

**November 14, 2022**

**CITY OF WASHBURN COMMON COUNCIL MEETING**

5:30PM

Washburn City Hall & Remote Call-In

City Council Members:

Present, in-person:

Karen Spears-Novachek, Tom Neimes, Mary McGrath, Carl Broberg, Laura Tulowitzky, Jennifer Maziasz, Dave Anderson,

Present, remote:

none

Municipal Personnel:

Present in-person:

Mayor Mary D. Motiff, City Administrator Scott J. Kluver, Assistant City Administrator Tony Janisch, City Attorney Max Lindsey, Director of Public Works Gerry Schuette

Present, remote:

none

Absent:

none

**Call to Order** - Meeting called to order at 5:30PM by Mayor Motiff. Roll call attendance depicted six (6) of seven (7) members of the Common Council in attendance. Quorum of the Council recognized. Broberg arriving late.

**Approval of Minutes – City Council/Historic Preservation Meetings of October 10, 2022 - A motion was made by Novachek to approve the October 10, 2022 minutes of the City Council and Historic Preservation Commission, second by Neimes. Motion carried.**

**Approval of Expenditures – A motion was made by Novachek to approve the monthly expenditures as reviewed, second by McGrath. Motion carried unanimously via a roll-call vote.**

**Public Comment** – Jared Trimbo, 24 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St., spoke about campground expansion stating that he understands the purpose of expansion is to raise income for the City. He continued that his family uses Holman Lakeview Dr. for walking/biking all the time. And that the overflow area has looked pretty chaotic at times with all the tents and campers, and that an expansion there along with a bathhouse would be great and easier to use. Regarding use of the open field, Trimbo stated that he is not a fan of huge RV's, instead looking at yurts as an option. He concluded stating that he loves the green space in the city but sees the need for increasing income.

John R. Hopkins, 631 W Bayfield St., stated that there is no question that the City needs more revenue. He continued that in 2015 it was discussed to expand West End Park camping up to 70 sites. Hopkins stated his concerns of the 2-acre greenbelt or green corridor and what will become of Holman Lakeview Dr. after Hwy. 13 construction is done. Memorial Park & West End have trees that buffer them from traffic, but the 2-acre spot isn't and having camping in this spot along a traffic area will be noisy for people. He concluded that the 16-acre jewel above the Walking Trail is the buffer from the road and losing this buffer will cause issues.

Linda Barnes, 5 W 3<sup>rd</sup> St., stated that she remembers when the 2015 West End Plan was done but did not recall in the planning process any discuss of market analysis and what justification and pay-back there is for a half-million dollars of expense, and are there other ways to generate income for the city with a half-million-dollar investment.

Bill Scripps, 228 W 4<sup>th</sup> St., began by saying that we all agree on two things; we all love Washburn, and we know that bills have to be paid. He continued that hopefully other sources of revenue can be found other than raiding the lakeshore. He thought that yurts might be a good option, but with the wood smoke that might be hazardous to health and fears that developing the one lot would set precedence for developing the other open lots. Scripps continued that he can see the lot from the Trail, and if he can see the green grass he can see any structures that may be there. He concluded with three suggestions for revenue; eliminate the seasonal camping rate, add the RV site per the 2015 plan or yurts, and develop other campsites including rustic campsites which are easier to maintain.

Susan Lince, 631 W. Bayfield St., began by stating the importance of greenspace and natural corridors and keeping all 16-acres free from development is really important to a city that wants to flourish in the future. She continued that people come this area for the greenspace and that any development can be seen from the Trail and its hard to imagine that the Trail will be kept a natural and quite space. Lince concluded that in speaking with visitors to her art gallery, these people love the lakefront.

Roth Edwards, 221 W 6<sup>th</sup> St, began that the fight for the best development of Washburn's lakefront has been fought on the streets. He continued that we need to lift this conversation and get off this narrow path and arrive at a compromise and solution that benefits the City not only for the next 100 days, but the next 100 years. Washburn born with pride survived the loss of sawmills, the closing of the DuPont plant and disappearance of shipping. This was statement made when Washburn celebrated it's 100 years in 1983. He continued that yes; we are going to have to compromise over matters of Washburn's lakefront overall development. The 16-acres of Holman Lakeview Dr. have long been at the center of development controversy, but there is a simple solution. Begin any development affecting Washburn's jewel with a community wide survey. By involving the community, we can achieve a community and make Washburn an enjoyable place to live and raise children. If done well, in 100 more years we can live up to the 1887 motto of the Washburn News: Washburn first and last and all the time. But moving into the future, our children might add; At the time of the first awareness that our Earth is a finite ecosystem, our mothers & fathers following the example of their own mothers & fathers thought first and last and all the time the blue Earth belongs not to us but to itself and with each decision we make, however big or small, let's think not first ourself, but our children and our children's children. Through addressing our differences and truly learning from one another we'll claim the reality as well as the work we seek a Washburn plan, a forever lakefront plan of the people.

Leann House, 329 W 5<sup>th</sup> St., referenced the discussion 10 years ago and the drive to expand the campgrounds, but being raised in Milwaukee, she suggested the idea of a botanical gardens like in Milwaukee. She continued that why couldn't the money being proposed for a campground be used for a garden, and maybe it could be incorporated into educational programs. Northland College students could get credit for working or volunteer and Master Gardeners might want to be involved. A botanical garden is a creative niche, no one else up in the area has one. It would bring people to the area, and possible draw businesses up here, maybe seed companies to test plants in a harsher, northern environment. She concluded by referencing the lyrics to a song: Cut down all the trees and put them in a tree museum and charge the tourists a \$1.50 to see them. Don't it always seem to go, you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone. You've paved paradise and put up a parking lot.

Amy Trimbo, 24 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St., stated that she liked the proposal for campground expansion. Washburn needs progress forward and she gets a lot of business from people at the RV park. The area needs more places for tourists when they come and enjoy the green spaces.

Jane Heim, 102 E 5<sup>th</sup> St, compared Washburn to the show Mayberry, and how at the end of each show the conflicts were resolved. She then thanked that the concept of campground expansion was bought before the people. She continued that this huge decision affects us all. She further asked that the City do away with the seasonal rate and keeping the campground area where it is. She made comment that the City is not charging enough for seasonal campsites and many park a trailer and only come up on weekends. And that everyday that these campsites are not being used, its one less person buying gas or food at the grocery store, or other business. The entire town loses money. She concluded by asking the city to Think Big and gave examples of other small communities that had big development occur in them, and to look for something that could be monumental.

Sarah Randa, 320 W 8<sup>th</sup> St., stated mixed feelings for campground expansion. She understands that it could create a couple new jobs for cleaning yurts, and Air BnB fees would come in. But there are pros & cons, with a strong wind that would blow campfire smoke in, and with year-round yurts there would be smoke smell all year. She concluded by suggesting that the campgrounds be reservable, so people know that they can come up and have a spot.

Joe Kochevar, 209 E 4<sup>th</sup> St., said that the discussion feels like a zero-sum game: you're either in favor of campground expansion or totally against it. He further stated that he is not in favor or opposed, but that the lakeshore trail should be unchanged. He is in favor of campground expansion if the campsites were more spaced out and vegetation in between, so that it doesn't look like an RV park but looks like nature with recreation interspersed. He continued that the finances need to work and need to be able to recoup the costs as long as its in line with managing the resource. He added that he has seen vacant sites and to look at eliminating seasonal campers for a season or two to see if there is an increase in revenue. He concluded that he is not in favor of all the mowing along the Walking Trail and along Holman Lakeview Dr. and to maintain as a greenspace.

David Bratley, 402 2nd Ave. E, spoke that he is concerned about the lakefront and has spoken with campers and residents while along the trail about expansion and most have said leave it as it is and don't change anything. He continued to leave the space as a natural corridor between the parks. He added that getting ride of seasonal campers could bring more funds in and that the golf course is putting in a campground and there would be competition. The younger generation is more interested in silent sports and nature, and the future predictions are not in RV camping and gas prices are raising. He concluded that Council opened the discussion up to the public and believe that most people in the City enjoy the greenspace.

Dawn Bellile, 714 W 5<sup>th</sup> St., noted that nobody so far has address borrowing a million dollars but how are you paying it back. And that there are no statistics on how much money is spent vs. brought in at the campgrounds. She shared a concern that the West End Park is in dire need of a new playground. If the City can't take care of a playground, will they take care of a new campground. We need to protect what we have, and the expansion of a campgrounds is not going to be the answer. We need to figure out how we're going to pay for things first. She concluded that the public is who you should be representing.

Michele Reiswig, 423 W. Pine St., stated that she visited Washburn as a child and ultimately moved here to live and what she, and her family & friends enjoy is the greenspace. And she hoped that Council would consider the other options like eliminating seasonal rates and to maybe look at long-term, big-picture options for the city, but keeping the lakefront as it is.

**Mayoral Announcements, Proclamations, Appointments** - The Mayor nominated Jeff Bellile to the Housing Authority and Matt Simoneau to the Joint Review Board. A motion was made by Novachek to appoint Jeff Bellile to the Washburn Housing Authority for the term expiring October 2026, second by Neimes. Motion passed unanimously. Novachek further motioned to appoint Matt Simoneau to the Joint Review Board, second by Anderson. Motion passed unanimously.

**Presentation & Discussion with Representatives from Cinnaire Solutions on Proposed County Housing Development Plans and Process** – Jerrell Harris and Nicole Solheim of Cinnaire Solutions presented to Council regarding the proposed housing development by Bayfield County on the east side of the city. Cinnaire Solutions submitted a proposal and was chosen by Bayfield County for a mixed-income, senior and family housing development on 9.5 acres of county property. It was stated that 56 units would be constructed providing affordable rental housing for both seniors and families ranging from one to three bedrooms; along with garages, walking/biking paths and outdoor gathering space. The presenters concluded by stating that WHEDA funding would be applied for to assist with project costs and once completed, a property management agent from the area would be sought out. Maziasz stated appreciation of health & wellness objectives with pathways and outdoor space and suggested areas for outdoor gardens, as well as managing storm water. Broberg shared concern of unit size, stating that the 53 senior units currently in the city account for 73% of the ambulance runs; and that these units have narrow hallways, doorways and small bathrooms making it difficult for EMS.

**Discussion & Action on Thompson's West End Park Camping Expansion and Park Committee Recommendation on Topic** – The Mayor began discussion of campground expansion and mentioned points identified in the 2015 Expansion of West End Park plan: enhance camping opportunities, integrated with existing trails, financially viable for the community, pg. 5; public input indicated that rustic or tent camping would be more effective at meeting the goals of the community including glamping or yurts, pg. 12; maximizing space is desired, rustic camping is appealing, and glamping sites offer an opportunity to set apart

from other destination in Northern Wisconsin, yurts would be well suited for winter camping, pg. 22; the first priorities includes up to 30 new campsites, new bathroom/shower house, and children's playground, in project phasing near-term includes pursue grant funding for habitat restoration which is being done along the trail, glamping & rustic sites and the children's play area, pg. 39. The Mayor further stated that estimated costs have been identified but until it is determined what is exacted needed, the exact cost and available funding is not yet determined. Maziasz thanked Council for letting this come to the Parks Committee to seek public input. She then thanked the Parks Committee for its work hosting two public input meetings, along with an article in the paper and tabling at the IGA. She continued that two points from the public input were to follow the 2015 park plan and be very careful with the development of the open field and that more formal camping could be done in the over-flow site. She concluded that its short sighted to only look as revenue as the goal, but to look at other ways to enhance the area for the community and visitors. Maziasz moved to approve development the Overflow Area according to the plan from Cooper Engineering and to send development of the Open Field back to the Park Committee for concept development, seconded by Novachek. Novachek acknowledged the survey that was completed with 51 respondents and asked what specific information is further needed. Maziasz answered to identify rustic camping opportunities and further discuss use of the corridor and desired future conditions. Discussion ensued. The Mayor questioned developing the overflow area since it is already generating revenue and to look further at developing the open field area. Anderson commented that this area is an old industrial zone; the marina wasn't there until the City built it. McGrath commented that campground expansion has been discussed for decades; she's fine with a balance on development, but it needs to be moving forward. She added that besides campers bring in revenue to the City, they bring revenue to the downtown businesses. Broberg moved to amend the motion to have the Parks Committee report back to Council in March, seconded Novachek. Motion to amend the original motion carried unanimously.

Masiasz moved to open the floor, seconded Tulowitzky. Motion carried five (5) to seven (7), McGrath & Broberg voting against. Roth Edwards thanked Council for its time, service and diligence on the matter. He further commented the roll and job of the Council is to seek, determine and follow the majority will of the people of Washburn. All of the people are valuable, but you do have to do what the people want. This is not a question of campground expansion, Edwards stated, he has never opposed expansion, but the question is where. You cannot have nature preservation and RV/yurt camping in the same area. Edwards concluded that 67 respondents is only 3% of the population, however in 2004 a citywide survey reached 600 people representing 33% of the population and that's what we need again to find, discover, and follow. If you develop that area of Holman Lakeview Dr., that does set a precedent. Neil Hunt, 815 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. W, stated he grew up in Washburn and recently moved back, and he remembers how industrial that area was. After moving back, Hunt has walked the Trail and seen the field and new it is a beautiful shoreline. Masiasz added that the 2004 survey that Mr. Edwards referenced was actually a referendum on condo development in that area. Tulowitzky commented that a large-scale survey may not be feasible. Leann House stated that listening to comments received tonight, tourism isn't the only thing that Washburn survives on. If other communities can draw in and survive on other businesses, we should keep an open mind. She added that before it was an overgrown industrial area, it was a pristine area; and we should look at other ways to increase revenue like raising rates. She concluded that we don't want to lose paradise for the sake of a parking lot for RV's. The Mayor responded that tourism support 1 in 4 jobs in the area. Bill Scripps stated he walked door to door handing out information and most responses were to keep the Trail the way it is and to protect the lakeshore. Kathy Hinson, 116 Jones Rd., commented that if the bathrooms are going to be year-round, why not look at yurts instead of RVs in the Overflow Area. Novachek moved to close the floor, seconded Neimes. Motion carried unanimously. Motion to approve the amended motion for campground development in the Overflow Area and the Parks Committee to present develop plans for the Open Field Area to Council in March passed Six (6) to One (1). Anderson voting against.

**Discussion & Action on Certified Survey Map for 101 Williamson Road – Mark Stilton, Petitioner –** Novachek moved to approve the certified survey map for 101 Williamson Rd, seconded by Broberg. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion & Action on Resolution #22-009 to Amend the Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) Charter to Include Price County –** McGrath moved to approve Resolution #22-009 amending the BART Charter, seconded by Broberg. Neimes stated that there would be no changes of service to the City or Bayfield Co. with Price Co. coming on board. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing, Discussion & Action on Recommendation to List the Washburn City Hall as a Local Historic Property** – Novachek moved to open the Public Hearing, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried unanimously. No public comments were received. Neimes moved to close Public Hearing, seconded by Novachek. Motion carried unanimously. Novachek moved to list Washburn City Hall as a Local Historic Property, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing, Discussion & Action – 2022 (payable 2023) Municipal Tax Levy; General Fund, Debt Service & Capital 2023 Budget Matters & Line-Item Adjustments; Action on Resolution #22-007 - Adopting the 2022 Tax Levy; Action on Resolution #22-008 - County Library Levy Exemption** – Anderson moved to open Public Hearing, seconded by Novachek. Motion carried unanimously. Dawn Bellile asked that Council consider budgeting for The Club to support recreational programming, suggesting \$1,000 a month. Broberg moved to close Public Hearing, seconded by Anderson. Motion carried unanimously. Neimes moved to approve Resolution #22-007 adopting the 2022 Tax Levy, seconded McGrath. Discussion occurred regarding increasing stipend pay for Committees and/or Council. No action was taken. Motion carried unanimously. Maziasz moved to add \$1,000 in the Budget for The Club, seconded by Tulowitzky. Novachek commented that it is possible to find \$1,000 somewhere but will need to be looked at carefully. Discussion continued. Kluver responded that this is a change in policy, several years ago Council made the decision to stop all donations to outside groups. Maziasz withdrew her motion. McGrath moved to approve the 2023 General Fund, Debt Service & Capital Budgets and Line-Item Adjustments, seconded Neimes. Motion carried unanimously. Novachek moved to approve Resolution #22-008 County Library Levy Exemption, seconded Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion & Action on Approval of 2023 Water and Sewer Utility Budgets; Action on Sewer Rate Increase** – Novachek moved to approve the 2023 Water & Sewer Utility Budgets and a Sewer Rate increase, seconded by Tulowitzky. Novachek stated that the City will be requesting a 3% increase of the Water Rate from the PSC. The last time a rate increase was approved was 2015. The fixed sewer meter rate will also increase to 3%. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion & Action on Proposed 2023 Harbor Commission Budget and Slip Fees** – Broberg moved to approve the 2023 Harbor Commission Budget & Slip Fees, seconded by Novachek. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion on Concept to Create Tourism Committee** – The Mayor began discussion stating that 10% of collected room tax goes to the City and 90% of the room tax goes to the Room Tax Commission, and that some local hoteliers do not like how room tax dollars are being spent. She continued that these dollars must be used to promote and develop tourism and the Commission has agreed to use the Washburn Chamber as the tourism entity to do this. State statute requires that a tourism entity must spend at least 51% of their budget of on tourism. Attorney Lindsey commented that state statutes have changed over the years. And if a tourism entity does exist in the room tax zone (Washburn and Town of Bayview) the Commission must contract with them. If there isn't a tourism entity in the room tax zone, the Commission may contract with another entity but 100% of the room tax dollars must be spent on tourism promotion and development. McGrath questioned the use of funding for office space and staffing. Lindsey answered that promotion & development has been further defined as marketing projects and creation & distribution of promotional material, transient tourist informational services, tangible municipal development including a convention center. He continued that it is frustratingly vague of what is allowed and does not specifically say that overhead expenses can or can not qualify. Discussion ensued. Novachek commented of why create a new entity rather than working with what we have already. Anderson commented that the role is to get people to town, but it's the role of the businesses to get them in their doors. McGrath added that to get a product done you need the staff, and where will the staff work, they will need an office. Lindsey added that a tourism committee could be created. He continued that the Joint Room Tax Commission has decided to send 100% of the room tax revenue to the Washburn Chamber, and that they don't have to do that. They can decide how that money gets spent, as long as it's spent of tourism creation and tourism development. Lindsey added that the City could pull out of the joint commission and create its own room tax commission to decided how to spend the room tax dollars. Lindsey concluded that both the City & Town of Bayview each appoint one (1) member to the Commission, and they in turn appoint two (2) members to the commission with the stipulation that these are from the lodging industry. During discussion it was asked and Melissa Martinez, Director of the Washburn Chamber of

Commerce, shared the new vision and mission statements of the Chamber which does include the promotion of tourism. The Mayor ended discussion.

**Discussion & Action on Temporary Street Closure (Omaha St. between 1st and 2nd Aves W.) and Property Use for Free Outdoor Play at Stage North on December 8-10, and 15-17 – Rebecca Weinel, Petitioner** – Novachek moved to approve the temporary closure of Omaha St and property use for Stage North’s Outdoor Play, seconded by Neimes. Motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn** – Mayor Motiff adjourned the meeting at 9:23PM.

Tony Janisch  
Assistant City Administrator

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 4:30pm**

Committee Members Karen Spears-Novachek, Laura Tulowitzky & Mary McGrath reviewed monthly expenditure vouchers.