

Winona County Parks & Environment Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday September 6, 2022 - 4:30 p.m. at Apple Blossom Park

Committee Members Present: John Howard George Howe
 Dale Hadler Amanda Gentry
 Steve Jacob Beth Stanford
 Matt Neil

Staff Present: Ross Dunsmoor Aaron Lafee
 Lew Overhaug Kay Qualley

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:36 p.m. by Chair Amanda Gentry.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

On motion by Beth Stanford and seconded by Matt Neil, the Parks & Environment Advisory Committee voted to approve the agenda. Vote: Yes – All.

3.0 Approval of Minutes of July 6, 2022 Meeting

On motion by John Howard and seconded by George Howe, the Parks & Environment Advisory Committee voted to approve the amended minutes. The minutes were amended to correct a typo under the Stone Point Park update. Vote: Yes – All.

4.0 Stone Point Park Update

Ross Dunsmoor explained the rationale behind updating some of the Stone Point Park garden plot rental fees and referred to the map and fee schedule included in the agenda packet. The goal was to recover about half of the annual expenses in fees. The market rate would have increased the fees exorbitantly. So, staff put together a more balanced proportional pricing plan for the garden plot fees based off the plot square footage and maintenance expenses to create more equitable fees. Kay Qualley added that the increase in the Community Gardens portion of the Parks budget mainly stemmed from the addition of lawn mowing expenses, which had previously fallen under the maintenance budget. The committee discussed the current use of the garden plots and the suggested 2023 price increase for the plots.

On motion by George Howe and seconded by John Howard, the Parks and Environment Advisory Committee voted to approve the 2023 garden plot rental fees, as presented. Vote: Yes – All.

Kay Qualley is still working on the DNR pollinator grant project for Stone Point Park. She is awaiting response from the Conservation Corp whether they are interested in providing personnel to assist or if Winona County will contract that work out. She will send an update via email to the

Parks committee prior to the next meeting. The committee discussed the pine trees at Stone Point Park and the necessity of reseeding all of the targeted pollinator planting area. The consensus from the Parks Committee was to remove the pine trees as they are non-native, obstruct the view from the future trails and are a challenge with prairie management which utilizes fire to keep trees and weeds under control.

5.0 Farmers Park Update

Aaron Lafee shared that alcohol is allowed at the park but cannot be sold in the park. *Sentenced to Serve* has been cutting weeds and cleaning up the playground equipment. Additionally, the bandshell electrical work is all done. Lights are scheduled to be updated in the Green Lodge and the Women's Lodge to provide additional and better lighting.

Kay Qualley brought up discussion about adding installation of parking stalls closer to the lodges being added to the parks budget as there has been issues with posts being removed by the public to drive closer to the lodges. Aaron LaFee expanded on the challenges of people driving on the lawn and mowing over posts to get closer to the rental lodges furthest from the parking lot. Information will be added to the lodge rentals to advise renters that the lodges do not have parking next to the lodges, if that language doesn't already exist. Discussion ensued about lodge cancellation within 2 weeks of rental date and the creation of a lodge cancellation policy.

6.0 Apple Blossom Park Updates

Kay Qualley gave an update on the proposed pavilion for Apple Blossom Park, including fulfilling the educational goal and objectives of the original plan by adding information about the prairie, history of the site, etc. George Howe added that the La Crescent Lions group was interested in investing time and possible funding into Apple Blossom Park, so looking to determine new opportunities for the Lions group because the overlooks were problematic for now. Some ideas include concrete pad for the pavilion, erecting the shelter, signage or a gravel path for trail. Kay Qualley went over the Executive Summary of Major Objectives for Apple Blossom Park, starting, in 2004, as presented in the agenda packet. Two potential pavilion locations were presented to the Parks Committee.

The Parks Committee discussed parking, viewshed, and public accessibility for both proposed pavilion locations. On motion of Beth Stanford and seconded by George Howe, the Parks Committee voted to explore pavilion option #2, which was located closer to the Apple Blossom parking lot and provided a view for visitors, while still being far enough away from the main lawn panel to not disturb those utilizing the picnic tables there, if a group rented the pavilion. Vote: Yes – All (5).

George Howe received permission to spray the non-native pampas grass and treat the black locust. He has an up-to-date volunteer form on file. Parks Committee discussed augmenting signage for the park. Aaron LaFee and his crew have re-installed the no burning signage and the signpost will not be easily dislodged.

7.0 Member Updates

None

8.0 Next meeting date: Tuesday November 1, 2022, in the County Boardroom

9.0 Adjourn

On motion by Beth Stanford and seconded by Matt Neil, the Parks Committee adjourned at 6:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Schwertel, Administrative Specialist

Signed by: 
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Committee Chair/Vice Chair

November 10, 2022 | 2:16 PM PST
Date