

September 17, 2019

CITY OF WASHBURN PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING

5:30 PM Washburn City Hall

Present: Members: Jennifer Maziasz (council rep), Jamie Cook, Erika Lang, Wendy Reese

Municipal Personnel: Mayor Richard Avol, City Administrator Scott Kluver, Assistant City Administrative Tony Janisch, Public Works Director Bob Anderson,

Excused Absence(s): Kyleleen Bartnick

Call to Order - Meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Maziasz. Lang arrived at 5:35 pm. Bartnick absent due to illness.

Approval of the August 20, 2019 Parks Committee Meeting Minutes - Motion made to approve minutes by Reese; second by Cook. Motion carried unanimously.

Update from Public Works Department - An update was given by Public Works Director Bob Anderson. Updates included: (1) Hockey rink has been painted. (2) Additional mowing was done in various locations to control/suppress invasive plants. (3) The backstop was planned to go in, but not sure if it will be completed before winter as the seasonal staff have left positions resulting in decreased capacity. (4) The drainage by the marina was recontoured, vegetation and other debris was removed, and rock was laid so the drainage functions better. Lang asked if the purple loosestrife flowers were removed along the lakeshore near the marina as this is an invasive plant that can spread quickly. Anderson reported that no, they were not but he is now aware of this.

Update of Dog Park Survey - The committee has continued to discuss the idea of a dog park for the City of Washburn, with the next step asking City residents to fill out a survey to gauge interest and support for a dog park. Reese has been working with a small group of dog park organizers to create the survey and the draft survey was shared with committee members.

Members opened the floor to the public at 5:45 pm; motion made by Lang, second by Cook. The following points were made/discussed: (1) One change to the survey will be to the question that references a "small" annual permit fee. The word "small" will be removed. (2) A link to the survey should be available on the City's website and FB page. (3) A link to the survey will also be available on the dog park website and maybe its FB page. (4) A hard copy of the survey will be distributed door-to-door in Washburn. Copies will also be available at various places in the City such as coffee shops, etc. (5) The survey will be launched in early October - maybe by October 1st. It will be live/available for a 2-week minimum, after which time feedback will be assessed. It can be shared for a longer period of time if needed. (6) Michelle Jensen from the Ashland Daily Press published an article on a potential dog park in the City of Washburn; it was nice coverage.

Discussion & Action on Family Music Park along Lakeshore - Nate Swiston brought this idea forward to City staff who asked the Parks Committee to discuss it. A one-page concept summary and a simple drawing was shared with the committee. As Nate was unable to attend the meeting, committee members agreed that this discussion will continue at the next meeting as long as Nate will be in attendance to give more information, answer questions, etc. However, committee members briefly made/discussed the following points: (1) The overall concept as outlined by Swiston is to construct a grandstand with power in an area that would be easy for people to access, close to restaurants, etc. He has suggested an area along the walking trail, in an area that was recently cleared by the City. (2) This grandstand would be a place for people to gather, as well as enjoy music or other forms of entertainment. Ideally, it will help bring people into the community just as this type of venue does in Ashland and Bayfield. Cornucopia has been offering a movie night which has been well attended. (3) Lang reported that music in the park is offered in Bayfield throughout the summer. The performers are paid, and these costs are heavily subsidized by the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce. The chamber also does a good job with publicity. The shows are well attended, and restaurants also benefit as they are just one or two blocks from the park. No additional food services have been needed. (4) As far as materials, Swiston has secured donations for the electrical work, as well as donated materials for the construction from Washburn Hardware and Olson Lumber. Therefore, the construction cost to the City would be minimal. (5) In considering this proposal, other locations should be considered as well. Bob Anderson will give this some thought. (6) The Washburn Chamber of Commerce Director should be invited to the meeting with Swiston to understand what role they might play. (7) In the meantime, committee members will review the plan for Thompson's West End Park to evaluate compatibility, and also consider other locations. Bob Anderson will also think about other potential locations.

Discussion of Schedule & Frequency of Parks Committee Meetings - Members briefly discussed the committee's future meeting schedule, as well as what items should be on the agenda and when. Members agreed to the following: (1) There needs to be more time taken to discuss future agenda items at the end of each meeting. (2) Agenda creators will continue to be diligent when considering what topics should be discussed and when. For example, it is pressing to discuss a proposal when the person bringing the proposal to the committee cannot attend the meeting? (3) In terms of frequency of meetings, the committee has currently been meeting monthly. However, a meeting should be organized only if there are things to discuss. Members agreed to continue meeting monthly as long as there are things to do. The next meeting's date will be discussed at the end of each current meeting.

Discussion & Recommendation on Lakeshore Parkway and Walking Trail Management Plan - Lang reviewed the changes that were made to the draft management plan for the lakeshore parkway and walking trail area. Changes were incorporated based on feedback from Cook as well as City staff. Committee members then discussed the following: (1) Changes to some language (use of should vs. will as well as clarifying which city entity is responsible for which task) would provide clarification to City staff as to what has to be done vs. what would be nice to do if there are resources. (2) Maziasz wants to ensure that the document is action-oriented, and as such, is easy for the City staff to understand and use. She referenced the Proposed Timeline of Activities table as something that could be more detailed to describe who/what/where/when/how specifically related to vegetation management. (3) Anderson pointed out that the descriptions of the best management practices (the "why" and "how") are very helpful and provide guidance to staff. (4) Lang pointed out that while the plan is not a mandate for the City, the City should strive to follow best management practices as this is what residents and partners expect. It has been the lack of attention to this that has caused some actions to be taken that were not the best for the lakeshore and met with opposition from some residents. The "why" and "how" parts of the document are very important for context and guidance. (5) Desired future conditions could also be further fleshed out, as well as potential opportunities. (6) Maziasz suggested working with Lang to make some changes to the way the document is organized to improve its readability and accessibility. An updated draft would be shared with the committee in November, and then if ready, brought to City Council.

While committee members agreed to spend more time to create a solid management plan that is ready for City Council, committee members discussed if actions to begin addressing invasive plant species as well as address some infrastructure needs could be put in motion. Members agreed that it would be opportunistic for the City to submit a grant proposal to Wisconsin Coastal Management in early November to begin removing/controlling invasive plants as well as do some basic infrastructure projects (such as a sign at the entrance to the walking trail as has been discussed) should the project be funded. A motion was made by Cook to recommend to City Council to seek grant funding for these actions; second by Lang. Lang volunteered to work with City staff on the proposal. It was also discussed that additional cash match, beyond what has already been budgeted and applicable to the grant activities, would not be needed from the City.

Site visit to Lakeshore Parkway & Walking Trail - This did not occur.

Future Topics - Committee members agreed to meet next in November, on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. At minimum, the following items will be on the agenda: (1) Management plan for the Lakeshore Parkway and Walking Trail (2) Proposal for a family music park (3) Dog park (at least a survey update) (4) Update from Public Works Department (which will continue to be a standing agenda item)

Adjournment - Motion made by Cook to adjourn meeting at 7:03 pm, second by Maziasz. Motion approved unanimously.

Erika Lang
Parks Committee