

**VILLAGE OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE
PARK COMMISSION
Village Hall, Auditorium
9915 39th Avenue
Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin 53158
Tuesday, March 6, 2007
6:00 p.m.**

A regular meeting of the Pleasant Prairie Park Commission was held on Tuesday, March 6, 2007, 6:00 p.m. Present were Rita Christiansen, Michael Russert, Glenn Christiansen, Alex Tiahnybok, William Mills and Kathleen Burns. Michaeline Day was excused. Also present were Michael Pollocoff, Village Administrator; John Steinbrink, Jr., Superintendent of Parks; and Ruth Mack, Clerical Secretary.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER.**
- 2. ROLL CALL.**
- 3. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.**

Alex Tiahnybok:

Move approval.

Rita Christiansen:

I have a motion for approval.

William Mills:

Just one. I think I'm identified as William Morris on page 11 again. William Mills through most of it but William Morris on the last page.

Rita Christiansen:

We have a motion and a correction and I need a second.

Kathleen Burns:

I second it.

Rita Christiansen:

Motion made and seconded. All in favor?

Voices:

Aye.

Rita Christiansen:

Opposed? Being none, motion carries.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

5. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Discuss Veterans Memorial with VFW Commander Laurens Vellekoop.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

I can start off. One of the things that the Village staff has been working on has been a site location, some detail for the veterans memorial to be somewhere in the Village of Pleasant Prairie along Lake Andrea Prairie Springs Park, somewhere around the ballfield pavilion area. In the past or at the last meeting I believe several months ago we had talked about having a proposed location potentially around this concrete area just to the northeast corner of the ballfield pavilion.

I had an opportunity to meet with Laurens the post commander for the Pleasant Prairie VFW, and he kind of gave me some recommendations and some other sites that he had visited. We actually just met yesterday morning. One of the sites that we went down to was the Zion memorial that's right on Sheridan Road just past the State Line. They really did a nice job down there with how they have the flags and the pavers. And Laurens gave some really good ideas for how we can do some benches, how we can do some—here's kind of a better detail based on this area that we're looking at having it which is really just due east of the ballfield pavilion and just north of the east diamond.

In that area we're kind of looking at doing something where we could have paver blocks in remembrance of any of the veterans, whether it's past or present, doing some memorial benches around the perimeter outside of the paver block area, having a landscaped area in here and having several of the proper flags. One of the things that Laurens had talked to be about was making sure that when we do this that we cover all the services. So this rectangle that we have here with the seven dots would represent the seven services that we have to represent.

When we went down to Zion here's a picture of what those plaques would look like and something that we were hoping to emulate. And so instead of having a flag for each of the areas, because we really are limited on spacing there, we're going with some sort of a

plaque on this concrete area that would have one plaque for each of the service branches. And then also having some sort of a plaque with some wording in this area here that would have some wording. Granted we would have to work on this, the Village of Pleasant Prairie Veterans Memorial dedicated to all who served past, present and future and then whatever the date of dedication would be.

Like I say, this is just our first brainstorming session. We did want to make sure as a Village that we kept the local VFW in the loop of what's going on, and I did have an opportunity to meet with Laurens yesterday. I took some of his ideas and concepts, and it's definitely our first draft at this. Laurens stated that he was going to go through and bring this plus any other notes that we might acquire as of today's meeting and bring it back to his post to find out any input that his people might have. I guess I'd like to open it up to any comments or questions, whether you have any questions of myself or the post commander.

Rita Christiansen:

Could we have the post commander come up and introduce himself for the record please? You need to stand up by the podium, sir, if you would. Thank you. State your name.

Laurens Vellekoop:

My name is Laurens Vellekoop. I'm the post commander for the VFW 7308 located in Pleasant Prairie.

Rita Christiansen:

Thank you. Alex, can we start at your end? Do you have any questions at all?

Alex Tiahnybok:

The location, if you could zoom back out again, it's not where the red dot is? It's the oval area?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

That's correct. I think we really needed something that had a little bit more space, and we really wanted to do a lot with the landscaping and the greenery. We're really limited to space up in the original red dot. We're still kind of in the concept stage of this. So if no one is opposed to having it on this lower area, I mean the staff recommendation to have it here, just because it is a larger area you could really do more with the landscaping, the benches. We're trying to make it a little bit nicer.

Alex Tiahnybok:

And the next question is I've seen some veterans memorials that are designated for a certain conflict or a period. This is universal, right?

Laurens Vellekoop:

Right. And that's what John and I had spoken about, that we don't make it specific. I would like nothing better to have an Iraq memorial because I'm a former prisoner of war in Iraq, and I've had 21 years of military service. So I would like nothing more than having Iraq memorial, but as the commander of the VFW here we have a lot of World War II vets, Korean and Vietnam vets. A number of POWs living in Pleasant Prairie as well. I'm the only Iraq veteran, but there's also some Vietnam veterans POWs and World War II veterans POWs that are living in this area.

So I told him with as small as 16,000 people that we have in Pleasant Prairie, the broader the better, and also to leave room for future conflicts and future veterans that are in there. I have a daughter in Afghanistan right now. There's a lot of possibilities with the memorial itself either for the past. The majority of World War II veterans at this point are leaving us. My dad is a Korean War veteran. In our family we've got it covered but in a lot of the other families that we have here, I know at least of right now 25 people that have sons or daughters in Iraq in Pleasant Prairie. But the broader we make it the more encompassing I think with all the veterans that we can do I think we'll have a better representation and not focus in on one group or conflict.

Glenn Christiansen:

I do like the positioning of the second site with the oval, over the red dot let's say. I think when you look at it now it almost looks like it will fit in and it looks more prominent where over where the red dot is it almost looks like we're trying to squeeze it in someplace perhaps. But, like you were saying, it gives you some opportunities to landscape around. I do like the comment you made about leaving it broad for the future. I know my father would agree with that and the phrase for all who served essentially. That was one of his comments when him and I talked about this idea a few years ago. He's a World War II Occupation veteran, and he's always felt that a community needs to have a memorial dedicated to the veterans. My wife and I have a son who was in Iraq in 2004 and he'll probably be back there again. So the point is well taken. Very good.

Michael Russert:

My only question or concern is it's a high traffic area. I think the memorial should be more to go and reflect. Would that be a concern come summertime ball games going on, kids using the bike path, rollerblading? Is there another proposed possible area? And I guess, Lauren, have you visited other memorials? Is it a place to meditate and reflect on your time?

Laurens Vellekoop:

A lot of the different memorials are reflecting. I go to memorials because I get invited but I don't seek out memorials per se. But I've found that memorials with the highest foot path and the highest visibility are the ones that are frequented the most. It's great if Pleasant Prairie or any other place, having a memorial is great, but if you put it in a place that's not prominent it's kind of like, okay, now we've stuck them in the corner, we've done our bit. If we have two people a year come and visit it, one, it doesn't become cost effective for Pleasant Prairie and, two, the visibility isn't there. In my case I would put it in the middle of the fairway where everybody walks. Because flags attract kids. They like to look at it. And especially in an area like that where there is a lot of foot traffic and there are a lot of people, parents and other people that go to the pavilion and use the ballfields, I think the more visible that we can make it the better off we are.

Michael Russert:

Good point. A pretty educational tool, too, for the parents and the kids. Okay, thank you.

Kathleen Burns:

How big an area is that?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

The area that I've circled is 30 feet from north to south and about 65 feet from east to west.

Kathleen Burns:

And then it looked like there were room for three flags? Is that right? You were proposing three? Is that what the circles are?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We're proposing that the blue dots are flags. I'm not a student of this, so I want to make sure that however we design the flags, whatever representation that we have it is correct. And so at all of our other sites that we have three flags I'm under the assumption that you would need three flags for this also. If it's two or one or four or seven, whatever it is, I want to make sure that it's correct. We'll make sure that working with Mr. Vellekoop's help that it is correct.

Kathleen Burns:

So would one of them be a POW flag then?

Laurens Vellekoop:

It can be. If there is not a separate flagpole for a POW flag it is mandated by law it's flown right underneath the U.S. flag and that's mandated by law. The POW flag is the only flag that that's mandated for if it does not have its own flagpole because it's not service connected when you do that.

Kathleen Burns:

But something like that, I mean obviously the flag would be the flag of Wisconsin-

Laurens Vellekoop:

The U.S. flag would be centered and highest. You have a State flag on one side. You could have a Pleasant Prairie flag on the other side just like you do at the police station. You have that exact setup with the three flags. You have that exact setup at Sheridan Road for the 32nd Infantry Division memorial that they have on Sheridan Road there right inside Pleasant Prairie. So they have that same setup. You could do all service flags. Again, then you run into the big thing with, well, the Marine Corps is part of the Navy, the Coast Guard is part of Homeland Security and they all have their own flags. Do you put the Navy flag and the--obviously you'd put the Navy flag and Marine Corps, but then you have to put the Homeland Security flag also with the Coast Guard. You could get into a whole--and I think that's one of the reasons John had talked about the plaques. Plaques are individuals. They're service connected and there's no ambiguous gray area there.

Kathleen Burns:

Thank you.

William Mills:

Is that currently just grass areas?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Yes it is.

William Mills:

And what was the thought behind the memorial bricks? Is that something in terms of that would be or you would pay for each one of those memorial bricks or what was the thought process behind that?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

You would pay to have your name or someone's name engraved on a memorial brick, the same you would pay to have someone's name engraved on a memorial bench. You would use that as one of the fundraising tools to offset some of the costs.

Laurens Vellekoop:

When John and I talked about the bricks one of the things that I've seen in other memorials, actually the paying of the brick is not so much a current thing as a future thing. Because what happens in a lot of memorials they'll do four or five rings of memorial bricks that people have paid for, but then there's concrete beyond that. As more and more bricks for future veterans then the concrete could get cut out and more bricks could be placed. That really makes it a living memorial not only for today and past but also for future persons who would like to have their family memorial. Like in my case my dad and me and my daughter. Who knows what will happen after that. I grew up in Pleasant Prairie. In fact, my house was right where this building is now. This is ours. I think if you asked my dad he's want it back but the State decided they needed it more back in the '80s. So that's one of the things that I've seen in different memorial places where it becomes a living memorial as opposed to, gee, we've made a monument and it's all done and we can walk away from it now. This will keep the people informed. We were talking about fundraisers. We've got Prairie Days in that area.

Rita Christiansen:

Laurens, first of all thank you and your family for serving. We really appreciate it. It's people like you that allow us to sleep safely in our beds at night. So it's very appreciated. This is a great idea. This is a long time coming. I'm very excited about this opportunity because both of our families have served and continued to serve. I also, like Mike, had some concerns about the site location. I realize it should be a place of quiet memory, but it also should be a place of celebration. It is an extremely high traffic area. There's a lot of ball tossing so it would really get a lot of visibility. I'm hoping this is very successful and we can start moving forward on it. Gentlemen, do you have anything to add?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

No, I do not. I think we covered everything.

Michael Russert:

One other question. So will the flags be lit throughout the night?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Yes, they will, they'll be lit. There will be lights on all the flags in the area.

Laurens Vellekoop:

If U.S. flag or any nation flag is flown overnight it by law had to be lit.

Mike Pollocoff:

I guess what we'd be looking to do once we formalize a plan that everybody likes is to be in a position to construct what we could construct this year. Maybe some of the things. If it's benches, maybe some intermediate benches are put out there until the long term ones are. But construct what we can. It would be nice to have it in place by Family Days. The Village Board I believe, I know John had talked about renaming the park or that complex the Veterans Memorial Park or Ballfield, whatever we end up calling the name, so we'd have to put another one of those signs like we have in the park out in front of it and then be able to dedicate it at Family Days.

Rita Christiansen:

Maybe make the pavilion the Veterans Pavilion and then the memorial park?

Mike Pollocoff:

Some kind of mix, whatever we want to cover. We need to noodle that a little bit.

Rita Christiansen:

Mike, what are we looking at for a time line for this?

Mike Pollocoff:

Once we go back and get some feedback from the vets that we see what they want and then kind of parse it up into what we can afford in the first run at it this year, but have the ultimate plan that we're working towards. If we have some feel for how long it's going to take to fundraise, maybe there's some things we can put in there ahead of time from the Village's standpoint. We do have about \$6,000 for materials.

Rita Christiansen:

Is there any way to get something from the State, a grant for something like this? Are monies available?

Mike Pollocoff:

No. It's one of those things in grant items that we looked at back when we were looking

a few years ago and there is zero grant money for memorials, monuments. Maybe there's even a question . . . veterans money for what they need. But there really isn't. But we have the fund that we set up and it's been growing. There's a couple times we've added money to it so we'll see what we can do. The nice thing is I think we're going to be able to put together a good chunk of the monument with our crew, so really what we'd be paying for is materials to get it in place so we could see what we could get done after we have a good idea of what the end product is going to be.

Rita Christiansen:

As we move forward is there a chance that we could utilize the Pleasant Prairie website for people that want to donate?

Mike Pollocoff:

Oh, sure. If we keep channel 25 we'll do that. Any venue where we can get the word out.

Rita Christiansen:

Alex, do you have any ideas for fundraising?

Alex Tiahnybok:

The pavers sound like a natural fundraising effort. Is your vision that the pavers would be for families, for veterans themselves?

Laurens Vellekoop:

Right, whoever pays for it, it would be a dedication. I mean obviously it would be a veteran. But some of the things that I have been involved with in memorials they had like a \$100 a brick. They had a larger tile square for \$500 which you can actually do a dedication on. You could have the family name and who dedicated. Let's say on the Holland pavers you can only get a name and we've done that. And the benches, the last one that I was involved with was \$5,000 per bench, because you only have six or eight of them. So you've got a lot of money in a bench, yes, but for some people, especially in this area, \$5,000 would not be out of question for a cost.

Alex Tiahnybok:

So the ultimate vision, Mike, what do you anticipate that would cost if we did—instead of doing an interim step trying to raise funds to build it according to the ultimate design?

Mike Pollocoff:

You're probably looking at between \$50,000 and \$60,000.

Alex Tiahnybok:

So if we took the approach—I mean you should be able to get there I would think pretty easily.

Laurens Vellekoop:

And with donations. I know there will be guys in the VFW where we're at that will donate as well as buy a brick. What I will do is next Thursday I have a meeting with my Post and at the end of the month I have a meeting with the Kenosha County Veterans, all the veterans group. We have a meeting once a month, all the Commanders we meet. So I can bring it up in both those places and give a report to John.

Rita Christiansen:

And just a suggestion. If we're going to maybe launch this or have part of it done for I think Prairie Family Days obviously we want to plan part of it as a celebration to recognize. That would be really great if we had some bands come out marching and maybe the VFW Color Guard or whoever is available.

Laurens Vellekoop:

We can ask for it.

Rita Christiansen:

Because Glenn and I have seen that in our travels and it's been very impressive. Excellent. Thank you very much. Any other questions? If nobody has any other questions, a motion for adjournment?

Alex Tiahnybok:

Do we have to take action on this item?

Rita Christiansen:

I don't think they're deciding. This is just a report. This is just to present facts if I understood correctly.

Mike Pollocoff:

Right, and I guess get your feedback on the site because that was different than the last

time.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Alex Tiahnybok:

Motion to adjourn.

Rita Christiansen:

Do I have a second?

William Mills:

Second.

Rita Christiansen:

Motion made and seconded. All in favor?

Voices:

Aye.

Rita Christiansen:

Opposed? Being none we're adjourned.