

- PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

February 6, 2013

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, February 6, 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, Kandy Peterson, Phynette Conrad, Brenda Mamer, Goergjett Hoffmann, Allen Hoffmann, Samantha Pinego, Bonnie Noonan, Mary Ball, Steven Roets, Darrell Barker, Jack Ader, David Hayes, Dale Rasmussen, Sharon Anderson, Marty Anderson, Judy Woller, Mile Wilson, June Barker, Christine Vorpapel, Dr. Steve Dahm and a few other came in at the start of the meeting.

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

***Carried unanimously.

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

**Sturm questioned what the \$1,500.00 was for. Wendorf stated it was for the wedding show at the Smith Center.

**Caylor questioned what the tree keeper subscription was and how many free trees we received for that amount of money. Wendorf stated it was for the online subscription for forestry management software and no free trees.

***Carried Unanimously.

***Motion by Caylor, seconded by Willman, 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.

**Christine Vorpapel, stated she met with Mr. Wendorf prior to the meeting, state there was a couple typo's in the brochure, is in favor of the River Bend Trail, would like to see Normal Park as a rental park because it is very hard to plan anything there with no reservations being taken. Would like to see the city and Lincoln County work together as far as the grand stands go.

**Bonnie Noonan, is in favor of the River Bend Trail but does not want to see snowmobiles on it and does not want it lighted. Is opposed to the dog park in the city limits, wants to know who will be responsible for the dog park.

**Steve Dahm, is in favor of the River Bend Trail, promotes exercise in the community, supported fully by medical staff, city needs to showcase what we have. Will not cost the city any money, all funds done by grants, federal funding and fundraising.

**Steve Roets in favor of the River Bend Trail. High School Senior and he feels Merrill needs these things if in future years they want to bring back some of the college students for a great community to live in.

**Sharon Anderson, 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. Feels we need to keep marketing the city in order for people to want to move here.

**Al Hoffman, owner of land up to railroad tracks over by Lincoln Wood Products and wants to know who would be responsible if the wall that is up would fall.

**Dave Johnson, stated that the city concluded the survey taken and two of the biggest themes of the survey was the Wisconsin River and Prairie River. Concerns on lack of access to the water and not enough trails in the City of Merrill. Johnson is in favor of the trails but at this point does not see the city paying for any, would like to use some money from the timber sales to help upgrade some of the trails in the community. Also would like to see some trails made in the Memorial Forest.

***Motion by Hintze, seconded by Caylor 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. Hintze stated that he was very happy to hear all the input from the public and thanked them for coming. Caylor reminded everyone that just because there is a project in the 2013-2018 Outdoor Recreation Plan it does not mean that the project will be completed or even started.

***Motion by Willman, seconded by Artac, to approve the 2013 – 2018 City of Merrill Outdoor Recreation Plan.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to review/approve Resolution of Support with the River District Development Foundation. Wendorf stated that the River District was not asking for money in the Resolution of Support, just wanted the blessing of the Park and Recreation Commission. Sturm stated that the River Bend Trail Foundation needed to provide a map of where the trail is going and where it ends. Sturm was also concerned about where the trail will go behind the cosmo and over by Lincoln Wood Products. Sturm stated he is in favor of the trail but there are too many questions on the trail and the foundation should have the answers before coming to the Park and Recreation Commission. Sturm also stated that the foundation has to take the Resolution of Support to the City Council for approval. Sturm stated that they would be better off working with the City Council than the Park and Recreation Department, there is not enough manpower in the Park and Recreation Department to assist with writing the grants or maintenance of the trails. Caylor stated the foundation needs a starting point. Hintze stated that making the Resolution of Support is the starting point. Willman stated the resolution would make it so the foundation can work with the city. Willman also stated there are maps of where the trail will be going. Caylor stated that she would rather see the City do the negotiations with the Railroad Company for the Right of Way Property since in the end it would be the City signing on the dotted line.

***Motion by Willman, seconded by Hintze, to approve the Resolution of Support with the River District Development Foundation and forward it to City Council for approval.

**Carried: Willman, Novitch, Hintze, Harris, Sturm, Artac

**Opposed: Caylor

The next item on the agenda was to review/approve application for Prairie Trails Park Adoption from Washington Elementary School. Wendorf stated that the adopt a park program was

established 8 years ago. Wendorf said the program is wonderful and very beneficial to both parties. Caylor questioned if the Park department supplied them with any equipment or cleaning stuff. Wendorf stated they take them garbage bags, rakes and garbage pickers. Wendorf stated this is a great thing for the community.

***Motion by Hintze, seconded by Caylor to approve application for Prairie Trails Park Adoption from Washington Elementary School.

Novitch stated that there are several other parks in the community for adoption also.

The next item on the agenda was the continued discussion on the dog park. Wendorf stated that he included several options in the packet that everyone received. Wendorf stated that he has been checking on other communities with dog parks and have not heard of anyone complaining about them. Wendorf stated that he will be sitting down with the dog park group and talking about selection of area where the best fit in the community the dog park would be. Wendorf stated that some rules and regulations would need to be up for the dog park and that is another thing he would like to go over with the dog park group. Willman questioned if the Memorial Forest would work for the dog park, stating it would be nice for the animals to have a shaded area and things to run around, and would be easy to expand. Wendorf stated the Memorial Forest is about 12 miles out of town. Wendorf stated that he will have more information at the next meeting.

The next item on the agenda was to request to purchase Top Dresser with funds coming from Merrill Memorial Forest Salvage timber sale revenue. Wendorf stated that he was interested in getting a top dresser for many years. Wendorf stated that this would be a great investment for the ball fields to improve quality of play. Artac stated that it would not only be for the ball fields but it could also be used in parks to smooth and level out the grass areas to remove divots. Wendorf suggested getting the Turfco Model for \$8,495.00. Sturm questioned if that one would be big enough for all the fields and why Wendorf wouldn't go with the 2.25 yard.

***Motion by Sturm, seconded by Artac, to approve the Turfco XL Top Dresser with a 2.25 cubic yard hopper for \$13,995.00. Money would come from Timber Salvage Sale from Memorial Forest.

***Carried unanimously.

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. Winterfest went good and already planning to ad some more events for next year. Getting ready for recreational programs for summer.

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

***Carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2013 at 4:15 p.m., in the lower level in the conference room at City Hall.

Public Comment: Darrell Barker would like to see more meeting held later in the evening. It is very difficult to get to the meeting at 4:15 p.m. Barker stated that even if every other meeting was held later that would be good for more people.

***Motion by Caylor, seconded by Artac, to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary