

## PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

July 1, 2015

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, July 1, 2015 at 5:15 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

Visitors: Dave Johnson, Jeremy Ratliff, Judy Woller, Judy Sukow, Fred Heider

\*\*Motion by Sukow, seconded by Artac to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2015 meeting.

\*\*Carried unanimously.

\*\*Motion by Sukow, seconded by Schroeder to approve the claims.

Debroux asked Wendorf what Sparkle was and Wendorf replied that it was infield lime/chalk for the baselines used by baseball/softball user groups for games/tournaments.

\*\*Carried unanimously.

There was no public comment on the front end of the meeting.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss River Bend Trail Head planning. Wendorf explained that the River District Development Foundation has begun planning for the parcel they purchased from WPS at the end of Park Street. He explained they held a public planning meeting to begin gathering ideas for the use of the space and was hoping to get a feel from the Commission for what they feel the park should look like, function as, and could potentially accommodate. Wendorf informed the Commission that the information in their packets was a summary of the RDDF planning meeting and was to be used as a starting point with a wide range of great ideas. Debroux felt it would be a great area to promote the use of kayaking and fishing, as he mentioned he enjoys fishing that stretch of river below the dam and sees great potential in providing that opportunity for the public. Wendorf invited the Commission to pass along any thoughts they had moving forward so he can pass along to the RDDF planning committee.

The next item on the agenda was to introduce 2016 Capital Improvements and Equipment requests from the department. Wendorf began the discussion by informing the Commission of the recent settlement of the ADA Lawsuit. Wendorf stated that the items noted in the settlement will have to be our number one priority as there are deadlines for completion that must be met. He mentioned that we can still ask for other things but the settlement projects must be priority. Wendorf informed the commission that he is working on a better estimate for the ADA Settlement item and will hopefully have at the August meeting. With the amount and type of items included it will take a bit to compile all of the information. Wendorf also would like to include the following on the 2016 Capital Improvement request list: \*Stange Park Pool Demolition & Construction of new pre-cast concrete restrooms - **\$175,000**

(like at Riverside park). Wendorf stated that the old pool is in great need of removal and by removing the pool and building new restrooms it will enhance the aesthetics of the park while adding greenspace to the entrance of the park.

**\*Smith Center HVAC preventative maintenance continued – \$43,000**

Wendorf stated this was established by the Commission three years ago to be proactive in replacing the HVAC equipment inside the Smith Center as it is all the same age and would allow for re-investing in replacing rather than continually repairing. This year's replacements would include water heaters in the Zamboni Pit, Locker Rooms 1,2,3, and the Concession Area.

**\*Stange Park Tennis Court Rehab & Re-fencing – \$25,500**

Wendorf stated that the tennis courts and fencing in Stange Park are in great need of repair and would greatly increase the aesthetics of the front end of the park, along with hopefully the removal of the old pool and construction of new restrooms.

**\*Normal Park Restrooms - \$80,000**

Wendorf stated that with the \$20,000 allocated to the Normal Park Restrooms from the Tornado Salvage Timber Sale from the City Forest and the recent efforts of the Normal Park Improvement group it would greatly increase the chances of the construction of the most needed facility within that park. Normal Park has seen a remarkable increase in usage since the City took over and the events are growing. Restrooms are very much needed at Normal Park and this could be used as a match from the fundraising group, as the recent plans included a multi-functional building on the property to include restrooms, warming house, shelter area, and some storage.

**\*Existing Trail Improvements – \$25,000**

Wendorf is requesting these funds to purchase enough granite to repair existing trails at the MARC and Prairie Trails as well as re-fill areas that have eroded over time. The trails at the MARC are used quite extensively with all of the activities occurring and would really be a good investment to make sure they are in great shape.

