

## **Parks & Recreation Commission**

December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

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

Members Excused Absent: Chad Krueger

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf

\*\*\*Motion Artac, seconded by Ravn to approve the minutes from the November Meeting.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the claims. Novitch asked if there were any questions. Gulke asked why there was a charge for the stolen flower watering truck. Wendorf said that the insurance company paid the City that exact amount and we paid Breaman's for the work when it was finished. Wendorf informed the Commission that the transmission was replaced and the truck is fixed with the exception of a few cosmetic things on the front passenger side that will get taken care of before next summer.

\*\*\*Motion Weix, seconded by Tabor to approve the claims from November.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss a request from a citizen to place a "Free Blockbuster Movie" Stand in a park location. There was a picture that the person sent showing they refurbished an old newspaper stand to serve as the movie exchange hub. Wendorf said he spoke with this individual and their initial request was to place this in Normal Park but Wendorf said he would prefer to place it somewhere else because Normal Park currently has so many things in it. Wendorf said he discussed a few other locations with the requestor including Streeter Square or Banker's Square. Wendorf said he prefers Banker's Square because an old newspaper stand would look like it belonged there and would provide for a great spot because of all of the retail in that downtown area. The consensus from the Commission after discussion was that they really liked the Banker's Square location and Wendorf stated that the department would install it when they had a chance.

\*\*\*Motion Artac, seconded by Ravn, to place the "Blockbuster Free Movie Stand" at Banker's Square.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to begin discussions on waste removal in the future. Wendorf requested this item on the agenda due to the rising costs of waste removal they have experienced throughout the parks over the past several years. Wendorf stated that they provide small dumpsters near all reservable park shelters as well as dumpsters near concession stands for the sports

organizations seasonally and year round dumpsters for the Smith Center and Park Shop. Wendorf said that it is time to look into ways to cut those costs and get creative with our methods. Wendorf informed the Commission that he talked with Street Supervisor Bonack who had some pricing on purchasing our own 2 yard dumpsters for those locations. The costs were in the \$750-800 range per dumpster. By owning our own dumpsters we save significant money but we have to weigh the costs of staffing and equipment from our department and street department. Wendorf also said they discussed using the 96 gallon carts that the City uses for current garbage removal. If we would use these, we would inform shelter renters that once they are full, they are responsible for removing the excess waste on their own. This would pose another challenge in that we would either have to bring those receptacles to a central location to be emptied by the auto garbage truck or create extra stops for them. Wendorf also stated that he will discuss waste removal with the baseball and softball associations as well so that we can get these costs down for our department. Wendorf stated that they don't have to make a decision right away; he just wanted to begin the discussion and problem solving process in hopes of having a plan in place by spring of 2023.

The next item was monthly board report. Wendorf asked if there were any questions. Weix asked about City Forest Timber sale extension and new Sumnicht property. Wendorf said that the extension is fairly common due to the complexity of lumber markets lately. He said that we have a 15% add-on to our contract for a requested extension that the logger is aware of and ok with. Wendorf said that he met with the new WDNR forester at the City Forest to bring him up to speed on the sale and to begin looking at the new property to eventually work into our overall timber sale. Wendorf stated that they are also looking at setting up trail development on that property as well so we might be better served trying to work those two initiatives into the fold at similar times to save money and efforts. Ravn asked about the cameras at Normal Park and if they were working to deter vandalism. Wendorf stated that they had damage to the railing of the Gazebo less than 4 hours after the cameras were installed and it helped us identify the vandals and it has been very quiet there since. Wendorf thanked all of the full time, part time, seasonal staff, Parks & Recreation Commission, City Council, and other departments for helping us create another tremendous year at Parks & Recreation.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 at 4:15 p.m. at the City Hall.

The next item was public comment. Gulke stated that the T.B. Scott Library had an "explorers backpack" donated by the Ice Age Trail that contains items to help explore and enjoy the Ice Age Trail that can be checked out at the Library.

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

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

Dan Wendorf  
Recording Secretary