

CITY OF VERONA

MINUTES

PARK, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2022

1. The meeting was called to order by Tyler Powers at 5:30 p.m.
2. Roll Call: Present: Tyler Powers, Paul Schmidt, Phil Hoechst. Also present: Casey Dudley, Recreation Director, Dan Schmitt of MSA, Jessica Lanius on behalf of Art house, Katherine Holt, City Planner. Absent: Heather Reekie, Mark Giesfeldt.
3. Jessica Lanius indicated the need for parking on the backside of the old school building.
4. Motion made by Hoechst, seconded by Schmidt, to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2022 meeting of the Park, Recreation, and Forestry Commission. Motion carried 3 - 0.
5. Dan Schmitt indicated the plan documents for the CORP will be brought to the September meeting for review and the full updated plan can be adopted by the City Council in October. Schmitt provided the board with a “project recommendations document” for them to fill out and complete by August 24th for guidance on the CORP. The goal is to have the board rank the items of priority with the final report. The final report will have cost estimates to go along with the priorities. Powers indicated that a dog park within in the city does not need to be included as there are two parks very near the city limits, the other members agreed. Hoechst indicated that a disc golf course might be better suited in a larger park area such as Badger Prairie Park (a Dane County Park) rather than at Fireman’s Park, other members agreed.

Schmitt also presented the finding of the public input booth held on Friday, June 3rd during Hometown Days where members of the public were asked to provide input on the park design and amenities that they would like to see as part of the development of Zingg Park. A rough estimate of about 30 people provided input with the vast majority in favor of the design implementing new features presented in Option B. Feedback also indicated the interest in an adult exercise area which could include equipment, but there is a cost to this type of addition. Katherine asked if we could place a sign at the park location to indicate the location of the future park with a web link for more information pertaining to the park map and amenities.

6. Tyler Powers relayed to the members the issues with a fire pit at the Century School Park brought to him for the Mayor in regards to safety and the burning of fossil fuels. Casey Dudley had reached out to Monona’s Park’s Director about their fire pit in there park with the ice rink. According to their director, they wish they had 3 to 4 more fire pits as people love them and want more. They have even added several wood burning pits throughout the park during the winter months. They also have not had any safety issues come up since the opening of the park.

Phil Hoechst added that his business in Fitchburg has a fire pit and it is very popular and heavily used. The group discussed reducing the size of the fire pit and adding additional pits.

A motion was made by Schmidt, seconded by Hoechst to reduce the size of the fire pit and add an additional 2 fire pits to the plan for a total of 3 smaller fire pits. Also adding the infrastructure for additional future fire pits. Motion pass 3 – 0.

7. All agreed that more parking is necessary at the new Century School Park. The main concerns were the cost to add this to the plan.

Motion was made by Powers, seconded by Schmidt to add the additional 20 parking stalls to the “Century School Park” plan. Motion passed 3 – 0.

8. Dudley presented the members with the need to increase the fees for a few recreation programs based on the costs to provide them. Motion was made by Hoechst, seconded by Schmidt to increase the Playground Program fees to \$200 for residents and \$300 for non-residents with the addition of a non-refundable fee of 50% if cancellation within a month of the start of the program, to increase the non-resident fee at Fireman’s Park Beach to \$5 for children and \$6 for adults, to increase the Park Reservation fees to \$100 per 50 for residents and \$200 per 50 people for non-residents with the addition of a non-refundable fee of 50% after the reservation has been made, and the addition of only allowing residents to book reservations until March 1st each year. Motion passed 3 – 0.

9. Casey presented the Parks, Forestry, and Recreation 2023 proposed budgets to the commission. Each budget added a small increase over 2022. Motion made by Powers, seconded by Hoechst to approve the 2023 proposed Parks, Forestry and Recreation budgets. Motion carried 3 – 0.

The Cemetery budget had a proposed increase for 2023 of 83% or \$13000 to \$28000 for the contracted services. This is due to the contracted company’s (Madison Landscape Construction) requested increase for their services. Hoechst asked if this was something that could be don’t in-house with additional resources at a lower cost. Dudley indicated that their had been discussion in the past with both Dave Walker and Pat Groom about shifting to this model. The member agreed that this was the best way to proceed if it is possible to end the contract after this year.

Motion was made by Powers, seconded by Schmidt to not renew the contract with Madison Landscape Construction at the conclusion of this year and move the operation in-house with the addition of a seasonal employee, a new zero turn mower and string trimmer dedicated to the cemetery. Motion carried 3-0.

10. Moved by Reekie, seconded by Hoechst, to adjourn. Motion carried 3 – 0. Time: 7:26 p.m.

Tyler Powers
Chairperson