



ROCK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Highways & Parks

3715 Newville Road, Janesville, WI 53545
Phone: (608)757-5450 Fax: (608)757-5470
www.co.rock.wi.us

Public Works Committee Meeting – Parks
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 – 8:00 a.m.
Public Works Department – Committee Room
3715 Newville Road
Janesville, WI 53545

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

Committee Members Present: Supervisors Homan, Pennycook, Rashkin, and Woodman.

Committee Members Absent: Chair Mawhinney.

Staff Members:

Duane Jorgenson	Public Works Director
Nick Elmer	Assistant Director Public Works Director
John Traynor	Park Services Supervisor
Amy Friend	Parks Community Coordinator
Amanda McElroy	Administrative Professional II

Others Present:

Randy Terronez	Assistant County Administrator
Chuck Flynn	Citizen (attended in person and on Zoom)
Richard Greenlee	Corporation Counsel
Josh Smith	County Administrator (Zoom)
Michelle DeRubeis	Department of Public Works (Zoom)
Amy Sather	Department of Public Works (Zoom)
Carl Lange	Friends of Rock County Parks
Carolyn Brandeen	League of Women Voters
Floyd Finney	Parks Advisory Board
Dean Paynter	Parks Advisory Board
Tom Presney	Parks Advisory Board
Cathy Schneider	Rock River Heritage Park Friends

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

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Approval of Minutes Dated February 13, 2024: Supervisor Pennycook moved approval of the minutes from February 13, 2024, as presented, seconded by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements: Mr. Jorgenson shared that the Department of Public Works partnered with Emergency Management to host Flood Fight Training last Friday (3/8). The US Army Corps of Engineers conducted the training, with representatives attending from Rock County, City of Janesville, Edgerton Police Department, Jefferson Emergency Management, City of Evansville, Fitchburg Fire and EMS, Clinton Police Department, City of Beloit, and City of Milton.

Mr. Jorgenson announced that National Work Zone Awareness Week is April 15-19, 2024. The theme this year is *“Work zones are temporary. Actions behind the wheel can last forever.”*

Parks Advisory Board Communications: Mr. Presney shared that there were two successful candlelight hikes at Beckman Mill Park and Rock River Heritage Park.

Mr. Finney advised that the Multi Use Trail Group will likely disband in March because they cannot find any new leaders to take over.

Mr. Traynor and Mr. Paynter thanked the Multi Use Trail Group for their years of service to the department. The Multi Use Trail Group has made numerous donations and completed a lot of maintenance projects in county parks over the last thirty years.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS

Authorizing Application with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for Snowmobile Grant Funds: Supervisor Pennycook moved the Resolution, seconded by Supervisor Homan. Mr. Traynor explained that all DNR grants are a two-step process and require a resolution to apply for the grant, and another resolution to accept the grant. ADOPTED.

REVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Discussion – Koshkonong Lake Access County Park: Mr. Traynor gave a brief overview of the parcel, explaining that it is flood prone, has limited access and usability, and is difficult to maintain.

Mr. Greenlee confirmed that the parcel was considered for divestment from the county park profile because it is not ideal for park use. The Homeowner’s Association declined the first opportunity to purchase the property. The McFarlanes, neighbors of the parcel, expressed interest in purchasing the property, obtained an appraisal at their expense, and offered to pay the appraised value. Mr. Greenlee explained that the title company didn’t identify any issues that would affect the title transfer. A resolution was put forward in December 2023 with the hope of closing on the sale by the end of the year.

Unexpected issues with the sale of the property quickly surfaced. The retention pond is owned by Rock County, but per the covenants of the subdivision plat, it is to be maintained by the Homeowner's Association so long as it is owned by a public entity. Private ownership raises questions about who would be responsible for the maintenance of the retention pond in the future. Additionally, Chapter 236 of the Wisconsin State Statutes requires that any subdivision plat recorded that borders a lake or stream have guaranteed public access dedicated on the plat itself. The parcel has public access identified on the plat, which would require a plat vacation before the title could be legally transferred. A plat vacation involves a petition to the circuit court, public comment period, and multiple hearings to determine if revocation of the dedication of public access is in the public's interest. These barriers, along with the additional time and expense, resulted in the McFarlane's opting to back out.

Discussion and Possible Action – Approval of Public Works Strategic Initiatives: Mr. Terronez explained that the Rock County Strategic Plan consists of five goals and 16 objectives for each goal. County departments were directed to develop departmental initiatives to meet the county goals and objectives.

Mr. Jorgenson and Mr. Traynor gave an overview of the 13 Department of Public Works strategic initiatives, which address three goal areas and six different objectives in the Strategic Plan and discussed accountability, target completion dates, and key performance indicators for each.

Supervisor Pennycook moved the Public Works Strategic Initiatives, seconded by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Discussion and Possible Action – Draft Resolution – Updating Wage Grid Implementation Criteria Related to Positions at the Department of Public Works: Mr. Jorgenson noted that Chair Mawhinney and himself drafted a resolution to address pay disparity issues within the Highway Tech I position.

Mr. Smith shared a suggestion that modifies the language of the paragraph "NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED" to make it clear that no employee would receive a decrease in pay. Mr. Smith explained that once the resolution is introduced at a County Board meeting, it will be referred by the Chair to the appropriate Committee.

Supervisor Homan moved the Draft Resolution with the modified language by Mr. Smith, seconded by Supervisor Rashkin. ADOPTED.

Parks Report – See Attached: Mr. Traynor and Ms. Friend shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting items in their report and answered questions from the Committee. Discussion was had about how to recognize volunteers for their efforts.

March 12, 2024

Parks General

- Maintenance Update - Tables, Signs- rehabbing tables and signs
- Equipment Maintenance – Mowers- Parks staff service the mowers
- Getting Ready for Burn Season- in process of purchasing a fire suppression unit
- SDS Inventory & Update- being completed by an employee on light duty
- Seasonal Hiring- hired one out of four, reposted position

Happy Hollow Park

- Aerial Trimming and Brush Work- along roadway
- Highlight - Volunteer Work - Tim Roach- helps maintain the park, reports any issues

Ice Age Trail

- Trail Development Meeting – March 5th- obtained Federal Status, funding available

Magnolia Bluff

- Well Donation – Baker Manufacturing – February 19th- Commemoration of 150 years
- Aerial Trimming and Brush Work- ongoing
- Gate & Upper Bathrooms Closed- opening is weather dependent

Rock River Heritage Park

- CCA Grant work in progress- widening and cleaning up trails
- DNR- Water Withdrawal Permit- very difficult process, still don't have permit
- Evansville School Field Trip – Survival Day – March 22nd- second visit to this park
- Bathroom Closed- opened for events, closed to general public

Sweet Allyn Park

- Ballfield Project Update- working to level outfield and hydroseed

Training

- CPSI – Jim – March 12 – 14th- rescheduled to October
- Reinders Conference – March 14th- classes about spraying chemicals
- Training Day – DPW – April 2nd- department wide, Committee invited to attend
- 2024 Trail Design School – Shawn – June 9 – 12th- Multi Use Trail Group sponsors an employee's attendance at event

Friend Groups

- Friends of Rock County Parks - Candlelight Hike – February 17th- attended by over 100 hikers and raised \$270
- Rock River Heritage Park Friends - Candlelight hike – February 24th- attended by over 300 hikers and 50 dogs, raised \$450
- Rock County Multi Use Trail Group – Tack Swap – March 2nd- raised \$800, also had 3 work days clearing horse trails of debris

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

March 12, 2024

Grant Updates

- County Conservation Aids Grant CC23-54WM- submitted reimbursement
- County Conservation Aids Grant CC24-54WM- work in progress, buckthorn control
- Outdoor Recreation Aids Grant – S-5930- snowmobile grant, still open
- Recreational Trails Program RTP-1019-20ND- Peace Trail paving, finishing paperwork
- Recreational Trails Program RTP-1051-21ND- Peace Trail paving, finishing paperwork

Rock County Parks Events

- Hearts In The Park – Rock River Heritage Park – Feb 8 – 19th- 56 entries and 2 prizes
- Leprechauns On The Loose – 6 Parks – March 3 – 17th- largest event, 5 prizes
- Egg Event – Carver-Roehl Park – March 18 – 31st- new event in place of Egg Hunt

Other

- Social Media- Facebook has 4,596 followers and Instagram has 1,121 followers
- Rock County Tourism Guide- Rock County Parks map is back in the tourism guide
- Wood Cutting Permit- \$25/permit, wood is currently available at 5 different parks
- Metal Detecting Permit- future of permit at stake due to people digging holes and not replacing them

Reminders

- Horse Trails at Gibbs Lake, Happy Hollow & Magnolia Bluff Parks – still closed- Ice Age Trail (Milton to Janesville segment) and Pelishek-Tiffany Trail open year round
- Sportsman’s Bathroom – Closed
- Boat Launch Fees in effect 4/15- 10/31- Gibbs Lake, Happy Hollow, and Royce Dallman

Upcoming Events

- Rock River Heritage Parks Friend – Solar Eclipse Event – April 8th- free event
- Friends of Beckman Mill – Opening Day – May 4th
- Friends of Rock County Parks Annual Bike Ride – May 18th- starts and ends at Beckman Mill Park

Next Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. at the Department of Public Works.

Adjournment: Supervisor Pennycook moved adjournment at 9:30 a.m., seconded by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda McElroy, Administrative Professional II

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE