

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

1

1 The Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board of the City of Onalaska was called to order at 5:15
2 p.m. on Monday, April 25, 2016. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice
3 posted at City Hall.

4

5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Jim Binash, Gretchen Newhouse,
6 Andrea Benco, Brian Udermann, Victor Hill

7

8 Also Present: Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick, Parks Maintenance Supervisor Mark
9 Hanson

10

11 Excused Absence: Andrea Vogler

12

13 Absent: Ohbe Johnson

14

15 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

16

17 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Brian, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as
18 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

19

20 On voice vote, motion carried.

21

22 **Item 3 – Public Input (Limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

23

24 Andrea called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of
25 the meeting. Andrea then said Item 6 would be addressed first.

26

27 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

28

29 **Item 6 – Presentation on Driftless Region Bike Share**

30

31 **Matthew Christen**

32 **308 14th Avenue South**

33 **Onalaska**

34

35 Matthew told the board he is part of a group that is a subcommittee for “Pioneering Healthier
36 Communities,” which is part of the YMCA. Matthew said two committees, “Move More” and
37 “Eat Well,” are part of “Pioneering Healthier Communities,” and his subgroup is affiliated with
38 “Move More,” which has the goal of promoting physical activity. The group includes
39 representatives from Gundersen, Mayo Clinic, Wisconsin Bike Fed, citizen advocates, local
40 businesses, IG Engineering Group and UW-La Crosse. Matthew said in 2013 the group started
41 looking at developing a feasibility study for the La Crosse area. The feasibility study was

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

2

42 completed in late 2014, and it examined whether this area had the environment for the success of
43 a bicycle share program. Matthew said the study determined that while the environment was
44 favorable, there still was “room to grow.” Matthew noted that more than 700 individuals has
45 provided input via an electronic survey, and he also noted that both scientific and anecdotal
46 evidence was examined. A Request for Proposal was developed in 2015. Matthew said there are
47 two types of companies associated with bike shares. One is a model where a company or a
48 jurisdiction purchases and operates the bicycles, software and technology. The company or
49 jurisdiction is then responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and customer service. Matthew
50 said the other option, the one that was selected, is Zagster. Matthew distributed a handout to
51 board members and referred to a page entitled “Why Sponsor Bike Share?” This page lists five
52 benefits to sponsoring a bike share, including:

53

- 54 • **Biking:** A community’s overall well-being improves as the number of individuals who
55 utilize bicycles increases.
- 56 • **Business:** Employees become more physically active, and this has a positive impact on
57 healthcare and productivity. Parking costs are reduced, and congestion is mitigated.
- 58 • **Health:** The average United States citizen sits an average of 9.3 hours a day, which is
59 equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes. Bicycling improves one’s well-being.
- 60 • **Transit:** Bicycling offers another transportation option.
- 61 • **Planet:** Bicycling is eco-friendly.

62

63 Matthew stressed that bike share is not a bicycle rental system; rather, people utilize bicycles for
64 short trips. Matthew described the bicycles as “one size fits all” and said they have security
65 measures. Matthew said a city employee who needs to perform a task at the Great River Landing
66 may ride a bicycle from City Hall to the site and then back. Matthew said approximately 60
67 percent of bike share uses are tourism-related and 40 percent local usage. Matthew referred to a
68 page describing how bike share operates, noting that each bicycle has its own smartphone access.
69 Matthew said a bicycle station stand, a parking bike station that retains the front wheel and holds
70 it in place, may be installed without a bicycle for \$125. Matthew said if 12 stations were placed
71 at the Great River Landing, four at City Hall and four at the library, the bicycles could end up at
72 any of the aforementioned locations. Matthew said each bicycle would have its own access
73 point, as opposed to having a kiosk. Matthew said having a bike share provides extra
74 transportation options as well as giving individuals more opportunities to be mobile. A bike
75 share also provides an opportunity to reduce traffic in certain areas at certain times of the day.
76 Matthew said there are options regarding the cost of a bike share, adding that “at this point we’re
77 still somewhat in the market for a host.”

78

79 Matthew referred to a page in the handout that lists the requirements of a Zagster customer for a
80 successful bike share program. The expectations of the host include signing the contract,
81 receiving funding and rendering some of the marketing and education decisions. Matthew said
82 the Driftless Region Bicycle Coalition is considering playing a significant role. Matthew also

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

3

83 said the City of Onalaska could serve as its own host, with the possibility of the Driftless Region
84 Bicycle Coalition becoming a regional host. The City of Onalaska then would become a
85 sponsor. Zagster sends out a check once every quarter, and funds are returned in one of two
86 ways: sponsorships and marketing, and also membership. A typical membership costs
87 approximately \$7 a day. Matthew said the host establishes increments, such as a half-hour or an
88 hour (The \$7 covers that fee). An additional fee is charged if someone wishes to keep a bicycle
89 longer than the first half-hour or hour. This fee can be avoided by parking a bicycle at one of the
90 docking stations. If someone wishes to return in a few seconds, he/she can ride another bicycle
91 for another hour at no extra charge. Memberships can be established for a day, week, month or
92 year. Matthew said the average in the nation is between \$60 and \$100 a year, and between \$5
93 and \$7 a day. Matthew addressed sponsors, noting that some of the features on bicycles are set
94 up so there is space for other information. Zagster coordinates marketing, and an app would be
95 set up specifically for the Coulee Region.

96
97 Matthew addressed the economic aspect of a bike share program, noting that the average return
98 on dollar in most bike share programs is approximately 35 cents. Matthew referred to a chart
99 created from a study regarding Capital Bikeshare in Washington, D.C. and noted that 83 percent
100 of the individuals who were polled indicated they either were somewhat more likely (52 percent)
101 or much more likely (31 percent) to spend money at a local business if it was accessible by the
102 bike share. Matthew also said that individuals on bicycles stop more often and spend more
103 money at businesses compared to if they were driving. Matthew pointed out that a bike share
104 supports local events by mitigating traffic and alleviates the need for parking. Matthew also
105 pointed out that millennials are choosing to live in locations where they do not need an
106 automobile. Matthew said local businesses who want to attract young, talented employees will
107 want to have options where they do not need to own a car. Matthew cited the example of a study
108 performed in North Carolina where it was determined that for every dollar that was spent on
109 infrastructure, an estimated \$9 was coming back into the community (this is a conservative
110 estimate). Matthew noted he had presented the idea of a bike share to Mayor Joe Chilsen, who
111 expressed his support for it. Matthew said Mayor Chilsen had suggested presenting his idea to
112 the Parks and Recreation Board to see if its members would be interested in involving the City of
113 Onalaska.

114
115 Andrea asked if Tourism has been made aware of the bike share program, stating she believes it
116 might be a good fit with the new regional tourism entity (La Crosse County Convention and
117 Visitors Bureau).

118
119 Matthew noted that the former La Crosse Tourism entity had contributed funds for the feasibility
120 study and said, "They are generally on board. They're a little bit down the ladder in terms of
121 when they're ready to get invested." Matthew noted he had made a presentation to Downtown
122 Main Street in mid-April and said its members would like to see its business become involved.
123 Matthew said there is significant support for a bike share program; however, actually placing

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

4

124 bicycles on the ground is still in the early stages.

125

126 Dan said the Driftless Region Bicycle Coalition could serve as the host, thereby allowing La
127 Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen and West Salem to all join underneath the coalition.

128

129 Matthew said anyone in the La Crosse area could become a sponsor if the City of Onalaska
130 chose to become a host. Matthew told the board that a host would need to have “boots on the
131 ground in the sense that there has to be a ‘lightning rod’ of interface between Zagster.” Matthew
132 noted that Zagster manages everything, including hiring an individual to perform maintenance
133 and retrieving missing bicycles. Matthew noted that a Zagster bike share program (35 bicycles,
134 100 stations) had been established in Lakeland, Florida.

135

136 Gretchen said she believes Tourism and the La Crosse County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory
137 Committee could be crucial community partners.

138

139 Andrea noted that the bicycle racks on the La Crosse MTU busses are always full and suggested
140 that individuals could ride a bicycle to the bus station and pick up another bicycle when they exit
141 a bus.

142

143 Gretchen asked Matthew where he is at in the process, and she also asked him what he is seeking
144 this evening from the board.

145

146 Matthew said, “The process right now is looking at trying to get something started because I
147 know that once we got one station there are going to be a lot more that people are going to fall
148 into place on. The other part of it is the host. The decision that I would like to see you make is
149 where you’re at with moving this forward, and whether you want to be a sponsor or a host. ... In
150 other words, if you see the value in this for the City of Onalaska, then the next decision is how
151 would you like to get involved in it? Is it at a host or a sponsor level? If it’s at a host level, it’s
152 your own timeline as to making something happen. If it’s at a sponsor level, then we’re sitting
153 back a bit and waiting [to see] what the decision is going to be from the Driftless Region Bicycle
154 Coalition and if there’s anybody else that ... The City of La Crosse has been approached and
155 they’re kind of sitting on the fence because they want to see a whole bunch of them go in at one
156 time. Then they’ll decide if they’re going to get involved.”

157

158 Andrea inquired about the minimum investments for a sponsor and a host.

159

160 Matthew said the Driftless Region Bicycle Coalition would serve as the legal host entity, and the
161 coalition would contract to have one person on a part-time basis serve as a manager or executive
162 director. Matthew said part of the money that is raised through memberships would cover the
163 manager/executive director position.

164

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

5

165 For clarification, Andrea inquired about the City of Onalaska's role as a sponsor if the Driftless
166 Region Bicycle Coalition served as a host.

167

168 Matthew said if the city wanted to put down five bicycle stations at the Great River Landing, the
169 cost would be \$9,000 a year.

170

171 Andrea inquired about the number of bicycles the city would need to purchase.

172

173 Dan and Matthew both said the city can choose the number of bicycles it wants to purchase.
174 Matthew said the cost would be \$1,800 per bike per year, with a one-time fee of \$125 for any
175 additional docking stations. Matthew said the bikes are on a lease basis, and the bikes would be
176 replaced after three years. The new bikes would have up-to-date technology.

177

178 Victor inquired about Zagster's response time to maintenance issues.

179

180 Matthew said that while he cannot provide the board with a specific answer, he can say Zagster
181 is "very responsive" based on what he has learned from other communities. Matthew added that,
182 "There's not a lot to go wrong with the bikes."

183

184 Andrea said it is her understanding that when one rents a bicycle he/she pays an annual fee to be
185 a member.

186

187 Matthew said it could be "one day, one time," adding that visitors could ride a bicycle from a
188 hotel to the Great River Landing.

189

190 Gretchen asked how individuals who do not have smartphones could utilize the bicycles.

191

192 Matthew said any type of Wi-Fi would suffice. Matthew said if the city is serving as a sponsor,
193 it could provide computer access at City Hall. Matthew also noted that hotels have business
194 centers and said individuals could log in and obtain a one-day membership.

195

196 Brian said it seems to him that the parties Matthew has approached are in favor of serving as
197 sponsors and not hosts.

198

199 Gretchen said she believes it is necessary to have a governing body in La Crosse County to
200 organize the entities and write a grant.

201

202 Andrea expressed concern over financing and said, "I would love to do it, but it only meets a
203 very small population group."

204

205 Matthew said, "It goes back to the investment dollars. In other words, if you have an option like

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

6

206 that that people know about and learn about and it attracts them down to the Great River
207 Landing, they're going to spend more money in the community. That's part of any business
208 entity – how am I going to spend the dollars I have, and what's the return on investment? While
209 it won't be completely sustainable, there is that element of what it can do to help generate other
210 aspects of revenue and economics in the community.”

211
212 Victor said he believes the bike share program could tie into a transportation master plan for the
213 entire area. Victor said he agrees with Gretchen about attempting to obtain grant funding that
214 would address stations in La Crosse, Onalaska and Holmen, adding that perhaps some could be
215 tied into UW-La Crosse.

216
217 Matthew said the City of La Crosse is looking at one station and would like others “to get on
218 board.”

219
220 Andrea noted that several new paths will be installed this summer in the City of Onalaska.

221
222 Matthew noted that there already are bicycle lanes on primary access routes in the city and said
223 more will be added. Matthew acknowledged that there always will be questions regarding
224 funding, but said nonprofits are able to write more grants. Matthew noted that several bike share
225 programs in the nation have initiated their programs through Air Quality Mitigation Grants.

226
227 Dan noted that the Parks and Recreation Department will begin the 2017 budget process in late
228 May and said the budget will need to be submitted by late July. Dan said once he knows the
229 direction he has been given (budget increase or no increase), the board will be able to examine
230 all the options and determine the city's involvement.

231
232 Andrea asked Matthew to keep the board informed.

233
234 Matthew said he will do so. Matthew also said the Driftless Region Bicycle Coalition's goal is
235 to have stations in operation by March 2017.

236
237 **Item 4 – Election of officers**

238
239 a. Chairperson

240
241 Motion by Gretchen, second by Brian, nominate and re-elect Andrea Benco as Chairperson of
242 the Parks and Recreation Board.

243
244 On voice vote, motion carried.

245
246 b. Vice Chairperson

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

7

247
248 Motion by Brian, second by Gretchen, to nominate and re-elect Victor Hill as Vice Chairperson
249 of the Parks and Recreation Board.

250
251 On voice vote, motion carried.

252
253 **Item 5 – Appointment to Great River Landing Committee**

254
255 Andrea stressed the importance of having a representative who can regularly attend the Great
256 River Landing Committee’s meetings and provide input.

257
258 Victor, the current Parks and Recreation Board representative, said he has missed a couple of
259 meetings but has attended most of them. Victor said he would not object to continuing to serve
260 as the Parks and Recreation Board’s representative.

261
262 Ald. Binash, who serves on the Room Tax Commission, said he attends the Great River Landing
263 Committee’s meetings when he is able. Ald. Binash said he would be willing to serve as the
264 Parks and Recreation Board’s representative.

265
266 Motion by Gretchen, second by Brian, to appoint Ald. Jim Binash to the Great River Landing
267 Committee.

268
269 Victor noted he had never said he objected to serving as the board’s representative and said he
270 would not object to Ald. Binash serving in that capacity if there is a consensus.

271
272 On voice vote, motion carried, 3-0 (Ald. Binash and Victor did not vote).

273
274 Ald. Binash said he does not want to deny Victor the ability to serve as the board’s representative
275 on the Great River Landing Committee and stated he would not object to allowing Victor to
276 continue serving in that role.

277
278 Victor said he would be happy to continue serving as the board’s representative.

279
280 Ald. Binash declined the nomination.

281
282 Motion by Gretchen, second by Brian, to rescind the previous motion to appoint Ald. Jim Binash
283 to the Great River Landing Committee.

284
285 On voice vote, motion carried.

286
287 Motion by Brian, second by Gretchen, to appoint Victor Hill to the Great River Landing

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

8

288 Committee.

289

290 On voice vote, motion carried.

291

292 **Item 7 – Tree carving options vs. tree removal in City Parks**

293

294 Dan referred to a letter from Mike Hayes regarding this topic he had read into the minutes at the
295 March 28 Parks and Recreation Board meeting and said Bill Black had expressed an interest in
296 tree carving. Dan said Bill's group is prepared to begin fundraising for bringing in carvers for a
297 competition. Dan said that while board members do not have to arrive at a decision this evening,
298 he would welcome a discussion. Dan said there would be a cost associated with tree carving
299 unless a program is developed where a contest would be held. Dan said it still would be
300 necessary to have funds available to pay the top carvers. Dan said he favors the idea of allowing
301 carvers into Rowe Park.

302

303 Board members said they agree with Dan.

304

305 Dan said he will begin working with Bill if the board supports allowing carvers into Rowe Park.

306

307 **Item 8 – Approve Park and Recreation Department Annual Report**

308

309 Dan noted that a copy of the annual report has been included in board members' packets.

310

311 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Gretchen, to approve Park and Recreation Department Annual
312 Report.

313

314 On voice vote, motion carried.

315

316 **Item 9 – Approve install rain garden at the Community Center**

317

318 Dan said La Crosse County has been working with Western Technical College and is willing to
319 provide and install a rain garden next to the Community Center at no cost. Dan said City
320 Engineer Jarrod Holter told him he supports installing the rain garden and that there are funds
321 available from the stormwater utility if necessary.

322

323 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Brian, to approve the installation of a rain garden at the
324 Community Center.

325

326 On voice vote, motion carried.

327

328 **Item 10 – Report from La Crosse County Bluffland Steering Committee**

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

9

329
330
331
332
333
334
335
336
337
338
339
340
341
342
343
344
345
346
347
348
349
350
351
352
353
354
355
356
357
358
359
360
361
362
363
364
365
366
367
368
369

Dan noted that the Bluffland Steering Committee had met earlier Monday and said La Crosse County Planner Charlie Handy plans to attend the May 23 Parks and Recreation Board meeting and provide board members with an overview. Dan said the Bluffland Steering Committee hopes to make a presentation to the La Crosse Area Planning Committee before coming to both the City of La Crosse and the City of Onalaska. Dan also said the Bluffland Steering Committee will attempt to host one more public meeting the second week of June.

Item 11 – Report from Onalaska Enhancement Foundation

Dan noted that the OEF had met on April 13 and said 250 runners and 40 children had participated in the Fleis Nightfall Frolic on April 22. Dan said preparations are under way for Celebrate Onalaska. Dan reported that fundraising efforts for the Cemetery Project are continuing as the project came in slightly over budget. Dan also reported that the OEF has instituted a fee per transaction per month.

Item 12 – Report from Great River Landing Committee

Ald. Binash told the board that the Common Council had approved Phase I of the Great River Landing Project at its April 12 meeting. A ribbon cutting ceremony is slated for 3 p.m. on May 3.

Dan said a preconstruction meeting is scheduled for May 2.

Item 13 – Director’s Report

a. Parks Update

Mark said staff is mowing and working on park shelters and the baseball/softball fields. Staff also is planting approximately 60 trees in Rowe Park.

Dan said signs have been installed along the Born Learning Trail system. Staff still must paint hopscotch and other items on the trail. Dan said a ribbon cutting ceremony for the trail system is scheduled for 10 a.m. on May 3.

b. Recreation Update

Dan reported the following:

- Baseball and softball tryouts have been completed. The baseball teams have been posted, and the softball teams will be posted before the end of the week.

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

10

- 370 • The adult softball schedule will be posted by Wednesday.
371 • The soccer programs are going well.

372

373 Ald. Binash addressed the disc golf course in Rowe Park, noting that a resident who lives nearby
374 has raised concerns over discs landing in his yard. Ald. Binash said the resident has asked if the
375 hole could be moved from its present location closer to the roadway. Ald. Binash noted he had
376 spoken with the resident, Dan and Mark and said the hole will be relocated. The resident who
377 requested that the hole be moved has offered to pay for the cement slab, but not the labor. Ald.
378 Binash said there also was a request to install more cement slabs on the course.

379

380 Dan said there were individuals who regularly utilized the disc golf course who had asked Mark
381 if they could spearhead a fundraising effort to install the course. Dan said there has been
382 minimal contact with the individuals and noted he has two quotes either to replace or install
383 concrete on the rest of the holes. Dan said he does not have adequate funding to do the work.

384

385 Ald. Binash said he must speak to another resident in the area who would be affected if the hole
386 is relocated closer to her home.

387

388 **c. Aquatic Center Update**

389

390 Dan said the pool staff has been hired, and that the Aquatic Center is scheduled to open June 6.
391 Lifeguard training will be held prior to the opening.

392

393 Gretchen inquired about the Parks and Recreation Department reorganization.

394

395 Dan said the reorganization has been approved, and that job deadlines for Recreation
396 Coordinator, Concession Specialist and Administrative Support staff member are April 29, May
397 2 and May 2, respectively.

398

399 **d. Omni Center Update**

400

401 Dan reported the following:

402

- 403 • SportCourt is being reinstalled.
404 • The Ona Attack volleyball program will host a 30-team tournament on May 14.
405 • The Omni Center will host the middle and high school volleyball programs.

406

407 **Adjournment**

408

409 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Brian, to adjourn at 6:36 p.m.

410

**Parks and Recreation Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, April 25, 2016

11

411 On voice vote, motion carried.

412

413

414 Recorded by:

415

416 Kirk Bey