

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Committee on Parks & Forest •

Monday, July 08, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

Agricultural and Resource Center

227 1st Street West., Altoona – Room 103 and 104

Members Present: Joe Knight, Tami Schraufnagel, Christy Tomczak (Virtual), Cory Sisk, Michele Skinner

Others Present: Josh Pedersen – Director, Jody Gindt – Supervisor, Kimberly Watnemoe – Office Coordinator (Committee Clerk), Erika Gullerud – Finance Analyst, Kyle Johnson – DNR County Forest Liaison, Todd Johnson – Parks Manager, Chad Morgan – Representative from Ramaker, Nancy Coffey – Ex Officio Members, Daniel Kalina – Ramaker Representative

Call to Order Committee on Parks & Forest and confirmation of meeting notice

Chairman Knight called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

Public Comment

No members of the public wished to make comment.

Review of June 10, 2024, Committee Meeting Minutes

Supervisor Sisk motions to approve the minutes from June 10th, 2024, All in favor.

Tower Lease at Expo Center

Director Pedersen provided a summary of the previous questions asked by the committee and illustrated how they were addressed. Ramaker has accommodated the requests suggested which included placing an easement that would not affect the parking lot, shifting the tower to the west, adding landscape fabric around all four sides of the fenced tower areas, and making sure the dog agility area would not need to be relocated. The tower shifted to the west makes it a little smaller in size than the initial proposal. The tower would now be 125x75.

Supervisor Sisk motions to approve easement placement and the shift of the tower further to the west away from the parking lot. All in favor.

Resolution 24-25.046 Authorizing the Withdrawal from County Forest Law and Sale of Approximately 0.928 Acres Located on S. 140th in the Town of Lincoln. Owned by Eau Claire County to the Town of Seymour.

Director Pedersen provided an update on this resolution. The town of Seymour is looking to replace a bridge near Beaver Creek and has been working with a consultant, Jewell, to acquire a piece of county forest land. When this was brought up at a previous meeting the department was still waiting to hear a counteroffer from Jewell for the parcel. However, the price has now been negotiated to \$8,086.80. The funds will be placed into a non-lapsing forest acquisition account to be utilized for future forest land purchases. This will be a long process as once the sale is approved; we first need to withdraw the land from county forest law which can take months.

Supervisor Sisk motions to approve withdrawal from County Forest Law and the sale of the land as stated in resolution 24-25/046. All in favor.

County Forest Camping Policy 16.30.520 A.1

Director Pedersen discussed what the current policy states for camping within the county forests. The cost is \$10 per 14 days. In the past camping was not allowed from May-September 15th to push more people out to our campgrounds. Then it was changed to allow year-round. During hunting season, you are allowed to buy two passes back-to-back making it valid for a 28 day stay. After 14 days or 28 days during the hunting season you must vacate for 1 day before you are allowed to get another permit. This is hard for staff and sheriffs to enforce as the 1 day turn around is too quick. The

department is running into issues with certain individuals buying multiple passes and basically living in the county forest. The department has a few solutions that we could try. The options brought forth were as followed:

- Option 1) Return to the previous policy i.e. no camping in the county forest from May 1 – Sept 15th. If you want to camp you must do it in a county campground.
- Option 2) Change the length of vacate to 7 days versus 1 day, which would allow for sheriff's department or staff to check for permits and know who is in violation.
- Option 3) Only allow an individual to purchase 2/3 passes a year.
- Option 4) Create designated spots across the county forest where you are only allowed to camp there. However, this would cause an upset with hunters who have camped in the same spots for generations.
- Option 5) Increase the fee from \$10 to a higher cost.

Staff will compose a plan and present it to the committee at our next meeting in August.

Approval of Advisory Committee Members

Pedersen shared a background on the advisory committee to educate the new committee members. The advisory committee is assigned tasks or conducts research on anything the department or the committee wants investigated. They are appointed by the committee and have staggered terms. Previously, the terms were one and two years. However, Pedersen is proposing that we do terms of two and three years. We had a group of 11 people. However, only 7 have currently requested to continue.

Supervisor Schraufnagel motions to approve the seven advisory committee members and allows for the change of terms to two and three years. All in favor. Sisk absent for vote.

Carbon Credits Presentation

Pedersen prepared a presentation about the Carbon Project to provide an update for the new committee members. He defined what carbon credit means and described who we are working with on this project (Anew). We are currently on step 5 & 6 out of 7. The overall carbon project is for a 40-year term. However, the contract with Anew is for 10 years and then we have the option to either handle it ourselves, rehire them, or use another vendor. Lastly, Pedersen shared Anew's revenue projections for us

North Side of Lake Altoona Public Access

Chairman Knight is disappointed of lack of access along the north side of Lake Altoona. There used to be a beach, but the town of Seymour sold the land years ago. Director Pedersen illustrated the land that the county currently owns along the north shore. The best parcel is a landlocked parcel near the dam. Chairman Knight expressed interest in knowing if a right of way for the parcel could be purchased. The Parks department will investigate this further.

Director's Report

Director Pedersen had no update to provide at this time.

Future Parks & Forest Committee Meetings and Items for Discussion

Next Parks & Forest committee meeting date is set for August 12, at 4:00 p.m at the County Boardroom.

Committee on Parks & Forest Adjournment

The Committee on Parks & Forest adjourned at 5:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Kimberly Watnemoe
Committee Clerk
Office Coordinator