

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

June 3, 2015

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, June 3, 2015 at 4:15 p.m. at the City Hall.

Members Present: Mike Willman, Melissa Schroeder, Dave Sukow, Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, and Ben Debroux

Members Excused Absent: Troy Pieper

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

Visitors: Dave Johnson, Fred Heider

***Motion by Sukow, seconded by Artac to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2015 meeting.

***Carried unanimously.

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

Ravn questioned on how the funds are set up and if they ever run into problems with lack of funds. Wendorf stated that he codes all invoices and sends them to the city hall. Ravn questioned when the budget gets set. Wendorf stated that they start working on the budget in August and is normally all set by October. Artac questioned how much money was in the Athletic Park Fund. Wendorf stated that they set aside \$5,000.00 towards the new shelter being erected at Athletic Park.

***Carried Unanimously.

Public Comment: None

The next item on the agenda was to elect Vice Chairperson. Sukow nominated Brian Artac for Vice Chairperson.

***Motion by Sukow, seconded by Schroeder to elect Brian Artac as Vice Chairperson.

***Carried Unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to review/discuss WisDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Planning Grant draft plan. Wendorf stated that Fred Heider was present and would be going through the details of the draft. Fred Heider stated that he had met with some community members that is part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian committee and made some decisions on where the best areas around the city would work for bicycle and pedestrian walking areas. Heider stated that 3 walk audits were done and on each walk audit some pinch points were pointed out. Heider also went through where some roads could be made into bike lanes. Heider stated that if everyone on the commission was happy with the draft plan the next step would be to have a public meeting. Heider stated that he would help with advertising the public hearing with some posters, and have some draft plans at the library, city hall and at the Smith Center for public review. Heider suggested that July would be good for a public hearing to get the Bicycle and

Pedestrian approved. It was decided that a public hearing would be held July 1 at 6:00 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss Normal Park planning initiative and ideas. Wendorf stated that he has been met with a group that has consolidated all of the ideas from different groups at Normal Park. Wendorf provided a map with different ideas on where the Optimist Club would like to erect a playground. Wendorf also stated that some organizations would like to see a bathroom/concession facility, some different brick paths along with some new lighting at the park. Willman stated that he thought it was good that we are able to partner with different organizations in the Merrill community. Willman suggested putting a list together and prioritize it according to what the park needs first. Sukow stated that Normal Park is the most popular spot for the outdoor rink. Wendorf will keep everyone updated on Normal Park projects and improvements.

The next item on the agenda is discussion and recommendation of pre-emptive Ash Tree removal related to Emerald Ash Borer. Wendorf stated a few years back the Park and Recreation Commission approved a recommendation on poor health Emerald Ash Tree removal. Wendorf stated that several ill trees have already been removed from some parks and trees are continuing to be removed when the trees are in poor shape. Wendorf stated that his recommendation would be to remove all fair to poor trees now and leave bigger ash trees until a problem arises with Emerald Ash. Sukow stated that he would like the problem taken care of before a problem arises. Sukow stated that he feels the city should go aggressively after the ash trees before it ends up costing the city more money to dispose of them if Emerald Ash becomes a problem.

***Motion by Sukow, seconded by Schroeder to completely remove all Ash trees starting with the poor to fair and removing the good ones last but do as soon as possible.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions.

Wendorf stated that it is really exciting that the new pool is to the point of ground breaking shortly. Wendorf stated that on next months agenda the Park and Recreation Commission should talk about what is going to happen with the old pool. Sukow asked if we were still on time with getting the new aquatic center started. Wendorf stated that everything so far is on time.

***Motion by Schroeder, seconded by Artac to approve the monthly reports.

***Carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 1, 2015 at 5:15 p.m. with a public hearing beginning at 6:00 p.m.

No public comment

***Motion by Sukow, seconded by Ravn to adjourn at 5:15 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary

