

March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Park Commission Minutes

Present: Earl Bednar (Vice-President), Kathy Burton (Secretary), Tom Weatherston (Trustee Liaison), and Mike Lambrecht (Commissioner)

Also present Randall Solberg (Supervisor), Tom Lazcano (Caledonia Public Works Director), Trustee Dale Stillman, Trustee Kevin Wanggaard, and Sue Schuit (Public)

1) Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 5:32 P.M. Vice-President Bednar informed the Commission that President Flynn and Commissioner Arehart were out of town and that Commissioner Kierzek was ill.

2) Public Comments – none

3) Approval of Minutes – \*\* Trustee Weatherston made a motion to approve the February 18, 2020 Minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Lambrecht. Motion carried unanimously.

4) Proposal to install signs on pavilions throughout Caledonia to promote online – Supervisor Solberg presented a sample of the sign. Tom Lazcano asked for the phone number to be removed because it is on the website and the public is encouraged to make their reservations online. The signs are 12 x 18, and we are waiting on one more quote from the Sign Shop.

5) Discussion on Linwood Park Kayak/Canoe Launch – Review cost estimate. Proposal to move forward with Linwood Park launch and seek DNR approval – Tom Lazcano told the Commission that the only quote he received was from Vassh and never heard back from G+F. However, he felt that the quote from Vassh was enough to start the grant process.

6) Tom Weatherston – Update on leased land at Nicholson Wildlife Preserve as recorded at December Park and Rec meeting – Trustee Weatherston informed the Commission that we receive \$1,000.00 a year for the property and that the money does go into the General Fund. He is continuing to search for the Board Resolution/action regarding the property and the original lease. He may also contact the original farmer. He asked for more time to complete these tasks. He concluded by adding that the land may not be part of the Nicholson Wildlife Refuge and therefore would not fall under the state statute.

7) Randall S.: New park development projects – Supervisor Solberg and Tom Lazcano presented a Capital Improvement Plan that they created. Supervisor Solberg went over the list. Trustee Wanggaard emphasized that he would like to see two 5-year plans.

8) Reports 5 – 10 Minutes

\* Staff Updates – Supervisor Solberg stated that he will have 3 helpers instead of 2 this year.

\* Sign Installations at NWR (Tom L.) – Tom Lazcano told the Commission that it would be \$250.00 for the Highway Department to make the signs and \$3,500.00 for them to make and install all the signs.

Trustee Stillman asked about the need for the signs because he never sees anyone at the NWR.

Trustee Weatherston stated that they were in response to a citizen complaint.

Sue Schuit identified herself as the citizen that complained about hunters hunting/shooting into the NWR. She explained that boundary markers and signs may help to inform people where the park is to keep them from hunting within the park.

\* Pathway clearing at Mona Park Rd. (Tom L.) – Tom Lazcano told the Commission that the Highway Department has attempted to clear the easement on two separate occasions only to be harassed and threatened by a neighbor that believes that he owns the property and does not want it cleared. He also informed the Commission that the easement will be cleared.

\* Playground equipment installation updates (Tom L.) – There needs to be an 82 ft. retaining wall installed at Gorney Park. After it is built the playground equipment will be installed. We are just waiting for the Highway Department to have the equipment available.

\* Supervisor – none

\* Commission Members – Trustee Weatherston gave a copy of the proposed Advisory Committee Ordinance to the Commissioners. He stated that the complaint of cutting citizen involvement was heard and that the new committee will now be made up of 2 Village Board Members and 5 citizens in contrast to the previous proposal of 2 Village Board Members and 3 citizens. He said that they would like to have members of the baseball league and the soccer league on the committee, and he encouraged all current Commission Members to reapply. He went on to explain that the ordinance is set to go before the Village Board at their next meeting scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020. He anticipated that the ordinance would pass and would then go on to be published. Once it is published the ordinance will take effect in 60 days.

Secretary Burton asked about a public hearing. Trustee Weatherston stated that the ordinance did not require a public hearing.

Sue Schuit asked what measures the public could take to stop this from happening? Trustee Weatherston responded that there was nothing that they can do.

Secretary Burton expressed anger regarding the March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 article in the Racine Journal Times. The article sited the embezzlement scandal by the Joint Park Supervisor as the reason for the downgrade of the Commission to an Advisory Committee. Although she understood the Village's position, she felt that the sentiment from the Village Administrator (in the article) to curtail the spending ability of the Parks Commission and his call for more oversight, was hurtful. She emphasized that the Commission has always been good stewards of the park funds and has been very frugal in its spending. Regarding oversight, she stated that the Commission has always had a Board Liaison that is supposed to be the link between the Village Board and the Parks Commission and that purchases above \$25,000.00 for the Parks require Village Board approval. She noted as a matter of business, the Village Board approves checks at every Village Board meeting, and that they also approve the budget every year. She wondered what more oversight the Village needed. She also noted that in addition to having a liaison, the Board Members receive a copy of her minutes in their packets every month, yet some Board members have no idea regarding the activities in the Parks and criticize spending by the Commission for items (such as a Park Plan) that they themselves voted for.

Vice-President Bednar expressed his anger regarding the lack of information and general guidance given to new Commission Members. He explained how seasoned members were not reappointed leaving a

basically new Commission to navigate and operate through a mish mash of disjointed information and outdated rules. He commended President Flynn for bringing in staff to explain their relationship to the Parks and their expectations of the Parks. He was disappointed that the Village Administrator never attended a Commission meeting although he'd been invited to do so several times. He also stressed that this Commission has always been transparent with the money. He noted that the Commission has asked for more transparency via a cleaner reading budget and Balance Sheet. He agreed that the implication in the newspaper article was hurtful; and was upset that the Commission was finally functioning as a machine only to be taken apart because of a crime that someone who has nothing to do with this Commission committed.

Trustee Weatherston complimented and thanked the Commission for their dedication and hard work. He stressed that this was not personal but just the direction the Village is going. He then encouraged everyone on the Commission to reapply.

9) Budget Report – The Commission looked over the new Balance Sheet.

10) Communication and Announcements – none

11) Adjournment – \*\*Commissioner Lambrecht made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Trustee Weatherston. Motion Carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted By: Kathy Burton