

May 12, 2020 Park Commission Minutes

Present: Patrick Flynn (President), Earl Bednar (Vice-President), Kathy Burton (Secretary), Jim Arehart (Commissioner), Sara Kierzek (Commissioner), and Mike Lambrecht (Commissioner)

Also present: Randall Solberg (Supervisor), Tom Lazcano (Caledonia Public Works Director), Peter Wagner (Caledonia Planning Director and Moderator of the meeting), Kathy Kasper (Caledonia Finance Director), and Elaine Ekes (Caledonia Village Attorney), Fran Martin (Trustee), and Lee Wishau (Trustee)

Peter Wagner explained how Zoom Meetings work and went over the rules.

***Attorney Ekes explained that due to emergency circumstances of Covid-19, and the need to meet virtually, "Public Comment" has been suspended. However, public comments can be heard on specific agenda items.

1) Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 5:42 P.M.

2) Approval of Minutes –**Commissioner Arehart made a motion to approve the April 14, 2020 Minutes. Seconded by Vice-President Bednar. Motion carried unanimously.

3) Update on leased land at Nicholson Wildlife Preserve as recorded at the December Park and Rec meeting (Tom Weatherston) – (*Trustee Weatherston not present*) President Flynn stated that for years the Village collected rent on a piece of land, currently being farmed, that he believed to be part of the Nicholson Wildlife Refuge.

Tom Lazcano talked about the survey and confirmed that the land is part of the NWR.

President Flynn stated that he had read the State Statute pertaining to rental of parkland and believed that per the statute, the money collected must go into the Parks Budget and not in the General Fund. He would like the money to go toward the NWR as it is in disrepair and could use those funds.

4) Proposal to install light poles at Parks; update on status of inventory at Shane Rawley's Park Complex donated to Caledonia Parks. (Randall Solberg) –The Shane Rawley Ballpark is being demolished due to the Foxconn development. Supervisor Solberg wrote a letter to the owner of the property and asked about the equipment. The owner in turn donated the lights (and poles), and bleachers to Caledonia. Supervisor Solberg informed the Commission that he agreed to donate half of the lights and poles to Saukville in exchange for them removing all the poles from Shane Rawley Ballpark and delivering them to Caledonia.

Commissioner Kierzek asked Supervisor Solberg if the donor of the equipment was aware that he donated half of the poles (and lights) to another entity?

Supervisor Solberg stated that the donor asked him, "If he knew anyone else that would want anything?" and was comfortable with Supervisor Solberg sharing the equipment.

5) Update on transitioning from the Commission to the new, Caledonia Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee – The Commission was informed that the Ordinance for the new, Caledonia Parks Advisory Committee goes into effect on May 22nd.

There was heated discussion surrounding the lack of communication and misinformation from the Village regarding: guidance, operations, impact fees, "open" and "closed" parks, etc.

Secretary Burton asked Attorney Ekes when the idea to move to a committee came about because she was unable to locate Village Board Minutes where the item was ever discussed.

Attorney Ekes looked to locate the meeting. After a search and a discussion of the timeline; it appeared that the item may have been discussed in the Closed Session held by the Village Board on February 17, 2020. That meeting was held under WI Statute 19.85 (1)(f) regarding the possible removal of a Commissioner. She offered no information about the meeting but expressed that, “many ideas are born out of meetings”.

There was concern and banter regarding oversight and responsibilities of Board Members, Commissioners, and Committee Members of past and future.

6) Review of Ethics Complaint to the State regarding the actions of the board to dismantle the Commission and the conduct of the Village Administrator and Village Board President – Attorney Ekes stated that an Ethics Complaint needs to be based in facts:

The claim that the Village did not follow proper requirements – Attorney Ekes said, is “false”.

She informed President Flynn and the Commission that the Village can change policy, and it is within their jurisdiction to make changes.

President Flynn expressed anger regarding the Village Administrator halting projects that were voted on and approved by the Commission. These projects were budgeted with money that was raised by the Commission through fundraising.

Attorney Ekes agreed that if it is true, that the approved projects were halted, that it would be inappropriate. However, she had no knowledge of it and could not speak to it.

Tom Lazcano confirmed that the projects were halted, and instruction was given to have the projects taken up by the new Advisory Committee.

Attorney Ekes concluded by referencing the Caledonia/Mt. Pleasant Joint Park status being a separate park. She informed the Commission that she is not aware of any transfer of Village parkland to the County addressing the belief that the County will be taking over any of the Caledonia Parks.

7) Discussion of 9.3 acres of land on 4 Mile Road from Armin Clobes – The Village purchased 9.3 acres of land for \$210,000. \$107,000 was transferred from Park Impact Fees to make the purchase.

President Flynn and Vice-President Bednar wondered why impact fees were taken from the Parks Budget when the Commission was told at their August 13, 2019 meeting by the Public Works Director (Tom Lazcano) that no Park funds would be used to purchase the property? They conveyed that the Commission was told that the money used to purchase the property was from the sale of the East Side Community Center and that no impact fees would be used.

Tom Lazcano rebutted, and declared that he said, “No funds would be used *right now*”.

He went on to explain that of the 9.3 acres, 5.67 acres (61%) will be added to Crawford Park with the remaining acreage going for police and fire.

Supervisor Solberg suggested applying for a Knowles Nelson Grant to cover some the costs of the property and park development.

8) Reports

a) Linwood Park Kayak Launch Installation – Tom Lazcano stated that because Linwood Park is an old park, he is waiting to see if Impact Fees can be applied.

b) Sign Installations at NWR (Patrick Flynn or Tom Lazcano) – Tom Lazcano stated that he did not receive the final artwork for the signs. Supervisor Solberg saw the artwork at the Highway Department and made minor changes to the sign (Reserve to Refuge).

c) Pathway Clearing at Mona Park (Patrick Flynn or Tom Lazcano) – There have been two previous attempts to do the work necessary to clear the easement. Both times were met with resistance by the neighbor to the west. The next attempt will happen with a police escort.

d) Playground Equipment Installation updates (Patrick Flynn or Tom Lazcano)- Tom Lazcano stated that they are looking to install the equipment in June when the ground is dry.

9) Budget Report- Pooled Cash increased, and there have been some adjustments. Some of the money transferred was to cover Supervisor Solberg's cleaning costs. Impact Fees are down \$128,000 due to the purchase of land in Crawford Park (oldest money being taken first – 2015).

10) Communications and Announcements – none

11) Adjournment – **Vice-President Bednar made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Lambrecht. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:28 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted By: Kathy Burton