

## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

April 5, 2023

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 4:15 p.m., at Merrill City Hall.

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

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

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

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

\*\*\*Motion by Tabor, seconded by Ravn, to approve the claims from March 2023.

Weix questioned the bill from Swiderski for the New Holland Tractor. Wendorf stated that it was being used for snow removal when it slid into a tree branch bending the exhaust and DEF system and causing the tractor to shut down. Wendorf stated that an insurance claim has been filed on this and has been paid.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

Public Comment: none

The next item on the agenda was to request permission to dispose of Gravely Trekker UTV. Wendorf stated that this is the Gravely Trekker that was purchased with the flower water group. The Gravely was not strong enough to handle both the water tank and the going over the curbs causing problems right from the start. Wendorf stated that right now the cost to fix would be between \$3,500 and \$4,000 and he didn't feel the machine would be worth that, plus that would not even be guaranteed it would be fixed after that, other things might be wrong. Wendorf suggested selling the UTV on the Wisconsin Surplus site, stating that someone else might want to try and fix it or just use it for parts. Ravn questioned what replaced the UTV. Wendorf stated that a 2 wheel drive ½ ton truck replaced it and works much better.

\*\*\*Motion by Gulke, seconded by Artac to give permission to Wendorf to place the Gravely Trekker UTV on the Wisconsin Surplus Site.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss and potentially approve concept of connecting bridge from Prairie Dells County Park to City Forest.

Wendorf stated that he was contacted by the County Forest Administrator about putting in a pedestrian bridge connecting Prairie Dells County Park to the City Forest. Wendorf stated that this item was brought to the Park and Recreation Commission many years back and the Park and Recreation Commission thought it was a great idea back then. Wendorf stated that this is a good partnership and will connect some unique trails together. Would allow for contiguous trails from

Prairie Dells through City Forest and the Underdown. There would be no cost to the city if the county chooses this project with their ARPA funding.

\*\*\*Motion by Artac, seconded by Krueger to approve the concept of building a connector bridge from the Prairie Dells County Park to City Forest.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to review Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan. Wendorf stated that the Park and Recreation Commission had a readiness plan in place for Emerald Ash Borer. Wendorf stated that a lot of Ash trees have been removed from the boulevards and also from Riverside Park. Wendorf stated that the parks department keeps an eye out for trees that go from fair to poor, then they remove them. Wendorf stated that he feels right now the parks department has a very good plan in place and if they needed to move fast to remove trees they could and would be ready.

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions. Wendorf stated that the crew has been working hard cleaning up all the garbage that people have been leaving behind in the parks. With the weather not cooperating the crew will have to hustle to get everything ready by May 1 for park opening and to get softball and baseball fields ready. Wendorf stated that the Easter Egg hunt is Saturday at Lions Park at 10:00 a.m. Weix thanked Wendorf for the article that was written in the Silent Sports magazine and also for the summer newsletter. Weix also stated that Optimist had come to him asking him about the splash pad at Normal Park and what Wendorf thought of that. Wendorf stated that Optimist had talked with him already and thought it was a good idea, but people have to remember that there is a lot of work that has to be done with a splash pad and Wendorf also feels it would hurt the attendance of the Bierman Family Aquatic Center. Any added maintenance would make things difficult for staffing and for our budget that is already very tight.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Public Comment: Wendorf informed the commission that Brian Artac was not being re-appointed and thanked Brian for his decade plus of service on the Parks and Recreation Commission and said what a pleasure it was to work with him. Artac also thanked everyone on the commission for making his years memorable.

\*\*\*Motion by Krueger, seconded by Weix to adjourn at 5:05 p.m.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith  
Recording Secretary