

HARTFORD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

6:30 PM – City Hall Council Chambers; Park Tour

Present: Todd Rusniak, Amy Hoffmann, Mark Kohnhorst, Todd Bultman, Joe Kohler, Karin Buhle

Excused: Scott Helms

1. President Rusniak 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** Kohler, seconded by Bultman to approve July minutes.
MOTION CARRIED
3. Informational Monthly Staff Reports – None
4. Communication and Correspondence – None
5. Appearances / Public Comments – None
6. Old Business – None
7. New Business

ADMINISTRATION

2021 Budget Updates– Staff has prepared the 2021 budgets and submitted them to the City Administrator. The Director specifically mentioned that the VMAC budget has remained, for the most part, the same, however, staff will discuss throughout the year possible changes to the pool schedule, with recommended changes brought to the Commission. Some changes being considered is an open swim schedule for weekdays of 1-7 versus the 1-8. Not only does usage drop after 6 PM, but this will allow more rental time for swim teams which was a huge financial benefit this year. Also being considered is going 5 days a week for Toddler Swim versus three days. Any changes staff would consider would not be detrimental to the budget.

Fall Activity Guide – The guide will be printed for the Fall Season, whereas for the Summer, staff chose to have it only available on line. Staff is preparing for a full schedule of activities, but is prepared to make adjustments/changes as needed to be sure all participants are safe. With the Booster no longer in business, the Express News will be delivering the books. Delivery date is August 25.

Recreation Center American Red Cross Blood Drive – This will be held on August 13 noon to 5 PM. The 28 appointment slots are filled. The drive will also be testing for COVID antibodies. Those still looking to give blood are welcome to walk in. Should the Red Cross staff have a time in between appointments, they would take walk ins.

Recreation Center Capacities for Fall Programs & Planning – Staff has meet to review Fall programs and building schedule to be sure our rooms/facility is not going over the recommend capacity and to be sure there is not an overabundance of cross traffic before and after programs. Modifications, where needed, are being made to programs to keep participants and instructors safe.

RECREATION PROGRAMS / ACTIVITIES

Cheerleading – This program has been held in conjunction with our Flag Football program, with the cheerleaders practicing cheers on Wednesday night and performing during the Saturday flag games. As the status of the Flag Football program has not been finalized, the Cheerleading program is re-designed to be a Cheer/Dance program with a short choreographed dance routine parents can watch at the last class. With the face mask law, we will attempt to hold practices in Jordan Park and should the weather not cooperate, the program will be taken to the Recreation Center Gym and the girls be instructed to bring a masks.

Dino Days – This is a program for ages 4-5 held on August 29. Registrations are low at this time.

ADULT / YOUTH SPORT

Youth Football – Staff is considering two different plans for this program. This has typically been a Flag Football league with two practices and 6 Saturdays of intermural games coached by the HUHS Varsity players. However, Football is considered a high contact sport and the Health Department advises against playing. One option for to modify the program would be to have it skills and drills only. Another option, and one that many of the surrounding communities are doing, is to make it a passing league. There would be no line/blocking and only passes or pitches. This eliminates most of the contact between players.

Adult Fall Volleyball – Staff is preparing for our Fall Volleyball season. This is a short, non-officiated season that runs 7-8 weeks in September and October. Staff would hold the first three weeks on outdoor courts so masks are not required. If teams are not interested in an outdoor season, then a shortened 5 weeks season could be scheduled beginning at the end of the mask mandate.

AQUATICS

Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center –

Operations Update – Considering the obstacles this year, it is looking to be a good season. Attendance has been solid and consistent. Being allowed a 50% capacity versus the 25% as it was on the first few days of opening has helped. Our original budget estimate was based on less than 25% capacity, but daily attendance has been closer to 30-50% most days.

Proposed Season Closing Date – Staff is still discussing Post Season hours and modifications to those should they be needed. Regular Post Season Hours are Monday through Friday 12-3:30, Saturday and Sunday 12-6 for the last two weeks of August.

Signicast Family Aquatic Center –

New Fall Water Walking Plan – The Aquatics/Fitness Supervisor is proposing a Water Walk at the indoor pool this Fall. This is a very popular activity in the Lazy River of the outdoor pool. The indoor schedule would be on Tuesday and Thursdays from 8-9:30 AM and will be held in our lap lanes.

PARKS OPERATIONS

Park Tour

Independence Park

Ball Fields – Noted:

- field material upgrades on the West and North field;
- plans to move the former Veterans Park shelter, now being stored on the north east corner of the park, to south of the concession stand. The Lions Club has made a donation commitment for the concrete slab and have indicated they would like the work done soon

- construction/upgrades to the batting tunnel by Eagle Scout Leo Kucharski. The area has been excavated and Leo will be putting in the stone base and then artificial turf.

Dog Park – Noted:

- additional Evergreen trees that were planted this spring for natural screening for the residential homes to the south of the dog park
- requests for a separate area for small dogs. This could be attached to the north of the dog park to share the parking lot and paved walkway.
- possible new locations should the City desire to move the dog park. Two locations would be located in the 'back' of the park, by the small shelter. However, this is heavily used by soccer teams for practice and the parking area is small. Another area is off of Monroe Avenue. This might be more desirable as it is normally an unused space and has ample parking and a hill separating the area from the adjacent subdivision. To move the dog park would require a lot of labor and new expense for concrete walkways/pads. The Director estimated the cost of the current dog area to be over \$20,000.

Veterans Park

Playground – new playground was noted

VMAC – Noted:

- Pool shell paint project completed this Spring at a cost of about \$56,000. The contractor will come back in the Fall, once the pool is drained, to fix the bubbling on the sitting wall. This pool painting is needed every 5-6 years.
- Sun shades have some holes/tears. Staff has and will continue to patch. Per manufacturer, these shades typically have a 10 year life span. The shades are 5 years old so the Director has put replacement of them in the 5 year CIP.
- Slide Restoration – the slides are taking a beating with the sun and chlorine. Cost to restore is \$21,000 per slide. The purple slide is in the CIP for next year with the green in two years. The contractor will buff, check and repair seams/joints and inspect the hardware.

Westside Park

Playground – new playground noted

Baseball Field – the Director noted the new location of the batting cage. It will be across the drive, north of the parking area. As it will be a double cage, more room was needed so the former location, near the diamond itself, would not work. Installation/purchase is being done with HUHS. President Rusniak recommended that a warm up area for pitchers be considered for future improvements. He also commented that he has seen more 'lost balls' because of lights this year than ever before. He wondered if the lights could get 'moved' by wind/weather and if that could be investigated. The Director will ask Musco Lighting, the company we purchased the lights from.

Woodlawn Park

Chess/Checkerboard Site – The Director met with Hunter Iding, the Eagle Scout that will be constructing an in ground checker/chess board, regarding possible locations for the board. In review of the three areas Hunter and the Director discussed, the Commission was in favor of keeping it close to the west side of large shelter. The large game pieces will be stored in that large shelter for rental parties and our playground program to use. Two benches will also be installed making the area about 10' x 15'.

Independence Park Dog Park Hours Recommendation – Executive Summary – There have been complaints of excessive dog barking, particularly in the morning and later in the day, by the residents adjacent to the dog park.

One resident has been speaking frequently with Alderperson Mixon regarding issues with the dog park. This resident requests the park be moved.

Currently the dog park, like all parks, per City Ordinance, is open from 6 AM to 11 PM. Staff suggests having a specific time for the dog park of 7 AM to 9 PM. If approved, City Council would need to consider a change to the Municipal Code. The City Attorney recommend adding the language "...or as otherwise established by the Parks and Recreation Commission".

The police department would manage the locking and unlocking the dog park gate should the hours change.

After much discussion, the Commission was not fully in favor of making the change. They foresee other issues by opening the park later in the morning. One would be dog owners, who do need to get their dogs out before work, would then let their dogs run in the open space by the dog park, and not picking up after their dog. The Commission was also not convinced changing the hours will satisfy the neighbor who has been calling Alderperson Mixon. Should changing the hours to 7 AM – 9 PM satisfy this resident, Commission would further investigate making the change.

Regarding moving of the park, while the Commission considered the options, the cost and labor to do so is does not make it feasible, currently.

MOTION BY Kohler, seconded by Bultman, to table the discussion of dog park hours until it is verified if the resident would be satisfied with 7 AM – 9 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Parks Maintenance Report –

Prepared base for Independence Park batting tunnel

Replanted two trees salvaged from Main Street. One at West Side and one at the Rec Center.

Filled in washed out area on Willowbrook Park island. Will need to add stone/boulders to prevent future erosion.

Wind damaged tree clean up at Willowbrook Park.

Topsoil/seeded Veterans Park playground area.

Planted tree at Sawyer Park with help from the Veterans group.

OTHER REPORTS /COMMISSION REQUESTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Kohler, seconded by Hoffmann to adjourn at 8:43 PM.

MOTION CARRIED

Submitted by,

Mike Hermann and 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."