

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Committee on Parks & Forest •

Monday, MAY 10, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Members: Kevin Stelljes, Joe Knight, Missy Christopherson, Gary Gibson, Tami Schraufnagel

Others Present: Josh Pedersen – Director, Jody Gindt – Supervisor, Winnie Parker – Administrative Specialist III (Committee Clerk), Kyle Johnson – DNR County Forest Liaison, Jacob Tumm – EC County Forester, Erika Gullerud – Finance Analyst, Greg Leonard – Land Conservation Manager

Chairman Kevin Stelljes called the meeting to order at 5 pm and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the April 12, 2021 meeting. Missy Christopherson moved to approve the minutes as amended. All in favor, none opposed.

No members of the public were present.

Spring Timber Bid Sale – Twelve (12) loggers submitted bids for the Spring Timber Bid Opening on May 7, 2021, of whom was one new logger. Ten (10) tracts were up for sale, three (3) of which were up for sale in the past. Those same three (3) did not sell again this time. After some discussion about timber shortages, Joe Knight moved to accept the Spring Timber Bid Sale as presented. All in favor, none opposed.

Timber Sale Extensions – After some discussion about the market and the current economy, Kevin Stelljes moved to accept the Timber Sale Extension as presented. All in favor, none opposed.

Resolution 21-22.006 Designation of Wilderness Area – Wanting to honor and reflect all of Bruce Willett's efforts in Eau Claire County, the Advisory Committee proposed the wilderness area near Hathaway Creek. This area is easily accessed and is heavily used. It would be very fitting to add a memorial to this area by way of a bench and sign indicating the significant contribution of Bruce Willett. Gary Gibson motioned to accept the Advisory Committee's recommendation. All approved, none opposed.

Resolution 21-22.012 Eau Claire County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan – The Eau Claire County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan went to the DNR for their preliminary approval. Some minor wording was changed to comply the DNR's standard. Tami Schraufnagel moved to approve the Eau Claire County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and send this final version to the County Board for their approval. All in favor, none opposed. NOTE: Once the County Board approves this document, it will then go to the DNR for their final adoption.

Carbon Credits – There was discussion on the power point presentation given at last month's meeting by Forrest Gibeault of Steigerwaldt Land Services. It was determined to convene an additional meeting within the next 30 days to further discuss the information, inviting the new Sustainability Coordinator and at least one member from the Administration Committee.

Memorial Bench request by Dawne Hanson at Lake Altoona Park – Dawne Hansen and family would like to donate a bench in memory of her sister and brother-in-law at Lake Altoona Park. Joe Knight moved to approve the addition of the bench to Lake Altoona Park as presented. All in favor, none opposed.

Fall Tour Date –It was determined to ask Josh and the staff to set up a date and create a plan in late September or early October to take a tour showcasing the projects and efforts happening within the county parks and forests.

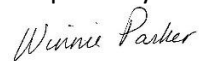
Director’s Report – Josh Pedersen mentioned that the ATV trails have opened one week early this year. The Committee should look at parcels for sale within the county for potential purchase. The Highway Department recommended we shut down the Troubled Waters ATV trail bridge until it is repaired. Because this is a local landmark, we would like to preserve the bridge and have applied for funding since the cost is substantial. The Wildlands School conducted a fundraiser to improve access to the Eau Claire River off Highway D, a temporary solution. All but the canoe slide, which is forthcoming, has been completed. Josh will be speaking with those involved about the issues mentioned in the Committee’s discussion. The long-term plan is to use grant money to make a more permanent solution to the access problem when the bridge will be fixed in 2024. With some funds carried over from 2020, we would like to add playground equipment for 2–5 year-olds to Lake Altoona Park which would include a walkway, add four (4) kiosks for self-registration, and improve the disabled boating access which would include parking reconfiguration and a dock and chair lift. The Committee has requested that the Advisory Committee be given the task of determining where best to put the four (4) self-registration kiosks. A redesigning of the HVAC system at the Expo Center is scheduled to be completed in August and September of 2021. Update of the six (6) year contract with the Fair is forthcoming. The issue with the insurance seems to be resolved. Information about the accessible beach chairs at Coon Fork is soon to be released.

Committee Updates – The busy season for parks is getting underway and seasonal staff is being finalized. Budget season is coming up and Josh is working with Erika Gullarud on the Capital Plan. The most cost-effective way to dredge sediment out of the lakes is with a large mechanical arm at the boat landings. Improvements are still in the early stages. It would be nice to identify more paths in Willett Woods and perhaps add parking to make the area more accessible. Clarification needs to be made at the access point at Big Falls as to where hunting can take place. Perhaps a sign with a map to indicate the parks boundaries should be installed. A partnership would be advantageous with Leinenkugel who has funds available for restoration of water quality and clarity.

The next meeting date was set for June 14, 2021, at 5:00 pm virtually.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Winnie Parker
Committee Clerk
Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest