

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

Monday, October 24, 2016

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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, October 24, 2016. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a
3 notice posted at City Hall.

4

5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Gretchen Newhouse, Andrea Benco,
6 Victor Hill, Ohbe Johnson

7

8 Excused Absences: Ald. Jim Binash, Brian Udermann

9

10 Also Present: Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick, Parks Maintenance Supervisor Mark
11 Hanson, Buildings Manager Brian Babiash, Interim Land Use and Development Director Katie
12 Aspenson

13

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

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

18

19 On voice vote, motion carried, with one abstention.

20

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

22

23 Andrea called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

24

25 **Mike Gargaro**
26 **415 R. Stephan Place**
27 **Onalaska**

28

29 Mike read into the record the following email from John Zea, Wisconsin Elite Hockey League
30 Commissioner: *“Dear Mike and [Recreation Supervisor] Kelly [Hanson] – Congratulations on*
31 *hosting and running another excellent tournament. As usual, the rink staff was welcoming. We*
32 *are glad we are there, and that is huge in my view. You guys tried something different with the*
33 *round-robin, two-period format. You made a point to ask the coaches this weekend of their*
34 *views, and overall they were fine and enjoyed the change and the opportunity for more teams to*
35 *reach the championship. Having the Coulee Region Chill coach come in and speak was very*
36 *well-received with the parents and players. There were about 60 or 70 players and parents who*
37 *came to listen to that, as well, to have a little insight and direction with the junior hockey system.*
38 *In conclusion, great job and many thanks to you guys for your hard work and efforts. Your*
39 *dedication does not go unnoticed.”*

40

41 Mike noted he also had received emails from two coaches – one a former NCAA Division I

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42 hockey player who now coaches in the Milwaukee area, and another who runs an ice arena.
43 Mike said both coaches enjoyed their experience at the Omni Center. Mike also noted that nine
44 of the 10 teams that participated in the tournament were from out of the area, meaning there were
45 185 players and their parents patronizing local restaurants and hotels both on Friday and
46 Saturday.

47
48 Andrea called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that portion
49 of the meeting.

50

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

52

53 **Item 1 – Public Art Program in the City of Onalaska – Katie Aspenson**

54

55 Katie, who serves the Long Range Planning Committee, noted the Comprehensive Plan had been
56 approved earlier in 2016 and said the committee's next step was to examine a variety of tasks,
57 choose one or two that interested its members, and be the driving force behind the project(s).
58 Katie said the Long Range Planning Committee had discussed the creation of a public art
59 program at its August 4 meeting. Katie said public art programs are beneficial in the sense they
60 attract tourists and bring together citizens over something locally created. Katie said a public art
61 piece does not have to be a mural or a painting; rather, it can be a sculpture that represents
62 something unique about the City of Onalaska. A public art piece also can tie into development
63 and attracting people to a certain area (e.g. park, downtown area).

64

65 Katie said Long Range Planning Committee members had asked her to speak to other city
66 committees and determine who would be interested in exploring a public art program. One idea
67 that was brought forward was to potentially hold a public forum, and Katie said the most likely
68 location to begin public arts is the city's parks. Katie said a public forum could identify different
69 locations where public art could be placed, noting that perhaps public art could be located at the
70 entrance to the Great River Landing. Katie also noted that public art could be placed in a
71 downtown overlay district and said the city parks could serve as a trial run of the public art
72 program. If there is support for a public art program, the Long Range Planning Committee likely
73 could assist the Parks and Recreation Department.

74

75 Katie said her intern had created different requirements of what would make a public art program
76 successful, including funding options. Katie said there could be a ½ or 1-percent public art
77 enhancement that could be tied to a building project, or there could be an impact fee tied to
78 commercial development. The funds could assist in the payment, solicitation or the maintenance
79 of art. Katie said another possible option would be to determine if utilizing tourism funding for
80 public art would be an acceptable use. Katie said perhaps Capital Improvements Project funding
81 could be utilized to collect, preserve, maintain and select artists. Katie said another option would
82 be to secure private funding. Katie said she is coming before the board today to determine if its

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83 members are interested in participating.

84

85 Dan said he and Katie have discussed Mike Hayes' offer to carve trees in city parks and
86 suggested perhaps it could be a kickoff project for the public art program. Dan said it would be
87 necessary to find the time, resources and other individuals who would be interested in
88 participating in a public art program.

89

90 Andrea noted there is an art community in the City of La Crosse and said she believes it would
91 be important to utilize local artists.

92

93 Gretchen said she would support a public art program and suggested seeking out resources.

94

95 Victor said it would be an opportunity for artists to "make a lasting legacy" because there is a
96 lack of public art.

97

98 Katie said if the Parks and Recreation Board wants to have tree carving for an art project and
99 chooses two other locations as a starting point, the Long Range Planning Committee can assist
100 with coordination. Katie said a call could go out for local artists and stated, "If we have a budget
101 to work with, fantastic. If we don't we can note that and just see what we get and move that
102 forward with this creation of a program."

103

104 Andrea said she believes city parks "would be a perfect place" to host art as long as there are no
105 cost issues associated with maintenance.

106

107 Mark said another option might be the Blue Heron program the City of La Crosse utilizes,
108 suggesting that perhaps the City of Onalaska could utilize a sunfish or something pertaining to
109 the logging industry. Mark also said local businesses might want to sponsor such a program and
110 place these items in front of their businesses.

111

112 Katie suggested perhaps talking to Xcel Energy about painting utility boxes and larger
113 transformers.

114

115 Andrea asked if a wall can be constructed around the transformer substation along State Trunk
116 Highway 35.

117

118 Katie said Centering Onalaska had discussed doing this, adding that art also can include
119 temporary art such as street performers.

120

121 Andrea suggested to Katie that she contact Beth Moon, who had come before the Parks and
122 Recreation Board at its July 25 meeting about painting the pedestrian tunnel under the State
123 Trunk Highway 157 interchange.

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124

125 **Item 2 – Request to use Pierce Park for the 20-year reunion for Class of 1997 on August 5,**
126 **2017**

127

128 Dan referred to a copy of an email included in board members' packets from Nicole Wickus,
129 who is requesting that the Onalaska High School Class of 1997's 20-year reunion be held at
130 Pierce Park. Dan said this "something that is unique" because there is no shelter at Pierce Park,
131 and he noted that a form must be completed and a permit must be obtained to put up a tent. Dan
132 said he believes the board must create a policy determining a fee for events of this nature, stating
133 he believes there should be a minimal fee of \$50 because staff will need to put out more refuse
134 cans. It also would be necessary to bring in portable restrooms. Dan said he does not object to
135 allowing the reunion to be held at Pierce Park; however, he reiterated he believes there needs to
136 be a fee of \$50.

137

138 Andrea said she would like to have further discussion regarding the fee.

139

140 Dan noted the cost to rent a shelter is \$50 to \$55.

141

142 Andrea noted that the request is to rent the entire park and might involve more labor. Andrea
143 said she does not object to approving the request; however, she believes the fee should be greater
144 than \$50 due to the size of the event.

145

146 Dan said Pierce Park is a public park and it would be difficult to restrict anyone wishing to
147 utilize the playground. Dan noted that there have been past neighborhood events in Pierce Park
148 in which Aspen Valley residents have utilized a tent. In this case, the class reunion would be
149 unique in that individuals are coming into the neighborhood.

150

151 Andrea suggested charging a \$50 fee and including a \$100 deposit.

152

153 Dan noted that the city's deposits are \$50 and are taken by credit card. Dan said the credit card
154 is on file if difficulties occur.

155

156 Andrea said she believes in this case the deposit should be larger due to the size of the group and
157 the possible impact it might have.

158

159 Victor inquired about the size of the group.

160

161 Dan said he is unsure of the size of the graduating class. However, Dan also noted his child's
162 class has approximately 220 students.

163

164 Mark said he does not object to holding the event in Pierce Park. However, Mark also asked if

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165 the group would be responsible for contacting all the neighbors, or if staff would be responsible
166 for contacting residents.

167

168 Dan noted that the reunion is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

169

170 Mark said he favors the idea of a deposit in case extra work is required of staff.

171

172 Motion by Gretchen, second by Victor, to approve a request to use Pierce Park for the 20-year
173 reunion for Class of 1997 on August 5, 2017.

174

175 Dan said he will email the event organizers a list of everything the board has discussed today.

176

177 On voice vote, motion carried.

178

179 **Item 3 – Approve revisions to the Park and Recreation Scholarship Program**

180

181 Dan said Administrative Assistant Louanne Pierce Keane coordinates the Park and Recreation
182 scholarships, and he referred to a copy of the Youth Scholarship Assistance Program handout
183 included in board members' packets. Dan noted the board first approved the program in May
184 2008, and the board also approved revisions in March 2011. Dan said he is requesting that the
185 minimum fee be increased from \$3 to \$5, effective immediately.

186

187 Motion by Victor, second by Ohbe, to approve increasing the minimum program fee for the Park
188 and Recreation Scholarship Program from \$3 to \$5.

189

190 On voice vote, motion carried.

191

192 **Item 4 – Authorization to work with Onalaska Lions Club to replace steps at the Sunfish**
193 **wayside leading down to the Great River Bike Trail**

194

195 Dan said Mark has asked him to obtain funding to replace the steps. Dan noted he has spoken to
196 representatives from the Onalaska Lions Club and said they are willing to take on the project,
197 with the assistance of city staff, and replace the steps. Dan said the Onalaska Lions Club will
198 incur a majority of the costs, and city staff will assist Lions Club members. Dan said he hopes
199 the project still can be completed this fall, but it might have to wait until spring 2017.

200

201 Andrea suggested inquiring about also possibly obtaining assistance from the Friends of the
202 Great River Bike Trail.

203

204 Motion by Gretchen, second by Victor, to approve authorization for city staff to work with
205 Onalaska Lions Club to replace steps at the Sunfish wayside leading down to the Great River

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206 Bike Trail.

207

208 On voice vote, motion carried.

209

210 **Item 5 – Report from La Crosse County Bluffland Steering Committee**

211

212 Dan said the funding request from the La Crosse County Bluffland Steering Committee is still in
213 the 2017 Capital Improvements Budget.

214

215 **Item 6 – Report from Onalaska Enhancement Foundation**

216

217 Dan told board members the OEF had met October 19 and noted the Onalaska Community
218 Thanksgiving Dinner is being planned. Dan also said “Celebrate Onalaska” will be held once
219 again in 2017.

220

221 **Item 7 – Report from Great River Landing Committee**

222

223 Victor told board members there had been another slide presentation of the project at the October
224 13 meeting. Victor said the committee also had discussed the next steps and obtaining feedback
225 from citizens as to what they want to see once Phase I of the Great River Landing Project has
226 been completed. Victor encouraged board members to examine the different possible options
227 and decide if the board should suggest one or more recommendations on how to proceed.

228

229 Dan noted there will be no funding for the Great River Landing in 2017 as the 2017 Capital
230 Improvements Budget will have been approved. Dan said he is open to discussing the next phase
231 of the Great River Landing, with the idea of focusing on including funding in the 2018 CIB.

232

233 Andrea said she agrees with Victor that the board’s input is important.

234

235 Dan said the Railroad Quiet Zone must be included in the discussions because a primary
236 discussion point will be where fishermen walk along the railroad tracks. Dan said he believes a
237 key component will be the installation of a path on the park side.

238

239 Victor said it will be important not to lose sight of items such as the path, stating he believes it is
240 something the board should be “pushing forward.”

241

242 Gretchen said she would like to find ways to gather a wider variety of input from all citizens
243 versus certain groups.

244

245 Victor said he told the Great River Landing Committee there should be a display at the site that
246 allows visitors to provide feedback.

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247
248 Andrea noted that many of the events held at the Great River Landing have occurred during
249 working hours, making it difficult for citizens to attend them.

250
251 Victor said he hopes the Great River Landing's grand opening scheduled for the spring of 2017
252 can occur on a Saturday.

253
254 **Item 8 – Director's Report**

255
256 **a. Parks Update**

257
258 Mark reported the following:

- 259
- 260 • The only restrooms that still will be open as of October 25 are at the dog park, Great
 - 261 River Landing and Rowe Park.
 - 262 • Staff is mowing, picking up leaves and trimming on the trails.
- 263

264 **b. Recreation Update**

265
266 Dan reported the following:

- 267
- 268 • The flag football, tackle football and volleyball seasons have been completed.
- 269

270 **c. Aquatic Center Update**

271
272 No report.

273
274 **d. Omni Center Update**

275
276 Dan reported the following:

- 277
- 278 • The new chiller system and boards have been installed. There have been some
 - 279 programming difficulties with the new chiller.
- 280

281 Brian reported the following:

- 282
- 283 • A garage sale will be held November 18-19 in the two meeting rooms and also possibly
 - 284 the hallways. Hours are noon to 8 p.m. on November 18, and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on
 - 285 November 19.
 - 286 • A hockey tournament will be held the first weekend of Wisconsin gun deer hunting
 - 287 season.

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- 288 • A nationally accredited ice maintenance class is being held at the facility. There are two
289 parts to the program: ice maintenance, and ice arena promotion. States that are
290 represented include Wyoming, Illinois, Virginia, North Dakota and South Dakota.
291

292 **Item 9 – Closed Session**

293
294 To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin
295 Statutes for the purpose of deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the
296 investing of public funds or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or
297 bargaining reasons require a closed session:
298

- 299 • Tornado Youth Hockey
300

301 If any action is required in Open Session, as the result of the Closed Session, the Board will
302 reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed
303 agenda.
304

305 Motion by Gretchen, second by Ohbe, to convene in Closed Session.
306

307 On roll call vote: Victor Hill – aye, Gretchen Newhouse – aye, Andrea Benco – aye, Ohbe
308 Johnson – aye. In Closed Session.
309

310
311 Recorded by:

312
313 Kirk Bey