

**CITY OF MERRILL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2024 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 4:15 PM**

I. Call to Order Chairperson Novitch was running a few minutes late so Vice Chair Krueger called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting Osness motioned to place minutes on file. Alderperson Rutkowski seconded and the motion Passed.*Motion Osness, seconded by Rutkowski to approve the July Minutes.

1. July 2024 Minutes -

III. Approval of Claims

1. July 2024 Claims - Gulke asked about River Bend Trail Light damage expenses and if any of this is covered by insurance. Wendorf stated that they have filed an insurance claim and are working to have damages covered, minus our deductible. (Novitch arrived)
Osness motioned to approve. Tabor seconded and the motion Passed.

IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration

1. Discussion and potential action regarding 4th of July vendors - Osness said where do we draw the line if we begin to allow external food vendors. Osness also said that parking is already at a premium for that event and food trucks will limit that even further. Gulke said he is hesitant to say a firm no because there may be some unique offerings from some food trucks or external vendors. Wendorf stated that many people show up after the normal dinner hours to park and watch the fireworks. Wendorf stated that he was only contacted by one potential vendor and he told them they could not attend because they weren't self contained and didn't have permits. Wendorf stated that there ended up being three random vendors that just showed up on their own creating some confusion. Krueger said if Fastpitch would have known that they would have probably not opened up their concession stand. Wendorf stated that if the commission votes No, it should be No for everyone. This makes it easier for everyone involved to simply turn them away if they try to show up unannounced. If they choose to allow external vendors then there needs to be clear policy and guidance as to who we allow, where they go, what permits they need, and other distinct criteria. There was further discussion related to pros and cons to allowing and/or not allowing food trucks and external vendors.

Alderperson Rutkowski motioned to Not allow portable vendors at 4th of July event at MARC. Tabor seconded and the motion Passed.

2. Update on Lion's Park "teachers parking lot" discussions - Wendorf began the discussion by reviewing the history of this parking lot agreement

with MAPS dating back to the 1980's and its intentions. Wendorf explained that the mutual benefits from this agreement have given MAPS staff (and previously students) a designated off-road parking area, while allowing the Parks Department the opportunity to have a fund to perform parking lot improvements, purchase adjacent homes and create either larger parking or more park space. It has always been a win win and he said it would continue to be if it were approved. Wendorf stated this would go into a non-lapsing fund to allow for the same expenditures as intended originally (purchase adjacent homes to create more park or parking space). Rutkowski asked what happened to the funds from the original years of the agreement, and Wendorf said that quite a bit of the original balance was spent on the purchase of three homes on that block to add to the parking lot and one of the homes was demolished closest to the west Lion's Park entrance to add green space. Wendorf said this is a good thing and allows us to once again start preparing for potential real estate acquisitions to add to the park and/or parking lot. Krueger motioned to approve. Alderperson Rutkowski seconded and the motion Passed.

3. **Things to be excited about** - Wendorf summarized some highlights of the summer from recent events, programs, and happenings. He mentioned that over the weekend of July 27th that included the Merrill Fastpitch Tourney at the MARC, Black Squirrel Scurry (using three parks), Legion Baseball Regionals at Athletic Park, there were thousands of people visiting our community for these events alone. Wendorf also mentioned that the Bierman Family Aquatic Center was packed all weekend with all of the action taking place in town. Wendorf thanked the organizers of these events and all events that the department works with and mentioned that it is the partnerships that they have formed with these organizations that helps grow events, and consistently bring visitors into our community.

4. **Closed Session – The Commission may convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute 19.85(1)(e) to deliberate or negotiate the purchase of public properties, investing of public funds, or conduct other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session, for negotiation of and to discuss terms for renewal of Merrill Youth Hockey Association Concessions**

Contract - Chairperson Novitch initiated the roll call vote to enter into closed session.

Gulke - aye, Krueger - aye, Novitch - aye, Tabor - aye, Malm - aye, Osness - aye, Rutkowski - aye

The Commission went into closed session.

Alderperson Rutkowski motioned to Approve a Concessions Agreement with Merrill Youth Hockey Association. Osness seconded and the motion passed.

V. Monthly Reports

- 1. August 2024 Report** - Wendorf asked if there were any questions related to his monthly report.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting The next Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be on September 4th, at 4:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Merrill City Hall.

VII. Public Comment Chad Krueger thanked the Parks Crew for all of their help and preparations getting the MARC softball fields, grounds, and facilities ready for their tournament. He said they had a lot of compliments from other cities on how nice our facilities are. He also said that a number of teams mentioned how nice everyone in Merrill was.

VIII. Adjournment Osness motioned to adjourn. Krueger seconded and the motion Passed.