

Parks & Recreation Committee Minutes

Date: April 12, 2011
Time: 8:30am
Place: J.P. Coughlin Building
625 East County Road Y
Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901
Present: Parks Committee Members – Chair Jerry Finch, Vice Chair Tom Konetzke, Secretary Travis Swanson, Don Miller
Also Present: Winnebago County Parks Department Rob Way, Winnebago County Parks Department Bob Lohry, County Supervisor Tim Hamblin
Absent/Excused: Mike Norton

1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 8:30am by Chair Finch
2. Approval of March 8, 2011 Minutes – Chair Finch called for a motion to approve minutes. Travis Swanson moved to approve, Tom Konetzke seconded. Motion carried 4-0
3. Public Comments – (none)
4. Action taken regarding April 7th North County Dog Park Public Input Meeting –
 - Way handed out surveys from Thursday's meeting. Surveys showed that the majority present support establishment of dog park in the north part of Winnebago County.
 - Konetzke talked about how one person at the meeting stated that dog parks should be located at least 250 yards from residences, but he believes that 100 yards should be sufficient.
 - Miller mentioned that we should talk more to a woman from Madison who spoke at the meeting because she has helped start dog parks in the City of Madison and Dane County and she could be a valuable resource for us in Winnebago County.
 - Finch mentioned that we should all take the results home and review them before acting on what we have learned from the surveys.
 - Finch asked about why we light the current dog park.
 - Way answered the park is open until 11 and often gets usage up until closing.
 - Konetzke said that many of the people at the meeting seemed interested in helping with the start up of this park and we should not let that go to waste
 - Way responded saying that people have already started looking into what it would take to start a Friends of the Dog Park 501c3
 - Finch asked Hamblin about municipal immunity if the site we choose turned out to be contaminated.
 - Hamblin said he has spoke to the city attorney about this and has not yet heard back.
 - Finch asked the committee for a feel of the results.
 - Finch: Keep researching
 - Miller: Will vote no if it will be of any cost to the tax payers
 - Swanson: We have been working on this for 11 years, its time to make it happen
 - Konetzke: Agrees with Swanson

- Finch stated that we should move forward in finding a location.
- Finch mentioned has questions about maintenance of the new park, but said that there are many alternatives to resolve the issues.
- Konezke mentioned that many people that were present asked about having a water source available and we should seek a site with that option available.
- Finch called for a motion to allow Way to continue search for property. Swanson motioned, Miller seconded. Motion carried 4-0

5. Ordinance Change governing use of sports field during maintenance cycles –

- Way discussed the need of the change
- Finch expressed concern because it lent to the appearance that OYSC could be on track to monopolize the fields at Community Park in Oshkosh.
- Swanson expressed support saying that the revised ordinance is just clarifying some loose ends in the existing ordinance.
- Konezke asked about signage and fencing
 - Way answered that there would be proper signage.
- Finch expressed that one field should always be available for public use.
 - Way said that except when programmed games are taking place there always is at least one open field available and that no organization can reserve fields for practices.
- Miller asked if clubs make donations to the fields and parks facilities
 - Way answered yes; OYSC helps pay for some maintenance of the fields.
- Swanson motioned to amend ordinance to change it to read “committee” to “parks and recreation committee”. Miller Seconded. Motion carried 4-0
- Konezke motioned to approve the ordinance as amended. Swanson seconded. Motion carried 4-0
- Way clarified that this is not intended to be an aggressive way of handling the problem. Indeed the Oshkosh Police Department said that they would use this ordinance as more of a warning and would only issue citations for people not complying with verbal requests.

6. Parks Director Update –

- Way gave an update from the DOT about the Sunnyview sign on US Highway 41. The DOT stated that they would pay all of the cost of moving the Expo signs during the highway expansion project
- Way indicated that the DOT had provided 75% assurance that there will be a Native American Theme on the new bridge spanning Lake Butte Des Morts.
 - Way said that they are looking at having a canoe and kayak launch under the bridge and that fishing will be allowed.
- Way also mentioned that this spring all the boat landings, and especially at Eureka, have not been doing as well as last year revenue-wise. This is attributed to the rain as well as the cooler than normal weather.

7. Committee Chair Updates:

- Finch reported that he had a couple of dog park sites in mind that might show potential and he will report to the committee if any seem viable.
- Finch also talked about members bringing certain categories of concerns direct to the committee for study instead of routing them through Parks administration.

8. Committee Members Updates – Miller thanked Way and Finch for their help in organizing the public input meeting in the Town of Menasha.
9. Staff Updates –
 - Lohry said that six trees are reported as being down on the Wiouwash Trail from the violent storms the previous Sunday in Winnebago County.
 - Lohry also said that season staff will be starting on April 25th, 7 employees, 6 positions and 2 part-time. Some seasonals will work until August and others will work until October.
10. Future Agenda Items – Americans with Disabilities Act compliance in parks to meet new changes in the law and further exploring ways that citizens may help in establishing a dog exercise facility in the northern section of the county.
11. Next Meeting Date – 05/12/2011 at 6:30pm – South Wing of the Expo Center
12. Adjournment – Konetzke motioned to adjourn, Miller Seconded. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:06am

Respectfully Submitted,
Travis R. Swanson
Secretary, Parks & Recreation Committee