

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

April 7, 2021

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 4:15 p.m., at Merrill City Hall.

Members Present: Dan Novitch, Kyle Gulke, Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, Joan Tabor, and John Van Lieshout.

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

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

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Tabor, seconded by Gulke, to approve the claims from March.

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Jon Krohn, 1851 Center Ave, Merrill. Krohn stated that on March 10 and also the April 5 at the River Bend Trail meeting it was voted on to approve the Blue route for the new section of the Riverbend Trail bike route. Krohn stated that it would be the safest route and if people wanted to use the Red route it would be their decision. Krohn stated for out of town visitors it would be nice to make them aware of a safe route. Krohn said the RBT committee stated that they could do a sign at the start and the finish of the trail, so there are not signs all over.

Christine Vorpagel, N2227 Oak Ridge Ave., Merrill. Vorpagel stated that she was amazed that there was not an Amended Agenda including the TB Scott Library Tower. Vorpagel stated that she was surprised that she did not see a Thank You in last month's meeting minutes thanking all the places that have donated to the tower. Vorpagel believes that this item should be kept on the agenda and the public should be informed on what is happening.

Sharon Anderson, 1200 A Johnson Street, Merrill. Anderson stated that she has concerns on where the Park and Recreation commission has voted to put the TB Scott Tower. Anderson doesn't believe that the location will do the tower justice and displayed some pictures of some areas that she thought would work out much nicer. Anderson stated that the Bankers Square would be a great spot and vandalism would be less in that area. Anderson stated that she would like to have the Park and Recreation Commission reconsider the location of the tower.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss and recommend River Bend Trail route through the MARC to connect with Council Grounds. Wendorf stated there was really no bad route, no wrong answer and either way there will be two routes. Wendorf stated the Blue Route was safer and a little longer and the Red Route was shorter. Wendorf would recommend the Red Route because a majority of people already use it daily. Wendorf stated that the poles for signs would already be in place on the Red Route, the Blue Route would need to have poles put in for signage. Vanlieshout questioned if trails would be paved. Wendorf stated they would not. Tabor stated that the Red Route would be shorter but the parking lot could be very busy and not sure

about safety, would bike lanes need to be put in. Wendorf stated you would have to put in a strip for bikers, similar to how we do it on roads with shared use.

***Motion made by Gulke, seconded by Ravn to approve the Blue Route option for the extension of the River bend bike trail.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions. Wendorf stated that with the early spring the crew has been getting a good start on ball fields and hooking bathrooms to get ready for spring sports. Wendorf stated ice removal went good and was very happy to report that there were no problems with the chiller this year. Wendorf stated that he is working on capital improvements including the pit toilets and rain gutters. Wendorf stated that the Park and Recreation has been put in a difficult position regarding to the TB Scott Tower. Wendorf stated it came up quickly with not a lot of time to put thought into the project. Wendorf stated that no matter what decision the commission decides on, someone will not be happy about it. Wendorf stated that too many people are using social media to stir things up and in the end it really doesn't benefit anyone. Wendorf stated that if someone wanted to talk about ideas the Park and Recreation office is open every day or call or email, please feel free to contact me instead of posting everything on social media. The Parks and Rec office received zero direct correspondence related to the tower or its location.

Ravn questioned if the Aquatic Center was going to be open this year and when they would be selling passes. Wendorf stated it would be open but no passes will be sold this year due to the pandemic, and if we have to close we do not have to refund anything.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Public Comment: Gulke stated that there has been some information posted on Facebook regarding the equipment at Stange Park. Gulke stated that the 10 year plan should be revisited to consider adding a new playground for next year.

***Motion by Vanlieshout, seconded by Ravn to adjourn at 5:00 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary