

## MINUTES

Eau Claire County

### • Committee on Parks & Forest •

Monday, June 13, 2022

5:00 pm

Room AG 103 and 104

Members: 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, Nick Smiar – Ex Officio Member, Kyle Johnson – DNR County Forest Liaison, Kevin Stelljes – P and F Advisory Committee Member, Michele Skinner – Lake Altoona District Chair, Chauncy Ellefsen – EC County Assistant Corp Counsel, Reagan Watts – Recycling and Sustainability Coordinator

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Vice Chair, Missy Christopherson 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 May 9, 2022, meeting. Jodi Lepsch moved to approve the minutes with correction. The minutes passed unanimously.

Michele Skinner requested a public comment regarding an upcoming Lake Altoona Tour and items in need of repair at the park.

Kyle Johnson proposed a salvage sale Tract 11-22 to be approved by the committee. Because of a windstorm last winter many trees blew down but are still alive. This sale allows for clearing out the fallen trees and to give the stand an opportunity to regenerate. Tami Schraufnagel moved to approve the sale. All in favor, none opposed.

Resolution 22-23/024 Adopting the Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2022-2027 – Many things were accomplished from the previous 2016-2021 plan, and the plan itself is visually more pleasing to read. Working with Chris Straight and his staff of West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission was a good experience, and we would be willing to entertain working with them in the future. The Parks and Forest Department proactively works with other departments to address some of the initiatives outlined in the Five-Year Plan. Once approved by the Board, a news release is sent out. Tami Schraufnagel moved, and Jodi Lepsch seconded a motion to accept Resolution 22-23/024. The resolution passed unanimously.

Carbon Credits - Josh Pedersen, Parks and Forest Director, gave a PowerPoint presentation about carbon credits. There are many more steps to take before carbon credits can be sold from the county, but the Committee is at a phase where a decision needs to be made whether or not to go forward with this project and, if so, how much county forest land to include. Management of the forest is not affected by participating in this program. Of the 29 Wisconsin Counties, five of them have already been enrolled, ten counties are currently considering participation, and nine counties are not participating due to not having enough acreage available. We would enter into a contract with Blue Source, the only project developers doing this type of project. Because this is a 40-year commitment, the contract would be void if either

party filed for bankruptcy. Next steps are to invite Blue Source to a committee meeting to present and answer questions. No action is needed at this time.

Kevin Stelljes (former Parks and Forest Committee Chair), Bobbie Barone (former Administrative Assistant for 30 years for the Parks and Forest Department) and Ryan Theiler put forward applications to become members of the Parks and Forest Advisory Committee. The committee discussed all three applicants. Currently there are six active members and five open seats. Tami Schraufnagel moved, and Jodi Lepsch seconded to approve Kevin Stelljes and Bobbie Barone to the Advisory Committee while asking Ryan Theiler to attend a committee meeting to introduce himself. All in favor, none opposed.

Resolution 22-23/029 – This resolution authorizes Josh Pedersen, Parks and Forest Director, to submit an application to the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to apply for a cost-sharing recreation boating grant. This resolution would encompass three interrelated projects. The first one involves dredging to connect Lake Eau Claire to from the Skid Row boat landing upriver, towards the Troubled Waters Bridge area. The second would be to address the major erosion issues at Eisberner canoe landing and provide stabilization. The third is to provide a barrier-free walkway from the north landing on Lake Eau Claire Park's accessible dock to the new restroom and to the boat landing. Jodi Lepsch moved, and Dane Zook seconded a motion to approve resolution 22-23/029. All approved, none opposed.

The Committee considered whether or not to post signs for a "no-wake" zone from Highlines Landing to Big Falls Park. Increased erosion to the banks of the river is caused by watercraft using enough power to cause a wake. There is a statute already in place for no-wake 100 feet from shore. The committee believe that buoy placement, signage, and enforcement would help mitigate the erosion problem caused by wakes on the river. Dane Zook moved, and Jodi Lepsch seconded the motion to allow the Parks and Forest Director to look into who would handle buoy placement, signage, and enforcement. All in favor, none opposed.

Joe Knight is interested to be the Parks and Forest Committee member appointed to the Land Stewardship Subcommittee. Tami Schraufnagel moved, and Jodi Lepsch seconded the motion to appoint Joe Knight to the Land Stewardship Subcommittee. All in favor, none opposed.

After receiving an email from the Human Resources Department, the committee discussed the merits of providing Annual Park Vehicle Entrance Passes at no cost to the Eau Claire County Employees. The most impactful of several concerns discussed was the fact that this request would be too much of a loss of revenue to the Parks and Forest Department. For the purposes of a positive meeting structure and to expedite the voting process, Dane Zook moved, and Jodi Lepsch seconded the motion to grant the Human Resources request to provide Annual Park Vehicle Entrance Passes at no cost to all Eau Claire Employees. None in favor, all opposed.

Lana Bohl, an ice cream vendor, made a request to sell ice cream two to five times per week from her trailer at Coon Fork County Park. Her trailer is registered in the county, she has liability insurance, and sells Cedar Crest hard scoop ice cream. Five years ago, snow cones were allowed to be sold at the beach at Lake Altoona. The committee decided to ask Lana back to further discuss the request.

Michele Skinner requested waiving fees to other government entities for renting park facilities. There is not a written code addressing the waiving of fees and the cost to the Parks and Forest Department remain in place. Historically whether or not to waive fees such as this is at the discretion of the Parks and Forest Director based on individual circumstances. Jodi Lepsch moved, and Tami Schraufnagel seconded the motion to waive the fee for Michele Skinner to use the Altoona Beach Pavilion at no cost for June 14, 2022. All in favor, none opposed.

Parks and Forest Update – There are no major changes to the budget that is due at the end of June other than anticipated general increases. There are requests for shared position for a recreation and highway deputy. The budget also includes a request for seasonal or shared help in the office, a full-time ranger that is year-round and a 900-hour Coon Fork Position. There are health insurance increases are also expected.

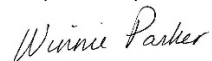
June 4 and 5 was a free park entrance weekend, which coincides with the state's free fishing weekend. Eau Claire County Parks have very heavy usage this weekend, especially at Coon Fork and Harstad. The parks sustained heavy damage as well, most notably from horses being hitched up to trees and left for the day. These areas are difficult and costly to restore back to grass. The committee discussed the impact the free weekend and the Amish community has on the parks. It was suggested that the bishops of the community be contacted to make them aware of the situation and the impact their horses have in the parks in hopes of formulating a solution.

Director's Report – No further report is needed.

Future committee meeting July 11, 2022, at 5 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,

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

Winnie Parker

Committee Clerk

Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest