

**CITY OF MERRILL  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025 MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING    CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS    4:15 PM**

**I. Call to Order** Roll Call:

Present: Gulke, Krueger, Novitch, Tabor, Osness, D8 Alderperson Rutkowski

Present Not Voting: Parks Director Dan Wendorf

Excused: Erid Malm

Absent:

Chairperson Novitch called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the April Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting.

**II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**

1. **March 2025 Minutes** - ( Osness/ Krueger) The motion Passed.

**III. Approval of Claims**

1. **March 2025 Claims** - Gulke asked what Black Squirrel Scurry socks charge was for. Wendorf stated they are registration gifts for people signing up for the Black Squirrel Scurry Triathlon and that fund is a non-lapsing which is funded completely by sponsorships.

( Osness/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) The motion Passed.

**IV. General Agenda Items for Consideration**

1. **Review and potentially approve Resolution of Support for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant Program** - Wendorf informed the Commission that this is a resolution of support that was initiated by the Ice Age Trail Alliance and fits very well with our department and city because we have been the fortunate recipients of almost a dozen Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grants over the past 20+ years. This grant has helped fund such projects as phase 1 & 2 of the River Bend Trail, the entire development of Prairie Trails, MARC trail extension and connection with Council Grounds, Riverside Park restrooms and boat landing, to name a few. Wendorf stated that the state has recently discussed the potential of not funding the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant program and many governmental entities and user groups are going on record to support the continuation of this funding source.

( Krueger/ Tabor) The motion Passed.

2. **Review and potentially approve Resolution of Support to WisDOT for the addition of six-foot pedestrian/bike lane(s) on State Highway 107 from Merrill to Tomahawk** - Wendorf began the discussion by saying this was generated by the River District Development Foundation to hopefully have the city go on record supporting pedestrian (and vehicular) improvements to Hwy

107 from Merrill to Tomahawk. The WisDOT is potentially looking at 107 improvements in 2026 (supposedly from Wilderness Dr to Tomahawk) and their current plan didn't call for any paved shoulder work to accommodate pedestrian travel. Wendorf stated he hoped that WisDOT would consider road improvements for the entirety of 107 from Merrill to Tomahawk and include 6 foot paved shoulders on both sides of the road to allow for safer vehicular and pedestrian travel all the way. This also would help in completing the State of Wisconsin State Trail Segment 18 of their State Trail Plan which is a connection from Tomahawk to Merrill (extension of the Bearskin/Hiawatha State Trail to Merrill). This connects Minocqua to Merrill and gets one step closer to connecting the Bearskin/Hiawatha State Trail to the Mountain Bay State Trail.

(D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Osness) The motion Passed.

**3. Potentially discuss and reconsider 4th of July (Mobile) Food Vendors**

- Novitch began the discussion by saying this item was already discussed back in August of 2024 and a decision was rendered but the item was asked to be put back on for reconsideration. Wendorf stated that there was some negative feedback from one local vendor after the August decision but he spoke personally with that vendor who understood and was good with it. Wendorf also stated that there was another vendor who reached out in January asking about being a vendor and he informed them of the policy not allowing mobile food vendors. This vendor then contacted the Mayor. Wendorf met with the Mayor and Administrator and was asked to bring this to the Commission for potential reconsideration. Novitch said it is the Commission's decision as to whether they would like to re-open discussion and reconsider or simply move on. \*Rutkowski motioned to re-open discussion, seconded by Krueger - carried unanimously.\* Gulke began the discussion by saying at the time he was in favor of finding a way to have mobile food vendors and still supports that if it can be controlled in the right way through a process. Rutkowski said she is not opposed to allowing but would like to see a City Employee there to ensure that things go accordingly. Gulke questioned if this was just for Independence Day Fireworks or should we consider this for other park functions. Wendorf stated that this discussion today is specifically for fireworks celebration but we should take this time to develop policy for other parks. Gulke asked if this is something that we can experiment with and revise or reconsider in the future after we have some experience with it. Wendorf stated that we can definitely adjust whatever policy we come up with at any time in the future to make things better for the users and for us. Krueger stated that there should be a designated area that these food vendors go and that they typically do not show up until around 4:00 to begin prepping. There was additional discussion related to if we approve where do we go from here. Wendorf stated that this was simply to decide to allow or not to allow and if decided to allow then we would have to devise a policy at a future meeting to follow for year one.

( Krueger/ Gulke) The motion Passed.

This will be on the May Meeting agenda - Wendorf will bring draft policy for the Commission to review.

- 4. Continued discussion and potential approval of Special Event Permit**  
- Wendorf summarized the final edits as requested by the Commission in the document and there were no questions or further edits brought forth.

(D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/ Tabor) The motion Passed.

## **V. Monthly Reports**

- 1. April 2025 Director's Report** - Wendorf summarized the board report and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

## **VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

- 1. The next regularly schedule meeting is Wednesday, May 7th, 2025 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall Council Chambers** - There were several Commissioners who indicated they were not able to attend the May meeting. Novitch suggested waiting to hear back from the missing member of tonights meeting to see if we would have a quorum and notify everyone of that information. For the time being we'll plan on meeting May 7th as scheduled as long as we have enough members.

**VII. Public Comment** There was no public comment.

**VIII. Adjournment** ( Osness/ Gulke) The motion Passed.  
Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.