks and forests but it doesn't speak to the broad variety of outdoor recreation opportunities that parks offer that support healthy and active lifestyles. With the increased emphasis on active outdoor recreation and sports tourism it is appropriate to brand the Department accordingly. The logo was discussed and a few minor critiques were made.

Athletic Park Parking Agreement – Report and Discussion on the Athletic Park Parking Agreement with Wilson-Hurd - Staff forwarded the parking agreement to Wilson-Hurd and was informed that Wilson-Hurd was in the process of being sold so it could not enter into an agreement at the time. There will be a new owner and it will be a lease purchase so for this year Wilson-Hurd will continue to be the general property manager. An agreement may happen this year however there are no promises for the future. The City had agreed to do a parking study of the area and with all of the improvements this needs to be done. A parking plan needs to be in place that reflects all of the land uses in the area.

Project Update – JoJo's Jungle - Duncanson reported that JoJo's Jungle is continuing on with fundraising. There's a question as to whether they will be able to start construction right after the planned ground breaking date. Schulenburg Pool - Interior electrical, mechanical and finishing work is ongoing. Completion of the pool is anticipated to resume in early April weather permitting. Alexander Park - Becher-Hoppe Associates is finalizing plans. The project will go out to bid on March 13th with bids due on April 4th. Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (C.O.R.P.) - The Wausau 2017- 2021 C.O.R.P. was approved by the City Council on February 14th and has been accepted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 400 Block Sign - Field reported that a design was selected and both of the sponsors approved of it. The final cost will be funded by the sponsors in full.

Future Agenda Items – dog park (Duncanson noted that the Department is very aware of the desire for a dog park but is currently working on many other projects at this time)

Next Regular Meeting – Monday, April 3, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall

Adjourn - **Motion** by Neal, second by Gehin to adjourn at 5:45 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Vote reflected as 5-0.