#### Capital Equipment:

Wendorf stated he discussed a number of items with the City Mechanics at the Street Department to determine which pieces of equipment, in their opinion, should be replaced in the near future. Those items include:

**\*Flower Watering Truck - \$5,000-\$7,500**

Wendorf informed the Commission that the Gravely Treker is once again out of service due to a broken gear box. The UTV experiment needs to come to an end if we are going to continue watering flowers. Wendorf stated he would like to speak with local dealerships to see if they would be willing to work with us on a used auction truck (1/4 or 1/2 ton). Wendorf stated we have stuck way too much money into trying to make something smaller work that just isn't delivering.

**\*Infield Conditioner - \$15,000**

New infield conditioner/dragger to replace the Smithco we purchased 11 years ago. The old Toro we have still runs fine and would fetch little on trade but the Smithco model we have is starting to need repairs and the parts are more expensive.

**\*Broom for lawn tractor - \$5,000**

Purchase a small broom for the front of the lawn tractor we purchased last year with a cab. This will save a lot of time on our snow removal for sidewalks especially, as well as allow us to broom rinks more efficiently. Maximizes staff efficiency on the days where we get only 1-2 inches of snow (which have been quite common over the past number of years).

**\*50-60 hp Tractor to replace the John Deere 2210 - \$70,000**

This would be a slightly bigger tractor with horse power more suited to run our large field mower (Rhino). It would also have a loader bucket to allow more trail work and park work for granite, topsoil,

infield mix, etc. The old tractor is over 20 years old and is beginning to need expensive repairs much more frequently.

**\*Tandem Axle Car Hauler Trailer - \$8,000**

This would replace our current car hauler that is over 20 years old that has had a bent back axle for a number of years. We use this trailer to transport park equipment, picnic tables, mowing equipment, trees, etc.

Wendorf stated this was preliminary for the Commission to think about as he wanted to make sure they had enough time before the budgeting process begins.

**\*\*Motion Schroeder, seconded by Artac to recess from the current agenda to allow for the public hearing**

**\*\*Carried unanimously.**

**\*\*Motion Sukow, seconded by Schroeder to open the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. for the Bike & Pedestrian Plan**

**\*\*Carried unanimously**

Fred Heider opened the hearing with a synopsis on the process of the plan and the resulting contents

Judy Woller, N1601 Spile Dam Road, asked what was to become of the bike routes and how they would be related to the plan. She wondered about the width of the street in the 800 block of East 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Wendorf informed her that was the Bike Route Designation process and that was altered by the Commission a number of months ago to detour bikes around that block.

Jeremy Ratliff, Foto News, questioned what were the costs to this plan? Fred stated he did not have any costs, the plan is meant to be a guideline for reference on future projects. Wendorf echoed his comments and hopes the plan is considered as it addresses a host of fantastic pedestrian hurdles that have existed for decades in Merrill.

There was no other public comment.

**\*\*Motion Schroeder, seconded Sukow to close the public hearing**

**\*\*Carried unanimously.**

The next item on the agenda was moved up at the request of the Chairperson to review and approve the WisDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan for the City of Merrill

**\*\*Motion Sukow, seconded by Artac to approve the plan**

Fred Heider noted that the WisDOT Bike Coordinator did have a chance to review and endorse the plan. He noted that there were some minor suggestions the Coordinator had and would forward onto Wendorf to disperse to the Commission. Willman asked if the \$10,000 that was budgeted for the Bike Route Designation was still available, to which Wendorf stated yes and that the Street Department would begin on the Routes shortly after receiving their new line striper for roads the following week.

Willman suggested possibly looking into budgeting that amount each year (\$10,000) to go towards improvements indicated within the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

\*\*\*Sukow had to leave the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

\*\*Motion Carried Unanimously.

Under monthly reports, Wendorf asked for questions and after hearing none mentioned that things were going well. Although very busy with projects and programs, Wendorf stated that it was very exciting to see the many wonderful things going on within the department and around the community.

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

\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will be Wednesday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Merrill City Hall.

There was no public comment.

\*\*Motion Artac, seconded by Debroux to adjourn at 6:40 p.m.

\*\*Carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf  
Recording Secretary