

DRAFT

CITY OF WAUSAU – PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date/Time: April 3, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. Location: 1703 Cherry St., Wausau and Council Chambers, City Hall

Members Present: Dawn Herbst (c), Sarah Watson, Lou Larson, Tom Kilian

Members Excused: Carol Lukens

Others Present: Jamie Polley-Parks Director, John Kahon – City Forester

1. In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisc. Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Daily Herald in the proper manner. A quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by Chair Herbst at 4:30pm.
2. Emerald Ash Borer Review – 1703 Cherry Street for EAB Review – The Emerald Ash Borer infestation is starting to become more prevalent. The City Forester, John Kahon, explained how there are pockets of infestation throughout the City. This time of year, if there are woodpeckers pecking at large live ash branches that could be a sign of infestation. Kahon discussed the boulevard ash trees at their current location and said some trees nearby are infested but look perfectly fine. The Emerald Ash Borer attacks all ash trees even healthy ones. When ash trees are infected it's typically four years before the tree could be completely dead in the spring. Staff has a work plan in place and is trying to stay ahead of it. The injections and removals are being done regularly, trying to avoid having a street full of dead trees that are hazardous and must be taken down immediately. If staff gets overwhelmed, the work will have to be contracted out and a budget amendment would be requested from City Council. Kahon answered questions from Committee members. Staff is not aware of any funds available for residents to take care of their private ash trees.

Motion by Watson, second by Kilian to recess back to City Hall. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0. Herbst reconvened the City Park and Recreation Committee meeting at 5:10pm.

3. Public Comment or Suggestions – none brought forward
4. Approve Minutes – February 6, 2023 – **Motion** by Larson, second by Kilian to approve the Park and Recreation Committee draft February 6, 2023 minutes. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.
5. Discussion and Possible Action to Apply for Wisconsin Assessment Monies (WAM) for 218 S 4th St and Enter Into Agreement with Property Owner for Access – Polley explained that this site adjacent to the dog park is under private ownership and has known soil contamination on it. The DNR has potential grant dollars available for municipalities and government entities to utilize to gather more information from site assessments. It includes a plan that if the site were to be cleaned up, what the DNR would recommend be done based on the assessment. The question had been previously raised why the property owner hasn't cleaned the site up. Polley said the DNR had contacted the owners. It has not been further pursued because the contaminations on the site are not considered high enough risk for the DNR to pursue any further action from the Department of Justice. The DNR asked if the City was interested in just doing the site assessment so that a plan can be put in place. The assessment would give information about what is needed to be done to clean it up or get it to a usable space. The City could take that information and in the future decide whether or not they want to purchase the property. One thing needed to do the site assessment is to get permission from the property owner to go on the property. The DNR has contacted the property owner, they are willing to talk about access. If they do give access to the property they are requiring a waiver so that nothing changes once the assessment is done, that they still have the right to do cleanup. Polley asked if Committee is interested in the site at all and pursuing this funding.

Kilian felt something in the future Council could look at is what their approach is to these types of things. He is also curious as to what the DNR's reasons are for believing the risk isn't high enough to pursue further cleanup. He believes there some environmental justice aspects to this and thought it would be good to get it cleaned up well. He felt if the City takes this on, it would be useful to know the full definition of the lateral and vertical extent of contamination to see if there have been any impacts to the dog park. He hopes all contaminants of concern are investigated and if it's cleaned up he requests a public meeting is held so citizens can be involved.

Polley felt it would be helpful to know what the remediation and costs would be. If they add it to the dog park it would most likely be a similar capping just like the dog park or pavement for additional parking would be considered

a cap as well but it all depends on what the extent of the contamination is. Some of the reasons the DNR gave about why it didn't meet that higher standard for further pursuance is that they look at proximity to houses and where this is located, proximity to water or the water system, the fact that its heavily wooded so it hasn't been disturbed, the parking area is gravel and has been disturbed but the majority is now wooded and pretty stable. They may have more reasons as well. She didn't know of any negatives in pursuing this other than it probably would be up to the property owner to decide what they want to do with it once the assessment is done. **Motion** by Larson, second by Watson for staff to move forward and get access to the property and apply for the land funds in order to do the site assessment. The City would have the information but is under no further obligation. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.

Educational Items

A. Park Updates – Barker Stewart Island Bridge – Barker-Stewart bridge decking replacement is underway. Water Systems – Some of our water systems are being put together for the spring start up. Playground Inspection – Playground inspections have begun. Riverlife Door Locks – New timed door locks have been installed at the Riverlife concession building. Athletic Park Video Board – Video board at Athletic was installed. Boileau Field Fence – Outfield fence reconstruction at Boileau field will take place now that the video board is installed.

B. Riverside Park Remediation Update – The documents for bidding the remediation work have been completed. The City had the Request for Bids posted and uploaded to the bidding software, Quest. Bids will open on April 18, 2023 at Board of Public Works. Staff will bring forward a budget request sometime in April to the Finance Committee with City Council approval to follow. We will not have a construction schedule until a contract is established and the contractor prepares a construction schedule.

7. Future Agenda Items – discussion on dog park sites

8. Next Meeting Date – The next regular scheduled meeting will be Monday, May 1, 2023 at 4:30pm in Council Chambers at City Hall, 407 Grant St., Wausau WI 54403.

9. Adjournment – **Motion** by Larson, second by Kilian to adjourn at 5:30pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 4-0.