

March 22, 2022

CITY OF WASHBURN PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

5:00 PM

Washburn City Hall and virtually

Members Present:

Jennifer Maziasz (Council rep), Jamie Cook, and Erika Lang

Municipal Personnel Present:

Assistant City Administrator Tony Janisch, Director of Public Works Gerry Schuette

Absent:

Angel Croll

Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm. Quorum met.

Approval of the February 15, 2022 Parks Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion made to approve minutes by Cook, second by Maziasz. Minutes approved unanimously.

Updates from Public Works Department

Public Works Director Gerry Schuette and Janisch gave the following updates:

- Still working on Memorial Park bathroom upgrades.
- Public Works staff is going to recommend a delay to open Thompson's West End Park by a minimum of two weeks, to late April at the earliest. Staff need time to let the snow melt and conditions to dry out a bit, letting them get into the bathrooms to get them up and running, grade the roads, and do any other grounds maintenance. Drier conditions will also result in less mud/damage to grass and roads from vehicles and boats. If staff can get everything in place before the park opens, once it is open, conditions are pretty much maintenance free.
- Next month, public works staff will have some updates on improvements and maintenance at Memorial Park before that park is opened for the season.
- The Book Across the Bay event went well and organizers cleaned up the site really well.
- Skating rink officially closed last week. Attendance was over 4,300 people with weekends being the busiest time. Fewer people skated when it was very cold out and the rink was closed early on some of those colder days. 17 school groups booked the site which resulted in 423 students and chaperones from those groups. The City also sold over \$2,000 in snacks which resulted in a net gain of about \$750. Also, City Council approved the rerouting of the water and sewer lines down in that area so the Ironworks business can expand. Public works staff has been discussing adding hydrants to fill the skating rink which could also be used for irrigating the athletic fields. Maziasz pointed out that it would be good for the City to replace the vegetative buffer between the fields and houses, should it be disturbed during the infrastructure work, to help reduce noise for residents. Schuette added that some landscaping will be done around the skating rink as well.
- Scott Kluver and Janisch had a kick-off meeting with Cooper Engineering who is looking at the feasibility of expanding camping, primarily RV camping, at Thompson's West End Park in two different locations. Once more snow melts, the City will do some onsite tours. Cooper Engineering will have the study done between mid-June/July.
- The Emerald ash borer has been spotted in Bayfield County in the City of Bayfield. We have a reference for landowners who call the City of Washburn if they want more information. Lang mentioned that it would be wise for the City to inventory its trees and start thinking about whether it should proactively replace any of the ash trees as other cities have done. Janisch mentioned that an inventory was done some years ago and can be revisited.
- There is a vacancy on the City's Parks Committee. City staff have put a post on Facebook announcing the vacancy and encouraging people to apply. Mayor Motiff will review applications and appoint the member.

Update on Implementation of the Walking Trail Land Management Plan and Wisconsin Coastal Management Grant

- Not much has occurred related to activities for the current grant as it is wintertime. An additional grant proposal was submitted to Wisconsin Coastal Management Program in November. The City of Washburn hasn't heard which projects will be funded.
- Lang is working with a restoration contractor to finalize the plant order for this spring.
- Janisch is working with a couple of Parks Committee members on the content for the interpretive sign and a local designer is working on layout.

Discussion & Action of Tennis Court Relocation/Expansion

City staff had been considering seeking DNR grant funding to redo the 3rd street tennis courts. However, the Mayor proposed the idea of abandoning these courts to allow for housing, as the City has a lack of affordable housing and the housing authority is adjacent to this small park. The Mayor and Janisch spoke with the Washburn Tennis Association, who is in favor of this as these courts are not US Tennis Association regulation size anyway. Additionally, the site is wet and there is inadequate stormwater management which makes water pool in several locations. Instead, the Washburn Tennis Association is in favor of adding courts to Hillside Park and in doing so would allow WTA to hold tournaments. City staff is asking the Parks Committee for input and will be reaching out to a contractor to get a bid on construction and resurfacing. The DNR grant is due May 3rd. Janisch also pointed out that a past DNR grant was used to fund tennis courts at Hillside Park in the past. This new grant would include a small parking area, two additional courts, and a backboard for practice.

Parks Committee members discussed the following:

- it makes sense to add courts to Hillside Park for the above-mentioned reasons.
- matching funds will be needed for the DNR grant. It would be nice if some of these funds could come from the Washburn Tennis Association and/or other residents as well as some small grants such as the Bayfield County Health Infrastructure grant. If only City funds are used as match, this is a lot of money to spend on one park as we have other improvements we want to do at other parks and we want to make sure we are guided by our priorities and outdoor recreation plan which is in progress.
- the current court could be restriped and Pickleball could be offered on a couple of the courts at least.
- regarding where the additional courts would go, it would be nice to not lose all of the baseball field because people do use it and also play kickball here and it is a nice open space.
- if the playground must be moved, it would be nice to still offer some playground equipment. The current playground is geared toward smaller kids which is fine.

Motion made by Lang for the City to seek a grant from DNR to support the relocation of the tennis courts to Hillside Park second by Maziasz. Motion approved unanimously. It was further suggested to look for other potential park improvements such as the playground when applying for the grant.

Discussion & Action of West End Park Fishing Pier

Motion made by Maziasz to open floor for this topic; second by Cook. Motion approved unanimously. City Council Thomas Neimes Jr. presented the idea of putting in a fishing dock again (to replace the dock that was damaged and then removed because of ice.) as people don't like their kids using the coal dock as it is too high, there are cars on it, wave action, etc. He would like to see a dock that can be rolled in and then rolled out during the winter, so it doesn't get damaged from ice. The dock would have to be pretty long (about 40 feet) so it can access some deeper water.

Parks Committee members discussed the following:

- there is no doubt that people and kids love to fish and would use a fishing dock.
- the dock could go into the same place it was located before.
- Schuette pointed out that the City may have a dock that could be used from when the boat docks were replaced.

Discussion & Action of West End Park Flowing Wells

Parks committee members agreed that the committee should work with public works to develop a management plan for the two wells at Thompson's West End Park, which will also help inform maintenance needs. The following things need to be considered: keeping the road corner mowed for clear sight lines; re-routing the drainage pipe; developing a planting plan for the slope where the cedar trees were removed while maintaining view corridors; determining placement of the walking trail to connect it to the flowing well; determining future desired condition for the vegetation in the drainage; and working with the DNR to ensure water quality standards are maintained. Because residents are interested in what happens around the flowing wells, sharing information with residents will be important. At the next Parks Committee, members will visit the site to begin to develop a management plan. In the meantime, Janisch will learn what he can from the City of Ashland as to how they improved conditions at their wells.

Adjournment

Date and time of next meeting will be April 19, 2022. Meeting was adjourned at 6:26 pm.

Erika Lang
Secretary, Parks Committee