

MARCH 19, 2018, YOUTH AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

5:15 p.m. Council Chamber. Members present: R. Moore, J. Pearson, M. Platteter. Others present: A. Albarado, A. Christianson 1 and 2, K. Gorsegner, F. Herbes, A. Kenyon, D. Parker.

Call to Order:

Chair M. Platteter called the meeting to order and presided.

Bike Race:

Rusk Co. Economic Development Director Andy Albarado provided a detailed narrative and written report (attached) on the status of the Gravel Grinder bike race, which is being planned at this time, to be held Sept. 8th.

Ball Fields:

Local Little League President Frank Herbes recounted his considerable involvement with baseball, softball and other sports over the years, from playing to coaching to organizing and field maintenance. He went on to say that he makes it a point to visit facilities in other communities and finds most to be superior to what is here. Some are owned by communities, including much smaller ones, while others are owned by school districts or even private entities. He went on to say that the good news is that most new fields are now being encircled in netting rather than much more costly chain link. The chain link at Christman Field has fallen into disrepair. The City has received a quote of \$14,050 to replace it and another quote of \$3,400 to repair that at Strop Memorial Field in the industrial area. Mr. Herbes will seek alternate cost estimates for netting to replace current fencing at these locations.

Mr. Herbes stated that many young parents base decisions on where they live on quality and availability of recreational facilities for their children. Mr. Parker, who has been a swimming coach, concurred.

Mr. Herbes went into considerable detail on how best to develop new or remodel existing ball fields. He also indicated he is well aware that this area is harder pressed to pay for such improvements. When asked what will have the biggest positive impact immediately for the three in-City ball fields he indicated the following:

- New drags for each field at a total cost of about \$4,000.
- Repair or replacement of storage sheds at each field at a total cost of about \$10,000. These would best be fitted with good sealing (to keep bees out) overhead doors for ease of getting drags and garden tractors in and out.
- Used garden tractors (sans mower decks) to pull drags at each field. These and the drags would be stored in the sheds along with other equipment such as bases, bats, balls, catchers gear.

Mr. Moore stated that he is willing to donate a used JD lawn tractor to pull drags.

Motion was made by Pearson, seconded by Moore and carried by voice vote to recommend to the Council that it take action to authorize expenditure of \$15,000 from fund balance in 2018 to make the above listed expenditures relating to ball field upgrades and that the Council plan to budget \$20,000 annually for up to 5 years to continue upgrades or until the Asst. DPW is satisfied with improvements made, whichever comes first.

The ball field discussion ended at about 6:30.

Economic Development:

Adm. Christianson stated that he planned on talking at length about how important trails, ball fields and similar community facilities are to retaining and attracting a work force, adding that he will pass on that for now as Mr. Herbes, the Mayor and others already made that point. He did say that, at this time, adding to and improving such facilities might be the best thing that can be done for economic development.

Boat Landing:

It was reported that the circular driveway at Wagon Bridge Landing, which is located on a sidehill, keeps eroding. This requires continuous maintenance and repair to refill hazardous gullies. It is felt that paving this drive will channel storm and meltwater to the center of the drive and on toward the concrete ramp, which will prevent scouring. Monarch Paving has quoted \$13,325 to do so, \$10,000 of which is in this year's budget. The PWD believes it can reduce another line by \$3,325 to make up the difference. Motion was then made by Moore, seconded by Pearson and carried by voice vote to recommend Council approval of the Monarch bid. Two other firms had also been asked to bid, but chose not to.

School Reuse:

Mayor Reynolds commented on how the community needs to investigate adaptive reuse of the Elementary School as a community rec center after it is vacated.

Riverview Trail:

Asst. DPW Parker used photos to illustrate how Riverview Trail narrows as brush alongside encroaches onto it over time. He also used a color coded aerial view of the Trail to indicate where additional access points could be added to provide flexibility and convenience to users. He then noted that most of the original trail signs, including interpretive signs that added considerable interest, have been lost. He went on to say that the Wisconsin Correctional System could produce higher quality replacement signs. Last, but not least, he called attention to color coding indicating how this trail system could be physically linked to the Flambeau Mine Trails giving users a much larger system to use if they wish. The latter may necessitate getting the Town of Grant's consent to use town roads to make connections.

Motion was made by Pearson, seconded by Moore and carried by voice vote to recommend Council approval to authorize Camp Flambeau to proceed with brushing and widening Riverview Trail.

It was noted that trail projects generally compete very well for DNR Stewardship Program 50% grant assistance. The following aspects of the work proposed above would likely increase Ladysmith's competitive score for that program:

- Putting in new interpretive signage and short side trails to access to shore fishing.
- Building a restroom that serves both the Trail and the industrial area ball fields.
- Adding gentler alternate trail sections as a safety measure.
- An intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Grant allowing a marked trail along one or more of its roads.
- Using the WI Corrections System to make signs or build new connecting trail sections. Using them to do maintenance brushing will, however, not score points.

Armory Use:

It was reported that a rep from the Rusk County Sheriff's Dept. has asked to use the meeting hall in the former Armory for color guard drills. Working restrooms are not needed and this will be temporary until the building is put to other use. Nobody present voiced any objections.