

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Committee on Parks & Forest •

Monday, May 9, 2022

5:00 pm

Room AG 203

Members: Joe Knight, Missy Christopherson, Tami Schraufnagel, Jodi Lepsch, Dane Zook

Others Present: Josh Pedersen – Director, Jody Gindt – Supervisor, Winnie Parker – Administrative Specialist III (Committee Clerk), Erika Gullerud – Finance Analyst, Kathryn Schauf – County Administrator, Jacob Tumm – EC County Forester, Tom Fech – Parks and Forest Advisory Committee Member, Michele Skinner – Lake Altoona District Chair, Jimmy Thums – Flannel Fleet

Chair Pro Tempore Tami Schraufnagel called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Public posting confirmed.

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

Nominations for Committee Chair - Joe Knight spoke to those present addressing why he would like to be chair. Dane Zook moved to approve Joe Knight as Committee Chair. All in favor, none opposed.

Nominations for Committee Vice Chair – Missy Christopherson told why she would like to serve as Vice Chair. Jodi Lepsch moved to approve Missy Christopherson as Committee Vice Chair. All in favor, none opposed.

Supervisor Tami Schraufnagel requested Winnie Parker be appointed as clerk and to close unanimously.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the March 14, 2022, meeting. Supervisor Christopherson moved to approve the minutes as presented. The minutes passed unanimously.

No members of the public were present.

Lake Altoona District Chair, Michele Skinner addressed the group outlining the Health Department closures of the Lake Altoona Park (LAP) Beach. Over the course of 2021 summer, the LAP Beach was closed nearly 1 ½ months of the available three (3) months in the summer. A pilot project with the Health Department to address the source of the closure problem is scheduled in 2023 after testing for the various contaminations have been developed. In the meantime, volunteers from those living on the lake have agreed to collect data as to numbers and proximity to the lake of the different species of birds found in the area. In addition, trail cameras have been set up along the shoreline to collect data. Deterrent projects have been suggested to keep the various birds from the beach area.

Director Josh Pedersen outlined the benefits and drawbacks of carbon credits to the Committee. The County has the goal to be carbon neutral by 2050. It was determined that the Committee should invite Blue Source and other interested parties to the next Committee meeting to further discuss carbon credits.

Timber Sale Approval – Jimmy Thums of Flannel Fleet Logging requested his bid for #2-22 be released. Thums made an error on his bid by not converting one species bid from cords to tons which made his overall bid exorbitantly high for the sale and for the market. This error is Thums' first one in the 20+ years he has been placing bids throughout the state. The county's Parks and Forest Department has a good working relationship with Flannel Fleet Logging and would like to continue to do so in the future. Missy Christopherson moved to accept the timber sales as presented except for 2-22 and accept Tlusty's bid instead. All in favor, none opposed.

The Heartland Property Land Acquisition is approximately 1,500 acres of land dispersed within Eau Claire County and includes over two (2) miles along the Eau Claire River corridor. Much of the land in question is surrounded by already owned county land. The seller wants \$3,800/acre and Steigerwaldt appraised the land at \$3,100/acre. After significant discussion about the pros and cons of purchasing these parcels and about various approaches to gathering funds, the committee decided it would be best to get Board approval to enter negotiations. It is important the board understands the importance of such an acquisition and why the Committee on Parks and Forest recommends the purchase. The Committee decided to have a work meeting, inviting needed parties to gather research and background information as well as determine the steps needed to see this acquisition to fruition. This meeting will be scheduled in the upcoming weeks.

Five (5) Timber Sales Extensions were brought before the Committee for approval. Each of these sales have taken a hiatus for the past two (2) years due to the unstable markets. It is recommended that all five (5) Timber Sales Extensions be approved with an increase of 5%. Contract #1709 is the oldest sale (2013) that is still open. It is recommended that this sale not be extended. The access to this sale has been made impossible due to a change in land ownership and beaver activity. Dane Zook moved to extend the timber sales as presented with a 5% increase and to close out sale #1790 and return the performance bond/LOC. All in favor, none opposed.

Senior Citizen Discount was brought up for discussion. Of the 5,400 Annual Vehicle Park Passes sold in 2021, roughly 25-35% of all passes sold went to senior citizens. After discussion on the fiscal impact, it was decided to have the ordinance change to include a senior citizen discount of \$10 off for those 65 or older. To receive the benefit of this discount, individuals must come to the office to purchase their Annual Vehicle Park Pass. Signs will be added to the information boards of all Eau Claire County parks and at the office indicating the discount. Missy Christopherson moved to approve the writing of an Ordinance 22-23.014 change. All in favor, none opposed.

Eau Claire Energy Coop (ECEC) is working on burying overhead powerlines around Lake Eau Claire. Access has been granted in the past for similar purposes. ECEC is seeking permission to access all of them to bury power, removing the existence of overhead powerlines. Dane Zook moved to approve Resolution 22-23/003. All in favor, none opposed.

Dairyland Power is working on a request to modify existing easements with Eau Claire County. Their project will involve installation of a fiber optic line to their poles and also allow permission to branch off the fiber lines to supply customers. Dairyland offered \$5,000 to the county and the Committee would like these funds to be deposited in the non-lapsing forest land acquisition account. Tami Schraufnagel moved to approve the easement resolution 22-23.015 as written.

Dane Zook moved to approve the Robert Manz (Rhonda Gappa) family donation of funds for a memorial bench placed in Lake Altoona Park in his honor. Robert Manz made a trade for the property located at

4907 N Shore Drive in exchange for an automobile in 1951. Robert's and his family owned their home on Lake Altoona near the park from 1951 -2018. All in favor, none opposed.

Director's Report - The Habitat Project in conjunction with the Ruffed Grouse Society is happening this coming weekend by planting Forest Road 1. Native plant seeding is scheduled to be seeded later this summer. Parks and Forest Department was made aware of the city's request to rezone a strip of land at Lowes Creek Park from Township of Washington to the City for purposes of water and sewer lines. CORBA presented many questions that this committee was not able to address. This issue is on the City's agenda meeting tomorrow. We expect the Lowes Creek Park to continue as usual. The Expo Center utilities create a precedent for sewer and water lines in that area as the Center is on the city's water utilities.

Future Committee meetings will be moved to the main floor in the Agriculture Building to room AG 103 and 104.

The next meeting date was set for June 13, 2022, at 5:00 pm AG 103 and 104.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm

Respectfully Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Winnie Parker".

Winnie Parker
Committee Clerk
Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest