

HARTFORD PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

5:30 PM – City Hall Council Chambers

Present: Todd Rusniak, Karin Buhle, Todd Bultman, Joe Kohler, Ken Mikulec

Excused: 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 Bultman to approve June 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

Veterans Park Shelter CIP Project – Proposed Site & Design Changes – The current CIP includes \$275,000 in 2022 for a shelter/bathroom combination building in Veterans Park. Original thoughts by Staff was to have a more elaborate shelter located to the west of the pool mechanical building to serve larger functions and community events that would possibly also use the green space around the skate park/basketball court and/or the Lincoln Athletic Fields. One example of such an event is the July 4th Jaycees Festivities and City Fireworks.

However, the Director reminded Commission that the High School may be purchasing Lincoln Athletic Fields and continued use of those fields by City and/or other groups may be limited. In addition, the Jaycees did not hold any additional festivities for the 4th of July this year and may not be doing so in the future.

Staff, therefore, believes a smaller shelter located closer to the pool would be of greater value. In review of the park area, Staff believes the location to the south of the concession building and northeast of the playground would work for a smaller shelter. This shelter would be larger than the shelter that was at the site prior to the construction of the new pool, but smaller than the one proposed in the CIP. This location is ideal as it is closer to the pool entrance, close to the playground, close to the uni-sex bathroom that is located with the Concession building but is accessible from the park. The concession building also has a window that can be opened to serve those in the park/shelter. The estimated cost of the materials for an open, more modest shelter would be about \$35,000. The Director estimates installation would be an additional \$35,000. While the Director believes our Park staff have the skills to construct the shelter, the time to do so is limited.

Aldersperson Kohler questioned if the one uni-sex bathroom would be enough. The Director mentioned that there are parks with shelters that have no bathrooms. The Director said that there are no rules/laws regarding the number of bathroom needed in parks.

The Commission was in favor of this change in the CIP as well as the new location of the shelter for Veterans Park.

Department Operation Budget Discussion and Staff Summary – As staff works on the Operational Budget, they are addressing increasing the wages of many of the seasonal/part time positions so they are more competitive with area businesses as well as other recreation departments. The Director mentioned that all City Departments are reviewing their part time/seasonal staff wages. When the Recreation Staff reviews wages, they do reach out to other recreation departments to compare wages. On average, most wage increases will be \$.50 or \$1.00. With this increase VMAC will see about \$18,500 additional staff expense and the Signicast Pool would see about \$6,500 increase.

As directed by the City Administrator, any wage increases do need to be offset by new or additional revenues or by reducing expenses. As our Department's expenses are already reduced down to the bare minimums, staff is looking to increase program fees to cover the wage increases.

RECREATION PROGRAMS / ACTIVITIES

Archery Classes ages 7-14 – Added Thursday classes at 4 PM and 5 PM.

Tots A Little – Registration starts on July 14th for City Residents, July 19 Open Registration and July 20 On Line.

ADULT / YOUTH SPORT

Youthball Report – The season is moving along smoothly.

Lacrosse Camp – New program for ages 7-12, held in Slinger, July 19-20.

AQUATICS

Starfish Swim Lessons – Staff Report & Recommendation – Executive Summary –Staff has recently evaluated in more detail the Starfish Swim Lesson program and is recommending that the Department change to this program from the Red Cross Learn To Swim (LTS) Program for the following reasons:

- Cost is lower. Staff anticipates certifying 10 instructors at a cost of \$588 annually. There may need to increase to 15 instructors which would be a \$948 annual fee.
- Ease of training the trainer and thus ease of training new instructors. With the LTS program, it is difficult to train a trainer and the Aquatic/Fitness Supervisor, with the requirements to become a WSIT (Swim Instructor Trainer in the Red Cross), would not be able to become a WSIT. This makes training new instructors difficult. With the Starfish program, the Aquatic/Fitness Supervisor will be able to train new instructors with ease and as needed.
- Free consultations as needed, audits and continued education for the improvement of the program at the facility.
- Learner based curriculum vs. check based. Learner based provides instructors the flexibility to teach students in a way that is beneficial to the student.

Other differences with the Starfish program is a smaller class size. However, based on the average number of 5.5 students per class with the LTS program we typically get, staff expects to get a similar average in a Starfish class with 4 being the minimum and 8 the maximum. In the LTS we can have up to 12 maximum in some of the higher level classes.

There are three 'school' levels in the Starfish program with stages of swim skill achievement in each. The Aquatic/Fitness Supervisor has the flexibility to create classes/descriptions within these school levels grouping the skill achievements of each class as he sees best.

The Aquatic/Fitness Supervisor is recommending switching to the Starfish Program this Fall. He will be losing all but 2 of his instructors and has no WSIT (Red Cross WSI teacher) available to teach / train new staff. Since he will need to train 4-6 new instructors for the Fall, training them now, in the Starfish program, would be ideal.

Alderperson Kohler expressed concerns that our staff would not be trained as a WSI instructor making employment as they go to college and work for other departments difficult. In his conversations with many departments, the Aquatic/Fitness supervisor finds that most don't concern themselves with their instructors being certified by Red Cross as they too find it difficult train staff. Most departments self train their instructors and find those that know how to swim and/or have teaching abilities to be desirable and that a Red Cross certification is not as important.

The Aquatic/Fitness Supervisor has spoken to a few current instructors and in the brief conversations he had with them, all seemed excited about the Starfish program. He also had a longer conversation with Val, a long time staff member who also teaches many of our lessons and is a WSIT. Val was also very excited about the program. Hearing this eased many of the Commission concerns about moving to this new program.

MOTION BY Rusniak, seconded by Kohler, to transition to the Starfish swim program to begin in September of 2021.

MOTION CARRIED

AQUATICS

VMAC –

Open Swims – Have been going well. One of the best June weather wise and thus attendance has been good in June and the start of July has been great also.

Swim Lessons – These have been very popular. Unfortunately, we are short instructors. Should we have a few more instructors we could fill a few more classes.

Events –

- o August 5 there is Deck Art Day. Swimmers can purchase a square on the deck and use their sidewalk chalk to draw a picture. Lifeguards will vote with prizes awarded.
- o Search n Find on July 22. Staff will use chalk spray that is invisible until wet. Swimmers can search for all the different hidden words and pictures. Find them all and be in a drawing for a prize.
- o August 10 will be Honorary Lifeguard Day. Kids can register to shadow a lifeguard. Plus get a slushy and hot dog!

Fee Increases – Staff is proposing a \$.50 increase to the resident daily fee and \$1.00 to non-resident daily fee for both VMAC and Signicast Pools. Staff is also proposing at \$3 increase to swim lessons. These increases are to offset the wage increases.

Alderperson Kohler asked if the memberships or seasonal passes were also being increased. The Director indicated that the Recreation Center Memberships were already scheduled for an every other year 2% increase and that 2022 would be the year for a 2% increase. The VMAC pool passes are not being increased. They were increased in the 2020 budget yet we did not offer season passes last year so staff did not believe there should an increase in seasonal passes. The Director also said that the daily fees for VMAC have never been in increased since it opened in 2016 and that the Signicast fees have remained steady since 2007.

PARKS OPERATIONS

MILL – Outdoor Movies at Willowbrook Park, July 14 & 28 – The community group The Mill is once again sponsoring free movies in the park on the large screen this summer.

Centennial Park Project Update – City Engineer is finalizing documents with MSA for the Mill Pond Wall restoration project and the Centennial Park design plans associated with the wall project including kayak/canoe

boat launch, handicap fishing pier and replacement of the footbridge. The DNR permit for the work has been approved. The anticipated start of this wall project should be in September.

August Park Tour – The August meeting will include a park tour. The Director asked if there were any particular parks the Commission wished to visit. Parks mentioned were Centennial including the VBH panels site location and Woodlawn Park to see the recent Eagle Scout projects. The Director indicated he will review the upcoming Park CIP and if there is anything of interest he will add those parks to the tour.

Parks Project Report – Beyond the mowing and cleaning/maintaining park shelters, staff has also:

- Delivered and picked up equipment for events including baseball tournaments and Kettle Moraine Lions Club Fisheree
- Added materials to volleyball courts and repaired posts at Woodlawn Park
- Removed overgrowth shrubs between Candy Can Park and residential home with new border fence to be installed by the resident on his property.
- Added infield materials to South 2 diamond at Independence Park. Work is still needed on South 1 and 2 and North diamonds to improve drainage.
- Island restoration project in Recreation Center parking Lot coordinated with the GPS Summer Students and park crews

OTHER REPORTS /COMMISSION REQUESTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY Buhle, seconded by Mikulec to adjourn at 6:20PM.

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."