



CITY OF MERRILL

Parks & Recreation Dept. - Smith Center

1100 Marc Drive - Merrill, WI 54452

Rec. Dept. Telephone (715)536-7313 * Smith Center (715)536-6187

Fax (715)539-2790

MARCH MEETING NOTICE

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission will have a meeting on **Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall**. Phone info: Phone: 321-586-2494
PIN: 449 042 989 #

Voting members of Commission: Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, Kyle Gulke, Joan Tabor, John Vanlieshout, 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. Discuss "No mow May"
5. Discuss and potentially approve survey questions for Outdoor Recreation Plan
6. Continued discussion on 10 year Capital Plan
7. Review/approve a Resolution of Support for the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway (presented last year as Voyageur Water Trail)
8. Monthly reports.
9. Set date for next meeting.
10. Public comment
11. Adjournment

Submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Novitch" with a stylized flourish at the end.

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 & RECREATION COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 2ND, 2022

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, February 2nd, 2022 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Members present: Kyle Gulke, Joan Tabor, Brian Artac, Dan Novitch, John Van Lieshout

Members excused absent: Jean Ravn

Department staff present: Dan Wendorf

Others present: Alderman Weix, Ruby Jaecks, Mike Caylor, Mayor Woellner, MP3

****Motion Artac, seconded by Van Lieshout to approve the minutes from the December meeting.**

****Carried unanimously.**

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

Novitch asked Wendorf about the charges from Baumgart Waste Removal. Wendorf stated that they charge one lump sum at the end of the season for all dumpsters used in all locations.

****Carried unanimously.**

****Motion Van Lieshout, seconded by Gulke to approve the January Claims**

****Carried unanimously.**

Public Comment: None

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the upcoming 5-year Outdoor Recreation Plan. Wendorf began the discussion by explaining that the new Outdoor Recreation Plan is required by the State in order to qualify for grant funding at both the State and Federal levels. He also said it is a great exercise in reflecting back on what was/wasn't accomplished and to re-engage the public to see where there priorities are and re-evaluate the direction they should be headed. Wendorf introduced Fred Heider from North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC), who is going to be spearheading the plan once again. Heider began the discussion by thanking the Commission and started the discussion by saying the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) identifies gaps and needs throughout the State and by Region. He reviewed the gaps/needs in our region and wanted to point out that these should be included in the plan. Heider said the plan is a great tool to engage the public and the Commission and will allow us to focus on local needs, wants, and trends. He proposes to do this by organizing an online survey again this cycle. On our last plan, the online survey was highly effective. He proposes publishing the survey online and leaving it up and active for one month. Heider reviewed each of the questions with the Commission and asked that they provide him with feedback as to whether they would like all of the questions as they are, changed, or removed. The Commission will take some

time and review the questions and provide feedback to Wendorf by the next meeting so the survey can be finalized and published right after the March meeting. Gulke suggested adding the “what improvements” questions to all of the other “enthusiasts” questions to get a more detailed answer from the public for those specific questions. Heider finished up the discussion by thanking the Commission and discussing the steps and timeline that will need to be taken to finish the OR Plan by the end of the year.

Novitch asked the Commission if they were alright with switching item 5 & 6 on the agenda to allow for Heider to not have to wait for one item on the agenda and to potentially answer any questions pertaining to Bike & Pedestrian Plan (which he helped author). The Commission was friendly to that suggestion. Wendorf began the discussion by informing the Commission that he was contacted by Gulke requesting this item be included on the agenda. Wendorf stated that Gulke would like to review and potentially begin taking action on some low hanging fruit within the plan. Gulke mentioned that it was his intention to hopefully start putting some checkmarks on some easy, but impactful initiatives within the plan. He specifically mentioned wayfinding signs to help guide people to public attractions (especially from the River Bend Trail), bicycle parking, crosswalk improvements at high use crossings, and additional guide signs for bicycle facilities to make things more user friendly. Wendorf stated that he would need to work with Gulke and the RDDF to gather more details to determine where to put wayfinding signs and what to point out and that he can work with the Street Department to see how to enhance the crosswalks that would be identified as high impact. Heider suggested using larger font on the signs and not using the bike icon on the road signs so it is more useful to vehicles and bikes.

The next item on the agenda was to begin discussion on the 10 year Capital Plan. Wendorf began the discussion by reviewing the 2022 Capital Request list that the Commission approved last year for budgetary consideration. He reviewed what was approved for funding and what was not. He informed the Commission that the 70 acre property by the City Forest that was approved for funding no longer has to be funded through City Funds. Wendorf informed the Commission that he just received word that we received the full \$140,000 that he requested through the State Tourism Grant. Wendorf said that items that were not funded from the 2022 request need to be slotted back into the 10-year plan and that obviously the less projects that are funded each year cause future year requests to increase. Just because a project/improvement is turned down doesn't mean that it goes away, it only adds to the existing requests in future years. Gulke asked about the City Forest Road Repair. He said it was getting pretty rough end of summer last year. Wendorf stated that the crew spent some time up there in the fall with some heavier equipment and crowned it and fixed it as best they could. He said it is good for now but at some point will need to be improved significantly, especially with the increased usage. Wendorf finished the conversation by asking the Commission to take some time to review the updated draft of the 10-year Capital Plan and bring any suggestions to a future meeting when it will be discussed and hopefully approved again this year.

The next item on the agenda was Monthly Report. Wendorf summarized his report by highlighting the success of ice season thus far in the Smith Center, informing the Commission of the figure skating show on 2/12 & 2/13, as well as the Badger State Games Fat Tire Bike Races at the City Forest on 2/19. He also informed the Commission on the current shortage of lifeguards that both the Department and MAPS are experiencing. He said we are working with MAPS to help each other gain the necessary amount of lifeguards to run our respective facilities and we have set up a lifeguard training course at PRMS Pool on March 21-23. Wendorf encouraged anyone in attendance to help spread the word about the need for lifeguards and said that if we don't have enough, we cannot open the Bierman Family Aquatic Center.

The next Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting will be on March 2nd, at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Merrill City Hall.

The next item on the agenda was Public Comment:

Alderman Weix suggested adding two questions to the Outdoor Recreation Survey. Ask people if they would support adding a shelter at the City Forest, and ask if people would support adding a sidewalk &/or bike path on Riverside Avenue.

Christine Vorpapel (call in) said it was hard to hear some of the motions that were made and who voted aye so that she knows. She also said that she couldn't find the board packet information and if we are going to discuss budgetary items they need to be readily available and easy to find. She then thanked the Commission for everything that they do for the Community.

****Motion Van Lieshout, seconded by Artac to adjourn at 5:25 p.m.**

****Carried unanimously.**

Dan Wendorf
Recording Secretary

		FEBRUARY			
AC & SONS PARTY RENTALS	TENT FOR FAT TIRE BIKE RACE	2/17/2022	3249	\$680.00	CITY FOREST TIMBER SALE
ACE HARDWARE	AIR PLUG	1/6/2022		\$5.98	55400-03-50000
ACE HARDWARE	SAW BLADE	2/8/2021	2129858	\$65.97	55200-03-40000
ACE HARDWARE	PADLOCK	2/12/2021	213005	\$31.98	55200-03-40000
AMAZON	WALL CLOCKS FOR AQUATIC CENTER	2/18/2022	112-9335393-9204222	\$88.48	55200-03-40000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	1/31/2022	8310229	\$117.64	55200-02-15000
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	1/31/2022	8310678	\$80.30	55300-03-41500
AMY HANDLIN	SECURITY DEPOSIT	2/15/2022	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
ATCO INTERNATIONAL	POP UP SWIPES	2/9/2022	10591884	\$281.70	55400-03-50000
BAUMGART WASTE REMOVAL	WASTE HAULING	2/1/2022		\$148.00	55400-02-23600
BLUEJAY 96.3	ADVERTISING	1/31/2022	14207-11	\$249.00	55400-03-41000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	2/3/2022	4109564920	\$93.21	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM/JOE/Ryan	2/10/2022	4110242142	\$93.21	55200-03-46000
CINTAS	MATS/MOPS	2/10/2022	4110241952	\$187.07	55400-02-23250
FOTO NEWS	ADVERTISING	2/1/2022		\$813.00	55400-03-41000
GENERAL BEVERAGE SALE	BARLEYFEST	10/1/2021	2001560769	\$198.00	BARLEYFEST
JUMPLINE	BARLEYFEST	2/7/2022	145024	\$35.00	BARLEYFEST
JUMPLINE	BARLEYFEST	2/7/2022	145025	\$123.40	BARLEYFEST
LORI KRIEWALD	SECURITY DEPOSIT	2/7/2022	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
MENDARDS	TREATED PINE	1/31/2022	98585	\$915.20	55200-08-91500
MENDARDS	EQUIPMENT FOR SHOP	1/31/2022	98585	\$109.72	55200-03-40000
NAPA AUTO SALES	HYDRAULIC SERVICE	2/9/2021	546199	\$149.00	55200-03-50000
NAPA AUTO SALES	CABLE TIES	2/11/2021	946737	\$41.57	55400-03-50000
NORTHWOODS CHEMICAL CORP.	AQUA SEAL DRAIN SEAL	2/1/2022	325046	\$184.55	55400-03-50000
RTL ELETRIC	LETTRICAL WORK ON RBT FOR NEW TRAIL ADDITIO	2/2/2022	64931	\$12,108.07	
RTL ELETRIC	SKATE PARK - DISCONNET AND REMOVE EL	2/2/2022	64930	\$265.00	55200-08-91000
STAINLESS SPECIALISTS	FURNACE REPAIRS	2/2/2022	42232	\$1,189.08	55400-03-50000
STATE OF WISCONSIN	BLACK SQUIRRELL		2/11/2021	\$50.00	BLACK SQUIRRELL
SWIDERSKI EQUIPMENT	TUBES	2/1/2022	B11065	\$140.61	55200-03-50000
ULINE	DOGGIE BAGS	2/1/2022	144488532	\$220.00	55200-03-40000

VICTORY JANITORIAL	UPRIGHT VACUUM	1/31/2022	1222000	\$389.00	55400-08-82000
WALMART	OFFICE SUPPLIES	2/14/2021		\$110.24	55300-03-415000
WISCONSIN BUILDING SUPPLY	TREATED PINE	1/31/2022	9545147	\$412.60	55200-08-91500
WISCONSIN BUILDING SUPPLY	TREATED PINE	1/31/2021	9545147	\$412.60	55200-08-91000
WISCONSIN BUILDING SUPPLY	TREATED PINE	2/9/2021	6545334	\$564.48	55200-08-91000
ZIEBELLS DOOR COMPANY	BROWN EXTERIOR JAMB SEAL	2/8/2021	13412	\$37.10	55200-03-500000

REQUEST TO INCLUDE ITEM ON AGENDA

Board or Committee: Park & Rec

Date of Meeting: ^{Early} March

Requested by: Christine Vorpage 1

**Describe below the item(s) you wish to have put on the agenda:
(please attach any pertinent information)**

No Mow May
Request to refrain mowing
"fringes" of city Parks to facilitate
pollination of bees. We need
dandelions & early white clover

Signed: J Vorpage Date: 2-21-2022

715-531-3189 dynamo@markeemail.com

Please return this completed form to the City Clerk's office. Every effort will be made to include your item on the next possible meeting agenda. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact City Clerk Bill Heideman. Thank you.

Received at Clerks' Office by: CP

Received Date: 2/21/2022

REQUEST TO INCLUDE ITEM ON AGENDA

Board or Committee: Board of Public Works

Date of Meeting: 2/28/2022

Requested by: Christine Vorpapel
536-2676

**Describe below the item(s) you wish to have put on the agenda:
(please attach any pertinent information)**

"No Mow May"
to help repopulate our bees/ag.
Suspend mowing - height of lawns
ordinance. Please ck with
City of Wausau & Stevens Point.
who've had idea in 2021 & longer.

Signed: C. Vorpapel

Date: 2-1-22

Please return this completed form to the City Clerk's office. Every effort will be made to include your item on the next possible meeting agenda. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact City Clerk Bill Heideman. Thank you.

Received at Clerks' Office by: lp

Received Date: 2-2-2022

Attachment: No Mow May Request (8582 : Request from Christine Vorpapel for "No Mow May")

No Mow May – Street Superintendent Dustin Bonack

In 2021, 9 Wisconsin communities participated in No Mow May. This program is run by Bee City USA in an effort to promote pollination by reducing the mowing of lawns in the month of May to create habitat and forage for early season pollinators. This is mostly done through a suspension of lawn length enforcement with some communities requiring registration.

We currently have a Natural Lawn provision in our code of ordinances (Sec. 14-35).

- Property owners must submit a written plan.
- Must include a 10' buffer between natural lawn and abutting properties.
- Notice is sent to all properties within 300'.
- Application is denied if 51% or more of noticed properties object.
- Two –year permit with a renewal process the same as the original application.
- Natural lawns cannot contain any of the noxious grasses and weeds listed in our ordinances.

The following is a statement from Dan Wendorf regarding the properties maintained by the Parks Department:

"In the month of May, we begin shelter reservations and parks officially open along with all of our athletic fields for soccer, baseball, softball, playgrounds, trails, and full recreational use of our parks and park areas. May also tends to be a month when the grass grows very quickly (in our part of the world) so if we were to leave all of our grass areas un-mowed - we would have to use special equipment to "brush" the grass and clean up the windrows first before we would be able to mow it a second time to get closer to usable turf for regular park usage and traffic. It would take us several weeks for us to perform this task and the usage of equipment that we don't have.

There are some areas that we could let grow a bit longer and already do (a few pollinator plots at Prairie Trails, we have several larger plots at the City Forest that are used specifically for wildlife and pollinators to head completely out, perimeter areas at the MARC, Riverside, as well as "edge" habitat along all of our riverbank parks (Athletic, Kitchenette, Stange, Lions, Riverside, Prairie Trails, etc.).

If go no-mow, the unintended weed spread would be broadcast all over town once they head out.

I think it is a good idea in areas that are not high visibility and in areas where cross pollination would have an impact."

Some of the common concerns with a program of this nature are:

- Neighbor disputes over unsightly lawns.
- Pollination of plants like dandelions from unmowed properties onto lawns that are being maintained and treated.
- The cleanup of lawns after a month of not mowing will be much more labor intensive.

If we were to start a program like this in Merrill it would be important to have a permit/registration process so it doesn't become a reason to not mow for a month. Keeping a mowed buffer between properties would also be important. Our current natural lawn provision achieves this and actually allows for the growth to occur throughout the summer.

Motion (Sabatke/Rick) to grant an extension until the end of September, and to review the issue at the October Board of Public Works meeting.

RESULT: APPROVED

3. Consider potential "No Mow May" policy

It was mentioned that other communities have similar policies. The City does have a "natural lawn" ordinance, a copy of which was in the meeting packet. Under this policy, people can apply for a "natural lawn" permit.

Alderman Sabatke suggested that adopting a "No Mow May" policy could result in more hassle compared to any benefits realized as a result of adopting such a policy.

No action was taken.

4. Consider "Prairie Trails to River Bend Connector Trail" bike route designation request from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Information and maps of the bike route were in the meeting packet. The Parks and Recreation Commission has already approved the route.

Motion (Rick/Woellner) to approve the route as submitted.

RESULT: APPROVED

5. Consider adding APR valves to "A" coils at Fire Station:

Proposal from Complete Control Inc. (\$12,417) for adding valves

Information was in the meeting packet.

Facilities Maintenance Manager Wszalek reported on the quote.

Alderman Sabatke stated that he inspected the fire station approximately a year ago, and discovered several construction oversights.

Alderman Rick and Alderman Hass recommended that the City seek relief from the contractor and others involved in the construction of the station.

Alderman Sabatke stated his opinion that the building was built for Florida weather, not Wisconsin weather. He suggested that perhaps this quote should be considered as a part of the 2022 budget process.

Motion (Woellner/Rick) to refer the Common Council, with no recommendation. Motion carried.

2021 Budget Amendment - Fire Station APR valves

Because the quote for the valves (previous agenda item) was referred to the Common Council without a recommendation, this agenda item was not considered.

6. Continue discussion on vacant city-owned Aldermanic District 7 properties

Attachment: No Mow May Request (8582 : Request from Christine Vorpapel for "No Mow May")

6/16/2021

Merrill, WI Code of Ordinances

Sec. 14-35. - Regulation of natural lawns.

- (a) **Definitions.** The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Natural lawn management plan means a written plan relating to the management and maintenance of a lawn which contains a legal description of the lawn upon which the planted grass will exceed eight inches in length, a statement of intent and purpose for the lawn, a detailed description of the vegetational types, plants and plant succession involved, and the specific management and maintenance techniques to be employed.

- (1) Property owners who wish to plant and cultivate a natural lawn must submit their written plan and related information on the form provided by the city. The term "property owner" means and includes the legal title holder and/or the beneficial owner of any such lot, according to the most current city records. Natural lawn management plans shall only indicate the planting and cultivating of natural lawns on property legally owned by the property owner. Applicants are strictly prohibited from developing a natural lawn on any city-owned property, including street rights-of-way. The term "city-owned property" means and includes, at a minimum, property located between the sidewalk and the street, or a strip not less than ten feet adjacent to the street where there is no sidewalk, whether the area is under public or private ownership. In addition, natural lawns shall not be permitted within ten feet of the abutting property owner's property unless waived in writing by the abutting property owner on the side so affected. Such waiver is to be affixed to the natural lawn management plan.
- (2) Any subsequent property owner who abuts an approved natural lawn may revoke the waiver, thereby requiring the owner of the natural lawn to remove the natural lawn that is located in the ten foot section abutting the neighboring property owner. Such revocation shall be put in writing and presented to the city clerk by the subsequent abutting property owner. Upon receiving the written request to revoke the original waiver, the common council shall contact the owner of the approved natural lawn and direct the owner to remove the natural lawn located in the ten foot section abutting the neighboring property owner. The common council shall revise the approved natural lawn management permit accordingly. The owner of the approved natural lawn shall be required to remove the ten foot section abutting the neighboring property owner within 20 days of receipt of the written notification from the city, provided the notification is received sometime between May 1 and November 1. Property owners who receive notification from the city between November 1 and April 30 shall be required to remove the ten-foot section abutting the neighboring property owner no later than May 20 following receipt of the notification.

Attachment: No Mow May Request (8582 : Request from Christine Vorpapel for "No Mow May")

6/16/2021

Merrill, WI Code of Ordinances

Natural lawns means and includes common species of grass and wild flowers native to North America which are designed and purposely cultivated to exceed eight inches in height from the ground. The term "natural lawns" does not include the noxious grasses and weeds identified in section 14-34. The growth of a natural lawn in excess of eight inches in height from the ground surface shall be prohibited within the city limits, unless a natural lawn management plan is approved, and a permit is issued by the city as set forth in this section. Natural lawns shall not contain litter or debris and shall not harbor undesirable wildlife.

(b) Permit required; application process.

- (1) Property owners interested in applying for permission to establish a natural lawn shall obtain and complete an application form available from the city clerk. The completed application shall include a natural lawn management plan. Upon submitting a completed application, a nonrefundable filing fee will be assessed by the city. The fee shall be as established by the common council, from time to time, and as indicated on the schedule of licenses and fees appearing in chapter 16 of this Code. Upon receiving payment, copies of the completed application shall be mailed by the city to each of the owners of record, as listed in the office of the city assessor, who are owners of the property situated wholly or in part within 300 feet of the boundaries of the properties for which the application is made. If within 15 calendar days of mailing the copies of the complete application to the neighboring property owners, the city receives written objections from 51 percent or more of the neighboring property owners, the city clerk shall deny the application. The term "neighboring property owners" means all those property owners who are located within 300 feet of the proposed natural lawn site.
 - (2) If the property owner's application is in full compliance with the natural lawn management plan requirements, and less than 51 percent of the neighboring property owners provide written objections, the city clerk shall issue a two-year permit to install a natural lawn. Permit renewals shall follow the same procedure used for the original application.
 - (3) Permits shall be for three years.
- (c) Appeals.** The property owner may appeal the city clerk's decision to deny the natural lawn permit request to the common council at an open meeting. All applications for appeal shall be submitted within 15 calendar days of the notice of denial of the natural lawn management plan. The decision rendered by the common council shall be final and binding.

(d) Safety precautions for natural grass areas.

- (1) When, in the opinion of the fire chief, the presence of a natural lawn may constitute a fire or safety hazard due to weather and/or other conditions, the fire chief may order the cutting of natural lawns to a safe condition. As a condition of receiving approval of the natural lawn permit, the property owner shall be required to cut the natural lawn within the three days upon receiving written direction from the fire chief.
- (2) Natural lawns shall not be removed through the process of burning, unless stated and approved, as one of the management and maintenance techniques in the natural lawn

Attachment: No Mow May Request (8582 : Request from Christine Vorpapel for "No Mow May")

6/16/2021

Merrill, WI Code of Ordinances

management plan. The fire chief shall review all requests to burn natural lawns and shall determine if circumstances are correct and all applicable requirements have been fulfilled to ensure public safety. Burning of natural lawns shall be strictly prohibited, unless a written permit to burn is issued by the fire chief. The fire chief shall establish a written list of requirements for considering each request to burn natural lawns, thereby insuring the public safety. In addition, the property owner requesting permission to burn the natural lawn shall produce evidence of property damage and liability insurance identifying the city as a third-party insured. A minimum amount of acceptable insurance shall be \$300,000.00.

(e) *Revocation of permit; appeals.* The weed commissioner or the street superintendent shall have the authority to revoke an approved natural lawn management plan permit, if the owner fails to maintain the natural lawn or comply with the provisions set forth in this section. Notice of intent to revoke an approved natural lawn management plan permit shall be appealable to the common council or designated committee thereof. All applications for appeal shall be submitted within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written notice of intent to revoke. Failure to file an application for appeal within the 15 calendar days shall result in the revoking of the natural lawn management plan permit. All written applications for appeal filed within the 15 calendar day requirement shall be reviewed by the common council in an open meeting. The decision rendered by the common council shall be final and binding.

(f) *Public nuisance and abatement after notice.*

- (1) *Public nuisance.* The growth of a natural lawn shall be considered a public nuisance unless a natural lawn management plan has been filed and approved and a permit is issued by the city as set forth in this section. Violators shall be served with a notice of public nuisance by certified mail to the last-known mailing address of the property owner.
- (2) *Abatement.* If the person served with a notice of public nuisance violation does not abate the nuisance within ten days, the enforcement officer may proceed to abate such nuisance, keeping an account of the expense of the abatement, and such expense shall be charged to, and paid by the property owner. Notice of the bill for abatement of the public nuisance shall be mailed to the owner of the premises and shall be payable within ten calendar days from receipt thereof. Within 60 days after such costs and expenses are incurred and remain unpaid, the city clerk shall enter those charges onto the tax roll as a special tax as provided by state statute.

The failure of the city clerk to record such claim, to mail such notice, or the failure of the owner to receive such notice shall not affect the right to place the city expense on the tax rolls for unpaid bills for abating the public nuisance as provided for in this section.

(g) *Penalty.*

- (1) Any person, who does not abate the nuisance within the required time period, or who otherwise violates the provisions of this section shall be subject to the general penalty of

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6/16/2021

Merrill, WI Code of Ordinances

section 1-7.

- (2) In addition to any penalties herein provided, the city may issue stop work orders upon owners of lots where work is unfinished under a previously issued building permit for any violation of this section.

(Code 1993, § 8-1-5; Ord. No. 96-04, 2-13-1996; Ord. No. 2017-16, § 1, 10-10-2017)



**A RESOLUTION FROM THE CITY OF MERRILL PARKS & RECREATION
COMMISSION SUPPORTING THE GREAT PINERY HERITAGE WATERWAY**

WHEREAS, the City of Merrill Parks & Recreation Commission supports the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway designating portions of the Wisconsin River and Prairie River as a water trail; and,

WHEREAS, a water trail is a marked route on a navigable waterway such as rivers and lakes for recreational use, drawing paddle sport enthusiasts to the area, contributing to the area's mission to highlight outdoor recreational opportunities; and,

WHEREAS, the trail will highlight available launch locations, travel distances between locations, and historical signage that tell the story of the river, the heritage and the people; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Merrill Parks & Recreation Commission will serve as the project owner for the launches under the departments current jurisdiction and will assist with long term maintenance, and;

WHEREAS, the water trail will enhance the Parks & Recreational opportunities of the citizens of the City of Merrill, Lincoln County, and all of Central Wisconsin,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MERRILL, WISCONSIN this 2nd day of March, 2022, that the Parks & Recreation Commission supports establishing the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway through the City of Merrill and Lincoln County;

Authorized Signature _____

Typed or printed Name Dan Wendorf

Title Parks & Recreation Director

Date _____

Potential pedestrian bridge over railroad tracks



Pedestrian Bridge

From: Merrill downtown Vision Plan



= Potential pedestrian bridge over railroad tracks



= Potential ramp connecting bridge to River Bend Trail



March 2022 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: As we hopefully round the corner on winter and begin to think spring, the crew has been making great progress with getting prepared for a change in the seasons. They finished repairs on all of our picnic tables that needed to be fixed so they are ready to be dispersed back to their respective parks. In the mean-time, snow continues to fall as we have had a fair amount of snow events to clean up after. It has really been a blessing to have our third person this winter for buildings & grounds. It has helped us be so much more efficient with snow removal than ever before. In the past 20+ years we always got things done but on moderate to heavy snow falls, it was easily 2+ days for us to remove snow everywhere we had to. Now, we are able to handle things within a full day or day and a half. I have been working on all of our capital items for 2022 and have almost everything squared away. The only thing that I am waiting to purchase is the lift gate for a pick-up truck. We jumped on all of our capital items again this year because we never know how long things are going to take due to this strange "supply chain" issue we have all been dealing with. Hopefully this isn't something that lingers beyond this year so that our economy can get back on track and goods can be produced and moved smoothly. Our outdoor ice rinks have been in great condition this season (unfortunately mostly due to the consistently cold temps for such a long time) but we have observed very good usage of them as well. Once we get to March though, we won't invest much time and effort into rinks because even on 20 degree sunny days it will really start to deteriorate the ice conditions with the power of the sun. We hosted a successful Badger State Games – Fat Tire Bike Race at the City Forest on 2/19/22. The weather was a bit crazy the evening before but that did not deter bikers from all over the state to make their way to Merrill. I have been working with our City Attorney's office to finalize the purchase of the Sumnicht 70 acres. I have also had to do some additional work with this purchase, as they still had the 40 acre parcel under Managed Forest Law so we are going through the process to eliminate that before the purchase. The land purchase should be wrapped up within the next few weeks. As the weather improves over the next several weeks, the crew will begin chasing the snowbanks back with the unfortunate garbage removal around the parks so when the snow is gone we can jump right into park and athletic field preparations. We typically do not have very much time at all to get things ready before people are flooding the parks and ready to use them. Spring sports will return early this year like it always used to pre-covid so we have to have fields ready for play (weather permitting) by the end of March for games already. Our online registration system has been going well. It seems as though people like the convenience of it. Every once and a while we have a few calls or emails with some issues but typically have been able to walk people through it and get them in the right direction after that. We also have had a few walk in's yet and I anticipate we will always have those who don't want to use the online platform. I met with Ice Age Trail representatives on 2/17/22 to begin discussions on potentially becoming an Ice Age Trail Community. It was a great conversation and very enlightening on the best steps to take moving forward. There will most likely be a Resolution of Support forthcoming on this after I finish the application. We have been promoting our lifeguard staffing as much as possible in every way possible and we are still

short on guards to date. Even after working with MAPS and setting up the lifeguard training in March, they have only had two people sign up for the course (as I write this). We are going to continue to work as hard as we can to try and find guards, but the reality is if we don't find enough lifeguards. . . we cannot open the Bierman Family Aquatic Center this season. So if anybody knows anybody who has any interest whatsoever in being a lifeguard please send them our way.

Forestry: The Street Department has started catching up on tree trimming and removals between snow removals. Hopefully they have enough time to catch up before I begin my spring list of inspections. I will be getting out on inspections as soon as the snowbanks begin to shrink. We came out of the last high wind event looking alright around the City and I do hope for a return to average weather to finish up the winter season. The roller coaster of conditions that have been presented weekly to our urban trees is going to have an impact on tree health (it won't be major but we'll most likely see some stress on newly planted trees and older trees). It is something to keep an eye on as we change seasons. I will also be attending our upcoming Urban Foresters Networking Meeting with the WDNR. I received notification that we were awarded Tree City USA once again this year. I will also be applying for tree funding within the next month or so from a few foundations that I hope will be willing to help us plant additional trees.

Recreation: We have been finishing preparing and planning for recreation programs for the upcoming seasons and hope to have everything ready by the middle of March. Thanks as always to Dawn for all of her hard work in handling all of the details on this. She always does a tremendous job. We're going to do a program/flyer again this year so people that want hard copies have them, but we are also going to encourage our program registrations go online this year. As with park shelter reservations, I would assume there will be a learning curve but think it will really help people get more involved in our programs. This saves people from having to make a special trip out to our office just to register. Like last summer, we're rolling out as much as we can handle and hope that people are comfortable getting active and involved again. We are also planning on bringing back a few bus trips as well (Brewers trip and Mississippi River Cruise). Our entire society is in need of socialization and activity. We are also working on filling any openings that we may have in our seasonal staff.

Smith Center: It is hard to believe that we only have a few weeks left of ice in the building. The season has been good and we are very thankful for our wonderful user groups and their families for their efforts this season. Our ice season brings thousands of people into our community each winter to help our local economy. Also special thanks to our Smith Center staff for their hard work in the arena and keeping the ice conditions great for all to enjoy. After March 11th, we will be removing the ice and transitioning quickly to dry floor events. We have a busy dry floor season ahead of us and it is very refreshing seeing more events returning to our building. We intend to continue capitalizing on this momentum and hope to continue to bring even more events to the Smith Center.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill