

HARTFORD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

6:30 PM – City Hall – Council Chambers

Present: Todd Rusniak, Mark Kohnhorst, Amy Hoffmann, Todd Bultman, Karin Buhle, Scott Helms

Excused: Joe Kohler

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 Bultman, seconded by Buhle to approve the November minutes.
MOTION CARRIED
3. Informational Monthly Staff Reports – Reviewed.
4. Communication and Correspondence – None
5. Appearances / Public Comments – None
6. Old Business – None
7. New Business

ADMINISTRATION

Centennial Park Re-Development

Fundraising Update– Staff has been actively fundraising to develop this park. Almost \$150,000 has already donated. Additional donations are expected as City Staff has been in conversation with other potential donors. With the photos of the conceptual plan in the newspaper and on social media, there is a lot of excitement in having this downtown park with the amenities/features as shown in the conceptual plan.

MSA Concept Design– Staff is hiring MSA Professional Services to design the multi-use pavilion. In 2018 MSA did a conceptual park plan for this site that included a multipurpose building that might include restrooms, shelter, stage, and picnic area. Because of the uniqueness of this building, it will be a primary gifting item in the campaign. As such, there is a need to have a design plans to show what the structure will look like and not just a concept on a map. The Director reminded the Commission that in the original conceptual park plan, a railroad theme was discussed and thoughts were to have a Railroad Depot look for the building. The Director believes that next month a rendering could be available for the Commission to consider. The actual construction of the building is likely a few years out, but having the design will help as park development begins.

President Rusniak asked if there was anything that might delay the development of this park. In particular he was concerned about the railroad tracks and/or the utility lines overhead. The Director did not see anything that may stop or delay the timetable. The City has budgeted about \$200,000 to bury overhead lines. Staff has discussed bringing the railroad tracks into the design by having a platform by the tracks for special train appearances such as Santa or unique locomotives. All involved in the design and construction of this park understands the safety concern of the railroad tracks. Minimally, natural barriers will be placed between the green space and the tracks. Fencing may also be considered. One of Staff's biggest concern is finding buried, old foundations that may hinder burying utility lines.

Staff continues to work on various grants for the project. One such grant, CDBG, is being prepared by City Planner Justin Drew and it is tied to the ADA Act and deals with improving accessibility. The City is still waiting to hear from the State regarding the Stewardship Grant. Hopefully that will be decided soon, so additional Stewardship Grants can be submitted.

Winter/Spring Activity Guide – Commission received a copy.

RECREATION PROGRAMS / ACTIVITIES

Staff mentioned these upcoming programs:

- Family Jigsaw Puzzle Contest, Friday, February 19
- Community Choir – The Parks and Recreation Director has spoken with the Choir Director and Choir Board regarding a shorten Spring season. The season would be about 8 weeks long and thus have fewer pieces that will be sung. The Choir Director has been in touch with Schauer Arts and Activities Center and they have some dates in May available for concert. There will be a limited number of participants and mask wearing would be required. The Choir Director has commented that at the High School, choir has been going well including singing with masks on.
- Archery Lessons, Ages 7-11, Mondays, Starts January 11 – The Program Supervisor is considering an intermediate class in the future as many participants enjoy this program and would like a higher level.
- Fitness Classes, Session 1 Starts Week of January 11

ADULT / YOUTH SPORT

Staff mentioned these upcoming programs:

- Winter Adult Volleyball League – 7-8 weeks long league began this week. There are 11 teams divided into an A and B league.
- Youth Co-Ed Volleyball, Ages 7-12. Mondays, Starts February 22
- Youth Pickleball, Ages 7-12, Wednesdays, Starts January 27

AQUATICS

Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center –

Discussion on 2021 Open Swim Season Schedule While working on the 2021 VMAC budget, a number of changes staff felt was well received this summer were included in the budget.

- Regular season closing time will be 7 PM
- Toddler swim will be 5 days per week
- New Thursday night ‘swim under the lights’
- Pre-Season will no longer include weekdays. These days could be used for School End of Year swims.
- Evening times open for swim team rentals.

In review of previous pre-seasons, the Aquatic Fitness Supervisor commented that only about \$420 was made in revenue, taking out staff expenses. He did not include any other expenses. VMAC is one of the earliest pools to open in the area.

MOTION BY Hoffmann, seconded by Kohnhorst to accept staff recommendations to the 2021 VMAC operations and program schedule.

MOTION CARRIED

Signicast Aquatic Center

- Rubber Duck Day, Thursday, January 14, Open Swim 3:30-5:15 PM
- Small Fry Saturday, February Saturday Open Swims, 1:00-3:45 PM, Kids 5 & Under Free

PARKS OPERATIONS

Ice Rink Report – The rink at Veterans Park is open. Willowbrook Park rink needs the first layer of water. It will require a number of people to help with the liner as the water is added.

Westside Park Baseball Field Stakeholder Meeting Report – Work Plans & Projects – A meeting with the various stakeholders of Westside Park, Jordan Stephans (Hartford Hawks Baseball Team), Scott Helms (Hartford Union High School), Jason Brown (Hartford Baseball Club) as well as the Parks and Recreation Director, was held in June and December. While the City arranges the master schedule for the baseball field, maintenance is a shared responsibility. This was discussed at the June Meeting. At the December meeting, an improvement plan/schedule was discussed. Items mentioned for improvements were:

- New dugouts
- Bleachers
- Walkways to restrooms
- New backstop/netting

None of these items are included in the City's budget. The preliminary cost for the items could be as high as \$175,000. The dug outs alone would be about \$70,000. The Director reached out to a pre-fab building manufacturer Easi-Set for dugouts. The cost per dugout is \$35,000 with storage and \$30,000 without.

While these capital improvement items could be proposed as part of the City's budget, the Director did let the stakeholders know that funding support from them would likely also be required. The City does have a Westside Park Special Fund with a balance of \$16,928. The funds growth is dependent on the selling of fence banners.

If design and development costs can be obtained by June, it could be part of the 2022-2026 CIP. While the improvements could be done in phases, a full design plan, incorporating all the improvement items, would first be needed. The Director suggested MSA Professional Services, who recently completed the 5 Year CORP for the City, would be a good design firm to consider. Scott Helms, HUHS Activities Director, offered use of the High School's current athletic field designer. A design plan could be paid for from the West Side Park Special Fund.

Also at the December meeting, the groups agreed to pay for new top dressing for the infield and to have new clay installed at the pitcher mound and batters box. The cost for 10 ton of top dressing is \$3,050 and 40 bags of clay is \$601.

Parks Project Report – 2020 Season End of Season Park Reservation Report was shared. Numbers are down a bit due to COVID.

Parks Shelter Reservation Season – Shelter reservations for the summer will begin Friday, January 15

OTHER REPORTS /COMMISSION REQUESTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Hoffmann seconded by Buhle to adjourn at 7:17 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."