

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

I. Call to Order Roll Call:

Present: Gulke, Krueger, Novitch, Malm, Osness, Alderperson Rutkowski

Present Not Voting: Parks Director Dan Wendorf

Excused: Joan Tabor

Absent:

Novitch called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting

1. **November 2024 Minutes** - Krueger motioned to place minutes on file. Alderperson Rutkowski seconded and the motion Passed.

III. Approval of Claims

1. **November 2024 Claims** - Osness asked Wendorf what the charges were from Stainless Specialists for the Smith Center. Wendorf stated it was contracted start-up that they always perform while we are getting ready to turn the floor on and make ice for the season. They go through all of our mechanical equipment to ensure it is running well. Krueger asked about the two charges for tree planting. Wendorf stated that in our operations budget we have funding to plant trees and we have additional funding through the capital budget that has been awarded over the past 5+ years to allow the City to try and keep up with regular plantings, requested plantings, and road construction restocking. Without additional funding we would fall further behind on tree planting every year.

Krueger motioned to Approve Claims. Osness seconded and the motion Passed.

IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration

1. **Update on bridge project to connect Prairie Dells County Park to the City Forest** - Wendorf informed the Commission that he has been talking with Lincoln County and they have approved a bid from Custom Manufacturing (same company that did Prairie Trails Bridge and the last Stange Bridge) to provide and install the bridge to connect Prairie Dells County Park with our City Forest. Wendorf stated that work is tentatively scheduled to begin spring/summer of 2025 and will be a tremendous asset to both of our parks. Wendorf also stated that after the work is completed we will both work to mesh our paths to match each side of the bridge to make it user friendly. Wendorf stated that he would keep the Commission informed on the project as things happen in 2025.

2. **Review Commission authority and responsibilities** - Novitch began the discussion by stating that with the number of new Commissioners he wanted to simply provide some information on what a Commission is versus a Board or Committee. He pointed out that it is important for the group to understand what the definition is and the statutory language associated with it. He pointed out that a Commission does have certain capabilities that Boards and Committees do not, but anything the Commission does is with Common Council approval. Wendorf summarized the conversation by stating the a Commission is intended for a better level of specialization meaning they can establish regulations, set fees, accept donations, purchase property, etc. but he reiterated Novitch's point that it is all with Common Council approval.

V. Monthly Reports

1. **December 2024 Director's Report** - Wendorf fielded a few questions from the Commission and summarized his board report by thanking all of the Commissioners for their insight and involvement in 2024. He went on to thank all of the Parks & Recreation Department Staff, volunteers, sponsors, and citizens who helped make 2024 another great year. He said it is always very refreshing to look back and see how amazing the Merrill Community is and we should celebrate that. The support is truly amazing and it allows our department to continue to thrive and serve not only our citizens but bring in thousands of visitors each year to showcase what we have to offer. Wendorf wished the Commission a very safe and happy holiday season.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Novitch said that we typically skip the January meeting each year because of its close proximity to Christmas and the New Year and that the next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, February 5th, 2025. If something pressing comes up we can always have a meeting at the call of the chair.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjournment

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