

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

Monday, September 28, 2015

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1 The Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board of the City of Onalaska was called to order at 5:18
2 p.m. on Monday, September 28, 2015. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a
3 notice posted at City Hall.

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5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Jim Binash, Gretchen Newhouse,
6 Andrea Benco, Sue Peterson

7

8 Also Present: Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick, Ald. Harvey Bertrand, Parks
9 Maintenance Supervisor Mark Hanson, Recreation Supervisor Marcus Aumann

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11 Excused Absences: Brian Udermann, Victor Hill, Andrea Vogler

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

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15 Motion by Andrea, second by Gretchen, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as
16 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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18 On voice vote, motion carried, 3-0, with one abstention (Gretchen).

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

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22 Sue called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the
23 meeting.

24

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

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27 **Item 4 – Review and possible action on Natural Land Protection Agreement with**
28 **Mississippi Valley Conservancy**

29

30 Dan noted that board members had received a copy of this agreement at the August 24 Parks and
31 Recreation Board meeting. Dan also noted that the agreement has been revised after being
32 reviewed by legal counsel. Dan said MVC has similar agreements with neighboring
33 communities, but noted that the City of Onalaska does not pay MVC, but rather places the funds
34 into a trust. Dan said staff and legal counsel approve of the agreement.

35

36 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Gretchen, to approve the Natural Land Protection Agreement
37 with Mississippi Valley Conservancy.

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39 Ald. Bertrand asked if any challenges might arise before this item comes before the Common
40 Council on October 13.

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42 Dan said no, noting that funds may be allocated for MVC and also that the city will work with
43 MVC if a project comes forward. Dan said, “With the city obtaining our first parcel of land, the
44 Elmwood piece back in the [La Crosse] Country Club, I think it’s just the start of more
45 opportunities for us moving forward.” Dan added he believes the first agreement was approved
46 in 2009 and expressed confidence that “we can continue to move this forward.”

47
48 Ald. Binash asked Dan if he is aware of any particular lands that might interest MVC in addition
49 to the bluffland.

50
51 Dan said there is no such interest at the present time and told Ald. Binash he will meet with
52 MVC once the agreement has been finalized. Dan said MVC is contacted by individuals who
53 might want to place a conservation easement on their property. Dan also said staff might
54 identify specific areas where it wants to focus and then a discussion ensues with MVC.

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56 On voice vote, motion carried, 3-0, with one abstention (Andrea).

57
58 **Item 5 – Approve Rental Fee for Waterfront house at \$55 per day**

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60 Dan noted that Three Rivers Roleo will “move out on its own” and said the department is
61 attempting to get its fees in line with this. Dan said it became necessary to develop a fee for the
62 house and said staff believes a \$55 per day fee is appropriate as this is the amount charged to rent
63 shelters. Dan said his department is contacted by other groups, such as kayakers, who wish to
64 rent the Waterfront house. The \$55 per day fee would be a published price for groups who want
65 to utilize the house.

66
67 Gretchen asked what is included in the facility.

68
69 Dan said restroom facilities outside the house are open all the time and noted there are five
70 smaller rooms located inside the house, which is carpeted and air-conditioned. Dan said the
71 department’s kayaks are being stored inside. Dan compared the house to Rowe Park Shelter No.
72 1.

73
74 Motion by Andrea, second by Gretchen, to approve rental fee for Waterfront house at \$55 per
75 day.

76
77 On voice vote, motion carried.

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79 **Item 6 – Date for next October meeting**

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81 Dan told board members he will be out of the office when the board is scheduled to meet again
82 on Monday, October 26 and said the meeting date can either remain the same with another staff

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83 member facilitating the meeting or the board can meet instead on Monday, October 19.

84

85 Motion by Andrea, second by Gretchen, to move the October Parks and Recreation Board
86 meeting to 5:15 p.m. on Monday, October 19.

87

88 Dan said the board possibly could meet at the Omni Center, noting that the new chiller system
89 should be installed and functioning. Dan also noted that the new boards should be installed by
90 that time, and staff should be making ice for an upcoming hockey tournament.

91

92 On voice vote, motion carried.

93

94 **Item 7 – Update on Omni Center Chiller Replacement project**

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96 a. Minnesota Ice Timeline

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98 Dan said Minnesota Ice was on site two weeks ago and that both the chiller and two condensing
99 units have been delivered. The piping has been installed, and pressure tests were performed on
100 the unit. Minnesota Ice will next be onsite on Monday, October 5 to perform preliminary chill-
101 downs on the floor. Dan noted the craft fair is scheduled for the end of that week, so the systems
102 cannot be run for multiple evenings. Instead, preliminary tests will be held and the units will
103 begin functioning for the season on Monday, October 12. Dan said Minnesota Ice appears to be
104 on schedule and “happy with where they are.”

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106 b. Olympic Builders Timeline

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108 Dan said Olympic Builders also seems to be “on pace” as all the building modifications have
109 been made.

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111 **Item 8 – Report from Onalaska Enhancement Foundation**

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113 Dan said the OEF will meet again on Wednesday, October 14.

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115 **Item 9 – Report from Great River Landing Committee**

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117 Ald. Binash said there have been discussions regarding withdrawing funds from Special Projects
118 to complete the Phase I design at a cost of \$160,000. Ald. Binash said \$100,000 was budgeted in
119 the 2015 Capital Improvements Budget, and \$60,000 may be withdrawn from Special Projects.

120 Ald. Binash noted that the Tourism Commission is scheduled to meet on Wednesday and said the
121 commission will be discussing funding the Great River Landing Project.

122

123 Andrea asked if the committee is still considering the splash pad.

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124
125 Ald. Binash said Phase I will be designed, and it will include several items that will be discussed.

126
127 Andrea noted that the board had spent a considerable amount of time analyzing the benefits and
128 costs of splash pads before ultimately deciding not to install one. Andrea also said a number of
129 residents have voiced their opposition to a splash pad because it would be sitting above the
130 waterfront.

131
132 Ald. Binash told Andrea it is very unlikely a splash pad will be part of the project.

133
134 Dan said he and staff have been discussing several options as part of 2016 General Fund Budget
135 and also the 2016 Capital Improvements Budget.

136
137 Andrea asked if staffing issues are being addressed.

138
139 Dan said the staffing portion has been part of the discussions.

140
141 **Item 10 – Director’s Report**

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143 **a. Parks Update**

144
145 Mark reported the following:

- 146
147
 - Staff is mowing, performing tree work and grinding stumps.
 - Staff likely will blow out the pipes at the Aquatic Center within the next week.
 - Firewood is available free of charge in city parks.

149
150
151 Dan reported the following:

- 152
153
 - A local tree contractor has contacted him about performing a demonstration on taking
154 down trees with a mechanical system. The demonstration would be open to local
155 municipalities.
 - The motor on the new, 104-inch mower has been malfunctioning. However, Kawasaki
156 and Hustler will be replacing the engine.

157
158
159 **b. Recreation Update**

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161 Marcus reported that the activity guides have been sent.

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163 Dan said staff is meeting with a group of UW-La Crosse Recreation students who will be doing
164 special event projects.

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c. Aquatic Center Update

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168 Marcus reported that more than \$1,600 was raised for the Coulee Region Humane Society at the
169 Diggity Dog Dip that was held on Saturday, September 5.

170

171 Andrea asked if there is any downside to holding the event at the Aquatic Center.

172

173 Dan said no, noting that the pool's filter system is shut down for the event. Dan said the
174 department covers all of its costs for the event, noting that any staff time is "taken off the top"
175 before the money is split.

176

d. Omni Center Update

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178 Dan reported the following:

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- 181 • The 12-step program was held last week at the facility.
- 182 • The Down Syndrome Walk drew approximately 1,200 individuals, and Hmong New
183 Year attracted more than 1,000 individuals.
- 184 • A wedding with 600 guests was held last weekend at the facility.
- 185 • The RE/MAX picnic was held at the Omni Center, and the Riverland Energy picnic will
186 be held Wednesday.
- 187 • The batting cage will be taken down later in the week.

188

189 Ald. Binash asked Dan if the Omni Center is currently operating at a surplus or a deficit.

190

191 Dan said the facility is currently facing about a \$20,000 deficit. However, Dan also noted the
192 Omni Center was facing a \$65,000 deficit in September 2014 and expressed confidence that the
193 facility will show a profit by the end of 2015 due to events scheduled and other revenue sources.
194 Dan also noted that more individuals are utilizing the Omni Center.

195

196 Ald. Binash noted that the Omni Center roof had been included in the 2016 Capital
197 Improvements Budget and asked if there had been a discussion about placing this item in the
198 Parks and Recreation Department Budget, or if it had been moved to the 2016 CIB.

199

200 Dan noted that there is no equipment replacement account in the Omni Center and said the roof
201 was shifted to the 2016 CIB.

202

203 Ald. Binash asked if Tourism assists in paying for the Omni Center.

204

205 Dan said yes, noting that the Omni Center receives 1 percent of the room tax.

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Item 11 – Closed Session

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To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin Statutes for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session:

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- The expansion of Van Riper Park

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If any action is required in Open Session, as the result of the Closed Session, the board will reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed agenda.

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Motion by Andrea, second by Gretchen, to convene in Closed Session.

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On roll call vote: Gretchen Newhouse – aye, Andrea Benco – aye, Ald. Jim Binash – aye, Sue Peterson – aye. In Closed Session.

223

224

225

226

Recorded By:

227

228

Kirk Bey