

HARTFORD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

5:30 PM – City Hall Council Chambers

Present: Todd Rusniak, Ken Mikulec, Karin Buhle, Joe Kohler, Kate Carroll, John Klabecek

Absent: Scott Helms

1. President Rusniak called the meeting to order at 5:30 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 Buhle to approve May 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

MSA Centennial Park Presentation – Commissioner Comments and Questions – Luke Geiger and Carter Arndt with MSA presented the re-development plans for Centennial Park including the overall design and landscape as well as the new park pavilion design. After this meeting, MSA will work on the Construction Documents which are to be completed by August 15. Once the Construction Documents are completed, Bidding/Contract Award would be done by October 31 with construction to start in November. This is also the time the Mill Pond Wall Restoration project is finishing. Substantial project completion should be in June/July of 2023 with ribbon cutting in August of 2023.

The Commission reviewed the park site layout that included locations for all new facilities, walkways, paths, parking lots and amenities. They also received pictures of furnishing selections, fitness equipment plans and concepts for the train theme multi-age playground. The poured in place playground material will have a train track design. Final playground drawings and designs are being worked on. The Commission also reviewed a rendering of the pavilion including finish materials and design details.

As planned, the pavilion will be a multi-use building with a train depot theme. Half of the structure will be an enclosed rentable shelter with fireplace and the other half will be a covered performance area. This structure will also have two gender neutral bathrooms. The shelter on the east side of the park will remain undergo maintenance updates.

Current cost for this project is now estimated at \$1,510,581. The increase is due to rising costs for materials and labor and also because a 20% contingency was added instead of the previous standard of 10-15%. MSA believes it is safer to add a higher contingency due increasing costs for labor and materials. To date, the fundraising campaign has raised \$320,000 to date. One major gift at \$125,000 remains for the Pavilion Shelter area. The Stewardship Grant awarded \$350,000, a CDBG Grant awarded is \$50,000 and the remaining 1.2 million will be from Park Development Fund and GO Debt Borrowing with money left from the millpond wall project. Staff is still

hoping for another \$140,000 in fundraising as the naming rights for the enclosed shelter portion of the pavilion is still available and the Fitness Equipment area.

The Commission was very supportive of the park plan and pavilion design as presented.

2023-2027 Capital Improvement Program – The Commission received the current 2023-2026 CIP list. As staff reviews this list, they update cost projections and requests. In addition, staff is to make requests for 2027 CIP projects. Should a request be made to add or move a project into the current 5 year CIP, another project must move or new funding source for the project being requested to change must be indicated. For new 2027 projects, the Director is considering the following.

- Signicast Water Slide Tower Replacement
- West Side Park Dugout Replacement
- Independence Park Playground Replacement
- Painting Current Park Pavilion / Structures – Roofs at West Side and Willowbrook
- West Side Park Ballfield Updates – Bleachers, Walkways, Netting, Fence
- Skatepark Equipment Update

If the Commission has any additional requests, those should be shared with the Director prior to July 8th.

President Rusniak asked if the Beine park site was slated in the CIP. The Director said that park project is tied to development in the area. At this time, there is no immediate plans to extend the Western Hills development and thus that park site is not in the 5-year CIP.

Sign / EMC Recommendation for Approval – The 2022 CIP includes \$22,056 to replace the electronic message sign on the corner of Rural and Sumner Street. The existing sign is 21 years old. It is dated, faded and the electronics no longer work. Staff has been working with the Schauer Arts and Activities Center staff (SAAC) and the Wisconsin Automotive Museum staff to research and design a new sign. The new sign is to be approximately the same size and be visible from the east and west of Hy 60, incorporate new EMC with a 9mm pixel. It will list/name the SAAC, Wisconsin Auto Museum and Hartford Recreation Center in that order.

Two proposals were obtained. One from Signworks of Hartford and one from Able Signs in Beaver Dam. Able Signs had the low bid of \$57,773. Besides being the low bid, the overall sign design and materials for construction were preferred. The Able sign is a 9 mm vs. 10 mm offered by Signworks (the lower the mm the higher the quality of sign resolution). The Schauer Center was still researching a 6mm pixel option from Able Signs. Warranties were the same, with both Signworks and Able Signs offering 7 year on parts and labor.

The Commission received a sign rendering and other information on the new sign from Able. The general oversight of this project will be by the SAAC staff. The city portion of the overall cost is \$19,527.67.

MOTION BY Kohler, seconded by Carroll to approve Able Signs for the purchase and installation of a new Sign/EMC at a total cost of \$57,773 with the City of Hartford responsible for one third of the cost - \$19,527.67.

MOTION CARRIED

Veterans Park Land Lease Consideration – The City was approached by a cellular phone company to lease a portion of Veterans Park, west of the skatepark, for a 140' monopole cell tower. Needed is an area 100' x 100' with perimeter security fence and a service drive to access the tower. The desired lease period is 90 years but could be negotiated to as low as 50 years. The Director recommends that the rent payment be placed into the Park Fund Balance account and used for community park development. The City would be paid a monthly rent (amount yet to be determined) with an annual percentage increase for each year over the lease term.

Currently, there are no park improvement or facilities additions scheduled in the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2018-2023 for this area of Veterans Park. As this area has no planned recreational developments, staff recommends continuing discussion with a land lease with the idea for potential long term revenue that can be used toward park and recreation facilities.

Brian Wirth, head of maintenance, did express concerns with mowing around a fence. Currently there just isn't enough staff to keep up with all of the mowing and weed trimming. This 100'x100' fenced area will add time to mowing as edge trimming will be needed. The Commission suggested that the concrete slab extend past the fence so edging would not be needed.

Kate Carroll spoke against this as, while she understood this is a 'dead spot' for recreational activity, it is very visible park spot to residents and a 140' tower would not be aesthetically pleasing. She hopes a better location in the City could be found where it could be 'tucked away' and not so visible. She is also concerned with the drainage in that area. As stated by the Director, this area holds water and she is concerned adding a paved 100'x100' slab would increase that problem.

The Director clarified that action by this Board is not approving this tower to be erected at Veterans Park, but instead would be a recommendation to consider a lease agreement to have a tower at this location. Council would take this Board's recommendation into advisement.

MOTION BY Mikulec, seconded by Kohler to recommend that a portion of Veterans Park western property area be considered for a land lease agreement as it concerns the placement of a cell tower.

MOTION CARRIED with Carroll voting against.

RECREATION PROGRAMS / ACTIVITIES

Summer Playground Report – Staff has been hired including a returning staff who will be the Playground Supervisor. The leaders are all young, but seem willing to learn and eager to work. We were able to increase enrollment and have called those on the waitlist.

Tree Climbing – Ages 7-14 - June 9 held at Woodlawn Park. A second timeslot was added due to the popularity of this program, however, there is still a very long waitlist.

Ooey Goopy Day – Ages 6-12 - June 21. Kids will get messy playing with whip cream, shaving cream, peanut butter and all the stuff parents say "No" too.

ADULT / YOUTH SPORT

Youthball Report – Umpires are set. Coaches' meetings for younger leagues were held. Games started. T-Ball clinics held this week. Opening concessions is delayed as the new Program Supervisor concentrated on getting the leagues running and other Recreation Programs started. She does plan on opening concessions soon and will be interviewing staff next week and ordering product.

Basketball – Ages 6-9 and 4-6 – Starts Saturday, June 11

Outdoor Pickleball - Ages 7-13 – Starts Wednesday June 18

Tennis Lessons – Youth Ages 4-13, Adult Ages 14+, Starts June 14

AQUATICS

Veterans Memorial Aquatic Center –

SEASON OPENING SCHEDULE CHANGES – Due to maintenance issues and delayed staff training, the pool did not open Memorial Day weekend. The pool will be open this Saturday and Sunday, June 4 & 5. However, the High School is still in session Monday – Wednesday, June 6-8, so our Weekday Season will be delayed to Thursday, June 9.

SWIM LESSONS – Swim lessons for the summer are filled. Staff is hoping to have additional instructors trained later in the summer and will add more classes at that time.

Signicast Family Aquatic Center – None

Lifeguard Wage Evaluation – Washington County Financial Assistance – The County has approached the City about using the County's ARPA funds to help increase pay rates for pool staff this summer in hopes of hiring additional staff to keep the pool open. The County had hoped to do the same at other County swimming facilities, however, at this point, it is too late for those facilities to get staff hired and trained to open. Most staff have found other jobs at this point.

Currently, our lifeguards are young. Many of our experienced guards did not return, taking jobs that pay more. The young staff we have are not looking to work many hours a week. This has been challenging for the Aquatic Fitness Supervisor in trying to patch work a staff schedule together.

In review of 42 other communities, guard wages range from \$9-\$16 with an average of \$11.53. We are at 10.25 for our first year guard up to \$11.00 for a 4th year guard. Preliminary discussions with the County could offer up to \$3 additional pay per hour for Managers, Guards and Instructors. Plus there may be an end of season bonus for staff based on number of hours worked. Estimations have an increase wage expense of \$40,000 for the season. This would be covered, this year, but the County's ARPA funds.

Staff has indicated that any wage increases in the summer would have to be carried forward as it would not be fair to drop staff's wages \$3 after the summer. This additional \$3 wage increase would add \$17,000 to the Signicast wage expense that would need to be covered by the department. Moving forward, budgets for both VMAC and Signicast will need to take into consideration these increased wages.

PARKS OPERATIONS

Parks Staffing Report – Like the pool, it has been difficult to hire seasonal park maintenance staff. To help with hiring park staff, wages were increased in May to \$14 (from starting wage of 11.25). Even so, the majority of those we were able to hire are High School students which delays when they can start and thus when normal park upkeep can be done in timely matter. In addition, like the pool staff, many of the seasonal park staff are not looking for full time hours or need frequent time off.

Parks Project Report –

- Mowing and trimming
- Restroom Cleaning
- Shelter Reservation Preparations
- Memorial Day Preparation at the Cemetery and Sawyer Park
- Riverwalk Work with VBH
- Playground Equipment Upkeep
- Repair to Walks/Bridge at Willowbrook

Dugout Netting
High School Day Of Service Assistance

Discuss July Commission Meeting and Park Tour – The Director confirmed if the July 6 meeting would work in Commissioner’s holiday schedule and if that meeting should be the annual park tour. Commission was favorable to both. The Director also asked for suggestions on which parks to tour. Alderperson Kohler suggested the parks with the bathroom renovations (Woodlawn, Willowbrook and Independence) and President Rusniak suggested Centennial Park. The director will prepare the tour schedule and list it on the next meeting agenda.

OTHER REPORTS /COMMISSION REQUESTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Buhle, seconded by Mikulec to adjourn at 7:30 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."