

**VILLAGE OF PLEASANT PRAIRIE  
PARK COMMISSION  
Village Hall Auditorium  
9915 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin 53158  
Tuesday, December 4, 2007  
6:00 p.m.**

A regular meeting of the Pleasant Prairie Park Commission was held on Tuesday, December 4, 2007, 6:00 p.m. Present were Michaeline Day, Michael Russert, William Mills and Monica Yuhas. Glenn Christiansen, Rita Christiansen and Kathleen Burns were 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 AND APPROVE THE OCTOBER 2, 2007 PARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES.**

Michaeline Day:

In your packet you have your minutes of October 2, 2007. If you've had a chance to go over the minutes is there any corrections or anything to be added? If not, could I entertain a motion to accept minutes?

**Monica Yuhas moved to approve the Parks Commission Meeting minutes of the October 2, 2007 meeting presented in their written form: Seconded by William Mills. Motion carried 4-0.**

Michaeline Day:

Thank you. Excuse my cough and my cold.

- 4. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Michaeline Day:

As we have no citizens' comments we move to New Business.

- 5. NEW BUSINESS**
  - a. Receive and discuss Prairie Springs Park Natural Area Management Plan Implementation Report.**

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Good evening. Staff would like to go through and get approval from the Park Commission to move ahead with the management plan implementation. For the past about 18 months/2 years staff has been working with, under the direction from the Park Commission, developing the management plan for the Prairie Springs Natural Area. And the Prairie Springs Natural Area is the area that is just west of the Prairie Springs Park, and the boundaries of it are really the Jerome Creek, the Des Plaines River, properties to 165, I-94 and the River Road area. So it encompasses about a 457 acre area.

The property was donated to Pleasant Prairie years back, and as part of the donation the Village had responsibilities to manage that property, and so a grant was applied for two years ago, and then we hired the professional consultant help Lori Artiomo to go through and develop the management plan. I'd like to just take a couple minutes and go over some of the activities that staff would like to do, and some of it is a staff in house and some of it is projects that we would be developing volunteer groups to work with to save costs with the assistance of the DNR and The Nature Conservancy.

Last week I went through with Lori Artiomo and we kind of identified some of the invasive trees that were in that area on a section just off of River Road. The process would be we do have like a small tree shredder that goes on one of our wheeled excavators. As soon as the ground freezes a little bit we can go out there with one of our highway crew staff and someone spraying behind it with some chemical that keeps that invasive species from coming back. It's basically just some small woody vegetation about three inches or smaller in diameter. So we would go out there and remove that, just kind of shredding it down to the ground, spraying an approved chemical that we're permitted to use by DNR on the chopped ends of those and that will hopefully kill that vegetation.

Staff plans on spending about maybe three days out there with that machine and that's probably comparable to about three weeks of work with a volunteer group. And so we do have the equipment in house. We do have staff that's trained to operate and use that, and so we feel that it's a very effective way to use that.

Once we can get some of the invasive trees that are taken out of the way with help from the DNR and The Nature Conservancy, we would like to start developing a burn group, and so that would be a volunteer group very similar to what they do in the Chiwaukee Prairie how they would use controlled burns to burn off some of the grasslands that are in there. There's an area probably about 65 acres that we'd like to burn sometime before spring as soon as we can get a group trained and the weather conditions allow for it.

In your hand-out that you received there was a map, and if you can turn to that page, the first area that staff would like to work on is the River Road unit which is really the center one of the three. And what's kind of nice is that it's bounded by the Des Plaines River and the Jerome Creek branch. So started it would be on the west end and work to the east it would really dial up by the time that hit the river. It's probably one of the easier places to do a burn for the first time, move onto the Jerome Creek unit possibly in 2009, and

then the Frontage Road unit once that is complete.

Then in the spring and summer we'd like to continue with some more volunteer groups and get in some of the areas where we're not able to get our public works machinery into, and even begin girdling some of the non native trees in that area and just let them die over time. Our goal for this is to bring that area that really hasn't had much management to it to really bring it back to a more natural prairie environment.

Those are really the three main activities that we're looking at doing and developing some volunteer groups along the way. There are some classes that are offered at UW-Stevens Point which I plan on sending our park foreman to over the course of the winter, having our fire department involved obviously, and with guidance from the DNR and The Nature Conservancy. And I guess that staff is looking to answer any questions that you might have on the management plan and approval to move forward with such a plan.

Michaeline Day:

I just have a question, what is girdle?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

For what?

Michaeline Day:

For large trees, girdle them?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

That is where you go and take about a one foot section of bark off of the tree in a complete ring. By doing that you ultimately kill the tree over time.

Michaeline Day:

Thank you. Anyone else have any questions?

William Mills:

I have a question. Mr. Steinbrink, is the River Road unit the only area that you can get to with your equipment? I apologize if I didn't catch that the first time.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Yeah. The River Road unit is really accessible right now obviously right off of River Road which we can kind of see coming in from the top left of the corner, and it's really surrounded by a swampy wetland area around the entire perimeter of it. And so right where the text is on the map where it says River Road that kind of shaded area that's

really the only area of a high ground in there. And the woody vegetation is kind of that vegetation that comes down in like a backward J hook from the top and that's the area that we're thinking that staff would like to go through and take that vegetation off and continue a burn across.

In some of the areas where there are more wetland areas you'll either have to do the maintenance when it's froze, when it's really dry, or have volunteer groups go out and perform that maintenance.

William Mills:

I have another question. When we did our walk last spring we actually did—we walked through Jerome Creek, correct?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

That's correct.

William Mills:

Then we did get back to the River Road unit if I remember correctly.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

There is a branch of the Des Plaines River that comes down from the north almost—on your map it's probably about a half an inch to the west of where the dividing line is between the River Road unit and the Jerome Creek unit. And so you probably didn't quite make it all the way over to the River Road unit, but you probably came very close to it. And so that entire area that you walked was the Jerome Creek unit. Now, keep in mind, too, this area that we're showing here is close to 500 acres so it is a large tract of land so I guess it's very deceiving because we really are zoomed out. And you can kind of see on the scale where one inch equals about a quarter mile.

William Mills:

Thank you.

Michaeline Day:

Any other questions?

Michael Russert:

What is the strategy for forming the volunteer groups for the spring/summer work?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We would use media through the Village newsletter and through the website. We would probably contact some of the other groups to see if they would like to be involved also. And so it would really—I guess it's staff's goal not to really start from scratch but to really tap into some of the groups that are already formed, use their expertise and anyone else that wants to be trained on it locally. So we would use all the media sources that we have, whether it be the Village newsletter, online postings or press releases or information on Channel 25.

Mike Pollocoff:

Ms. Chairman, if I may.

Michaeline Day:

Yes, Mr. Pollocoff?

Mike Pollocoff:

John, could you describe under other activities if the Village is seriously considering restoring Jerome Creek to a natural state what would that be in Jerome Creek?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

For the Jerome Creek area or for the actual Jerome Creek?

Mike Pollocoff:

Jerome Creek, because it looks like they're indicating we need to do a general floodplain study and determine the impacts on the tributaries. So is that basically brushing out all the trees?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Another activity that we would like to do is SEWRPC had indicated that they would do a floodplain study on the area at no cost to the Village. So we would go through and identify that, and by bringing it back to its natural state, originally that Jerome Creek tributary was kind of a windy, wavy, curvy area that kind of went through there. At one point that was kind of dredged out and made straight. The importance of having the floodplain study would be to make sure we don't impact anyone upstream or downstream by changing the way that that water flows by spreading it out.

We have spoke with groups from Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever that would like to be involved in any of the larger projects or kind of make that one of their national projects to work on to do a component of the funding for that if we do bring that back to its natural state. And that's something that probably won't happen for a couple years but it is something that we'd like to see potentially based on the results of the floodplain study.

Mike Pollocoff:

Jerome Creek was a WPA project and it's been straightened out. As they do that floodplain study we've got to make sure it doesn't affect the upstream drainage area . . . drainage of that.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Sure, sure, I agree.

Michaeline Day:

So is it staff's recommendation that we ask SEWRPC to do this study for us?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

It's a no cost study. It takes about 18 months to have the study completed. So once we would have a recommendation to move ahead with the study it probably would be 18 months to two years before we'd have the results of that study. And then based on the results of that study we could see what kind of changes we could make if any at all.

Michaeline Day:

Thank you. Any other questions? I would guess then staff would like a motion to accept not only the activities we wish to do but also the other activities as far as SEWRPC. Would we need one or two motions for that?

Mike Pollocoff:

One motion would be find just to accept the findings and recommendations.

Michaeline Day:

Can I entertain a motion to accept the management plan?

**Michael Russert moved to accept the Prairie Springs Park natural Area Management Plan Implementation. Seconded by Monica Yuhas. Motion carried 4-0.**

**b. Receive and approve 2008 Parks Commission Meeting schedule.**

Michaeline Day:

In your packet you also received your 2008 Parks Commission meeting schedule. In the past we've always--January 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting has always been not made. We've not had a quorum. There've been several people out of town, so we might want to discuss not having a January meeting at this point. Normally January is a slow month for us anyway, so it would be my recommendation to accept these meeting dates without January 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Anyone care--is that alright with everyone?

Monica Yuhas:

The kids, children do go back to school on the second.

Michaeline Day:

Oh, do they?

Monica Yuhas:

They do. That is their first day back. So maybe that's been a problem in the past because they usually didn't go back until the . . . but they do go back that day. I don't know if that influences your scheduling or not.

Michaeline Day:

It's up to you guys.

William Mills:

I'll be here that day because of the kids coming back on January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Michaeline Day:

Okay, then we'll leave it in. So we'll leave January 2<sup>nd</sup> in. Is there any other dates here that's in question? We all seem to be the first Tuesday except for on election days or holidays it gets moved to Wednesday. Can I have a motion to accept the meeting dates?

**Monica Yuhas moved to accept the 2008 Parks Commission Meeting dates. Seconded by Michael Russert. Motion carried 4-0.**

## **6. PARKS COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Michaeline Day:

Does anyone have any comments? Yes, Mike?

Michael Russert:

I have a few questions. One, if you can comment on the 2008 budget that passed pertaining to the Parks.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Yes, for the 2008 budget for the Parks, the capital item that was approved—well, actually there were several capital items that were approved. One was replacement of a wide area mower, one of the mowers that we use to mow the park and the other large areas within

Pleasant Prairie. That mower is seven years old so I was very happy to see that we were able to replace that piece of capital equipment. And also there was the playground approved for \$20,000, so I'll probably be bringing down a final sketch or a couple different options of some final designs and what we can do for that either in our January or our February meeting so we can have that installed in the spring and ready for the kids to use this summer.

Michael Russert:

Thank you.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

Oh, and the Village Board also approved ballfield lights on the north ballfields, so there will be an RFP put out in early January with the goal to have the lights operational by April 1.

Michael Russert:

That's which park?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

The north ball diamonds on Prairie Springs Park.

Michaeline Day:

Any other comments?

Michael Russert:

One other question. Regarding the use of Lake Andrea for 2008 for the different activities that has been used in the past, when will those dates be finalized from the different organizations who have proposed?

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

We can go through and we can bring a list of dates to our next Park Commission meeting. The only change that I'm aware of right now is the staff is looking at combining wakeboard nationals with Prairie Family Days so both those events would happen at the same time. And so we worked really hard with folks at wakeboard nationals to kind of lure that group to our Prairie Family Days, and then we can have the Prairie Family Days group participate with the wakeboard nationals. One of the problems we've had in the past is getting people out to the park on Sunday, and with the championships of the professional wakeboarders on Sunday that's always the biggest draw. So it seemed like a really good fit for both groups, and so we'll kind of use the lake for two different events in one weekend. So it actually opens up a weekend over the course of the summer. And right now we do not have any inquiries to fill that open space.



Michael Russert:

Then one other comment about the Prairie Springs Park, mentioning about maybe putting a light at the boat launch.

John Steinbrink, Jr.:

That is something that we could probably consider for the 2009 budget year is putting in a transformer or some sort of electric power. We are going to have to put power on that side or setting a pole and lighting that. That is something that we can probably bring forward for the 2009 budget year since it's already been approved for 2008.

Michaeline Day:

Anyone else? Good questions, Mike. Anyone else? Okay, I need a motion then to adjourn.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Monica Yuhas moved to approve motion for adjournment. Seconded by William Mills. Motion carried 4-0.**