

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

August 5th, 2015

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, August 5th, 2015 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall Council Chambers.

Members Present: Mike Willman, Troy Pieper, Brian Artac, Jean Ravn, Dave Sukow

Members Excused Absent: Ben Debroux and Melissa Schroeder

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf

Others Present: Mayor Bill Bialecki, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Helene Ader and Jack Ader

**Motion Sukow, seconded by Artac to approve the minutes from the July 1st, 2015 meeting.

**Carried unanimously

**Motion Sukow, seconded by Ravn to approve the claims

**Carried unanimously

There was no public comment received.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss flower watering policy. Wendorf began the discussion by informing the Commission that if the watering responsibilities placed upon the department continue to increase they will need more help. The flower watering person can only water for 29 hours per week right now and the City handles watering Monday through Friday and the hanging flower basket committee handles the weekend duties and they pay for that on their own, along with the water. Mayor Bialecki requested the item to be on the agenda and said the flower baskets, planters, and gardens really add charm to the community and he mentioned that with the possibility of more areas to water he would support some additional help for the department to handle the growing duties. Mayor Bialecki cited the parking lot that was recently re-done behind First Street Coffee, as well as the green space to the east of the Center Ave Bridge as two new areas that will need to be watered. Mayor stated it might be an opportunity to blend the help of other departments to accomplish additional watering. Helene and Jack Ader were in attendance and granted floor privilege to speak and they informed the Commission how much support they have received throughout the community. They also mentioned that with the 21 plots around town, in addition to the hanging flower baskets, they may have over-extended what can be routinely handled. Administrator Johnson suggested hiring another part time person to be under the Parks & Recreation Department to handle extra watering duties, but if/when applicable that person can help other departments out and potentially perform some maintenance at the "Fair Grounds." Chairperson Willman asked the Aders if we continue to perform the watering during the weekdays would they be able to sustain the weekends. They said that arrangement will work. The Commission then asked Wendorf to adjust the budget request to handle any additional watering for 2016 and summarize that request at next month's meeting.

The next item on the agenda was to begin preliminary discussions on the 2016 Operating Budget. With a number of new Commission members going through their first budget process, Wendorf asked if there were any initial questions. He then went through the budget page by page and explained everything in great detail so everyone understood. In reviewing the Pool Budget Revenues, Commissioner Pieper asked if we were going to work with Merrill Transit to provide a pool pass that included a bus pass. Wendorf stated it was definitely worth looking into and has been discussed during the pool decision making process. City Transit doesn't operate on the weekends so it would be week days only. No action was taken and this item will be on the September agenda as an action item.

The next item on the agenda was to re-visit 2016 Capital Budget. Wendorf wanted to clarify one of the requests that were discussed at the July meeting. Wendorf stated that he had an opportunity to get a more firm price on the ADA Lawsuit work that will be required. He stated that the original number he requested (\$80,000) would be sufficient to cover the work required to comply. He stated that the asphalt paths and rest stations alone were nearing \$60,000.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss progress of the Bierman Family Aquatic Center. Wendorf informed the commission that construction was going very well and that Miron is right on schedule. Wendorf stated that footings and foundation walls are finished for the building and concrete was poured for the floor of the deep well area on Tuesday. Walls are being formed up for concrete on the deep well for the rest of the week and will be poured within a few days. Wendorf stated that they are going to pour from the deep end to the splash area in that order. Wendorf stated that thus far it has been a very seamless process working with Miron, WTI, and Clark Dietz.

The next item on the agenda was to review/approve a resolution supporting a grant application to the WDNR for Urban Forestry. Wendorf stated that they revised their policy this year and the resolution of support from each community must accompany the grant application (due October 1st) in order to be considered. Wendorf stated he would like to ask for a \$10,000 grant (50% match) to be more aggressive with our boulevard tree plantings. This will go a long ways towards restocking our boulevards, especially following the pre-emptive Ash removal and the storms of past years.

The next item on the agenda was board report. Wendorf apologized to the Commission as the board report was omitted from the packets and he informed them he would mail them out tomorrow. Commissioner Willman stated that verbal would be more than adequate. Wendorf summarized a busy, yet very productive summer up to this point and reported that all events, activities, and projects were going very well.

****Motion Sukow, seconded by Artac to approve the verbal report from Wendorf**

****Carried unanimously**

The next regularly scheduled Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will be Wednesday, September 2nd, 2015 at 4:15 p.m. at the Smith Center. Wendorf informed the Commission he talked with Miron and would like to begin the meeting with a tour of the Aquatic Center construction. Wendorf stated that he will have enough helmets and safety gear for the Commission at the meeting to enter the site.

There was no public comment.

****Motion Sukow, seconded by Ravn to adjourn at 5:38 p.m.**

**Carried unanimously

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Recording Secretary