

PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Name of Commission,
Board or Committee: Parks & Recreation Committee
Date & Time of Meeting: Monday, February 1, 2010 at 2:00 P.M.
Place of Meeting: Coughlin Building (Mtg. Rm. B)
625 E. County Rd. Y, Oshkosh WI

Present: Jerry Finch, Mike Norton, Nancy Barker, Arlene Schmuhl, Tom Konetzke.
Also present: Rob Way, Vicky Redlin, Loren Dieck, Bob Lohry – Winnebago County Parks Dept.,
Mark Harris – Winnebago County Executive, John Bodnar – Winnebago County Corporation
Counsel, see attached attendance sheet for citizen's present.

SUBJECT MATTER OF THE MEETING

1. Call to order – Chairman Jerry Finch called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m..
2. Approval of January 4, 2010 Minutes – Chairman Finch called for a motion to approve the January 4, 2010 meeting minutes. Tom Konetzke moved to approve the minutes. Arlene Schmuhl seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Chairman Finch entertained a motion to amend the agenda to move item #5 ahead of item #3. Mike Norton moved to make the amendment to the agenda. Nancy Barker seconded. Motion carried 5-0.
5. IS Update on Redesign of the County Website – Patti Francour updated the Committee on the status of the IS Department's redesign of the County website. She stated that the update is being done in two phases. The first phase includes making the site look more uniform and user friendly. The second phase will include those special items that individual departments asked for in the recent survey done by her office. Arlene Schmuhl questioned whether the County has a policy regarding departments' use of social networking sites for marketing purposes. Patti responded that she is currently working on a policy for employee use with Human Resources but that department usage hadn't been brought up. It is an idea that she will explore. The first phase of redesign should be done at the end of February with the second phase an ongoing effort enlisting departments for their input.
3. Public Comments – Several citizens spoke regarding the Buoy 100 Navigation Aid and its light. There were both pro and con opinions on whether the light should remain lit year around.
4. Discussion of Boater Navigation Aids – Rob Way provided a short history of the Buoy 100 light including the fact that it was taken over from the Coast Guard in the 1980's. The County and City of Menasha purchased a brighter light in 2006 and had it installed but there were problems with it so a decision was made to return to the original system for lighting the marker. This replacement occurred on 10/19/09 and included the installation of new batteries. As per past practices, the light would not be tended to until the annual spring maintenance would be performed again by a private contractor. Mike Norton questioned if there are other municipalities within the State that maintain buoy systems. Rob Way indicated that, per his contacts at both the DNR and the U.S. Coast Guard, "no", there are no other municipalities in the State who are involved with maintaining winter navigation aids for ice travel. Rob Way added that from his past research on navigation aids in Wisconsin, with a minor exception being given to a municipality near St. Croix, Winnebago County seems to be the only municipality in the State that handles a navigation aids system of our size and numbers. Mike

Norton also questioned whether additional landmark type lights were needed throughout the entire Winnebago System for the safety of winter users. Arlene Schmuhl stated that without a uniform system for lights throughout the entire Winnebago System there could be problems. Rob Way stated that changes regarding the maintenance of the buoy system to a year around responsibility would have to start with the reworking of the Parks Department Navigation Aids Mission Statement that is annually approved by the County Board. He also stated that the 100 Buoy light was fixed today as ordered by County Executive Mark Harris, and the battery pack was frozen. It has been replaced with a marine battery pack that would be more dependable in the cold. Mark Harris stated that he made the decision to have the light fixed while the issue of year around maintenance of the navigational aids program was being discussed. The light was fixed via assistance from the Sheriff's Departments hovercraft rescue boat as it is inaccessible during the winter months in any other way. Mark Harris went on to mention that the solar technology used in the Buoy 100 light is designed for warm weather and is therefore unreliable during the winter months. Jerry Finch stated that he received a call from the former Coast Guard Commander in charge of the buoys prior to the 1980's, William Otto, who stated that the light was operational during the winter at some times but if it stopped working the Coast Guard did not fix it until the spring. Rob Way asked that guidelines be made for the Parks Department as to what to do if the light goes out again this winter and whether to fix it or not and the process for doing so. Mark Harris stated that if necessary the cost to relight the buoy again if it goes out can come from the General Fund. Jerry Finch stated that perhaps education regarding safety on the ice is needed rather than sending a resolution to the County Board to change the Parks Department Mission Statement regarding the navigational aids program without further study. Would area snowmobile and fishing clubs be interested in helping keep the buoy lit? Should an ad hoc committee be formed to study the situation? Nancy Barker stated that regardless of the decision to keep the light lit in winter those from out of the area will not know enough about the lake ice to stay clear of open water. Arlene Schmuhl questioned whether there are any other lakes that have navigation aids for the winter months. Rob Way replied that as per the WDNR that aside from some snowmobile and fishing clubs mainly to the north, there are no municipalities who maintain navigational aids during the winter months within the State. Currently all buoys are removed from the water in the winter months with the exception of the Buoy 100 as it is permanent. Mark Harris suggested sending a resolution to the County Board stating that the Parks Department will make reasonable attempts to keep the Buoy 100 lit during the winter months until a decision regarding a winter navigational aids program is decided upon. This resolution would come before the Parks Committee at next month's meeting and then will go to the County Board for approval. Mike Norton agreed and stated that he would like to see a second resolution developed regarding winter operation of the navigational aids program. Jerry Finch proposed forming a sub committee of 2 supervisors, and various citizens, some of whom attended this meeting, to investigate the possibility of a winter navigational aid program for the Winnebago System. He will have a resolution to form this sub committee brought into the next Parks Committee meeting. Rob Way stated that he questions whether the first step to take in the process would be to gain direction from a legal authority as to the legalities and liabilities of winter navigational aids, possibly from the WCA attorney, so that a suitable course of action can be taken.

The Chairman followed the conclusion of item #4 with a 10 minute break.

5. County Support of Senate Bill #406 – Rob Way introduced Terry Schroeder the President of the Winnebago County Snowmobile Alliance who explained the reasoning behind the Senate Bill #406. He stated that other States currently use this program and have much success. The bill has to do in part with the

snowmobile registration fee process and the proposal to allow a discount for owners who hold full membership status in a state recognized snowmobile club. The bill has already had two public hearings in Madison. Mike Norton moved to support Bill #406. Nancy Barker seconded. Motion carried 5-0. The bill will be sent on to the Legislative Committee for their 2/22/10 meeting and then to the County Board for it's 2/23/10 meeting.

6. Request for Bus Route Change – Mike Norton stated that he has joined with the Health Department in drafting a resolution to change the current bus route from Oshkosh to Neenah so that it services the JP Coughlin Center and related departments on Cty. Rd. Y. Rob Way stated that he has had input from Parkview that they would be interested in such a resolution. Rob will set up a meeting with Health Department, Parkview and the Sheriff's Dept. to discuss the resolution and determine a potential route.
7. Parks Director's Updates: Breezewood Property – Rob Way reported that the property at Breezewood has been boarded up and that next week representatives from the Health Dept. will be visiting it with staff to determine any health hazards that may be present on the property. WDNR funds may be available for the necessary asbestos study that is required before any demolition can take place. The Hwy. Dept. estimates the cost of removal of debris from demolition at \$15,000.00.
8. Committee Chairman's Updates: - Jerry Finch inquired if the Committee approves of him selecting members for a proposed sub committee to study winter navigational aids. The Committee consensus was approval. He also noted that buoy 100 is marked on aeronautical charts for the State of WI.
9. Committee Member's Updates: Community Park Beach – Ad Hoc Committee – Mike Norton updated the Committee on the progress of the Ad Hoc Committee for future beach use. Nancy Barker noted that Waverly Beach is currently considering the installation of a strobe light at their business to aid those using the lake and ice and a fundraiser is going on to raise money for additional markers.
10. Staff Updates: - none
11. Future Agenda Items: – resolution to keep buoy 100 lit on a temporary basis throughout the winter months while a sub committee investigates the possibility of a winter navigational aids system; resolution to form a sub committee to investigate the possibility of a winter navigational aids system, input from various departments on bus route changes, Health Dept. report on Breezewood property.
12. Next Meeting Date – March 1, 2010 at 2:00 p.m..
13. Adjournment – Chairman Finch called for a motion to adjourn. Mike Norton moved to adjourn. Nancy Barker seconded. Motion carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned 4:20 p.m..

Respectfully Submitted,
Vicky Redlin
Asst. Expo Mgr.