

EXPOSITION CENTER AND COUMMUNITY PARK

USER GROUP MINUTES

DATE: January 18, 2014
PLACE: Sunnyview Exposition Center
Exposition Building – South Wing
9:00 a.m.

PARKS COMMITTEE

MEMBERS: Tom Konetzke, Mike Norton and Harold Singstock
ALSO PRESENT: Rob Way, Loren Dieck, Don Klemmer and Bill Demler – Winnebago County Staff, Jeff Bahling of Rettler Corporation as well as representatives of the following user group organizations: Lifest, ORFC, Hmong Outreach, the Winnebago Cnty. Dog Park, County Board, Oshkosh Kennel Club, 4-H Horse & Pony Project, Oshkosh Disc Golf, WHBA, WAQHA & Winnegamie Dog Club, Valley R/C Boats, and Oshkosh Police

At 9:00 a.m. Winnebago County Parks Director & Expo Manager Rob Way opened up the meeting with introductions and a statement instructing representatives of the organizations to pick-up the Parks' Sponsorship Notification Document made available to inform all user groups of the various sponsorship agreements that Parks has and the requirements that all must follow as stipulated within the expo rental agreements.

Rob then proceeded to address issues as outlined within the agenda:

Expo Matters:

- Garbage Issues – The provision addressing the requirement that expo users are responsible for keeping the grounds clean and neat in appearance was read and explained to those present. Rob went on to detail how a change is being instituted where the promoters will now be responsible for all trash pick up and dumping of barrels within the arena facility over the duration of their event(s). Garbage can liners will be supplied. Rob also mentioned that a survey/questionnaire is due to be distributed later in spring seeking feedback on such topics as how management and promoters can better work together to improve the handling of garbage during events.
- Promoters were told about the need for them to inform their vendors and participants of the fact that Parks will be much less lenient this year in regards to dealing with early camper arrivals and persons staying on the grounds past the date indicated on the contract. Whether it is an early arrival or someone who remains after the event end date, both cause confusion for Expo staff and creates a liability and security issue for the county. Parks understands when extenuating circumstances apply but will rely on the promoters to advise staff of these situations well ahead of time so they can be dealt with before police are brought in to ticket. Similarly, items that are brought onto the grounds prior to the beginning of a contract or left on site after an event may be moved by staff and unless the item is claimed by the owner or other arrangements are made in writing, within 30 days the item will become property of the county.
- The promoters were told in no uncertain terms that anyone caught dumping grey or black water on the grounds will be dealt with sternly with ticketing and fines. Additionally, promoters were told of a change in expo policy in that the key to the dump station will now be turned over to the promoter for the duration of the event. Further, the promoter will be held responsible for accommodating access to the dump station and he/she will be held accountable for any damages or clean-up requiring expo staff attention during or after their event. The token distribution system will no longer apply.
- The subject of communications with expo staff was brought up and the group was informed that the county considers each promoter as being the single point of contact for their particular event. In other words, all dialogue and correspondences are expected to be carried on solely between the county and the promoter. Each event holder is expected to make his/her participants and/or vendors aware that they are to first go to the promoter if they have issues dealing with the grounds.

- The group was informed that the new light controller system has been installed and that it will allow for greater latitude and reliability in making sure that certain lights are turned on and off according to the promoter's schedule. Promoters are responsible for informing Vicky Redlin of their lighting needs at the time when they pick-up their facility keys.
- A description was provided of the new UWEX storage building that will be constructed on the expo site approximately 100 feet NE of the dump station. Except for some adjustments that may need to be made by Lifest, the building should not affect the promoters' event planning.
- A brief explanation of the Community Park road redevelopment and shared use path construction project was given. Following that a statement was made about how promoters could stay informed of the project status by getting in touch with Vicky Redlin and being included in on an e-mail list that will receive regular updates. Promoters will have other options available such as going on Facebook, visiting the Parks website or calling the Parks info line.
- Lastly, the group was informed that enforcement of the city's and county's dog leash ordinances are likely to become necessary this year as there is the likelihood of a complaint(s) being filed with the police that will ultimately require action. Given this situation promoters were asked to inform their participants, spectators and vendors of the need to begin securing their dog(s) and not let them run on the grounds off-leash.

