

## MINUTES

Eau Claire County

### • Committee on Parks & Forest •

Monday, September 13, 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), Erika Gullerud – Finance Analyst, Kathryn Schauf – County Administrator, Michelle Skinner – Lake Altoona District Board Chair, Glory Adams, Megan Haserodt - USGS, Laura Plummer – President of CORBA, Doug Brown – County Forest Land Specialist, DNR, Jared Choate

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

The committee reviewed the minutes from the August 9, 2021, meeting. Kevin Stelljes moved to approve the minutes as presented. All in favor, none opposed.

Public Comment – Michele Skinner, new Chair of the Lake Altoona District Board, introduced herself to everyone and presented some concerns regarding algae blooms and sand traps. Would like to address these concerns more formally at a future committee meeting.

Doug Brown presented the County Forest Loan process, which has been used primarily for land acquisition, project loans, and variable acreage loans. Project loan deadlines are August 15 and December 1, and are on a first-come, first-served basis. Loan programs are not heavily used, and this program can accommodate large request, keeping in mind there is a 50% local match. This means the county would need to match 50% of the loan. For certain projects, funds can be committed to and secured during the negotiation stage of the acquisition. The Committee has decided to defer action until closer to the time of the acquisition.

Megan Haserodt speaking on behalf of Rob Washbusch from USGS regarding placement of a climate response monitoring well on County Forest land in Eau Claire County. These wells monitor ground levels only and are placed in areas that are not affected by nearby pumping wells. Only one location of the three (3) proposed locations is requested. The County would give permission for USGS to access the well and is not liable for damage. Joe Knight motioned to enter into a 20-year agreement with USGS as written. All in favor, none opposed.

Laura Plummer, President of CORBA, presented to the Committee the different types and classes of bikes that are currently being used on the county trails. She wanted the Committee to be aware of these differing types of bikes in the event the Committee would like to create a use policy in the future. CORBA is not officially taking a stand on these various types of bikes. Because of the rural nature of our trails, the committee might like to have more knowledge of these bikes and their uses as they develop and change and might like to create policies based on the different classes of bikes being used in the future. The Committee will reconvene in 60 days on this issue.

Jared Choate requested a bench be placed at the Lions Youth Camp near Bullhead Pond in memory of his father, Mike Choate. Tami Schraufnagel moved to approve the bench as presented. All in favor, none opposed.

The Committee discussed the merits of closing Harstad Park Campground on September 15, which coincides with the closure of the county's regular camping season. Several issues like fee collection, extended stays of homeless groups, possible illegal drug activity, and disruptive behaviors have been escalating at Harstad over the course of the summer. The Committee decided to ask the Advisory Committee to come up with some possible solutions that would address the above-mentioned issues.

Clarification as to who is responsible for filing the DATCP Premise ID for the Eau Claire County Expo Center is needed. It is unclear as to who took care of this in the past but is speculated that the full-time person at the Expo Center was the one who oversaw this task. Missy Christopherson will investigate this and get back to Josh Pedersen once she has new information.

A grant has been awarded to cover 50% of the cost of the installation of the Harstad Park playground equipment. It was suggested to make the Advisory Committee aware of this as well as the renovation of the pavilion as this may impact their possible solutions to the issues being addressed at Harstad Park. Missy Christopherson motioned to proceed with Harstad Park playground equipment installation. All in favor, none opposed.

Josh Pedersen gave the following updates to the Committee. Seasonal staff are winding down for the season. The Park Kiosk will not be installed in 2022 because of a part back log. The sidewalk is being poured this week at the Lake Eau Claire accessible dock. WCFA strategic planning meeting is at the end of this month. This meeting happens every five (5) years. Blue Source has requested more information for the Forest Carbon Credit program which the staff is providing. Parks and Forest has been working alongside ADRC to provide an accessible dock to Lake Eau Claire Park. It is our hope this project will pave the way for other areas to collaborate on projects such as this for the good of the community. The annual committee tour was canceled due to the uptick in Covid cases in the county. We are waiting on an appraisal on the Sand Mine Lot. Kevin Stelljes will consult with Human Services regarding the process of providing park passes to those in need.

The next meeting date was set for October 11, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. virtually.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Winnie Parker  
Committee Clerk  
Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest