

Merrill Parks & Recreation Commission

The Merrill Parks & Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, February 1st, 2017 at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Merrill City Hall.

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

Members Excused Absent: None

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf

Visitors: Heather O'Neill, Paul Russel, Mary Ball, Dave Johnson, Erik Pfantz, Derrick Woellner, Kandy Peterson

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Willman at 4:15 p.m.

***Motion by Schroeder, seconded by Artac to approve the minutes from the December 2016 Meeting.

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion Burgener, seconded by Artac to approve the claims from the previous two months.

***Carried unanimously.

There was no public comment during the first public comment period.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss plans for the Normal Park Restroom project that was approved for funding for 2017. Wendorf shared three plans with the Commission. A site plan showing the where the building would be located within the park and surrounding amenities, a footprint plan of the restrooms themselves, and a side elevation of the buildings. Wendorf commented that he worked with City Engineer Akey (who drew the design) to come up with a design that would create a multi-functional building. The plans include ADA accessible restrooms, storage space, and an area for concessions in the summer and warming shelter for the ice rink in the winter. Willman asked Wendorf if there were enough toilets in each restroom to accommodate large crowds. Wendorf stated the design would be able to accommodate a big crowd. Wendorf also stated that the bid specifications would include a base bid, and an alternate to see how much it would cost to add another stall into each restroom. Ravn asked the height of the restrooms and if they could potentially create an issue with parents not being able to see the playground once it is installed in the future. Wendorf stated that it shouldn't be an issue due to where people sit during concerts, and the layout/position of the playground. But Wendorf stated he would make sure to take that into consideration during the layout process.

***Motion Schroeder, seconded by Sukow to approve the design for Normal Park restroom.

***Carried unanimously

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the Stange Park Revitalization initiative. Wendorf began by stating he was still waiting on drawings from City Engineer, he has been diligently working on them, but also has his essential functions of his position he needs to accomplish first. Wendorf stated that this is a continuation of the discussion from budget meetings the previous two years. Wendorf discussed some of the components of the plan, including: replacing the pedestrian bridge furthest downstream along the lagoons, re-constructing the parking lot, eliminating the tennis courts, upgrading the basketball courts, better park lighting, working with the WDNR to clean up brush along riverbank and hillsides, and build a “kitchenette-like” shelter to become another popular reservation destination. Wendorf stated the park is unique and beautiful and can truly be a showcase greenspace. Wendorf stated that after recent renovations at Kitchenette and Riverside Parks, they rank #1 and #2 respectively for number of reservations per year. Wendorf stated that as soon as he has the plan he will bring it back to the Commission for review and he would like to use this information to hopefully receive funding in 2018.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the 10 year capital plan. Wendorf began the discussion stating that each department has been asked to revise a new plan to forecast potential capital projects and equipment, to allow the City to plan for these investments. Wendorf referred the Commission to the 10 year plan he had provided and asked if there were any questions. He stated that a number of items on this list have been requested for years and some are new ideas. Wendorf pointed out a few large items that are on the wish list, Curling Facility at the Smith Center and trail along the Prairie River to connect Prairie Trails to the River Bend Trail. Wendorf stated that this doesn't have to be approved at this time but he wanted the Commission to review and add anything else on there that they would like to see, or have heard from their constituents throughout the community. Artac asked if there was money left in any project to pave the Athletic Park parking lot this year. Wendorf stated it was requested for funding this year and was not granted by City Council and that there would not be sufficient funding to perform the project in 2017. Artac stated it was too bad because Merrill will be hosting the American Legion AA State Tournament there this summer and will draw quite a crowd from all over the state. Sukow asked if there was money left over from the Stange Park Pool Demo project and are we going to be able to use some of that to finish that project. Wendorf stated there was money left over and it will be utilized to finish cleaning that area up this year. Sukow asked about the disc golf initiative and Wendorf stated that he purchased goal baskets last fall and installed all three in Kitchenette Park, as well as the alternate ADA 3 hole loop at Riverside Park. Sukow also asked about Timber Sales and Wendorf stated they are still slated to occur, if the weather cooperates, and additional sales will be marked and executed which will help bring in additional revenue to spend on projects. *Schroeder had to exit the meeting for a prior engagement at 4:47 p.m.

The next item on the agenda was monthly board reports. Wendorf asked if there were any questions from the Commission. He then summarized all of the things that have been going on within the department and upcoming projects they will be working on. Wendorf stated it will be another exciting year and he is excited to see what it brings.

***Motion Sukow, seconded by Burgener to approve the directors reports from January and February.

***Carried unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for March 1st, 2017, at 4:15 p.m. at Merrill City Hall.

There was no public comment

***Motion Sukow, seconded by Burgener to adjourn at 5:10 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dan Wendorf
Recording Secretary