



Waterways and Parks Commission

Agenda

5:30 p.m., October 23rd, 2024

City of Eau Claire

North Conference Room – City Hall

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Reading and approval of minutes of the past meeting on Wednesday, September 25th, 2024.**
4. **Open Public Comment Period for Items that do not appear on this Agenda**
 - a. The public comment period will be for 20 minutes. Each speaker shall be permitted no more than 3 minutes to speak and shall only speak once per session.
5. **Business Agenda Items**
6. **Discussion and Direction**
 - a. Announcements
 - Overview on pesticide use in City Parks
 - Update on recent tree removals at the City Well Site
 - b. Future Agenda Items
7. **Adjournment**

Ellen Faulkner, Chairperson

c: News Media

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."



Waterways and Parks Commission

Minutes

5:30 p.m., September 25th, 2024

City of Eau Claire

North Conference Room – City Hall

1. **Call to Order** by Ellen Faulkner at 5:30pm
2. **Roll Call**
Members Present Ellen Faulkner, Mark Stanley, Clara Serrano, Erin LaFaive, Megan Holmes, Christopher Johnson, Joe Maurer
Members Absent: Aaron Brewster, Meredith Ball, Gina Keenan, Don Wisner
Staff Present: Steve Plaza, Patrick Newkirk, Corey Lee, Lindsay Jerry
Others Present: Chris Silewski of Ayres Associates, Inc.
3. **Reading and approval of minutes of the past meeting on Wednesday, August 28th, 2024.**
Motion by Chairperson Faulkner to approve the August minutes, seconded by Commissioner Stanley. The August meeting minutes pass unanimously.
4. **Open Public Comment Period for Items that do not appear on this Agenda**
 - a. The public comment period will be for 20 minutes. Each speaker shall be permitted no more than 3 minutes to speak and shall only speak once per session.
 - Mary McManus, city resident and President of the Friends of the Wells requests motions for a report from city staff on the use of pesticides, as well as on logging at the Northeast part of the City Well Site. She also requests a motion for Friends of the Wells to review the CORBA trail plan for the City Well Site before it's implemented.
5. **Business Agenda Items**
 - a. Overview of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
Presentation by Chris Silewski, Ayres Associates, Inc.
 - The City initiated the CORP Study to assess city parks and trails through community survey, user group input, and meetings, in order to put a plan in place that allows for continued access to DNR grants for trail and park improvements. Time has been allotted for Waterways and Parks to review and add input.
 - Per Mr. Silewski The Corp Plan process began by collecting data and visiting every park. Ayres Associates connected with user groups, attended community engagement opportunities, met with neighborhood groups, initiated a community survey, and conferred with the Planning and Parks Departments. Recommendations were compiled for individual parks and the parks system in general, some required by the DNR. In a workshop with City Council members, the priority was access to parks. Community feedback is that playgrounds and water access are a priority,

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with improvements needed for children’s play areas, some aging infrastructure, as well as the quality of benches, picnic tables, and drinking fountains.

- The Commission asked questions of staff:

The Commission requested a heat map of the playgrounds.

Does the Corp Study look at equity? Per Mr. Silewski, it’s not in the usability index, but the demographics of the community as a whole and how it compares to similarly sized communities in the state are considered. Mr. Silewski offered to see if they can create a low to moderate income map to interlay with parks.

Does accessibility mean wayfinding and community awareness, or mobility related accessibility? Mr. Silewski responded that wayfinding and signage will be one of the main recommendations, along with physical accessibility improvements and general awareness.

What happens after the report is finalized? Per Mr. Plaza, we will figure out what we can do within the budget, and the recommendations will be the guideline over the next five years. We received a rough draft of the report yesterday. When it’s is done, prior to review by City Council, the Waterways and Parks Commission will have time to review it and approve it or not.

Are recommendations based on existing budget, or are they shooting for the stars?

The formal report is written as if the budget were no concern. Per Mr. Newkirk, the final product is what we use to inform the CIP budget and justify improvements.

Mr. Silewski asked for any recommendations for criteria for which the Commission would like a heat map. Responses were accessibility, natural elements, and noise level.

- b. Recommendation for approval of Underground Utility Easements, Trail Easements, and Temporary Construction Easements for the Menomonie Street Pedestrian Underpass Presentation by Corey Lee, City of Eau Claire Budget Analyst

- The city is in the process of finalizing what’s being done with the Menomonie Street pedestrian underpass near the Sonnentag Center. We have five easements: utility and permanent utility, temporary construction, and trail easements. Water and sanitary lines are being shifted around the underpass, requiring easements for accessibility and construction easements for the installation. The plan involves utility and trail relocation and retaining wall construction. To meet the proper grading, the trail needs to be located on private property. The city can try to purchase it, but an easement is faster for the meantime. Easements for sanitary lines and construction have been signed, with work continuing with EC Spring LLC on the language.

- The Commission asked questions of staff:

Are there any floodplain concerns? Per Mr. Lee, there are none. The major concern is contaminated soils. We have DNR permission with the understanding that there will be caps in the area.

Are trees, lakes, or streams impacted? Per Mr. Lee, there are no concerns as far as trees or the

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floodplain.

- Commissioner Holmes motions to recommend all of the proposed easements, seconded by Chairperson Faulkner. Commissioner Maurer opposes.

6. Discussion and Direction

a. Announcements

- The City will be clearing the line in Owen Park that pumps water up to Half Moon Lake. The lake will get a little orange due to the iron buildup. Flushing the line doesn't affect aquatic life or plants.

- Update on promoting City Trails and Parks

Per Steve Plaza, Visit Eau Claire has a grant to promote rural trails. This doesn't come into the city, but we'll work with them to promote the trails. Per Mr. Newkirk, Visit Eau Claire is working with eight counties including Eau Claire County on a way to brand the surrounding area as a destination for outdoor recreation in Wisconsin. The city can't participate due to our population size, but we'll attend their meetings and form our own city subcommittee. The city's goal is to update marketing materials and create branded slogans.

- Discussion on the current status of the Park System

Mr. Plaza presented a PowerPoint with current statistics about the city park system.

b. Future Agenda Items

- Commissioner LaFaive motions to have pesticide use in parks on the agenda. Chairperson Faulkner seconds the motion.

- Commissioner LaFaive motions for a report on tree removal in the City Wells. Commissioner Maurer seconds the motion.

- Commissioner Maurer motions to have a revised update regarding the CORBA Trail Plan. Commissioner LaFaive seconds.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner LaFaive motions to adjourn at 7pm, seconded by Commissioner Serrano.

Ellen Faulkner, Chairperson

c: News Media

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PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT NAME: Overview of Pesticide Application in City Parks

To: Waterways and Park Commission Members

Date: October 23, 2024

From: Steve Plaza, Parks, Forestry, Cemetery, Buildings and Grounds Manager

Description: Information Only

Location: Overview of Pesticide use in the City's Parks

Background: The Commission requested an overview of pesticides used in the parks and how they are applied.

Justification: Brendan Osborne, Parks Supervisor and Licensed Pesticide Applicator through the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture will be sharing an overview of the Parks Department process of applying pesticides in the parks.

Proposed Motion: Information Only – no action needed

Proposed Location: Park system

Facilities Features: N/A

Financial: Operational Budget

PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY

STAFF REPORT

PROJECT NAME: Logging/Tree Removal on City Wells Site

To: Waterways and Park Commission Members

Date: October 23, 2024

From: Steve Plaza, Parks, Forestry, Cemetery, Buildings and Grounds Manager

Description: Information Only

Location: City Well Site – Logging/Tree Removal

Background: The Commission requested a report on logging/tree removal in the well fields

Justification: At the September meeting of the Waterways and Parks Commission, it was requested that a report of the logging/tree removal operations taking place in the Wells Site be placed on the October agenda. I would like to point out that the City Wells Site is not designated as a City Park, and is under the control of the Utilities Division.

Ben Spanel, Utilities Manager, has indicated that the Utilities Division was giving a Forestry Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc. (FISTA Training) to its staff. The trainer cut three dead Ash Trees behind the water plant to demonstrate safe techniques for felling and limbing trees while using a chain saw. These training courses are held annually for Community Services staff members to help ensure safe techniques while performing their jobs.

The city currently doesn't have any logging operations in place.

Proposed Motion: Information Only – no action needed

Proposed Location: Park system

Facilities Features: N/A

Financial: N/A