

**City of Eau Claire
Waterways and Parks Commission
Wednesday, March 28, 2018
7:00 p.m.
North Conference Room – City Hall**

Agenda

- I. Approval of minutes from the February 28, 2018 meeting.
- II. New Business
 - a. Hobbs Ice Arena 2017 Annual Report (Patrick Newkirk)
 - b. Presentation of Aerial Deer Survey Results (Information Only)
(John Dunn)
- III. 2018 Special Events list (Information only)
- IV. Directors Report (Information only)
- V. Adjournment

**Please call the Recreation Administrative Office
(839-5033) if you cannot attend this meeting!**

"Any person who has a qualifying disability as defined by the Americans With Disabilities Act that requires the meeting or materials at the meeting to be in accessible location or format must contact the ADA Coordinator for the City of Eau Claire, at 839-4921 or at 203 South Farwell Street by 2:00 PM the Monday prior to the meeting so that any necessary arrangements can be made to accommodate each request."

**CITY OF EAU CLAIRE
WATERWAYS AND PARKS COMMISSION**

February 28, 2018

Members Present: Joshua Miller, Tom Fiedler, Meredith Ball, Ron Doering, David Leaman, Terry Weld, Susan McLeod, Megan Kremer, Jason Duba, Kate Beaton, Jenni Sterling

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Todd Chwala, Kristine Basom, Pat Ivory, Kassandra Humke

The meeting was chaired by Joshua Miller in the North Conference Room and called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes of the January 24, 2018 meeting were approved noting that Mr. Ray Larson was the speaker listed on page 4 of the minutes.

Certificate of Appreciation: The Commission presented a certificate of appreciation to Diane Paulsrud for her work on the Commission.

Business Agenda.

A. Recommendation on Excess Land along Galloway Street. Kristine Basom discussed a proposal to declare land owned by the City of Eau Claire on the east side of Galloway Street as excess land. The parcel is divided with one portion to the north of River Prairie Crossing and one portion to the south. It was noted that land along the Eau Claire River would be retained by the City for public open space and possible trail extension. Potential uses for the land north of River Prairie Crossing would most likely be residential. The land south of River Prairie Crossing could be commercial or residential.

ACTION TAKEN: Tom Fielder moved to recommend that the land in question be declared excess with the City retaining ownership of land along the riverfront. Ron Doering seconded the motion. All votes were in favor. Motion carried.

B. Presentation of 2017 Fairfax Pool Report. Chad Duerkop, Facility and Program Supervisor for the Fairfax Pool, presented the 2017 report for Fairfax Pool. The 2017 pool revenues and expenses were discussed as well as the sale of season passes and scholarships that had been given out. He added that 2017 was a very safe year at the pool, and discussed one rescue noting the quick response of the life guards. He also discussed improvements planned for the pool in future years and efforts to better market the pool.

ACTION TAKEN: Jason Duba moved to accept the report. Dave Leaman seconded the motion. All votes were in favor. Motion carried.

Other Items.

-The Commission reviewed the special events listing and Director's Report.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Submitted by,
Susan McLeod, Secretary

PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT NAME: Park and Recreation System Master Plan

To: Waterways and Parks Commission

Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018

From: Patrick Newkirk

Description: Hobbs Ice Arena 2017 Annual Report

Location: 915 Menomonie Street

Background: Annually, staff puts together a statistical summary of Hobbs Ice Arena operations. The summary includes financial, facility usage/attendance, and facility project information. This is an informational report with no action required.

Justification: Allows staff to properly analyze and manage the facility on an annual basis. Reporting this to Waterways and City Council allows for transparency and an update on a city enterprise fund.

Proposed Location: N/A

Facilities Features: N/A

Storm Water: N/A

City of Eau Claire Park and Open Space Master Plan: N/A

City Comprehensive Plan: N/A

Financial: N/A

LAWCON: N/A

Waterways – HOBBS REPORT FOR 2017

March 28, 2018

Overview/History

Hobbs Ice Arena is a year-round ice skating facility with three indoor sheets of ice. Originally constructed in 1974, it was expanded to a two sheet indoor facility in 1985. In 2009 Hobbs was expanded again adding a 2/3 full size indoor rink, expanded lobby and restrooms, additional locker rooms, and a new office area for the Parks and Recreation Administrative offices which consolidated City buildings and services for continued departmental savings.

Major users include the Eau Claire Youth Hockey Association, the Eau Claire Figure Skating Club, UW-Eau Claire, the Eau Claire Area School District's three varsity hockey teams, the F1 and Bucks AAA summer hockey program, and the City of Eau Claire's Parks and Recreation programming. There are also several summer hockey camp groups that call Hobbs their home. These organizations utilize the facility extensively and are the foundation for continued financial success at Hobbs. Additional Revenue is generated through private ice rentals, public open skating and open hockey, vending commissions, advertising sales, and concession operations. Hobbs Ice Arena also hosts dry floor events which utilize the facility's 'dry' rink floors in the off season months.

Facility Events and Usage

In 2017 Hobbs Ice Arena hosted a major figure skating competition, 3 figure skating testing sessions, 81 varsity level high school and college hockey games, 3 major youth hockey tournaments, two high school hockey tournaments and a regional USA Hockey tryout. The rest of the facility's ice usage comes from public open skating and open hockey, figure skating and hockey practice time, and private rentals. The meeting rooms at the facility are used for various Recreation Division programs, City staff orientations and trainings, user group meetings and events, and also for private rentals. Hobbs was also the host for 4 dry-floor events held in April and August/September. Open skating attendance for 2017 totaled 8,335 participants for all drop-in offerings. Overall, Hobbs Ice Arena had 7,868.5 reserved hours of use combined between its 3 ice sheets and meeting rooms. This is the largest total in the facility's history.

2017 Major Facility Projects

Major facility projects in 2017 included adding a lighted facility name sign to the front of the building while also replacing the parking lot lighting in the front parking lot with new poles and LED fixtures. The lighting in the parking lot has been dramatically improved which is important during the low-light winter months when the facility is used most heavily. All asphalt surfaces in the front and back parking lots were also seal coated with a special coating to extend their lifespan an additional 5-10 years. Lastly, the locker room entry doors for the O'Brien Rink public locker rooms, which were still original to the facility, were completely replaced.

Preliminary Revenues/Expenses

Revenues in 2017 totaled \$898,518 while operational expenses reached a total of \$748,787 leaving the operation with a net profit from operations of \$149,731. This is the 8th consecutive year the facility has shown a profit from operations. Of note are stabilized utility costs through various operational changes and the continuation of regular preventative maintenance for the facility's mechanical equipment. The advertising and sponsorship program has also been successful in recent years, bringing in roughly \$30,000 in advertising revenue each year with a core group of regular facility advertisers. Ice rental revenues have also been consistently strong due to the strength of the local fall/winter user groups. In addition, the concession stand operation had its highest revenue year ever with over \$91,000 in revenue. This noticeable concessions increase from recent years can be attributed to the additional events the facility hosted including the USA Hockey Girls Central District tryout in March and the ECA Stars holiday tournament in December. These types of events all bring patrons to the facility for long periods of time and while they are here, they will typically purchase food and snacks from the concession stand more so than during practice time or stand-alone youth hockey games.

Budgetary Performance and Debt Service

While preliminary revenues exceeded operational expenses by \$149,731 Hobbs operations did fall short of the budgetary income projection of \$193,800. Revenues were under budget projections by \$49,782 or 5% of the overall projection. The revenue shortage comes almost entirely from lower than projected ice rental/usage. There are two main factors for this. First, starting in 2016, the summer use of the facility has decreased due to the availability of lower cost ice at the completely volunteer run Chippewa Falls ice arena. In the summer of 2017, ice rates at Hobbs were reduced in an effort to remain cost competitive with the facility in Chippewa Falls. As a result, the facility did see a slight increase in rented icetime from May-August of 2017 when compared with the same period in 2016. The roughly \$50,000 revenue shortage is equivalent to 285 hours of ice rental at the prime fall/winter ice rate of \$175 per hour.

In addition, the overall number of youth hockey players has also been a contributing factor toward a lower amount of overall rented ice use. Prior to 2016, the numbers of youth hockey players in the youngest levels of the sport had been decreasing. This contributed to a shrinking 'base' of players to support all the different summer hockey groups, and in turn ice use, at the facility. This issue has been addressed by significantly increased grass roots fundraising efforts by the Eau Claire Youth Hockey Association. In 2017, there were over 80 youth hockey players in the mini-mite level, ages 4-5 years old. That is significantly increased from 2015 when the lowest number of 4-5 year old hockey players was only 37 and in 2016 when there were 44 players. As time goes on, this increase in the base of hockey players in Eau Claire will result in more ice use both during hockey season and in the off-season months. For the long term, ECYH has received commitments from private donors such that the cost of registration and equipment is free for all players aged 7 and younger. This should serve to continue the renewed growth of youth hockey at the youngest levels now and into the future which will ultimately result in increases in ice use from all hockey related groups and in turn more ice rental revenue at the facility.

As the facility navigates through the ebbs and flows of user group size a continued focus on attracting outside events and tournaments will remain. In the summer months, the majority of the available ice time at the facility in the off-season months is on weekends, making the growth potential to host tournaments and camps quite high. While locker room upgrades are still necessary to attract higher level play, weekend time for off-season tournaments is readily available and weekend summer use is being pursued.

On the expense side of the operating budget, 2017 Hobbs operating expenses came in at \$5,713 less than projected. Ice rinks use large amounts of electricity and natural gas to keep the ice frozen and keep the air at the correct temperature and humidity. Continued energy efficiency measures and ongoing preventative maintenance to the facility's major mechanical equipment are paying off significantly. Proper ice maintenance also causes significant savings from the ice refrigeration equipment not having to work as hard to maintain the temperature of ice that is kept thinner than in the past. Rink air humidity and temperature are constantly monitored for ideal conditions and this also contributes to less work by the ice refrigeration and air handling equipment. The cost of electricity has increased over the last year, so it will be important to continue maintaining the ice and mechanical equipment to high standards as any deferred maintenance will reduce the efficiency of the building's systems.

As a result of the shortfall in budgeted income from operations, the 2017 General Fund investment for debt service will increase from the projected \$106,100 to \$148,427. An appropriation adjustment for Hobbs will be included with the quarterly adjustments in April. Future year debt service amounts will remain at approximately \$310,000.

Future

The future for Hobbs Ice Arena continues to be strong. The major user groups in the fall and winter seasons are utilizing the facility a great deal and there is significant potential for more growth in future seasons, especially with the rebound of the youngest ages of youth hockey players. While efforts to attract an NAHL team to the facility were ongoing during 2015, discussions with the league have shown that locker amenities need to be upgraded and more fall/winter weekend icetime needs to be available before Hobbs can be seriously considered for a team. Attracting an NAHL team to the Eau Claire market is desired, but not at the expense of icetime to the local major user groups. That said, it would be prudent to address the locker room amenities in the facility should more icetime become available in the future. There is also the potential to explore renovating the Akervik Rink to the level of NAHL facilities, which would immediately solve the weekend icetime issue as the Akervik Rink is currently not used on Friday/Saturday nights for any varsity level games during the hockey season. Right now, the O'Brien Rink is used for all varsity level hockey games as it is the only rink at the facility with amenities sufficient for those levels of play.

As previously mentioned another area of focus for increasing usage at the facility is during the summer months. The availability of icetime at the facility in Chippewa Falls has caused some smaller summer groups to leave Hobbs for lower cost icetime. Because of this, ice rates for the summer months have

been decreased in an effort to stay competitive within the market and gain back groups that chose to skate elsewhere in 2015 and 2016. People want to skate at Hobbs, but the cost has to be factored into their decisions. For September 2018 - August 2019, there are no planned rate increases at Hobbs Ice Arena. The 6% rate increase in 2013 along with improved preventative maintenance practices and decreased energy usage have helped to stabilize the financial situation at the facility. However, rental rates will continue to be analyzed to ensure strong financial performance at the facility.

There are several significant projects at the facility in 2018. First, the evaporative condensers for the main refrigeration system will be replaced. These units are essential to the refrigeration process and once replacement is complete the facility should see further increased energy efficiency. Another major project for the facility is the design of the replacement rink floor in the Akervik Rink. Lack of subfloor heat has caused heaving of the concrete floor which if not addressed will lead to failure of that rink and a complete loss of the ice in one of the two full size sheets at Hobbs. Design work will be completed in 2018 with the actual replacement being done in the spring/summer of 2019. This work should be completed without any interruption to the normal ice schedule at the facility. Lastly, a concept level design for a future mechanical and locker room addition will be completed in 2018. Addition of an interior ice resurfacer garage between the O'Brien and Akervik Rinks is planned along with additional locker rooms for the existing high school hockey teams, a locker room space for a future NAHL team, and other improvements within the Akervik Rink. The intention is to work with the current user groups of the facility to take input on what is desired for additional space and use that input in the concept design. In future years, formal design work will be completed leading up to the eventual addition work.

Economic and Community Impact

In 2013 and 2014, Visit Eau Claire conducted an economic impact study on events that occur at City facilities operated by Eau Claire Parks, Recreation, and Forestry. The results of that study have shown a tremendous amount of impact on the Eau Claire economy directly resulting from events such as the Eau Claire Youth Hockey tournaments and the Eau Claire Figure Skating Club competitions. The study's results also show the significant value that facilities like Hobbs have for the City as a whole. As an example, the study concluded that the 2014 Michael Hughes youth hockey tournament had an overall impact of approximately \$565,000 to the Eau Claire economy. Hobbs hosts three major youth hockey tournaments each year as well as a major figure skating competition, all of which bring large numbers of people to Eau Claire who stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, and go shopping while they are here. Because of the economic impact from these kinds of events, it is clear that Hobbs is a benefit to more than just the facility's user groups.

In 2017, the facility hosted two additional major events which brought people to Eau Claire. Most notably, the USA Hockey Girls Central District tryout brought over 300 girls hockey players from Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri during the ECASD spring break week. This type of event during the local user groups' off-season does not interfere with existing user groups, increases ice use and revenue for the facility, and also positively impacts the overall economy of Eau Claire. Hosting additional events like this will continue to be the focus for increasing facility use and planning facility upgrades now and into the future.

Hobbs Ice Arena Total Icetime Reserved Hours

UWEC MEN & WOMEN	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	85.75	83	75.75	82	88
February	55.25	56.5	69	74.5	75.75
March	32	12.75	6	4	15
April	10	9	10.5	16	15
May	4	9	10.5	8	8
June	4				
July	4				
August					
September	13	19	16	18	15
October	50.75	49	58.5	60.5	59.75
November	62.75	68	85.75	88.5	84.5
December	42.75	55.25	61.75	63.25	48.25
TOTAL HOURS RESERVED	364.25	361.5	393.75	414.75	409.25

EAU CLAIRE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	109.25	90	108.75	119.5	137.75
February	58.5	87.25	100.5	104.5	92.25
March	3	6.5	3		
April	21.25	9	2	5	4
May	12	6.5	8	5	4
June	7.5	14	8	13.25	19
July	4.5	17.75	15.5	31.75	40.5
August	4	11	5	8	12.25
September	13	10	4	7	11
October	14	14	26	16	21
November	108.75	90.75	107.25	154.75	123.75
December	110.25	118.25	129.75	159	131.25
TOTAL HOURS RESERVED	466	475	517.75	623.75	596.75

EAU CLAIRE YOUTH HOCKEY	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	210.25	203	250.5	284.25	244.25
February	152.5	208.5	196.25	183.5	210.5
March	11	67	106.25	76.5	54.25
April			10		5
May					
June					
July				10	
August					
September				2	
October	48	36	40	48.5	57.75
November	101	97.5	104.75	102	131.75
December	150.25	150.25	136.75	175.5	197
TOTAL HOURS RESERVED	673	762.25	844.5	882.25	900.5

EAU CLAIRE FIGURE SKATING CLUB	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	57	53.75	59.75	53.75	53
February	55.75	54	48.75	48	47.25
March	134.5	182.75	179.75	165.75	99
April	89.5	74.5	71.75	65.75	62.75
May	54.25	62	48.5	41.75	41.25
June	39.25	58	58.75	55.75	62
July	53.25	58.75	49.5	35.25	44.75
August	55.25	68.25	60	68.75	63.75
September	53.25	62.5	45.5	44.5	45.75
October	57.25	61.75	53.75	55.25	55
November	65	101	92.75	87.5	67.25
December	55.75	56.25	45.5	41.5	48.5
TOTAL HOURS RESERVED	770	893.5	814.25	763.5	690.25

F1/BUCKS SUMMER HOCKEY	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January					
February					
March	10	10			
April	59.75	51	11.5		5.75
May	53	32	43.5	9	17.75
June	68	45.75	38	54	40
July	52	39.5	42.25	42	41
August	43.5	28	44.25	21.5	17
September	48	53	48	41	36
October	66.5	44	48.5	46	27
November	6	3	4.5		
December					
TOTAL HOURS RESERVED	406.75	306.25	280.5	213.5	184.5

PARKS AND RECREATION	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	177.75	167	148.25	187.5	126.75
February	155.5	154	143.25	175.5	118
March	115.25	121	124.25	165.75	143
April	52	65.5	81	82	84
May	60	56	68	70	63.5
June	58	76	72	81	88
July	74	95.5	76	64	70.5
August	74	90	76.75	63.5	86.5
September	116.5	131	75	79.5	64
October	134	116.5	110.5	115	109.5
November	138.5	158.75	178.75	128	122
December	150.5	169	212	164.25	139
TOTAL HOURS RESERVED	1306	1400.25	1365.75	1376	1214.75

Individual Renters Combined Total 1351.75

Combined Facility Total 5347.75

Hobbs Municipal Ice Arena Reserved Hours by Space

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
O'Brien Rink	1695	1879	2046	1909.5	2265.25
Akervik Rink	1878	2177	1907	1807	1947.25
Hughes Rink	1388	1569	1511	1519.75	1331.25
Conference Room	502	605	558	643.5	585
Meeting/Party Room	233	110	316	279.75	354.5
Club Viewing Room	288	419	711	583	890.5
Mezzanine Spaces	0	30	30	0	0
Lobby	0	0	15	27	19.5
Parking Lot	26	20	27	0	0
Fitness Room	248	225	425	362	475.25
	6258	7034	7546	7131.5	7868.5

Hobbs Municipal Ice Center Reserved Days by Space

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Dry Floor Space	54	45	24	18	23
Conference Room	146	172	169	161	190
Meeting/Party Room	43	73	64	58	54
Club Viewing Room	75	135	142	130	177
	318	425	399	367	444

Hobbs Municipal Ice Arena - Ten Year Financial History

Hobbs Municipal Ice Center Operating Budget

	2017 Preliminary	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009*	2008	2007
Revenues	\$898,518.00	\$826,992	\$834,412	\$825,857	\$762,821	\$778,563	\$713,159	\$652,249	\$558,867	\$514,447	\$482,171
Expenses	\$748,787.00	\$681,998	\$674,597	\$658,224	\$681,838	\$633,740	\$631,533	\$619,833	\$566,137	\$545,895	\$524,059
Net	\$149,731	\$144,994	\$159,815	\$167,633	\$80,983	\$144,823	\$81,626	\$32,416	(\$7,270)	(\$31,448)	(\$41,888)

* Renovation in 2009

* Consolidated Operation Savings - not applicable in 2009

* Consolidated Operation Savings Beginning 2010 = \$180,000

HOBBS MUNICIPAL ICE CENTER FEES

LINE #	FEES	LAST INCREASE	2016-2017 ADOPTED FEES (09-01-16 to 08-31-17)	2017-2018 ADOPTED FEES (09-01-2017 to 08-31-18)	2018-2019 ADOPTED FEES (09-01-2018 to 08-31-19)
Hobbs-1	Hobbs Ice Rental - F/W Prime Time - O'Brien & Akervik Rinks - Per Hour. Weekdays 1pm to 12am, AND all weekends. September 1 through April 30.	2014	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$175.00
Hobbs-2	Hobbs Ice Rental - F/W Prime Time - Hughes Studio Rink - Per hour weekdays 1pm to 12am, AND all weekends. September 1 through April 30.	2017	\$143.00	\$148.00	\$148.00
Hobbs-3	Hobbs Ice Rental - F/W Non Prime Time - All Rinks - Per hour weekdays 12am to 1pm, September 1 through April 30.	2017	\$143.00	\$115.00	\$115.00
Hobbs-4	Hobbs Ice Rental - Summer Ice - O'Brien & Akervik - Per hour May 1 through August 31	2017	N/A	\$148.00	\$148.00
Hobbs-5	Hobbs Ice Rental - Summer Ice - Hughes - Per hour May 1 through August 31	2017	N/A	\$126.00	\$126.00
Hobbs-6	Hobbs Event - Dry Floor Special Event - Daily Rental Per Rink, plus any additional custodial overtime related to the event.	2011	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Hobbs-7	Hobbs Hourly - Dry Floor.	2014	\$125.00	\$125.00	\$125.00
Hobbs-8	Hobbs Hockey Event - O'Brien Rink - Varsity Single Game	2014	\$775.00	\$775.00	\$775.00
Hobbs-9	Hobbs Hockey Event - O'Brien Rink - JV/Varsity Game Combined	2014	\$975.00	\$975.00	\$975.00
Hobbs-10	Hobbs Hockey Event - Akervik Rink - Varsity Single Game	2014	\$575.00	\$575.00	\$575.00
Hobbs-11	Hobbs Hockey Event - Akervik Rink - JV/Varsity Game DH.	2014	\$775.00	\$775.00	\$775.00
Hobbs-12	Hobbs Event - Birthday Party Reservation Fee (available during open skate hours only). Includes: Open skate admission (10 youth/2 adults), 12 hot dog/pizza meal deals, and room space provided. Any additional person beyond 12 is \$8.00 per person.	2014	\$125 (up to 12) plus \$8 for each add'l person	\$125 (up to 12) plus \$8 for each add'l person	\$125 (up to 12) plus \$8 for each add'l person
Hobbs-13	Hobbs Event - Food (Excludes Birthday Parties) - Per Event.	2010	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
Hobbs-14	Hobbs Drop In Program	2017	\$6.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
Hobbs-15	Hobbs Skate Rental - Skates are ONLY available to use during Open Skate Sessions at the Hobbs Municipal Ice Center.	2017	\$3.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
Hobbs-16	Hobbs Ice Resurface Charge	2014	\$42.50	\$42.50	\$42.50
Hobbs-17	Hobbs Locker Room - Cleaning Fee	2015	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
Hobbs-18	Hobbs Room Rental - Mezzanine (5 spaces available A, B, C, E, F) - No Cost.	2010	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hobbs-19	Hobbs Room Rental - Meeting/Party Room/Conference Room - Per Hour.	2014	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00
Hobbs-20	Hobbs Room Rental - Club Viewing Room - Per Hour / Per Day	2014	\$75.00 / Hour \$600.00 / Day	\$75.00 / Hour \$600.00 / Day	\$75.00 / Hour \$600.00 / Day
Hobbs-21	Hobbs Room Rental - Club Viewing Room - Per Varsity Game	2016	\$100 / Game	\$100 / Game	\$100 / Game
Hobbs-22	Hobbs Room Rental - Kitchen (includes food fee)	2016	\$150	\$150	\$150
Hobbs-23	Hobbs Room Rental - Audio/Video	2016	\$30	\$30	\$30

PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT NAME: Whitetail Deer Census

To: Waterways and Parks Commission

Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018

From: John Dunn

Description: 2018 Ariel Deer Survey

Location: Citywide

Background: In recent years there's been a concern about an overpopulation of the whitetail deer herd within the City limits. Most concerns were related to landscape vegetation damages.

Justification: The metrics collected will aid staff in properly analyzing and managing the deer herd going forward.

Proposed Location: N/A

Facilities Features: N/A

Storm Water: N/A

City of Eau Claire Park and Open Space Master Plan: N/A

City Comprehensive Plan: N/A

Financial: N/A

LAWCON: N/A

2018 helicopter Deer Survey Summary

On ~~Thursday, February 8, 2018~~ I conducted a helicopter deer survey for the fourth consecutive year. MN Helicopters, Inc. out of Minneapolis was again contracted for this survey. Jonathan Salaun was the pilot for the second year. The same Robinson R22 helicopter was used.

We had almost ideal conditions with fresh snow and partly cloudy skies. The temperature started out below zero but warmed to a high of 14 degrees. The only improvement would have been overcast conditions that would have reduced some of the shadows.

The survey started at approximately 9:30 AM and finished at about 3:00 PM. We flew the same seven areas that have been flown the previous years.

The overall deer population was up 53% from 2017 and is a record high since the survey was started. Five of the seven areas were up significantly, one area remained the same and one area was down. When the raw numbers are translated to Deer per Square Mile (the standard measuring unit for deer), the Citywide density is 59 Deer per Square Mile. This is up 37% over last year. This is three times the generally accepted urban density level. This is a departure from the last 3 years where there was a slight downward trend.

While discussing the Eau Claire survey with the pilot who has flown a number of surveys in the Twin Cities, two things became apparent. First, our deer tend to herd up far more than in the Twin Cities. They generally see 1 or 2 deer at a time while we may see 10-15 or more in a group. This is most likely due to feeding stations that tend to concentrate deer. Secondly, our deer tend to run more than in the Twin Cities. This may be

due to less daily aerial disturbances. Both of these factors may have an influence on our survey.

We have now had 4 archery seasons in the City of Eau Claire as a result of State Act 71. The harvest numbers within the city are not known because there is no mechanism available to record them. The harvest is most likely too low to have a significant influence on reducing deer numbers. In a positive move, the Eau Claire County Deer Advisory Council (CDAC), has approved the creation of a Deer Metro Sub-Unit that will liberalize the hunting season framework in and around Eau Claire. This will not create new hunting areas but will expand the season dates and antlerless tag availability. Harvest figures will be better defined with the Sub-Unit but still will not provide harvest numbers for the City alone. The new Sub-Unit should be in effect for the 2018 season.

The City Wells showed a significant increase from previous years. Counting deer here has always been difficult due to the heavy conifer cover. This year, more deer were observed out of the conifers and into the hardwoods. The youth/disabled hunt that takes place in the northwest corner has harvested 19 deer in the past two years. The success rate of 67% is well above the statewide archery success rate of 25% and is an indication of an abundance of deer. Despite the high success rate, the limited number of deer harvested in and around the City Wells does not have a significant influence on reducing the herd. Based on some large concentrations of deer to the west and south of the Wells, it appears that there is some feeding on private property.

Another area of interest is Grover Road. The number of observed deer dropped 23%. I don't believe that this is due to fewer deer but rather missed deer. This area has traditionally had the largest groups of deer in the City. This is most likely due to feeding and large yards with an abundance of landscape shrubbery. Missing one group of deer can greatly influence the overall herd count in this area.

Mount Simon is surveyed as part of the Jeffers Road Area. This year, 16 deer were counted in the park and adjacent private land. The previous high was 4 deer in 2015. The survey count and corresponding density numbers for all seven areas is attached.

Literature searches as well as professional contacts indicate that this type of aerial survey is the most effective means of counting urban deer but still only accounts for 60-80% of the total population. My overall impression is that this year's count more accurately reflects the growing status of Eau Claire's deer herd. The current limited archery season will not harvest enough deer to keep up with annual reproductive rates. This will result in increased landscape/garden depredation and car/deer collisions. Future surveys will provide more reliable data and help develop long term population trends that will determine future management needs.

HELICOPTER DEER SURVEY

	1993	2015	2016	2017	2018
Area 1 (Princeton Valley)	9	56	75	47	70
Area 2 (City Wells)	33	54	45	25	84
Area 3 (Jeffers Rd.)	22	42	30	40	78
Area 4 (La Salle Hill)	52	34	49	32	30
Area 5 (Grover Rd.)	59	61	38	57	41
Area 6 (Oakwood Hills)	0	27	18	21	33
Area 7 (Putnam Park)	0	33	9	10	18
	—	—	—	—	—
	175	307	264	232	354
		+75%	-14%	-12%	+53%

DEER DENSITY/ SQUARE MILE

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Area 1 (Princeton Valley)	35	47	29	44
Area 2 (City Wells)	53	44	25	82
Area 3 (Jeffers Road)	29	20	28	54
Area 4 (La Salle Hill)	77	111	73	68
Area 5 (Grover Road)	94	58	88	63
Area 6 (Oakwood Hills)	38	26	30	47
Area 7 (Putnam Park).	103	28	31	56
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Average	50	48	43	59
Change		-4%	-10%	+37%

CITY OF EAU CLAIRE COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY
March 2018 Monthly Report

Carson Park Main Playground

The East half of the playground has been installed and the remainder will be completed in the spring of 2018.

Fairfax Pool

The construction of the addition of the first aid room and manager's office continues. The footings have been poured and the walls have been constructed. The project is expected to be completed by May 1.

Forestry Division

Emerald Ash Borer has been officially discovered in the City of Eau Claire. We will continue our preemptive Ash removals in targeted neighborhoods, which currently are East of Rudolph Road to Fairfax Street and South of Mitscher Street to Interstate 94.

Forestry Division staff are removing Cottonwood trees along the Chippewa River adjacent to the Haymarket Plaza project. The trees in question are in conflict with the proposed trail that follows the river bank.

We will be facilitating a chain saw safety clinic with employees from other divisions. The intent is to cross train employees in Parks & Streets Divisions in further preparation for the Emerald Ash Borer impact on city trees.

Northside Dog Park

The City Council approved the Northside Dog Park at the location of Sundet Neighborhood Park. This addition will provide a much requested dog park on the northside of the City. We expect the construction to take place this spring and summer with a grand opening sometime this year.

Staff has met with reps from CBS Squared to initiate design elements for the proposed southwest dog park and boat launch at the end of Ferry Street near the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Parks Division

Park staff has been making progress removing invasive vegetation (buckthorn) in several park areas. Outdoor ice skating and cross country skiing opportunities have ended for the season. Staff are now making preparations for the upcoming warm weather seasons.

Prime Times

The Summer 2018 edition is now available in print, or can be found online at www.eauclairewi.gov/primetimes . The book has been distributed to elementary schools and at several locations throughout the City.

Special Events

The Special Events Committee continues to work with all the groups that conduct events within city parks and meets at least monthly. The group will also review alcohol license applications.