



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY MARCH 1, 2018

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 1. Minutes of February 1, 2018 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
 1. Continue discussion and reporting of alcohol licensing
 2. Fair financial report/update from Fair Assn. Rep. Becker
 3. Update on clay for the arena
 4. Placement/site for new bathrooms
 5. Review and possible action on restroom and Steckling Building bids
- IV. Monthly Reports:
 1. Food Vendor Rep. Christensen
 2. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund
- V. Public Comment Period
- VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting
- VII. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES • THURSDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2018

Regular Meeting Bierman Building 6:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Norton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Table with 4 columns: Attendee Name, Title, Status, Arrived. Rows include Rob Norton, Tim Meehean, Bill Bialecki, Paul Russell, Neal Christensen, Bryan Bloch, and Brad Becker.

Also in attendance: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Festival Grounds Manager Richard Bjorklund, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Alderman Ryan Schwartzman, Diane Wais, George Henrich Jr., James Kreger and City Clerk Bill Heideman. Alderman Russell departed at 6:45 P.M.

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):

1. Minutes of January 4, 2018 meeting

Motion (Bialecki/Meehean) to approve.

RESULT: APPROVED

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Discussion of use of grounds adjacent to Expo Center for Wausaubicon, June 16, 2018

Diane Wais reported that a lady from the Wausaubicon group planned on attending the meeting. However, the lady was unable to attend.

The Wausaubicon group will be having an event at the grounds on Saturday, June 16th, 2018. They have also inquired whether it might be possible to camp on the grounds that night, after the completion of the event.

City Administrator Johnson suggested that camping would be possible, with some restrictions. The camping would be for one night only (June 16th). It is estimated that a maximum of ten people would be camping.

Motion (Meehean/Russell) to approve camping for the Wausaubicon group on the night of June 16th. Campsites would be located on the south side of the Festival Grounds. The total fee for all campers would be \$100, and an additional \$100 deposit would be required.

Attachment: 2018-02-01 FGC Minutes (3111 : Minutes of February 1, 2018 meeting)

RESULT: APPROVED

2. Continue discussion and reporting of alcohol licensing

Festival Ground Manager Bjorklund reported that discussion with a potential licensee continues. This will be discussed further at the March meeting.

No action was taken at this time.

3. Fair financial report/update from Fair Assn. Rep. Becker

Fair Association Rep. Becker was not at the meeting.

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund reported that the carnival booked for 2018 (Spectrum) will be in New Berlin during the first week of July. All are invited to travel to New Berlin to get a preview of the carnival booked for our 2018 fair.

A Monster Truck show has been booked for the 2018 fair.

4. Review Capital Improvement list

A draft a ten-year (2018-2027) Capital Project list was in the meeting packet. It was noted that certain projects have been moved up, based on the receipt of a grant.

Landscaping in and around the grounds was discussed. Two maps of the grounds area were distributed. The trees on East Sixth Street will be removed, as will the trees on Memorial Drive.

There is still a possibility that the City will obtain the fencing currently being used for the Park City Credit Union building project. At this time, fencing of the grounds is scheduled for 2021. Fencing and gates installation will be done at the same time.

The northwest restroom renovation project (\$40,000) was then discussed. It was reported that the structure will not need to be replaced, but the facilities are in need of replacement. It was decided to move up this project from 2020 to 2019.

Paving at the grounds was then discussed.

It was agreed that Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey should continue research and consideration of the various projects. Consideration of the list will continue at future meetings.

As always, the plan is a "living document", subject to change as circumstances dictate.

5. Update on clay for the arena

Representing the Rodeo Association, George Henrich Jr. reported that, in February, Musson Brothers (Rhineland) will be hauling in 12 to 14 loads of clay for the arena area. Additional clay will be placed on the outside of the arena.

Merrill Gravel and Construction will pulverize the clay. All work will be done under the supervision of Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey.

No action was necessary, requested or taken.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Food Vendor Rep. Christensen

Food Vendor Rep. Christensen reported that the permanent stand group did planning at their January meeting. They are still working on a document that will provide contact information as well as other information related to the permanent stands. The group is scheduled to meet again on February 22nd.

2. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

The report was in the meeting packet.

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund reported that he attended the Wisconsin Fairs Conference. Multiple radio stations have expressed interest in holding events on the grounds. Although he stated it was doubtful that the grounds would be booked for “big” events, Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund expressed confidence that the types of events being considered by the radio stations, are strong possibilities as future events.

V. Public Comment Period

Alderman Norton thanked Mayor Bialecki for chairing the January meeting.

The Riders Club will not be having any activities at the Festival Grounds in 2018.

The “Taste of Merrill” event has been cancelled.

City Administrator Johnson reported that a local restaurant is interesting in holding an Easter event in 2018.

Food Vendor Rep. Christensen referred to a flyer providing information on events/facilities in Athens.

VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Thursday, March 1st, 2018 at 6:00 P.M. in the Bierman Center.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Meehean/Bialecki) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:55 P.M.

Merrill Festival Grounds

March 1, 2018

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

Research is underway to identify and source an interstate facing billboard for possible location on City property. Discussion to be undertaken this month's meeting.

City completed an upgrade to arena lighting. New lighting will be very welcome grounds wide.

*Installation of the new restrooms should be completed in time for the Rodeo with the location adjusted to be immediately adjacent to the power substation.

Identification and prioritization of capital improvements for the grounds is an ongoing exercise in accord with the TIF requirements and user group needs.

The Lincoln County commissioned study from 2015 is an extensive document (over 100 pages at a cost of \$50,000), and it refers to successful Festival Grounds facilities as:

1. Year-round facilities are multi-use and include, at a minimum:
2. Indoor, fully climatized exhibition-style building
3. Entertainment venue customized for specific market demand in the form of a grandstand, race track, indoor arena, amphitheater, etc.
4. Defined and improved camping facilities
5. Dedicated livestock facilities
6. Up-to-date restrooms and patron amenities

The Study recommends that two key operational/positional characteristics for successful fairgrounds/event venues are:

1. Pro-active marketing and management of the facilities – This includes creating marketing materials, establishing co-marketing
2. Relationships with local/regional tourism organizations and businesses, conducting travel and tours for prospective clients and, in some cases, self-promoting of events and activities.

If a perimeter fence is included as a capital improvement, it should be considered in light of County Fair admission policy, safety and security concerns vs beautification needs, yearly maintenance costs.

To begin a capital improvement plan, the facilities within the grounds include:

- Bierman Expo
- Fair Association Office –Owned by Fair Association
- Lokemoen Building – Built 1974 – Owned by Fair Association
- Livestock Pavilion – Built 1927 – Square footage 18,224
- Old School House – Moved onto property 1960
- Fair Building – Owned by Fair Association
- Schultz Building – Built in 1880 – Square footage 4,595
- Our Savior Church Stand – Square footage 920
- Steckling Building – built 1965 – Square footage 6,150
- Sell Building – Owned by the Fair Association. – built 1980 – square footage 4,860
- Newest Bathrooms
- Knights of Columbus Food Stand – square footage 700
- St. John’s Church Concession stand – square footage 2,880
- County Owned Stand – they rent to various groups – square footage 1,232
- St. Francis Church Food Stand – square footage 1,409
- Eagles Club Food Stand – square footage 1,428
- VFW Food Stand – square footage 2,400
- Lions Food Stand – square footage 1,216
- Optimist Food Stand – square footage 783
- West Bathroom
- East Bathroom
- Grandstand
- Rodeo/Horse Arena – 100 x 220

The City of Merrill has moved past some of the recommendations/conclusions but it is always prudent to cast an eye to a comprehensive study so that future planning does not miss items.

Additional categories could include: Perimeter Fence, reduction of Humane Society footprint, paving/asphalt, plantings, trees, electrical grid, winterized buildings, canopies, shade and rest areas, picnic tables, sewer and water hook-ups,

Tractor Pull:

Now that 2 Pull events have taken place, the properties of the dirt surface have settled into a known form. Inspection will assist Merrill to make the correct preparations and plan for physical improvements if necessary.

Additional classes are being discussed and reviewed; possible 4x4 or semis; WTPA may provide a class pro bono.

Marketing discussions are taking place with a designer of marketing plans focusing on social media, purchased time branding, logo design, web design and unified messaging. A retention agreement is anticipated buy meeting time with the same entity under contract to the Rodeo.

Pricing will be reduced to that of the year one event in concurrence with the sponsor and underwriter.

The goal of having excess revenue in year three is important for the event to contribute to the capital improvement of the grounds.

Antique Tractors event will end by 3pm to accommodate more extensive track preparation.

Bank attorney is trying to expedite the filing of 501-c3 or non-stock corporate paperwork.

Rodeo:

The committee has been approached to alter the arena set-up for the bulls and barrels event. That request is declined for safety and security reasons.

A new, sanctioned event is being discussed. Angel underwriting and financial assistance is being sought.

County Fair:

August 15-19

Consistent with every major Fair and Festival in the state, it is strongly recommended that fencing inside the fairgrounds be reduced or eliminated. Check points for age should be maintained with a stamp or wristband given for daily ID. Encourage all beer stands to provide entertainment.

Use Expo stage for contests and additional programs.

County Fair has a new Carnival Producer. The poor show produced last summer left the community upset. Changing the vendor should increase capacity, excitement, value, income and content. The Carnival producer is also bringing free entertainment. Early promotion of this change will serve the Fair very well. County fair would be well served by establishing a multi-year contract for this producer. Because the Lincoln County Fair is a smaller event, it is in danger of dropped down date priorities or left without a Carnival completely.

The committee in charge of the livestock auction (the fair is a terminal show) has done a superb job of lining up corporate and private buyers for the auction. It is one of the better auctions in the state in the county fair category. The work done by the committee is a model for the fair to use in seeking additional support, sponsorship and possible angel underwriting. Such additional support will help the fair continue to be a “free fair”.

Observations and suggestions following last year’s fair are as follows. Implementation of some or all could help the fair present a friendly face and encourage greater attendance:

Need to turn grounds lights on earlier
 Need to have a heavier presence of management during set-up
 Need electrician presence at electrical panels for set-up
 Carnival trucks parked inside fairgrounds. Park across street.
 Camper locations move to ends
 Sr Center closed. Open and put up passive displays of programs and projects.
 Many electrical cords across walking aisles
 Cars and trucks inside pedestrian areas
 Electric panels open unlocked
 Parkers still on a 9 but no gate traffic
 Arena dirt used for rain fill
 Bulls and Barrells show is weak. Replace if possible
 Move butter carving and pie eating into Expo
 Do more contests in Expo
 Add kids contests
 Try school tie ins prior to school closing for the summer
 Carnival closed at 10, buildings at 10:10
 Not enough traffic to warrant one way on 6th St.
 Credentialed and vip parking signs for E end.
 Chicken barn closed for judging
 Demo derby ½ hour late start, 1st heat took ½ hour
 Beer vendors in GS too loose
 Beer tent set-up tables behind trailers...VIP?
 No need for one way on 6th St
 Karaoke return would help bolster content for the overall show
 Reduce Monster Truck berm runoff
 For a 3-truck show, the producer stretched the content into a good show
 Fenced pavilions appear to not serve the fair's best interest
 Carnival tear down too early.
 Think about expanding demo derby and monster truck days
 Eliminate bulls and barrels or seek different producer
 Consider keeping the booking in August.
 Submission of State report to DATCP

Bierman Expo Hall:

Sale of alcohol at the building is an issue that will be important to some future users of the building. Generally, users will fall into certain categories such as private (weddings, birthdays, bar mitzvas, and family gatherings), commercial/paid events (concerts, trade shows, exhibit shows, etc), fund raisers (honorariums, benefits, foundations, charities).

Commercial and fund raisers need the profit from alcohol sales; private events do not. A group has been contacted for potential sale of alcohol at expo events. The total number of potential events will not represent a significant annual potential gross sales.

Reservations for weddings in summer of 2018 are increasing monthly. Diane is superb at talking with the potential users. She has excellent acumen for event business.

Jack Koshick, talent buyer for NRG Radio is interested in the Expo as a possible concert site.

Cameo Roets, Marketing director for WIFC, WDEZ, WSAU, WOZZ AND Fox has visited and is considering producing radio station entertainment concerts at the expo. She and her operations manager were very impressed with the facility and its application to their event needs.