

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

January 2, 2013

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, January 2, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall in the Council Chambers.

Members Present: Mike Willman, Ralph Sturm, Dorwin Harris, Dan Novitch, Steve Hintze, Anne Caylor and Brian Artac

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

Visitors: Dave Johnson, Fred Heider, Gene Bebel, Kandy Peterson, Vince Conrad, Mike Wels, Judy Woller, Chris Malm, Mage Lerch, Dennis Lerch, Mary Bauman, Brenda Mamer, Ruth Ann Markewycz, Sue Weith, Jan Leistelow, Larry Hampel, David Hayes, Joanne Kirby, Steve Hass, Mayor Bill Bialecki, City Administrator Dave Johnson, Dewy Pfister, Steve Dahm, Sharon Anderson, Christine Vorpapel, Janet Thompson & daughter. Others came in after the meeting started.

***Motion by Caylor, seconded by Artac, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Hintze, seconded by Willman, to approve the claims.

***Carried Unanimously.

***Motion by Willman, seconded by Artac, to open the meeting into a public hearing for the 2013 – 2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Chairperson Novitch asked Mr. Heider from NCWRPC to summarize the process for the public. Chairperson Dan Novitch invited any of the public to come up and speak on behalf of the 2013 – 2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan.

**Sue Weith, an avid bike rider and walker, is in favor of the plan.

**Dave Johnson is concerned where the money will be coming from for the River Bend Trail, doesn't feel it should be paid for out of tax dollars. Mr. Johnson felt that the meeting was not advertised enough for the public to be aware of what the public hearing was on.

**Gene Bebel is for the 2013 – 2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan and is also on the committee for the River Bend Trail and explained that the committee is not looking at the City for money for the trail, but instead will be kicking off a one million dollar fund raising project for the trail.

**Mayor Bill Bialecki has concerns with the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan. The Mayor brought up some concerns about the trails in place now in the city and doesn't feel they are probably maintained. Mayor Bialecki would also like improvements to City Forest stating great potential. Mayor Bialecki also said we should do all we can do to improve our athletic fields. Mayor Bialecki felt that the meeting was not advertised enough and encouraged the January public hearing to be postponed until February giving the community more time to read and look over the 2013 – 2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan.

**Judy Wollor is in favor of the plan and feels that the River Bend Trail would enhance the City of Merrill drawing more people into the community.

**Christine Vorpapel stated that she was unaware of the meeting or where to view the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan.

***Motion by Caylor, seconded by Hintze to close the public hearing regarding the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The next item on the agenda was to review/approve 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan. Caylor questioned how long the public notice was posted. Wendorf stated that it went on the City web page 3 weeks ago. Artac questioned what more can be done to make the public aware of the meeting. Hintze stated that the public hearing was already advertised on the radio, newspaper and also a public notice was posted. Caylor stated that she feels the public was uninformed of where they could read or download the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan. Caylor questioned if it would be a problem to delay the approval of the plan for another month. Wendorf stated that he spoke with the DNR and as long as the plan is being actively worked on it should be okay, but would need to be resolved in February.

***Motion by Caylor, seconded by Artac, to postpone the approval of the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan until the February meeting and also reconvene into a public hearing at that time.

Caylor stated that necessary steps need to be taken so that people know where to view the plan. Hintze stated that it was already advertised in the newspaper, radio and at the City Hall. Caylor stated that a reference needs to be made to where the plan can be viewed. Willman stated that plans from the 2009-2012, that were not completed, should be incorporated into the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan.

***Carried, Sturm, Harris, Artac, Hintze, Caylor.

***Voted against the motion: Willman.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss Dog Park development project. Wendorf stated that they have \$12,500 that was budgeted for the dog park development project. Wendorf stated that there are several different areas that they are looking into for the project but are undecided at this time where the park will be located. Willman questioned how this is being presented to the public. Wendorf stated that he has been talking to a group of people that originally came to him with the idea of the dog park. Hintze questioned what the time line on this project was, a couple of months or will it be a year before this project is completed. Wendorf stated that he would like to have most of it complete by the summer of 2013. Harris stated that before a location is picked out, a design of the park should be done first so that there is an idea of how big the dog park will be, and then chose a location to fit the size of the park.

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports by Wendorf. Wendorf thanked everyone for coming to the public hearing and also for the involvement in the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan. Wendorf also stated that this is a draft for guidance only and not everything in the plan will be completed.

***Motion by Willman, seconded by Artac, to approve the monthly report given by Wendorf.

***Carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2013 at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers at the City Hall. A public hearing for the 2013-2018 Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan will be held prior to the meeting.

Public Comment: Dave Johnson stated that the 2013-2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan will be posted on the front page of the city's website. Gene Bebel expressed his concern for the outcome of the meeting stating that he drove a couple of hundred miles to be here to have the decision postponed for another month.

***Motion by Caylor, seconded by Hintze, to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary