

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Committee on Parks & Forest •

Monday, February 14, 2022

5:00 pm

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, Nick Smiar – Ex Officio Member, Kyle Johnson – DNR County Forest Liaison, Jacob Tumm – EC County Forester, Greg Leonard – Land Conservation Manager

Chairman Stelljes called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

Verbal roll call was taken by the committee clerk and is noted above.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the January 10, 2022, meeting. Joe Knight moved to approve the minutes as presented. The minutes passed unanimously.

No members of the public were present.

The Committee discussed the possibility of creating a dedicated loop at Lowes Creek Park and/or Lake Eau Claire Park for skijoring. Minutes from 2019 show that the Committee on Parks and Forest discussed introducing skijoring in the Eau Claire County Parks back then. There are limited areas where skijoring is allowed even in other counties. Those who currently groom the park trails see evidence of people and their dogs skijoring in Eau Claire County. The most ideal trail for this activity should be wide and flat. Joe Knight motioned to create a one-year trial loop next season on the east side of Lowes Creek Park starting at the Expo Center and running through the “Clay Pit” area. All in favor, none opposed.

Altoona Schools request for flat fee rental of Tower Ridge for cross country race. Last season, Eau Claire County charged \$2 per participant, and it was decided then to increase the fee for the current 2022 season to \$4. The Altoona Schools scheduled their 2022 event last season and advertised the \$2 per participant fee prior to the increase. They would like to request that Eau Claire County would honor the last year’s price as the increase would make them over budget. Kevin Stelljes motioned subject to legal counsel approval to make an exception and honor last year’s fee of \$2 per participant for this year only. Next year, the fee will reflect the county code at \$4 per participant. All in favor, none opposed.

The Committee continues their dialogue regarding county forest carbon credits. There was concern about satisfying our own carbon credit goals by participating in this 40-year commitment proposed by Blue Source and how much our county forest practices will need to be altered. The Committee decided to schedule within the next 90 days a joint meeting with the Budget and Finance Committee as well as the Sustainability Committee and invite Blue Source to attend so they can be on hand to answer questions. Materials will be sent to those participating for their review prior to this meeting.

The committee discussed the need to make a change in the county code in order to create a more reasonable fee structure based on the fee structure for renting shelters and pavilions at the other parks within the county. The deposit rate for rental of any facility at the Expo Center went up last

year from \$100 to \$1,000. The deposit of \$1,000 seems disproportionately high for renting the shelter only when the rental fee is \$50. Kevin Stelljes motioned to change the county code and exclude the pavilion at the Expo Center from the \$1,000 deposit. All in favor, none opposed.

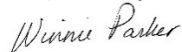
Josh Pedersen opened the discussion regarding the Heartwood Forest Group. The first step in acquiring any land is to get an appraisal. Because of the size of this tract of land held by the Heartwood Forest Group, Steigerwalt's appraisal cost is \$6,500. Our current budget is able to support this appraisal which can be reimbursed if the any of the proposed tracts of land are purchased. Kevin Stelljes motioned to authorize Josh Pedersen to move forward with the appraisal and spend up to \$6,500 from the Parks and Forest 2022 Operating Budget. All in favor, none opposed.

Director's Report – Josh Pedersen asked the Committee if there was a desire to support an update to a resolution to continue to control the wolf population. After a short discussion, the Committee decided not to place this issue on an upcoming agenda. The progress has slowed down with regards to seeking a grant for the acquisition of new county land. This grant request is on the agenda of the next Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors Meeting. Missy Christopherson has agreed to attend said meeting and after our grant request has come onto the floor and a motion and second have been made, she will then make a motion to have the grant be referred back to the Parks and Forest Committee for further review. Kicking Kids is going well this year and opening the frisbee parking lot is very much appreciated and helpful. Timber Revenue for 2021 is currently below budgeted amount, but an update will be given after more revenue has been entered. Vehicle Entrance Pass Sticker meters are slated to be installed by June.

The next meeting date was set for March 14, 2022, at 5:00 pm virtually.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 pm

Respectfully Submitted by,



Winnie Parker
Committee Clerk
Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest