



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY MARCH 7, 2019

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 1. Minutes of December 6, 2018 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
 1. Bierman Grant Discussion - Sell Building/Bathroom
 2. Labor Day - Mobil Food Vendors/Contract
 3. Proposal - Fourth of July returning to Merrill Festival Grounds
 4. Calendar of Events
- IV. Monthly Reports:
 1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund
 2. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor - No report, because Food Vendor Committee did not meet.
- V. Public Comment Period
- VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting
- VII. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES • THURSDAY DECEMBER 6, 2018

Regular Meeting**Bierman Building****6:00 PM****I. Call to Order**

Alderman Norton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Michael Caylor	Food Vendor Rep.	Present	
Rob Norton	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	
Tim Meehean	Aldersperson - Eighth District	Present	
John M. Van Lieshout	Aldersperson - Fifth District	Present	
Derek Woellner	Mayor	Excused	
Bryan Bloch	Rodeo Assn. Rep.	Present	
Brad Becker	Fair Assn. Rep.	Present	

Also in attendance: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Street Commissioner Ron Liberty, Alderman Paul Russell (arr. 6:21), Diane Wais, Dick Stoeckmann, Darryl Barker, Dennis Knott, Judeen Knott, John Rathke, Kandy Peterson, Bill Bialecki, Kathy Liberty and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A student was present to tape the meeting for Merrill Productions.

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):**1. Minutes of October 4, 2018 meeting**

Motion (Meehean/Van Lieshout) to approve.

RESULT: APPROVED

III. Agenda items for consideration:**1. Food Vendor Contract Review/Changes:**

A copy of the proposed contract was in the meeting packet.

City Administrator Johnson is proposing that the water shut-off date for the stands be changed from October 31st to approximately October 1st.

Judeen Knott suggested that \$25 is not a sufficient fee to charge the “temporary” vendors. She was told that this issue is being addressed.

Fencing of the grounds was then discussed. No definite time for installing fencing has been set, but it will not happen in 2019.

Motion (Meehean/Caylor) to approve the contract, with the following inclusions. The water turn-on date will occur in time for the first event of the year involving the permanent stands. The water shut-off date will be October 1st. All permanent vendors will be notified prior to the water shut-off.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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2. Calendar of Events:

2018 Year in Review/Comparison with 2017

There were 16 events at the grounds in 2017. In 2018, 36 events.

Alderman Norton thanked everyone who was involved in bringing events to the Festival Grounds.

New - Web Page, Bar and Blinds

The Bierman Building now has a new bar and new blinds. Improvements have been made to the "Festival Grounds" section of the City webpage.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

The report was in the meeting packet.

2. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor

The food vendor committee did not meet in the last month. Therefore, there was nothing to report.

V. Public Comment Period

Fair Association Rep. Becker reported that, although the fair did better financially in 2018 than in 2017, the fair is still losing money. Changes will have to be made to reverse this trend. He added that the state fair convention will be in January. More information on the fair will be presented at the February and/or March meetings.

Food Vendor Rep. Caylor reported that, in early 2019, he will be submitting a Fourth of July celebration proposal to the committee.

VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting

Any January meeting will be at the call of the chairperson. The February meeting was set for Thursday, February 7th, 2019 at 6:00 P.M. It will be held at the Bierman Building.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Norton/Van Lieshout) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

FEBRUARY

Bierman Grant Discussion – Sell Building/Bathroom

Labor Day – Mobile Food Vendors/contract

Proposal – Fourth of July returning to Merrill Festival Grounds (attachment)

Calendar of Events (Attachment)

Festival Grounds Manager Report – Bjorklund (Attachment)

Food Vendor Report – Caylor

CONCESSIONS AGREEMENT

FESTIVAL GROUNDS – LABOR DAY EVENT

This agreement made on _____ by and between the City of Merrill, a municipal corporation of the State of Wisconsin, hereinafter referred to as the (“City”), and _____, whose address is _____, hereinafter referred to as (“Concessionaire”).

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the City owns, operates, and maintains certain facilities for athletic contests, entertainment exhibitions, theatrical productions, concerts, and other public performances, within its facilities; and,

WHEREAS, the City desires to make available to the general public and others using the facilities, merchandise and services for the better accommodations, convenience, and welfare of the general public; and,

WHEREAS, the City has allowed the Concessionaire the rights and privileges of supplying its merchandise and services for the Festival Grounds Labor Day event, and the City has determined that the Concessionaire has the ability and qualifications to provide those services and wishes to allow those concession services; and,

WHEREAS, the Concessionaire is able to provide the merchandise and services in accordance with the terms and provisions of this agreement;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the covenants and agreement herein contained and of the payments of monies as hereinafter set forth, the parties agree as follows:

1. **RIGHT TO OCCUPY AND OPERATE.** Concessionaire has the right to sell at the Festival Grounds Labor Day Event.
2. **TERM/FEE.** This agreement shall be in effect for Monday, September 3, 2018, upon payment of a \$25.00 fee.
3. **LICENSES.** Concessionaire shall be responsible for obtaining any necessary restaurant license from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services or other agencies for the operation of the concession stand.
4. **INDEMNITY.** The Concessionaire agrees to indemnify and save harmless the City from all suits, claims, damages, and actions of any kind or nature arising directly or indirectly on the part of the Concessionaire, its agents, servants, employees, contractors, or supplies out of its operation under this agreement.

5. **LIABILITY INSURANCE.** The Concessionaire shall at its own expense provide such public liability insurance as will protect the Concessionaire and City from all claims for damages to property and persons, including death and particularly the use of products, giving cause for claims or damages which may arise from the operation of the business conducted under this agreement or anyone directly or indirectly employed by the Concessionaire.
6. **COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS.** Concessionaire shall observe and comply with all laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations of the United States Government, the State of Wisconsin, the City of Merrill, the County of Lincoln, or any department or agency of the above.
7. **ASSIGNMENT.** The Concessionaire shall not assign or transfer its right and privileges granted under this agreement either in whole or part without first obtaining consent of the Parks and Recreation Director.
8. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable for any damages resulting from the elements, acts of God, or any other cause beyond the reasonable control of the parties. In the event of acts of God or other events beyond reasonable control of Concessionaire or the City, including but not limited to acts of government entities, suppliers or labor strife; performance of either party under this Agreement will be excused during the period of the force majeure.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hand and seal as of the date first above written.

CITY OF MERRILL

CONCESSIONAIRE

By: _____
Parks and Recreation Director
Daniel Wendorf

By: _____

By: _____

Fourth of July Returns to Merrill Festival Grounds Proposal

January 2019

Background:

For year's Tomahawk "had" the Fourth of July and Merrill "had" Labor Day. The Fourth of July in Tomahawk was an event that brought people in from all over, they had bands, carnival rides over days, the parade, fire department water fights, more bands and carnival rides and eventually fireworks.

Then, in the late 1980's most of the activities stopped.

Merrill held the fireworks down at the fairgrounds for nearly 100 years. During the early 1990's things were shifted to the MARC Center as were many things happening in the city at the time. Although they still have fireworks, the MARC Center fireworks have drawbacks for several reasons. One is easy access both to enter and leave and in case of an emergency. The small space and parking limits also preclude outside food or other vendors from coming in as they do not have much space to set up. The event is certainly what it is advertised, but that is about it, for many it is not really considered a family event.

Proposal:

Move the fireworks back to the Festival Grounds and make it a family event.

The idea is to open the gates around 4:00 PM and invite several entities to be involved. Have events for the children such as game and bounce houses. Area fire departments can do a water fight, something that used to be a Merrill tradition on Crazy Days. The Merrill City Band could play. The five permanent food stands could open along with both of the beer stands who have spoken about sponsoring a band after the fireworks show; Flea market like vendors could be invited. When the time for the fireworks comes the grandstands and surrounding area could be utilized for the thousands of attendees to enjoy the show.

Future:

As the event grows the evening could also start out with our own Fourth of July parade that would end at the fairgrounds in a similar and successful fashion as Labor Day.

Drawbacks:

Some people have comments on some myths and drawbacks, let's discuss them.

The Humane Society will never allow it:

I have personally spoken with Liz at the Humane Society. She said the building was built with the anticipation the fireworks and other large noisy events could be held right next door. They have an internal music system, soundproof walls, and the ability to foster animals for the evening and last but not least a little bit of Benadryl to lighten up the animals moods for the evening

Pine Crest will burn down:

This was an argument made years ago. Our contention that has been confirmed by a previous fire chief, they never burned it down the first 50 years why would they burn it down now? Also since the development of the MARC apartments you have a much larger fire load made completely of combustible materials right next to that venue. Plus Fourth of July's of the past and recent events have shown the residents of Pine Crest enjoy things going on next door and this will probably result in a very captive often forgotten audience.

Parking is an issue:

Between parking on the grounds along with nearby parking lots and surface streets will allow for much more parking then the MARC could ever produce. Further because it will return to a neighborhood setting we will likely once again see house parties and people walking from blocks and blocks away to enjoy this community party. Could the city charge \$5 a car to park on the grounds? That would offset costs of the event.

Tomahawk may not like this:

The thought was we did not want to upset Tomahawk by holding an event on "their day." I have personally spoken to the Mayor of Tomahawk. He assured me that he would encourage Merrill to do a community event on the Fourth of July as he knows his city pretty much shuts down now after 3:00 PM unlike past years where it partied all day and night.

People go out of town:

Yes, the Fourth of July is a huge travel holiday for those of us who live in the north woods of Wisconsin. In order to make this be a large yearly event we need to start this year while the holiday still falls during the week so it becomes something people will want to stay or come home for. In 2020, the holiday falls on a Saturday so it would be very difficult to launch this that year.

The Permanent Stands Group has discussed this event change since our very first meeting. Each and every stand endorses the move and feels not only will this be a great fund raising opportunity,

UP COMING EVENTS AT THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

2019

Feb.	02-07-19 2/20-2/21	Festival Grounds Committee Meeting ACT Testing **
March	03/1-03/2 03-07-19 03/16/19	Gun Show ** (Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee) Fund Raiser **
April	04-04-19 04-06-19 04-13-19	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee) Craft Show – Enrichment Center ** Prom **
May	05-02-19 05/3, 4, 5 05-08-19 05-17-19	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee) Gun Show (NEW) Fire Department Demo (Grounds) Alternative High School Graduation
June	06-01-19 06-06-19 06-7, 8, 9 06-15-19 06-29-19	Wausaubicon Gaming ** (Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee) Rodeo (Grounds) ** Wedding Tractor Pull **

**** Yearly Repeat Events ****

This will be sent out in the packets for the February meeting.

Merrill Festival Grounds

February 7, 2019

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

Addition of lighting needs to continue to create a safe and user-friendly environment.

Additional electric hook-ups along the fence line and in the infield are a priority along with sewer hook-up or dump stations and water connections. Such installation preparation should coincide with installation of asphalt.

Identification and prioritization of capital improvements for the grounds is an ongoing exercise and is conducted in accord with the TIF requirements and user group needs. Current projects to improve the appearance and function of existing buildings will be noticeable to the community and user groups.

Capital improvement categories could include: Perimeter Fence (with caution and concurrence of user groups), reduction of Humane Society footprint, paving/asphalt at the Grandstand and improved elevation between the east and west bathrooms, plantings, trees, electrical grid, winterized buildings, canopies, shade and rest areas, picnic tables, sewer and water hook-ups.

Tractor Pull:

The Midstate's Pullers are replacing the WTPA. The Dirt Flingers (minis and garden tractors and specialty classes) are being added with the antique Pullers for the daytime free show. Additional activities are being considered to encourage people to stay on the grounds longer.

Additional marketing through tagging bank buys is being planned.

Family pack pricing is being implemented; pricing was reduced and was well received.

The Tractor Pull is now re-structured as a non-stock corporation by River Valley Bank's law firm.

Rodeo:

Next year, porta toilets will not be required so the physical layout will be better for all. In general, the layout was crisp and efficient.

Vending could help concessions. ATM is a good concession.

Extensive photos of the grounds lay-out were taken as well as drone photos. The layout was more efficient this year.

Upgraded infield electric panels are a priority as well as possible access to sewer and dump station facilities.

New welcome signs could help at the entrance and at the entertainment tent.

We are seeking ways to scrub the grandstand after Sat show.

County Fair:

Recommend that fencing inside the fairgrounds be reduced or eliminated. Check points for age can be maintained with a stamp or wristband given for daily ID. Encourage all beer stands to provide entertainment. Consider eliminating the beer stand at the Grandstand in exchange for a re-stated financial and operating agreement with the permanent stands.

Sell display space under the Grandstand and east of the restrooms and west of the carnival and east of poultry barn. Invite the military to move displays in at no cost. Leave no empty space. Consider active and/or participative displays such as chain saw carving, wood working, fish tank, kid's shows, animal petting, jugglers, etc. Such shows are inexpensive, easy to book and easily fill space as needed. They give a sense of activity and fun and help to keep families at the grounds longer. The only kids show this year was provided complimentary by the carnival owner.

Location of the new restrooms worked very well.

Replace the ATM vendor.

Statewide, the carnival business is experiencing unusual contractions and shifts. Steps to assure a carnival contract for future years should be taken. Consider alternative pricing structures.

Use the Expo stage for pie eating and butter carving contests and additional programs. The expo stage is rarely busy. Open the Enrichment Center for passive display of projects and programs, sell items to the public and hand out information to increase public awareness and participation.

The committee in charge of the livestock auction (the fair is a terminal show) has done a superb job of lining up corporate and private buyers for the auction. It is one of the better auctions in the state in the county fair category. The work done by the committee is a model for the fair to use in seeking additional support, sponsorship and possible angel underwriting. Such additional support is essential to help the fair continue to be a "free fair".

Add lights to the east and west poles in the grandstand to keep from having to refocus lights. Consider raising the height of the north grandstand poles to reduce glare into the grandstand seating.

Have a heavier presence of electrician, labor and management during set-up. Distribute keys to assigned managers, lock electric panels, reduce hose and cable crossings.

No stock trucks or private vehicles should be parked next to or behind food stands. Set-up a stock truck area where ALL vendors must remain.

Campers restricted to infield or south fence line only.

Bury utility runs in a grid pattern across all areas to be asphalted. Asphalt as much area as possible and bring to a flat grade.

Reduce or eliminate vehicle traffic at the gate at the south end of the Expo. If it has to be used restrict the hours and credentials. Put livestock trailers across 6th St.

Arena dirt and roadway dirt is breaking down into dust and fine particles.

Remove Bulls and Barrels show. Consider doing 2 nights of Monster Trucks and Demo. Horse show on opening day is not attended by participants or the public. Replace it with a sponsorable show.

Not enough traffic to warrant one way on 6th St. Use the east parking area for credentialed and vip parking.

Make a show out of animal judging. Judges to be encouraged to talk about what they are looking for and why each animal has special features.

Grandstand shows need to be limited to 1.5-2 hour-time limit. Sunday show needs to start at 2 so the people attending the show stay on the fairgrounds afterwards and bring benefit to the vendors.

Bierman Expo Hall:

Wrestling show, intending to happen on Nov 16, is postponed to the spring so the promoter can tap the spring shows in Milwaukee and Minneapolis. Dates through April have been issued to the promoter.

The Northern Wisconsin Gun Show producer was very happy with the show results and looks forward to a long relationship at the Festival Grounds. Next show is March 1 & 2.

Marvin Krause Productions has expressed an interest to rent the Expo for their show(s). An agreement has been sent to him for a show in May, 2019.

We are reaching out to the former Polka event that left the grounds a few years ago. Perhaps they will consider returning.

We have been complimented by user groups for such clean facilities, for the building being well laid out and equipped. Nick and the crew does an excellent job. Rental rates are user friendly and equally applied.

Reservations for weddings are increasing monthly. Diane is superb at talking with the potential users. She has excellent acumen for event business. Potential users are complimentary even if they chose another venue.