



ROCK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Highways & Parks

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Public Works Committee Meeting – Parks

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 – 8:00 a.m.

Public Works Department – Committee Room

3715 Newville Road

Janesville, WI 53545

Call to Order: Chair Richard called the meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 8:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Supervisors Richard, Mawhinney, Pennycook, Rashkin and Woodman.

Committee Members Absent: None.

Staff Members:

Duane Jorgenson	Director of Public Works
John Traynor	Parks Manager
Amy Friend	Community Coordinator
Terri Carlson	Risk Manager
Hans Koch	Superintendent
Amanda McElroy	Secretary II

Others Present:

Dean Paynter	Parks Advisory Board
Carolyn Brandeen	League of Women Voters
Cathy Schneider	Friends of Rock River Heritage Park
Rick Schulte	Nutrien Ag Solutions
Sheila Williams	Citizen (attended on Zoom)
Chuck	Citizen (attended on Zoom)

Approval of Agenda: Supervisor Woodman moved approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Supervisor Pennycook. ADOPTED.

Approval of Minutes Dated March 14, 2023: Supervisor Mawhinney moved approval of the minutes from March 14, 2023, as presented, seconded by Supervisor Woodman. ADOPTED.

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements: Cathy Schneider introduced herself as the Chair of the newly formed Friends of Rock River Heritage Park group. She stressed the importance of forward thinking for the future of the park.

Sheila Williams of Janesville submitted a public comment requesting that the county refrain from the use of herbicides.

Mr. Traynor officially introduced Cathy Schneider as the Chair of Friends of Rock River Heritage Park.

Mr. Jorgenson shared that a get-together to honor and remember Randy Reilly will be held at Rock River Heritage Park on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 1:30pm.

Mr. Jorgenson provided updated information about the possible ramifications to staffing if the deferred financing is not approved by the County Board for the CTH N and CTH X rehabilitation projects at the County Board of Supervisors meeting on Thursday, April 13, 2023.

Parks Advisory Board Communications: Mr. Paynter handed out the newly printed Rock County Peace Trail maps (see attachment) by the Rock Trail Coalition. Work is in progress on a Rock County Trail Map.

Mr. Paynter noted that work has started on installing a perimeter trail around Rock River Heritage Park that will be a little over three miles in length.

Mr. Paynter shared Mocha Moment is hosting a fundraiser on Sunday, April 16, 2023, from 8am-11:30am. One hundred percent of the gross sales and donations will be contributed to the Rock Trail Coalition.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS

Approving Application for 2023-2024 Snowmobile Grant Funding: Supervisor Mawhinney moved the Resolution, seconded by Supervisor Woodman. Mr. Traynor explained that committee approval is needed to apply for the grant, and later, committee approval will be required to accept the grant. ADOPTED.

REVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Discussion and Possible Action – Issue Paper – Herbicide Spraying Pilot Project: Supervisor Mawhinney moved the Issue Paper, seconded by Supervisor Pennycook. Mr. Jorgenson explained that the Public Works Department is planning a pilot project to evaluate the use of an herbicide treatment on select highway right-of-ways to control invasive plant species such as wild parsnip, help native plants, and reduce overall costs. The areas being considered are in the eastern half of the county and include all county roads from STH 51 to

the East county line along with selected areas on State Highways, a one-mile stretch of Town Highway, and Rock County Park Trails.

Mr. Jorgenson said the public will be notified with a press release. Any certified organic farmers in the affected areas will receive a letter in the mail with information about the upcoming spraying dates, herbicide ingredients, and application rates, along with the option to opt out of spraying next to their operation. Mr. Jorgenson displayed a PowerPoint presentation from Dodge County that included information about their notification system, application, photographs of the results, and a cost analysis showing that spraying was less than half of the cost of mowing. Mr. Jorgenson shared a list of 15 other Wisconsin counties that use herbicide growth inhibitors, along with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Schulte from Nutrien Ag Solutions answered questions from the committee and noted that this herbicide is available for purchase to anyone, it is not classified as hazardous, has no odor, and is not volatile. Mr. Schulte explained that this herbicide has been in use for seven years and will not hurt insects or animals. The herbicide takes approximately 10-30 minutes to dry, at which point re-entry is of no concern. ADOPTED.

Discussion and Possible Action – Issue Paper – Rock River Heritage County Park – Playground Equipment Purchase: Supervisor Woodman moved the Issue Paper option to approve the purchase of two complete playground structures, seconded by Supervisor Rashkin. Mr. Traynor explained the three different playground options on the Issue Paper for Rock River Heritage Park and shared design images of each. Mr. Traynor recommended the purchase of two playground structures to provide more options for park users. Mr. Traynor noted a location change for the smaller structure, which would now be built in an open area by the outdoor shelter. The total cost for two playground structures is \$94,868.35, and with installation and materials provided by Rock County will not exceed the \$100,000.00 approved in the 2023 budget. ADOPTED.

Discussion and Possible Action – Rock River Heritage County Park – Rental Fees: Supervisor Mawhinney moved the Rental Fees (\$1,000 per day Monday through Thursday, \$1,500 per day Friday through Sunday, \$3,500 weekend rental Friday-Sunday, with Parks Manager discretion regarding reduced rates for non-profit groups for Heritage Hall), seconded by Supervisor Pennycook. Mr. Traynor shared a list of rental rates collected from other venues in the area along with policies other counties use regarding non-profit rates for comparison. ADOPTED.

Parks Manager Report – See Attached: Mr. Traynor provided information on the items listed in his report and answered questions from the Committee.

Parks General

- CIP Updates- Magnolia Bluff Shelter, Rock River Heritage Park playgrounds, Carver-Roehl lights, Sportsman's Park bathroom design
- Prairie Burning – Multiple Locations- burning ditch lines, burning hazards are higher with temperature changes
- Brushing Projects - Wood-list Availability- due to storm damage, wood will soon be made available for Wood Permit Holders
- Staffing Update – Seasonal, New Position- three of the four seasonal positions are filled, an offer was made for the new position, hoping to have them start May 1
- Training Day – April 4th- able to complete outdoor activities before the storms

Rock River Heritage Park

- Friends Group Update – Meeting Wednesday April 19th- Welcomed Cathy, this will be the second meeting for the Friends Group
- Kitchen Project Update – Auction- made around \$8,100, will have a second auction
- WPRA Meeting – April 13 – at Rock River Heritage Park from 8am-12pm, the Public Works Committee is invited to attend
- Memorial Shelter Update- the roof and concrete were donated, remaining cost of approximately \$5,100 for the rest of the materials, can use money from the Eager Fund, Friends of Rock County Parks is willing to help, money from Parks Budget

Beckman Mill

- Ad Hoc Committee – Contract Update
- Opening Day – May 6th

Indianford Park

- MOU Update – RKLD- approved
- Powerhouse Project Update- contractor is off site due to high water

Sugar River Park

- Park Is Open – Monitoring Dumping Issues- garbage was dumped at the gate

Gibbs Lake Park

- Sign Project Update – Grant- Badger Corrections Enterprises to make the signs

Donations

- Memorial Benches – Carver Roehl, Gibbs Lake- in honor of family members
- Boat Launch Kiosk – Gathering Place Fishing Club- three new boat launch kiosks
- Mounting Blocks – Gibbs Lake – MUTG- donated for users to mount their horses
- Aldo Leopold Benches – Beloit Turner HS- made four benches that will be placed at Rock River Heritage Park

Community Coordinator Report: Ms. Friend presented a PowerPoint presentation on items in her report. She shared that the Rock County Parks has amassed 3,000 followers on Facebook! Ms. Friend also explained the GPS Live Monitoring Tracker that she carries to ensure her safety.

Ms. Friend thanked the Gathering Place Fishing Club of Milton for their donation of three sign kiosks at the boat launches, Beloit Turner High School students for building and donating four benches to the Rock River Heritage Park, and the Friends of Rock County Parks for their work on the trail system at Rock River Heritage Park.

Ms. Friend shared photographs from the Survival Day Field Trip attended by Evansville seventh graders at Rock River Heritage Park (3/24/23), Leprechauns on the Loose (3/3-3/19/23), and the Friends of Carver-Roehl Annual Easter Egg Hunt (4/2/23). Ms. Friend highlighted that the I-Spy Egg Hunt & Eggs-ercise is currently going on and ends on April 14, 2023. The Earth Day Trash Pick-Up Challenge will run from April 15-29, 2023 and encourages park users to make a difference by picking up trash. There is an Earth Day Guided Nature Walk on April 22, 2023 at Beckman Mill Park.

Finally, Ms. Friend shared reminders, including that the upper gate to Magnolia Bluff is open, the Sugar River Park is open, the Sportsman's Park Restroom is closed, the horse trails at Gibbs Lake, Happy Hollow, and Magnolia Bluff are closed, and boat launch fees are in effect from 4/15/23-10/31/23 at Gibbs Lake, Happy Hollow, and Royce Dallman. Upcoming events include the Earth Day Trash Pick-Up Challenge (4/15-4/29/23), Earth Day Guided Nature Walk (4/22/23), Trout, Trout, Trout StoreyWalk® (May), Friends of Beckman Mill Opening Day (5/6/23), and Friends of Rock County Parks Annual Bike Ride (5/20/23).

Next Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. at Rock River Heritage County Park.

Adjournment: Supervisor Mawhinney moved adjournment at 10:02 a.m., seconded by Supervisor Woodman. ADOPTED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda McElroy, Secretary II

Rock County Peace Trail



The Peace Trail is a 13.1 mile trail connecting Janesville to Beloit.

The vision to provide a bike trail connecting Janesville to Beloit was started in 1993 with gradual property acquisition. Final paving of the trail was completed in 2022. Thank you to everyone who worked tirelessly to get this project completed for everyone to enjoy. The Peace Trail is a joint venture of City of Janesville, Rock Trail Coalition, Rock County Parks, City of Beloit Parks and many volunteers and donors.

Peace Trail Etiquette:

- KEEP RIGHT EXCEPT WHEN PASSING
- KEEP CHILDREN AND PETS IN PROPER LANE
- WHEN STOPPED, DO NOT BLOCK TRAIL
- WHEN PASSING, ANNOUNCE, "ON YOUR LEFT"
- SPEED LIMIT 15 MPH WHEN OTHERS ARE PRESENT, SLOWER NEAR PEDESTRIANS
- YIELD TO SLOWER TRAFFIC: BICYCLISTS TO PEDESTRIANS

Funding Provided By:

- Anonymous donor
- Blain Gilbertson Family
- City of Beloit
- City of Janesville
- Kennedy Foundation
- Rock County
- Rock Trail Coalition
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Report Trail Conditions

Trees Down? Trail Flooded?

608-757-5450

Rock County Parks Department

Peace Trail Janesville to Big Hill Park

