

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

March 2, 2022

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

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

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

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

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Ravn, seconded by Artac, to approve the claims from February.

Novitch questioned why the bill from RTL for the Riverbend Trail did not have an account number. Wendorf stated that because the Riverbend Trail group will be paying that bill.

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None

The next item on the agenda was to discuss “No Mow May”. Christine Vorpagel requested this agenda item. Novitch asked Christine Vorpagel to speak on this agenda item. Christine stated the reason for No Mow May is to allow flowering plants to grow unmown for the month of May, creating habitat and forage for early season pollinators. Christine stated she is not asking people to let their lawns grow uncontrollable, but maybe just the outline of areas. Christine stated that she has been speaking with Wendorf and she realizes that the city can’t let the parks grow uncontrolled but maybe just leaving some fringe areas in the park grow for early pollinators. Wendorf stated that there are areas at most of the parks where they leave natural growth. John VanLieshout stated that the Board of Public Works is looking into working with city residents that want to participate in the No Mow May.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss and potentially approve survey questions for Outdoor Recreation Plan. Wendorf included a drawing of a potential pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks connecting the downtown with the Riverbend Trail. Gulke stated that there should also be some questions regarding where water enthusiasts like to visit. Wendorf stated that he will request that both questions be put on the survey.

The next item on the agenda was continued discussion on 10 year Capital Plan. Wendorf stated the reason that they do the 10 year plan is so the finance director and alderpersons have an idea of what the departments will be asking for. Artac questioned if the money that was approved for purchasing the Sumnicht land can now be used someplace else since the money is now coming from the grant. Wendorf stated that he is looking into it. Ravn questioned what is happening with the skate park. Wendorf stated that they need funding for the new skate park.

The next item on the agenda was to review/approve a Resolution of Support for the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway. This was presented to the Commission last year by Bill Burtram from Iron Bull in Wasuau. Wendorf stated that this is good for the community.

***Motion by VanLieshout, seconded by Tabor to approve the Resolution of Support for the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions. Ravn asked how old you have to be for a lifeguard. Wendorf stated you can pass your test at 15 but can't guard until you turn 16. Wendorf stated that all surrounding communities are having the same problem as we are for trying to find guards. Krueger stated that maybe persons that pass the lifeguard class and work for the aquatic center for the summer be reimbursed the money for the lifeguard class. Wendorf stated we will continue working with the school in hopes of getting at least 10 more guards. Wendorf stated Emerald Ash Borer has been detected in Lincoln County in the town of Harrison and also in the City of Tomahawk. WDNR and DATCP both have confirmed EAB. Wendorf stated that he has put some helpful links on the Merrill Park and Recreation webpage and also on the Facebook page. Wendorf also stated that if anyone has questions they can call the Merrill Park and Recreation office. Wendorf stated that if you have Ash trees on your property it is the homeowner's responsibility to remove the trees if necessary. Wendorf stated the Merrill Park and Recreation have an Emerald Ash Borer Readiness plan in place and have been removing Ash trees for the past several years.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 2022 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Public Comment: Christine Vorpagel stated that she would like to see some areas for taking out Kayaks along the stretch of water between Ott's Park and the Dam. Vorpagel stated she would like to see this item on the 10 year plan.

***Motion by Artac, seconded by Ravn to adjourn at 5:11 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary