

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

August 4th, 2021

The Merrill Parks & Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, August 4th, 2021 at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Merrill City Hall.

Commission members present: Dan Novitch, Kyle Gulke, Brian Artac, Jean Ravn, John Van Lieshout

Commission members absent: Joan Tabor, Amanda Groth

Department staff present: Dan Wendorf

Others in attendance: Alderman Mark Weix, John Malm, MP3, Dave Johnson

***Motion by Artac, seconded by Ravn to approve the minutes from the July meeting.

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion Van Lieshout, seconded by Artac to approve the claims

Novitch asked Wendorf what the expense was for signs at the Smith Center. Wendorf stated that was for the naming of the arena in memory of Charlie Phelps, and that non-lapsing funds were used for that expense.

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None

The next item on the agenda was to continue discussion on the Sumnicht property adjacent to the City Forest. Wendorf informed the Commission that he was able to have a few discussions with a representative of the family regarding the property. He said discussions went very well and the family has been very nice to work with. Wendorf stated that they were hoping to get fair market value for their property and on 70 acres that would be approximately \$140,000. Wendorf said that is a fair price considering today's market and he would like to add this item into the 2022 Capital Requests. City Administrator Johnson stated that he thinks the priority on the Capital list should be upgraded to a number one as it is a unique opportunity that doesn't come along very often if at all. Wendorf and the Commission agreed and the change will be made to the priority. Alderman Weix asked if there are trails on the property or recreational value. Wendorf stated that the property has tremendous potential to incorporate our trails into. Novitch asked if the family was aware of our timeline and if they were willing to be patient. Wendorf stated that he did discuss that with the family and they are willing to be patient to a certain degree. Wendorf described the budgetary process to them and he believes they will be willing to wait for a bit but it is something that if funding is not appropriated during this cycle, they will most likely put it on the open market.

The next item on the agenda was to begin discussions on the 2022 Capital Projects and Equipment list. Wendorf introduced the list of items that he has compiled after discussing it with his buildings and

grounds staff to ensure that those who work most intimately in the parks and on the amenities and equipment have input. Wendorf reviewed the list item by item for the Commission. Gulke asked if pit toilets for Prairie Trails could be added to the list. Wendorf stated it can certainly be added and the Commission agreed to add it to the list. Gulke also asked why the large field mower was moved to a future year. Wendorf stated that the Jacobsen has been running well over the past year and a half and the crew wanted to keep using it for as long as possible, as they really like it. Wendorf stated that this item will be on next month's agenda so he asked the Commission to review it and contact him if they have any revisions or additions to the list.

The next item on the agenda was to continue discussion on the newly adopted park along West Highway 64. Novitch asked the Commission if anyone had any names they would like to suggest as this is basically all that remains to be accomplished for this park. Wendorf stated that previously a few suggestions came up (Council View Park, River View Park, River Parkway, etc.). Gulke had a few ideas, including Five Islands Park due the view of the 5 islands in the river adjacent to the park. Wendorf stated there was no hurry in naming the park and Novitch suggested leaving this on future agendas to continue the discussion and creative thinking.

The next item on the agenda was the Malm Pergola to potentially be built on the east end of the River Bend Trail near Cooper St. Wendorf stated that the Malm Family was looking to leave a lasting memorial and amenity to the River Bend Trail in honor of their parents. Wendorf included plans for the pergola, along with a location map. Wendorf stated that he has been involved with the planning of the structure and sees it as a very nice addition to the trail.

***Motion Ravn, seconded by Van Lieshout to approve the plans and location for the Malm Pergola.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Director's Monthly Report. Novitch began by thanking Wendorf for his thorough report and commenting on how busy the summer looks for the department. Novitch wanted to thank Wendorf and the entire staff at Parks & Recreation for a job well done. Wendorf thanked Novitch for the kind words and said it has been rejuvenating to have a more normal summer season with people, parks, and programs and Wendorf mentioned that it is the staff that makes things run and we have an amazing group of people working for us this year. Wendorf said it is nice to see heavy traffic in the parks, the aquatic center, athletic fields/leagues, programs and events returning, and lots of visitors returning to our community because of our parks and programs.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, September 1st, 2021 at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Merrill City Hall.

Public Comment: None

***Motion Ravn, seconded by Van Lieshout to adjourn at 4:55 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dan Wendorf
Recording Secretary