

HARTFORD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, August 3, 2016

6:30 PM - City Hall – Council Chambers

Present: Jeff Troeller, Joe Kohler, Todd Rusniak, Dave Ziemer

Excused: Amy Hoffmann, Mark Kohnhorst, Scott Helms

1. President Troeller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM; "This is an open meeting under 19.81 to 19.98 of the Wisconsin State Statutes".
2. Approval of Minutes
MOTION by Ziemer seconded by Kohler to approve the July monthly minutes.
MOTION CARRIED
3. Informational Monthly Staff Reports – Reviewed
4. Communication and Correspondence –

Hartford Jaycees Thank You – The Hartford Jaycees thanked the Department for staff's help for the Jaycee's Fourth of July event. The Parks Department provides and delivers picnic tables, garbage cans and consults on set up. This year, the Hartford Jaycees had to modify their set up as the area they have used in previous years, with the construction of the pool, is no longer available. Tweaks to the event will be made for next year's set up for an even better experience.

Therapy Pool Concerns –Sherida Wank sent a letter to the Director asking the Department to consider adding more Therapy Pool Hours especially in the summer. One time in particular she mentions is to allow use of the Therapy Pool during swim lessons. However, the instructors use the therapy pool for lessons. Other than allowing use during swim lessons, Ms. Wank does not state any specific times she would like added. Commissioner Rusniak asked if the Therapy Pool is open during Open Swims. The Aquatic / Fitness Supervisor said it was during the weekday open swims, but not on weekends as there are more people swimming on weekends and she does not feel it would be safe for the staff to guard the leisure and lap pool and also watch the Therapy Pool. The Director has not added any additional staff wages to the 2017 budget to add more Therapy Pool hours.

Willowbrook Park Rental – The Director received a letter from a park reservation group complimenting Willowbrook Park, its shelter, amenities, staff and maintenance.

5. Appearances / Public Comments – None
6. Old Business - None
7. New Business

ADMINISTRATION

Consideration to Purchase 12.1 Acres of Property or Parkland – Developer Mark McCune would like the City to purchase 12.1 acres of wetland he owns for \$54,500. The property is located to the southeast of the Paul Quick Conservancy Park and is bordered on the western side by the Central School Wildcat Wetland Preserve and on the eastern side by business properties along Hy 83. The southeast corner of the Paul Quick Conservancy meets up with this property and a small peninsula meets up with Hy 83 South and therefore is not completely land locked.

Mr. McCune proposes that the park development fees collected by the City for his newest development the “Oriole Ponds Apartment” to be used to pay for this wetland. The residential development includes 156 units that would generate \$195,000 in park fees. The payment of 12.1 acres result in a balance of \$140,500 in park fees based on current park fee of \$1,250 per unit.

Based on information available at this time, staff does not support payment to purchase this property. The Paul Quick Conservancy is a similar property – 10.1 acres of wetland - but it was donated to the City as a way to protect this wetland. Future considerations for this land would be a passive use hiking trail that could extend to the Wildcat Wetland trail. To date, there is no master plan for this area and thus no estimated cost for developing a trail. Staff anticipates trail development could be expensive as raised boardwalks would be necessary in wetland. Without knowing the cost to build trails in this area, nor having a plan in place for this conservancy, staff does not recommend purchasing the Mark McCune’s land.

President Troeller reiterated that the City does not have a plan for that area, there is land that was donated that the City has not done anything with at this time and he can’t see purchasing more land in that wet land region.

Aldersperson Kohler commented that the owner likely does not have a plan for property at this time as he approached the City with an offer to sell. He continued to say that likely the property would not move quickly and passing at this point is a good idea and perhaps in the future it could be revisited.

Commissioner Rusniak commented that the Rubicon River Trail plan, on the north east side of town, north of Hilldale Dr., calls for boardwalk. Commissioner Rusniak believes that should the City develop a board walk trail, that section should be given priority as funds become available.

MOTION BY Ziemer, seconded by Troeller to not enter into a purchase offer with Mr. McCune for the 12.1 acres of wetland west of Hy 83 South.

MOTION CARRIED

Discussion on Current Policy for Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center Weather Related Closings and Refunds – The current policy at Veterans Aquatic Center is that there are no refunds due to weather. If the pool closes due to weather, in most cases, only part of the day would be canceled. We can and do often reopen. This can be as soon as within a ½ hour of the last observed lightning strike. If the radar indicates the storm may be around longer, an announcement is made that the pool will close but could reopen at 5 PM weather permitting. Those at the open swim, are given a wrist band to reenter the same day. In situations where we know there is a potential for storm, admission staff will tell paying patrons that we have a no refund policy. In addition, a sign will be posted stating there are no refunds due to weather.

When faced with upset customers, pool managers may review the policy and gather any special circumstances as well as the patron’s name and number to pass on to a supervisor who can then follow up. The supervisor can decide if the information justifies that the person should receive a free swim day pass admission. Cash refunds would not be offered. Although free passes are a potential loss in revenue, it can be good customer service when the situation warrants.

Staff recommends that we continue with a no refund policy for open swims canceled due to weather.

Commissioner Rusniak wondered if we should follow the private rental refund policy of pro-rated refunds based on the amount of time the pool has been open. Staff commented it is difficult to know who has been in the pool for what amount of time and which patrons were season pass holder and which ones paid the day admission.

Commissioner Ziemer commented that a private rental is paid well in advance and will not know what the weather would be on that particular rental day as opposed to those paying for a day admission who have ample opportunity to review the weather before they go.

MOTION BY Troeller, seconded by Kohler to continue with a no refund policy for open swims canceled due to weather.

MOTION CARRIED

Recreation Center Maintenance Position Vacancy- The current 3rd shift janitorial maintenance staff has submitted her letter of resignation. She has taken a similar position at another company that offers a better working schedule for her. Staff will be asking the Personnel and Finance Committee to approve the filling of this position. In the meantime, staff has begun advertising for applications to get the process in motion and to help limit the amount of time we are without this position filled. Until someone new is hired, other maintenance staff will be taking on extra hours and duties.

Fall Activity Guide – This guide will be distributed on August 23.

RECREATION PROGRAMS / ACTIVITIES

Kissel Car Classic Run/Walk – After over 30 years, this annual run is being cancelled. There were only 13 pre-registered runners. This run has usually averaged 80 to 100 runners. However, with the influx of 5K runs being held all over, our run just does not bring in the participants. This would have been the last run as staff was not planning to budget for a run in 2017. Staff will continue to hold the Mini-Triathlon and may look to another type of ‘theme’ run such as a mud run, in the future.

Tots A Lot Registration – Registrations of the 3 year old and 4-5 year old pre-school began in July. Currently all classes still have openings.

ADULT / YOUTH SPORT

Youthball Report – It was a very successful youthball season once again. Equipment and evaluations are being returned.

Youth Flag Football- Registrations for our Little Packers, Flag Football and Junior Flag for ages 6-12 are now being taken. Practice for all leagues will begin at the end of August with games beginning September 10. The Junior Flag football league for 5-6 grade will have games scheduled with the Oconomowoc YMCA. Little Packers (ages 6-8) and Flag Football (ages 8-10) will play an intersquad league coached by the HS Varsity Football Player.

AQUATICS

Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center Operations –

ATTENDANCE REPORT – Since opening, our average attendance is about 850 with a high attendance over 1300. Our lowest day was 112. The Director commented that he is surprised in the volume of day passes. He anticipated more season pass holders to use the pool, but our day passes will likely surpass the anticipated 2016 budgeted revenue.

The Director and Aquatic Fitness Supervisor forewarned the Commission that there could be staffing issues as we head into the end of the season. Many college staff will be returning to school before our official closing date of Sept. 2. Many of the High School staff have conflicts with Fall sports. An adjustment in the hours open, pool amenities open or closing date may be required.

The Director and Aquatic Fitness Supervisor also updated the Commission on the rescue incident that occurred last week in which a toddler was pulled out of the zero depth area and was unresponsive, not breathing and had no pulse. With the quick response from the guard as well as two nurses that were at the pool, the child was responsive and breathing when the rescue squad took him to the hospital. After such a serious rescue, the State will come and review the facility, pool staffing, manuals and more. The review confirmed that two lifeguards need to be on the Lazy River, one guard at the top of the slide and during peak hours, they recommend, but it would not be required, to have another guard in the toddler zero depth area. The Director and Aquatic/Fitness Supervisor both agree that during peak times another guard will be placed in the zero depth area. When attendance is lower, the guard at the water walk would be responsible for guarding the portion of the zero depth area near the water walk.

The Aquatic/Fitness Supervisor complimented not only the staff on how well they handled the rescue, but also on how flexible they have been in coming in for additional hours as the guarding needs are tweaked.

2017 OPERATIONAL AND BUDGET PLAN – As staff prepares the budget for the VMAC, ways to maximize hours for open swim, as well as to start open swim earlier during the week, are being looked at. Some options will be to shorten lessons by 5 minutes to 40 minutes each day and have only 5 minutes in between lessons. In staff's review of other community lessons, our lessons typically have more instructor minutes than others. By shortening lesson time and the time in between the lessons, we can end the lessons earlier and start open swim at 1:00. Staff is looking to add an additional hour at the end of open swim two nights a week, to 9 PM. This will allow us to take advantage of the lights installed at the pool. Starting open swim on the weekends at 1:00 will allow more flexibility in scheduling swim team practices, private rentals and swim meets. However, these suggested changes, in particular the open swims that will end at 9:00 PM, will create more staff overtime.

In addition to staff expense, the Director is working on estimating lesson, pass, concession and day admission revenue. With only a few weeks of this current, first, season as a guide, the Director is using his best estimates to arrive at a proposed revenue budget. He will increase daily admission based on current trends this season and only moderate increase to season passes.

Signicast Family Aquatic Center Annual Maintenance Shut Down – This will be August 20th to September 4th.

PARKS OPERATIONS

CVMIC Playground Safety Inspection – The City's insurance provider – Cities and Villages Municipal Insurance Company – recently inspected all of the City's playground equipment and offered advice on replacement/repairs. The City stays pro-active in maintaining safe playground equipment by having a dedicated staff member who inspects all equipment every week. Overall, CVMIC was pleased with the maintenance and safety of our equipment but did recommend the replacement of the modular equipment at Willowbrook Park which Staff is planning to do this Fall.

Willowbrook Playground Project – The 2016 CIP budget includes \$50,000 for a playground equipment and a poured in place surface to replace the modular piece at Willowbrook Park which has reached its life expectancy. Of this budgeted amount, the Director anticipates \$20,000-\$25,000 to be needed for the poured in place material and \$5,000 for installation. In the next month, the Director will gather two to three proposals for a new playground equipment. Based on comments from a previous meeting, the Commission believed it might be good to have equipment geared toward toddlers ages 2-5 and another section geared toward older kids ages 6-12. One drawback to having this separation is that it often means less play features can be gotten for the same amount of money. Also, more surface space is needed which requires more poured in place material. The Commission also mentioned that they were not in favor of purchasing an expensive climbing structure. As the Director requests proposals, the Commission would like to see the plans for both a multi age singular piece as well as a plan that divides the age groups.

The Director hopes to present two to three proposals to the Commission at the September meeting. Should Commission approve a design at that meeting, the equipment could be installed yet this year. However, should the Director be unable to have the proposals ready by the September meeting, or the Commission needs more information before choosing a design, the install will likely be pushed into next year. With that, since this park is often a 'wetter' park, the equipment may not be able to be installed in the Spring and may have to be done next Fall.

Park Project Report – The Gaga Pit constructed at Woodlawn Park by Eagle Scout Tate Stoeckman has been well received. As expected might happen, the grass is already worn away and staff will need to consider putting a crushed stone, playground tiles, or some other surface material in the pit next year.

The Director shared with the Commission a copy of the national trade magazine "Landscape Contractor" as the Mill Pond project was featured in a recent issue of this magazine.

OTHER REPORTS /COMMISSION REQUEST

Mark Kohnhorst, who could not be at the meeting, asked President Troeller to pass along Mark's compliments to staff on a great ribbon cutting ceremony for the Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Troeller seconded by Ziemer to adjourn at 7:48 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Submitted by,

Sara Cummings

"Persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations for attendance at the meeting should contact the City Clerk at least one (1) business day prior to the meeting." Members of the Common Council may attend the above meeting. Pursuant to State ex rel. Badke v. Greendale Village Board, 173 Wis. 2d 553, 494 N.W. 2d 408 (1993) such attendance may be considered a meeting of the Common Council may attend the meeting without violating the open meeting law."