Community Park Matters:

An overview of recent and ongoing Community Park projects was provided. Topics included:

- The overview started with a report on the tennis court renovation involving a reduction in the number of courts from 6 down to 3. The commitment to go with a hard plastic tile surface instead of the usual sealcoat restorations. The notification was given that besides tennis play the courts will also facilitate pickle ball and basketball activities.
- An update on the pavilion was given that included information about the exterior terrace areas that will be available this spring, the possible landscaping of the beach area and the remodeling of the restroom facilities.
- The group was informed of the possibility that the City may allow for prairie burning in certain areas through the granting of a conditional use permit. Consequently, if the City does allow prairie burning within its corporate limits, in the future, on a yearly basis visitors to the park may observe sections of prairie that are being maintained through burning. Park user groups and expo promoters will be informed well ahead of time prior to the department engaging in such activities. Parks staff will also take into consideration event schedules when planning for a burn.
- A.D.A. upgrades were mentioned and the audience was reminded of the requirement that all organizations must ensure that their programming provides for handicap accessibility.
- Notification was given that the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is likely to begin taking a toll on the Community Park tree inventory sometime within the next 2 – 3 years. Depending upon how hard it hits, visitors to the venue may see Parks crews taking down a significant amount of the estimated 500 ash trees in the park. In addition, it was pointed-out that the three Parks Committee members who were present at the User Group Meeting, Tom Konezke, Mike Norton and Harold Singstock, had each provided a yes vote on a resolution that had gone before the County Board several months ago regarding utilization of an E.A.B. preventative inoculation in attempting to preserve the estimated 100 ash trees that line the East Cnty. Rd. Y park frontage. Unfortunately, the sponsorship arrangement with the company that would have provided the inoculation for 3 years at no charge, was voted down by the County Board. Consequently, the means by which the Parks Department will be dealing with E.A.B. is by removal and subsequent chipping.
- Time was spent explaining to those present the means by which the department will keep the population aware of developments regarding the Community Park road redevelopment and shared use path construction project. Specifically, park users will want to monitor the department's Facebook, e-mailings, telephone message system and website for updates on which portions of the park are being affected by the project.

Jeff Bahling, a representative from the department's engineering consultant Rettler Corporation, then proceeded to engage in a presentation describing the Community Park improvements that will be happening during the spring – summer of 2014. The improvements include:

- The project will address the need for improvements to be made to the park roadway through a re-networking of the road system that will relieve functional problems and confusion inherent in the present multi-loop configuration. The road bed will be widened to allow for 2 way traffic.
- Accompanying the need to engage in Community Park road improvements is the mandated requirement that Winnebago County comply with such accessibility guidelines as detailed within the 2010 update of the American Disabilities Act. In meeting the new ADA requirements it is incumbent upon the county to proceed with construction of a 10 foot wide shared use path within the park that will serve in allowing mobility impaired individuals a barrier free network of hard surface pathways to the various program support facilities housed within the Community Park.
- For economic reasons it will be necessary for Winnebago County to include as a third facet to this improvement project the replacement of the northern portion of four decade old park road lighting with and updated LED system.

Excluding the work involving installation of the road lighting system, the County Hwy. Department will be performing most of the construction work. The Hwy. Department's representative, Bill Demler, indicated that his department will do its best to schedule work so that it causes as little disruption as possible to the various user groups.

The user group representatives were then asked for any input they might have in the form of suggestions and/or concerns relating to the aforementioned Community Park improvements. Several audience members then provided their suggestions on how the county might address vehicular ingress/egress through the park during Lifest and other large events.

Lastly, information was given to the user groups on what the tentative construction schedule may be allowing for normal weather conditions this spring and summer.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:55 a.m..

Submitted by,
Robert Way
Parks Director & Expo Manager