



CITY OF MERRILL

Parks & Recreation Dept. - Smith Center

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JUNE MEETING NOTICE

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission will have a meeting on **Wednesday, June 1, 2022 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall**. Phone info: Phone: 662-441-3076
PIN: 943 825 927 #

Voting members of Commission: Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, Kyle Gulke, Joan Tabor, Mark Weix, Chad Krueger and Dan Novitch

The following items will be included on the agenda:

1. Approve minutes from previous meeting.
2. Approve claims.
3. Public Comment
4. Summary of Outdoor Recreation Survey.
5. Continued discussion on Bierman Family Aquatic Center – staffing levels and future recruitment and retention.
6. Seasonal staffing issues – begin discussion on future solutions.
7. Monthly reports.
8. Set date for next meeting.
9. Public comment
10. Adjournment

Submitted by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dan Novitch".

Dan Novitch, Chairperson
Parks and Recreation Commission

The Merrill City Hall is accessible to the physical disadvantaged. If special accommodations are required, please contact City Hall at 536-5594

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

May 4th, 2022

The Merrill Parks & Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, May 4th, 2022 at 4:15 p.m., at the Merrill City Hall.

Members Present: Kyle Gulke, Chad Krueger, Dan Novitch, Mark Weix, Brian Artac, Jean Ravn

Members Excused: Joan Tabor

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf

Others in attendance: Elizabeth McCrank, Lori Anderson-Malm, Mayor Hass, MP3, Dustin Brown, Dave Johnson, Fred Heider (NCWRPC)

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

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Weix, seconded by Artac to approve the claims from April.

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

The next item on the agenda was to review the results of the survey from our upcoming 5-year Outdoor Recreation Plan that North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) has been working on. Fred Heider from NCWRPC was in attendance to review the survey and summarize the results. He explained that in the packets for the commission was a summary and the supporting details from the survey. He explained that the survey was taken by 282 people and there was a good representation of citizens from inside the City and from the surrounding townships. He explained that surveys are acceptable in lieu of public hearings because the survey allows for so much more feedback over a longer period of time. The survey results showed that it was taken by 58% female and 42% male and that the majority of survey takers were between the ages of 25-40. That age category was over 50% of those participating. He also explained that there was a good representation of all age categories. Heider then discussed some key findings. He stated that one of the very first questions was most frequent outdoor recreational activities that respondents participated in. Results showed the top ten outdoor recreation activities to be (in order): 1. Walking/hiking 2. Events/festivals/fairs 3. Swimming 4. Fishing 5. Playground usage 6. Boating 7. Dog walking/dog park 8. Canoeing/kayaking 9. Bicycling 10. Gardening. Heider mentioned that boating and playground usage were higher than other communities but the results speak for themselves. He then explained that "enthusiast questions" followed use questions to quantify people's interests. Heider discussed the "rate this statement" category and said it turned out very well and allows the commission to really gauge public interest on the topics they elected to include on the survey. It also allows the commission to see how many people answered these questions and how many skipped. Krueger asked if it is normal for people to skip these questions and Heider said yes. Heider went on to describe the goals and objectives portion of the survey, saying that

he used the previous plan and survey results. He suggested keeping the second goal in the plan due to the very high survey demand for water based recreation. He stated that the survey results confirmed the goals and should remain according to the public. Heider explained that if the Commission sees anything that needs to be changed, please let either him or Wendorf know and we can get it adjusted into the plan. Heider told the Commission that the Outdoor Recreation plan helps with grant funding through Stewardship as well as LAWCON funding to help support park projects. He also stated that new LAWCON legislation is going to allow for funding qualification (50% match) for non-nature based items now, including playgrounds and facilities.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the upcoming WisDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant cycle. Heider also spoke on this topic and said that the new grant cycle begins in August of 2022 and will likely close towards the end of October. TAP grants are 78% federal funding with a 22% local match and can include any requests related to bike/pedestrian/trail expenditures. He said there is a minimum of \$300,000 request for this cycle. Weix asked if sidewalks would be included and Heider said not all sidewalks would be – only ones that were identified in our Bike/Ped Plan that we completed a few years ago. He did say the pedestrian bridge that we referenced in our survey over the railroad tracks connecting Banker's Square to the River Bend Trail would qualify.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss a potential concession building to be built with donated time and materials near the north baseball/softball fields of the MARC. Wendorf stated that he met with a representative of Merrill Baseball that has enough materials to donate and build a 12x14 building in between the three north fields. Wendorf stated it was a great idea and it was mentioned numerous times in the survey that people would like that there. He stated that baseball would need to find a mason to pour a concrete slab, as the person who is building it doesn't do concrete work. Wendorf also stated that they would try and work with local plumbers and electricians to stub in accommodations to allow for power and water/sewer at a later date when funding allows for a bathroom to be added to the facility and increase the size of it. Wendorf stated this is a great opportunity to accomplish a real need in that area and not have to spend taxpayer dollars on the project.

***Motion Weix, seconded by Ravn to approve the concessions building by the north fields at the MARC.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to continue discussion on the lifeguarding situation at the Bierman Family Aquatic Center. Wendorf informed the Commission that the situation is unfortunately similar to last month's meeting. We have enough guards to open the aquatic center, but not enough to open with the same hours as we have enjoyed in the past. Wendorf explained that they have continuously advertised on the radio, newspapers, social media, word of mouth, job fairs, and even large posters at several key areas around town (even the High School). We have gained a couple guards over the past month but not enough to make a big impact. Wendorf stated that after discussing availability with existing guards, the Bierman Family Aquatic Center will only be able to be open Monday through Friday's. Guard availability is extremely limited on almost all weekends all summer long. If there is a weekend or weekend day that we have enough guards, we will add that to the schedule and inform the public. Wendorf also stated that he and Dawn recently sat down with representatives from MAPS to not only address the current situation, but to begin looking at ways to creatively solve this issue moving forward. He said there were some very good ideas that came out of the discussion including Lifeguarding as a credited physical ed class through the school and a consortium of communities with shared lifeguard

pool to name a few. Wendorf stated that it is very important to remain vigilant in our search for recruiting and retaining lifeguards for the foreseeable future and it will most likely involve keeping a very close eye on wages that surrounding communities pay to remain competitive. Wendorf also stated that he realizes that the public will most likely not be happy with the hours that we have to operate under at the aquatic center, but we literally have no other choice. We need lifeguards. He will continue to keep the Commission apprised of the situation.

The next item on the agenda was to elect a Parks & Recreation Commission representative to the City Plan Commission. Novitch explained that this is going to be a one year term starting this year and we will re-elect a representative each year. Novitch asked if anyone on the Commission had any interest in being a representative. With nobody stepping forward, Novitch informed the Commission that he talked with Gulke before the meeting and he agreed to serve for another year if nobody else had interest.

***Motion Weix, seconded by Ravn to nominate Kyle Gulke to the City Plan Commission for a one year term.

***Carried unanimously.

Next item was monthly reports. Wendorf fielded questions to begin. He then went on to say things were ramping up in the parks with the nice weather finally starting to arrive and that everyone was extremely busy with parks maintenance and programs. Ravn thanked Wendorf and the Parks & Recreation Staff for all of the things that they do. Wendorf said that we are all fortunate to have the best staff. The Parks & Recreation Staff (full time, part time, and seasonal) are the ones who make things happen each and every day.

***Motion Artac, seconded by Weix to approve the monthly report.

***Carried unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 1st, 2022 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

***Motion Ravn, seconded by Artac to adjourn at 5:40 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dan Wendorf
Recording Secretary

		MAY			
STACY HAGENBUCHER	SECURITY DEPOSIT	4/5/2022	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
ACE HARDWARE	PRESSURE WASHER/GAS CAN	5/4/2022	215280	\$349.98	55200-08-905000
ACE HARDWARE	BRUSH AND ROLLERS	5/11/2022	215516	\$38.94	55420-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	GARBAGE BAGS	5/13/2022	2157767	\$59.98	55420-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	HOSE	5/16/2022	215702	\$89.99	55200-03-40600
AMERICAN WELDING	CHEMICALS POOL	5/6/2022	8511739	\$471.22	55420-03-40000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	4/30/2022	8498345	\$78.22	55300-03-41500
APPLIED	LOCKWASHERS	4/26/2022	7024108038	\$30.50	55200-03-40000
APPLIED	GLOVES	4/27/2022	7024120777	\$16.53	55200-03-40000
ATCO INTERNATIONAL	POP UP SWIPES	5/12/2022	10596587	\$287.70	55400-03-40000
BAUMGART WASTE REMOVAL	WASTE HAULING	5/1/2022		\$296.00	55400-02-23600
BRANDT EXTINGUISHERS	ANNUAL INSPECITON	5/9/2022	12587	\$117.25	55200-02-15000
BRANDT EXTINGUISHERS	ANNUAL INSPECTION - POOL	5/9/2022	12587	\$76.75	55420-03-40000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	4/21/2022	4117116166	\$98.22	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	4/14/2022	41164369848	\$93.21	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	4/29/2022	4117799152	\$98.27	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	4/11/2022	1902952903	\$70.94	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	5/5/2022	4118482113	\$98.27	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MATS MOPS	5/5/2022	411848939	\$197.21	55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	5/12/2022	4119170789	\$98.27	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	5/19/2022	4119864767	\$98.27	55200-03-46000
CYLINDER RENTAL	CHEMICALS POOL	4/30/2022	8497900	\$116.25	55200-02-15000
HOLIDAY WHOLESALE	PIZZA'S	5/17/2022	1085853	\$1,191.95	55420-03-40100
JESSE MOSSHOLDER	SECURITY DEPOSIT	5/22/2022	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200
JESSE MOSSHOLDER	PARK RENTAL REFUND/COVID	5/22/2022	VOUCHER	\$55.00	10-45200-46722
LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH DEPART.	RETAIL FOOD - AQUATIC CENTER	6/30/2022		\$105.00	55420-03-40500
LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH DEPART.	WATER SLIDES - AQUATIC CENTER	6/30/2022		\$275.00	55420-03-40500
LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH DEPART.	WATER ATTRACTION - AQUATIC CENTER	6/30/2022		\$275.00	55420-03-40500
LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH DEPART.	WATER ACTIVITY - AQUATIC CENTER	6/30/2022		\$192.00	55420-03-40500
LINCOLN COUNTY HEALTH DEPART.	POOL	6/30/2022		\$165.00	55420-03-40500

MENARDS	SUPPLIES FOR ARENA	5/9/2022		\$639.60	55400-08-82000
MENARDS	STUDS/SCREWS/PLYWOOD	5/9/2022	3646	\$653.17	55400-08-82000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	HYDRAULIC	5/5/2022	215329	\$18.99	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	O-RING	4/28/2022	215113	\$0.79	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PAINT AND SUPPLIES	5/9/2022	215439	\$159.94	55200-08-90500
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	PAINT ROLLER	5/12/2022	215575	\$6.99	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	SHOP SUPPLIES	5/14/2022	215842	\$36.98	55400-08-82000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	BOLTS	5/9/2022	215449	\$115.95	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	O-RING	5/18/2022	215771	\$1.58	55200-03-40000
MERRILL COUNTRY STORE	RYE GRASS	5/5/2022	297921	\$66.98	55200-03-40000
MERRILL COUNTRY STORE	TURF	4-28-222	297531	\$110.19	55200-03-40000
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	5/3/2022	1611185	\$942.99	55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	JANITORIAL SUPPLIES	5/4/2022	1611492	\$48.08	55200-03-40000
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	5/10/2022	1612128	\$328.29	55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	5/12/2022	1612583	\$1,201.92	55420-03-40100
MERRILL DISTRIBUTING	AQUATIC CONCESSIONS	5/2/2022	1613615	\$343.23	55420-03-40100
MERRILL FOTO NEWS	ADVERTISING	5/9/2022	3362	\$199.00	55400-03-41000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	LIFT GATE FOR TRUCK	4/28/2022	18230	\$385.44	CAPTIAL
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	KUBOTA ZERO TURN	9/27/2021	18072	\$399.25	55200-03-50000
MID WISCONSIN BEVERAGE	SODA FOR AQUATIC CENTER	5/16/2022	2844186	\$773.90	55420-03-40100
MID WISCONSIN BEVERAGE	BLUE BLAST/CHILL CHERRY	5/16/2022	2844185	\$400.00	55420-03-40100
O REILLY	SHOP SUPPLIES	5/21/2022	2327-146540	\$28.96	55200-03-40000
PETERSON BROS.	SMALL LOADS DUMPING/RIVERSIDE	5/2/2022	17864	\$65.00	55200-08-91000
RAISE YOUR VOICE - DEBBIE MULLENDORF	SECURITY DEPOSIT	4/5/2022	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7100
RTL ELECTRIC	ATHLETIC PARK	5/13/2022	65157	\$330.00	55200-02-15000
RTL ELECTRIC	AQUATIC CENTER	5/13/2022	65162	\$2,958.98	AQUATIC CENTER NON LASPE
SAM'S CLUB	FOOD FOR AQUATIC CENTER	5/13/2022		\$496.34	55420-03-40100
SAM'S CLUB	AQUATIC CONCESSIONS	5/19/2022		\$665.04	55420-03-40100
SERVICE MOTOR COMPANY	SUPPLIES	3/31/2022		\$185.19	55200-03-50000
SUNRISE BROADCASTING	ADVERTISING	5/1/2022		\$249.00	55400-03-41000
THE LIFEGUARD STORE	LIFEGUARD SUITS	5/20/2022	730461	\$127.50	55420-03-40000
TRINITY SCHOOL	SECURITY DEPOSIT	5/22/2022	VOUCHER	\$50.00	10-21-7200

WALMART	AQUATIC CENTER SUPPLIES	5/2/2022		\$101.62	55420-03-40000
WALMART	POOL SUPPLIES	5/13/2022		\$198.70	55420-03-40000
WPS	RIVER BEND TRAIL LIGHTS	5/23/2022		\$332.19	RIVER BEND TRAIL LIGHTS/LINCOLN



Wausau & Marathon County Parks & Recreation Foundation

PRESS RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

William Bertram, President of Wausau & Marathon County Parks & Recreation Foundation
715-212-8188; william.c.bertram@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Creating A Paddling Destination In The Midwest Like No Other



The Wausau & Marathon County Parks & Recreation Foundation announces the development of the **Great Pinery Heritage Waterway (GPHW)** as an overarching paddling trail on the Wisconsin River from Hat Rapids in Oneida County through Wausau to the Lake DuBay Dam in Portage County. The scenic, urban, and historical water trail is 108 miles in length and connects today's paddler with the history, events and people of the river that runs through Central Wisconsin. In addition to the creation of the river trail, a comprehensive website highlights the trail's access points and its amenities.

The website hosted by the Central Wisconsin Visitors Bureau (CVB) encompasses outdoor recreational opportunities in Central Wisconsin offering tourists a one-stop experience to **"come for a weekend and stay for a lifetime."**

"A significant component of the plan is to market the Greater Wausau Region as an Outdoor Recreation mecca of the Midwest to attract and retain skilled workforce and innovative companies. The GPHW proposal would help contribute to realizing this strategy and further enable the area to reach full potential as a nationally recognized outdoor hub, building upon its diverse menu of outdoor amenities including the world-class Wausau Whitewater Park, Nine-Mile County Forest, and other local jewels", said Dave Eckmann, Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce CEO & President.

This is an overarching trail of three waterways: The Wisconsin River, the Lower Big Rib River (17 miles) and completion of the Lower Eau Claire River (15 miles) into Lake Wausau. The trail touches 12 communities in Central Wisconsin from Tomahawk to Stevens Point, with the heart of the project centered in Wausau and Lake Wausau. *"What makes this trail possible is that it is based on a river trail that was developed in 2008 by the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company's Centennial Water Trail to celebrate their 100th year," said Bill Bertram, Wausau and Marathon County Parks and Recreation Foundation President. Additionally, the majority of the landings have been developed by our parks and recreation departments of the different municipalities and governments that border the rivers."*

Communities along the Wisconsin River and two county parks departments collaborated to create the GPHW. Trail stories told by the Marathon County Historical Society, Merrill Historical Society, and the Tomahawk Historical Society enrich paddlers' experiences with historical signage along the route. Additionally, the CVB is providing content and support for a new microsite located within their website.

Key funding was provided by the Wausau and Marathon County Parks and Recreation Foundation, B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation, the Dwight and Linda Davis Foundation, the Dudley Foundation, the Judd Alexander Foundation, and the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin along with individual donors.



Outdoor Recreation Plan Survey Summary

Our recent public survey for our 2023-2027 Outdoor Recreation Plan is a great way for our Department and the Commission to gauge the interests of our citizens. It allows us to maximize our engagement and solicit a significantly larger response than a public hearing, simply due to the ease and convenience.

The survey generates a tremendous amount of information that is very useful for our department to plan for the future and serves as a barometer for current services. It also allows us to quantify things based upon actual responses.

I was asked to provide my summary of the survey at the last Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting. Below is my summary outline that I will explain in more detail at the meeting on June 1st:

1. With slightly under 300 participants, it would have been nice to see more people engaging in this very useful survey but that is still a very strong number.
2. It was nice to see almost 60% of the participants residing within the City of Merrill limits. These are the people who are paying their taxes that fund our parks, amenities, and programs and have a vested interest in everything we do. It is their investment.
3. It was also nice to see a very strong diversity in the age ranges participating in the survey. This provides us with a very well rounded viewpoint of answers, as well as a very diverse set of experiences that people are looking for given their circumstances. What I mean by that is we have new families, young families, older individuals, couples, and virtually everyone in between offering up their opinions on what we are doing and what they would like to see us do.
4. I have been involved in quite a few of these OR Plan developments and one of the first things I look for is overwhelming "common themes" that become repetitive within the plan/survey AND themes that become repetitive from one plan to the next. This allows us to separate what is a sustainable/long term trend versus fads that are a "flash in the pan."
5. The Key Findings as laid out in the summary we received last month are a good indicator of current trends. This tells us what people are actually doing now and like to participate in for recreation. My take away from this is that we have been investing wisely in our amenities and are looking in the right direction for future investments (pedestrian trails, water trails, aquatic center especially). The items I listed in parenthesis make up 6 of the top 10 most frequent outdoor recreational activities respondents participated in.
6. Potential outdoor recreational opportunities that should be developed in Merrill question was fairly balanced and does a good job of directly relating to and confirming the Key Findings. It shows the importance people already placed on what they are already doing in trails and water related items, amongst other things. It also points out wants and needs in other areas that are reflected in the survey, which is great to see.

7. One of my favorite new things in this survey is the rated questions. I like it because it gives us a quantifiable number to look at when it comes to specific activities, projects, initiatives, improvements, etc. The 1-5 scale with stars allows us to see what our citizens would deem as really important or not so much. I tend to lean towards 3.5 as a strong enough rating to warrant more serious consideration and we did have several of them. Water trail, Pedestrian Bridge linking downtown to the River Bend Trail, Restrooms by the north fields at the MARC, and River Bend becoming a State Trail were all at or above 3.5. This also somewhat mirrors the results we saw in the Key Findings and the Potential outdoor recreational opportunities so that shows continuity of thought. Results like these show some clear intent from our citizens and will help us navigate the next 5 years.
8. One of the things that makes people uneasy about plans like these is that there are a lot of projects and improvements listed in there and people tend to think with dollar signs. This plan is meant to be a road map that gives us direction to what we should be investing in as spelled out directly by our citizens. That is a smart way to operate and a great exercise to go through every 5 years. Evaluation and re-evaluation is very important to make sure we are staying on the right course and doing what our users and user groups want us to do.

**I will discuss this further at our June Meeting, as well as comment in more detail on specific items that were mentioned in the survey.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dan Wendorf', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill



June 2022 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: All of our parks, facilities, and fields are up to full capacity now. High School sports are coming to an end over the next several weeks and summer recreational leagues are underway and in full swing for the next few months. Our shelter reservations have been going well over the past month and are really going to pick up starting this week and over the next several months. We have picked up quite a few more shelter reservations over the past several weeks. We have been having some issues with vandalism again at a few locations (Stange and Normal). Unfortunately we have had to repair some damage at each location on a number of locations, besides the normal littering and horseplay. Unfortunately some of the damage has occurred on the Optimist Playground at Normal by breaking the ADA swing and another play feature as well as issues with ripping soap dispensers off the wall in the restrooms. The same has been happening at Stange as well with restroom messes and ripping things off the wall. We have been working with MPD on these issues as well as looking into how we can put security cameras in these locations to halt these activities by catching some of these senseless acts on camera. If we can find the right security camera set up for these locations, I would like to invest in others in our parks so we can limit this foolishness to a minimum from now on. Our crew does not have the time to continually clean up and repair things all of the time and nor should they if people have a little bit of pride in their community and parks. The Bierman Family Aquatic Center has also provided us with a bit of an adventure over the past several weeks as we have been working towards getting it ready to open. After we filled the pool we noticed a small leak in our exterior sump pit from a drain tile and tried to trace it with no luck. We then had a few issues with our main drain and while working on that discovered where we think the drain tile leaking is coming from – both of our construction joints in the main pool vessel. So we have been able to fix the main drain and have sealed what we can of the construction joints. After the pool is closed for the season in August, we are going to have both seams re-done so that we don't have to worry about this for the next few seasons and will make this a routine maintenance project every few years. Our new chemical feeder system is now up and operational and we are hoping that it helps us like it is supposed to with much more efficiency and effectiveness than our old feeder. In a facility that size with all of the moving parts that we have, we always have a few glitches that we have to work through and we will be fine and ready to serve the public with some fun this summer. We did have one seasonal begin in mid-May so that has been very helpful over the past few weeks to have another helping hand. A few of the others will be filling in over the next week or two and we are very much looking forward to that. We did have a few trees go down in Stange Park during the last heavy wind day in mid-May and got them cleaned up right away and fortunately no damage to anything else. We sure have had a lot of wind events so far this year. Now we are contending with grass growing at a very high rate so our amazing crew has been trying to keep up with that as best as they can until reinforcements arrive. The Street Department was able to come out during the warm week in May to crack seal as much of the far parking lot as possible at the MARC. While we were setting that up I showed the rest of the lot to our Street Superintendent and he suggested that we budget for a complete re-pave on the parking lot closest to the Smith Center within the next 2-4 years. He said the subgrade

underneath is failing and crack sealing it will not fix anything anymore. So we'll have to add that to our capital request list for one of these upcoming years. We will be hosting the Merrill Baseball Association Youth Baseball Tournament on June 10-12th at Lions, Athletic, and the MARC. We will be hosting over 40 teams for the weekend here in our community so hopefully we roll out the red carpet and give everyone a great impression of our community and our parks/facilities.

Forestry: I will be back out inspecting as soon as we get all of our summer operations going now that we are finally having trees leaf out. After leaf out is always a great time to make final determinations on certain trees that were questionable to see canopy life and loss. Our newly planted trees from last fall and other young trees are looking pretty good thus far. I mentioned that I did have a few concerns with the elongated winter-like conditions we experienced this "spring" but it looks like we will get through it alright with our young trees. I will be attending our Regional Urban Foresters Networking meeting on June 14th in Stevens Point. We are touring some of their facilities as well as getting an inside look at their new "tree walk." I will let you know how that goes in my next board report. It was asked at our last meeting about hosting an Arbor Day observation this spring. As I mentioned, we couldn't even get trees for that because they couldn't get them out of the ground from the nursery we purchase from in Rhinelander. So we'll look to have one this fall when things slow down for us a bit and we have full availability of trees to plant.

Recreation: So far what we are seeing is a really good bounce back year for our Summer Playground Program. Our numbers are up around 80 so far with more interest still coming in. So we just might get to our 100 participant limit. With people physically going back to work, it definitely helps our program and we hope that continues every summer from here on out. Our other programs are also picking up with registrations now that the weather has started to feel a little more summer-like. This is pretty typical each year and we just didn't experience better weather until later this year. We are looking forward to another great summer recreation season and helping our citizens get up and get active once again.

Smith Center: We have had a number of smaller rentals in the Smith Center and the Community Room as well as the arena and a birthday party as well. We also had a very large last minute arena rental on Friday, May 20th. Kate Goodrich and Washington Elementary Schools were going to have their end of the year carnival at Kate but were not allowed to because they had too many people. So they moved their entire set up into our arena at the Smith Center in a few hours and had their end of the year festival in the arena with over 700 people. We also have June Dairy Breakfast coming up on June 12th. After that we will spend a few weeks getting the arena ready for summer ice in July. We are going to try summer ice for two weeks in July like we used to do it about 10+ years ago. We have been working with Youth Hockey Association and they are organized and were the ones who initiated the conversation about bringing it back. Hopefully it goes well this year and we can do it again.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill