



MINUTES OF THE PARKS COMMITTEE

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2019, 5:30 PM
CITY HALL, ROOM 207**

A. ROLL CALL.

Ald. Jesse Brunette, Ald. Brian Johnson, Ald. Barbara Dorff
Excused - Ald. Chris Wery, Ald. Andy Nicholson

Others Present: Dan Ditscheit, James Andersen, Rick Jensen

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

Moved by Ald. Brian Johnson, seconded by Ald. Barbara Dorff to approve. Motion carried.
Yes- Jesse Brunette, Brian Johnson, Barbara Dorff, No- None, Abstain- None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

Moved by Ald. Barbara Dorff, seconded by Ald. Brian Johnson to approve. Motion carried.
Yes- Jesse Brunette, Brian Johnson, Barbara Dorff, No- None, Abstain- None

D. REGULAR BUSINESS.

I. Consideration with possible action on the request by Ald. Dorff to consider adding a playground area separate from the Baird School playground in Baird Park. For security reasons the school may not allow the public to use the playground during school hours. The former playground belonged to the City and the residents of the area are requesting to have a playground they can use.

Moved by Ald. Barbara Dorff, seconded by Ald. Brian Johnson to approve the installation of a tot playground at Baird Park, separate from the school playground, on City property adjacent to the tennis courts. Motion carried.

Yes- Jesse Brunette, Brian Johnson, Barbara Dorff, No- None, Abstain- None

2. Request approval to purchase mobile and portable radios from Nielson Communications, Inc. for \$45,822.

Moved by Ald. Brian Johnson, seconded by Ald. Barbara Dorff to approve. Motion carried.

Yes- Jesse Brunette, Brian Johnson, Barbara Dorff, No- None, Abstain- None

3. Consideration with possible action on the request by Ald. Brunette to make changes to alleviate parking concerns at the Resch Aquatic Center.

Moved by Ald. Jesse Brunette, seconded by Ald. Barbara Dorff to receive and place on file. Motion carried.

Yes- Jesse Brunette, Brian Johnson, Barbara Dorff, No- None, Abstain- None

E. INFORMATIONAL.

1. Director's Report on updates and recent activities of the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.

Moved by Ald. Brian Johnson, seconded by Ald. Barbara Dorff to receive and place on file. Motion carried.

Yes- Jesse Brunette, Brian Johnson, Barbara Dorff, No- None, Abstain- None

2. The next Park Committee is scheduled for October 23, 2019.

F. ADJOURNMENT.

Moved by Ald. Brian Johnson, seconded by Ald. Barbara Dorff to adjourn. Motion carried.

Yes- Jesse Brunette, Brian Johnson, Barbara Dorff, No- None, Abstain- None

VERBATIM MINUTES

- Okay, I'd like to call the order the October 9th Parks Committee. Vice Chairman, Jesse Brunette, Alderman Nicholson and Alderman Wery, well, Alderman Nicholson is excused, Alderman Wery is probably in transit. Alderman Johnson and Alderman, Alderperson Barb Dorff are present so we have a quorum. Can I get a motion to approve the agenda?

- So moved.
- Second.
- Motion by Johnson, second by Dorff to approve the agenda. All those in favor, say aye.
- [Crowd] Aye.
- Opposed? Motion carries. Item C, approval of minutes.
- Move to approve.
- Second.
- Move to approve by Alder Dorff, second by Johnson, all in favor, say aye.
- [Crowd] Aye.
- Aye. Opposed? Motion carries. And, item D, regular business. Consideration with the possible action on the request by Alder Dorff to consider adding a playground area, separate from the Baird School playground in Baird Park. For security reasons, the school may not allow the public to use the playground during school hours. The former playground belonged to the city and the residents of that area are requesting to have a playground they can use. Alder Dorff?
- Okay. So I did a little bit more work after the council meeting and put out, something was put out to all of the neighborhood association presidents and I got zero feedback from them. I did get some negative feedback about the proposal to put it on, tell me the name of that little street.
- Ah, McKenzie Lane
- McKenzie Lane. But they were concerned over something that wouldn't have happened, anyway. It would not have been anywhere near the apartments. In the end, though, to me, the park was on Baird property, and other, like Schmitt Park, has kind of perked up and said, "Well, put it over by somewhere in Schmitt Park." Okay. I think, just to alleviate that, I would rather just see a smaller area. Really, what we really need, is a toddler park. That's the part that's missing. There's a regular playground, but the children that would be using it are in school. And, when they're out of school, they can use it. But it's the toddlers, the younger children in the neighborhood that can't use a park. And so, I asked Director Ditscheit to see is there a little spot, we could use less money, and we could have a smaller area, and just a toddler area. And then, I think I'd like him to explain that.
- Sure. So in 2015, the city did bond \$80,000.00 to replace the playground at Baird, because of the property trade and the new school, that money was never spent, and so it's still available. So, this winter, we would like to spend it on a playground project. So, it's either build a tot playground at Baird School, or replace an existing playground somewhere else using that money. Or, put a brand new playground at one of the other two park locations that are close to here, which one would be McKenzie Lane Park, which we've discussed, and like Alder Dorff mentioned, there have been some concerns addressed with that location. But the other option would be Arnie Wolff Sports Complex. That would be used quite a bit because of the nature of the facility. It's a soccer tournament complex.

But it really would not be convenient to the neighbors who are walking to the site, because it's kind of out of the way and you'd have to drive to it. So, in anyway shape or form, we would like to spend some of that money and replace some playgrounds. So, we did take a look at Baird School to see if there was a potential location. I submitted a map to you where, if we were to do a smaller, tot playground, not a full playground, just the tot one, it could fit in the location shown right next to the tennis courts. I do have photographs of that area if you're interested in seeing that. There really wouldn't be no other place that I would recommend placing a tot playground. If you look at the existing park configuration, we wouldn't want to put it over by the soccer field, because then we'd lose use of that potential soccer field. And any other open space is too close to the outfield fence for that ball field. So, I'd would have safety concerns with putting it in the outfield of that new ball field location.

- Plus, and it's further away from that retention pond, as well.

- Correct.

- I'd like that. Because that's can be dangerous.

- Now, if we were to build a tot only playground, we would estimate that to run about \$50,000.00. That cost would include purchase of the equipment, our staff would install it, and it would also be the cost of wood chips and edging, and an ADA accessible walkway to it. \$80,000.00 would not be enough, anymore, to totally replace a playground, because any other new playground we would do, you'd have the cost of that walkway in there. And, that \$80,000.00 covers the cost of wood chips and the playground, for a whole playground, but it does not cover the cost for ADA accessible walk to it. So, in general, I guess, in summary, if the Park Committee is supportive of just installing a tot playground here and having two playgrounds in this location, I would be acceptable to putting it here. Just to give you some perspective of other tot, or other park school locations. Right now, there's only one other park school location with two playgrounds, and that's at Wilder Park. All of the other ones only have one. And the playgrounds are either on park property or on school property in the other locations. But, that being said, there are not a lot of playgrounds in this neighborhood. So, I think it would warrant a tot playground here as long as we have a space for it.

- Suggestion? Frank? Alder Jensen?

- So, I presume that, and I'm trying to recall the discussion that previous occurred on this. The issue at hand here, correct me if I'm wrong, is that the playground area, currently, the site is closed off after hours?

- No. It's on school property now, where, before, we had one on school property and one on park property. Now, in the new configuration, it's the playground that's there is on school property. So, how that works is if the playground is on school property, the public can use it but only on weekends and evenings after school is out of session. Now, of course, throughout the entire summer, it's open to the public. The only time that it's closed to the public is when school is in session and there's students in school.

- And that's consistent across the board with all the district schools...

- Correct.

- For security reasons they just don't allow strangers...
- And that makes more sense, why you're proposing the tot...
- Right.
- The playgrounds that are on park sites, at a park school location, are open to the public at all times, even when school is in session. So, like for example, Beaumont School, that has one playground and it's on park property. The public can use that year round, anytime, even when school is in session. The issue that we have in those instances is the public still feels that they're not able to use it because it's so close to a school. And we may have a similar situation here, with this being the backyard of this school, but the school would not be able to tell the public they would not be able to use it.
- Right.
- Because it's on park property.
- I think that neighborhoods pretty aware. They could use it if it was there. Can I make a motion?
- Of course.
- Okay. I would like to move to approve that we add the playground area, separate from the Baird School playground, just a tot playground to the area behind the school, on the Baird School property. Not on, I'm sorry, on the park property.
- Okay, second that.
- Second.
- Got a motion by Alder Dorff. Do you have that motion?
- Yeah.
- Yes.
- Okay, second by Alder Johnson. Any discussion? All those in favor, say aye.
- [Crowd] Aye.
- Opposed? Motion carries.
- Thank you.
- Request approval to purchase mobile and portable radios from Nielson Communications and for \$45,822.00.
- In 2014 and in 2017, we upgraded the Public Works portable and mobile radios to Hytera, is a brand name, and we put that out for bid. We received three quotes with Hytera being the lowest

compared to Motorola and another brand called Impres. So we awarded that contract for the Public Works Department to Nielson, which is a local distributor of Hytera radios. The city's radio technician, which was Randy Fraling and now, it's Robert Jones, is requested that we stay with the Hytera radios because they work very well and it's consistent then, throughout Parks and Public Works Department. So, when Parks got the money approved to upgrade their radio system, we kept it in line with what we have done in the past with DPW with Hytera. We did put this out for bid but we only got the one quote from Nielson and the quote came in where we expected it. There may be one other authorized Hytera dealer in Northeast Wisconsin, but they did not quote. So, the recommendation of the Parks Department and our radio technician is to proceed with the award to Hytera for these radios.

- Did it come in under what was budgeted?

- Yes. In fact, there's more money in the budget, I think, to, you know, Dan can address that.

- Yeah.

- Yes, so real quickly on that, Steve, the city bonded a \$110,000.00 for this. There's quite a bit of savings with this quote. The reason that there's a savings is because, originally, we were going to replace all of the radios in Parks and Forestry, and also, at Bay Beach Amusement Park. What we decided to do was to keep the ones at Bay Beach Amusement Park, for now. The problem that we had with the radios is, obviously, we were switching to digital. Right now, they're analog. But the other problem is because they're an older radio system, we don't have replacement parts for them. And when it breaks, it's hard to fix them and hard to find replacement radios. So what we're planning on doing is taking all of our old radios from the Park shop and Forestry, and give them all to Bay Beach. So that'll solve our problem with replacement radios as needed. So we feel that'll be quite a number of years before we really have to switch out the radios at Bay Beach Amusement Park. So this is a nice cost savings by going this route. And then the additional savings that we see, what we'll do is we'll prioritize within the parks what other equipment needs to be replaced within the park system and use the funding for other equipment replacement.

- Okay. Thank you.

- Alder Johnson?

- This is something we're that we're replacing every three years, then?

- I don't think it's that frequently.

- Naw. I mean these...

- Or it's just a three year contract for service?

- 2000...

- The equipment will last until it's done. What we're talking about here is kind of a service and we're not going to be replacing these unless they get damaged or break in different ways.

- All right. The only reason I ask, Dan, is it sure would be nice, and I understand the budget situation as it is right now, but it sure would be nice to get away from bonding for things like this and have that be part of our levy supported expenditures every year. So, I'll just make that comment. I've had had my peace. I move to approve.

- Second.

- Okay, motion by Alder Johnson, second by Dorff to approve. Any discussion? All those in favor, say aye.

- [Crowd] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries. Great.

- Are you retiring?

- Yes.

- Yeah? November 8th.

- Well, congratulations.

- Yeah.

- Thank you.

- Thank you for many years of service.

- Well, thank you. I enjoyed every year of it.

- Good.

- Item 3. Consideration with possible action on the request by Alder Brunette to make changes to alleviate parking concerns at the Resch Aquatic Center. For the sake of the committee, I will give a very brief summary of why this is appearing before us here. Alder Wery is not here and he represents the area. I think he and Alder Scanell are pretty close, border-wise, district-wise. But there's a constituent that reached out to me who used the park over the summer months. As you know, Colburn Park was closed for the year. So that we have, maybe saw more traffic to Resch Aquatic Center, may be other, the only other west side pool the city, At least, of any notable size. So she was concerned about the traffic and the parking enforcement in that pool area. This has been an ongoing issue that the Traffic Commission's well aware of, Parks committee's well aware of, it's a very, at times, it's caused a lot of frustration within the community. So I think what we currently have in place is well considered and thought of. I think we already have looked into it. This appeared before the Traffic Commission. Talked to Dave Hansen about that and the Traffic Commission recommended that this would be forwarded to the Parks Committee. So that's why it's here. So, Director Ditscheit, if you could just provide like a two or three minute, we don't have to go into too much detail.

- Yeah. I reached out to the constituent, informed her we'd be discussing it today. Offered. Invited her. She did not respond. So.

- Sure. Just a little more history about the park itself and the aquatics center. So when the aquatics center was built, the decision at the time was made to just have a small parking lot put in. So, currently, I believe there's 23 stalls in that parking lot. And the rest of the parking would be handled with on-street parking. Part of that reason was because of the cost of building a new parking lot. It just simply wasn't in the budget. But then the other thought behind that was they didn't want to lose the green space to the east of where the aquatic center is. It's a nice green space with mature trees and then they didn't want to cut down trees and build a parking lot. And the other thing, though, is that came into consideration is there are plenty of opportunities for on-street parking, within the block or two of the facility. And then, we also worked with the school district, at the time, to allow overflow parking at the west High School parking lot, which is about a block away. And that's a pretty far walk. But the school district has agreed to that as overflow parking for the aquatic center. So that's the reason that we're in the situation we're in. Since the aquatic center was put in, it has been a frustration with the residents, on Reed Street, especially. So, we worked closely with the Alders in that district, and also with the traffic engineer and the neighbors to set up a system where there was no parking, other than residential parking, or resident parking on the south side of Reed Street. But on the north side of Reed Street, that's the general parking for the pool. So, we've gone through several different renditions of how that could work and how it's ticketed and signed. Right now, I think with what Alder Brunette mentioned, I think we have a system that the residents who live across the street are content with. And it seems to be working fairly well. The problem now, we're having now is, you know, somebody who used the facility received a parking ticket, because they didn't, either see the rule sign or didn't adhere to it. So, that's where we're at right now and that's the brief summary and history of it. There are plans, at some point in the future, to extend the smaller parking lot north. If you recall, there's several residential properties along that stretch. Last year, the Redevelopment Authority purchased one of those houses and it's the house directly north of our parking lot and that house was removed. And it's going to be donated to Park, for park purposes. So over the years, as the other two properties owners decide to move out, we may look at those as other, potential, park expansion opportunities to expand our parking lot even further north. And, maybe, double or triple the size of that parking lot.

- Thank you, Dan. Alder Dorff.

- Is it worse this year because Colburn was closed? Do you think that, or is it just always been bad?

- I don't that offhand. I didn't talk to the traffic engineers about and we didn't really do any traffic studies in the area. I will tell you, I didn't receive any complaints from the residents this year as I had in previous years.

- I think part of the issue is, for folk who had been using Colburn, parking is more abundant there. And if they, you know, were to use this park this year, it's less abundant. So...

- But will Colburn be open next year?

- Colburn will be open next season.

- Okay.

- So.

- Alder Johnson?

- Yeah. Thank you for that overview. I'm just taking a look at the satellite image of that particular site and I see the house that you're talking about. And then, if I'm looking at this correctly and I'm understanding what you're saying correctly, Dan, there's two more homes left there. Right?

- That's correct.

- Okay. Have we done any outreach of those homeowners to, at least, indicate our interest in, potentially, acquiring their property?

- We have not at this point. What happened with that first house is it just went out for sale and then we pursued it from there and worked with the Redevelopment Authority to acquire it.

- Okay.

- So.

- I just wonder if it might be worthwhile to, at least, have, you know, a warm conversation with those property owners. Just to, maybe, understand where they at, if there's any interest in selling to the city when that becomes available, or, if they want to go open market, obviously, that's their choice. But I think it might be worthwhile to at least entertain a conversation there so that we know what options we have in our belt when, if this continues to be a problem.

- I would say that's a great idea. I can reach out to them and the conversation going.

- Okay. I'll make a motion to receive and place in file.

- Second. Okay. Motion made by Alder Brunette. Second by Dorff to receive and place in filing. Discussion? All those in favor say aye.

- [Crowd] Aye.

- Aye. Opposed. Motion carries. Item E, informational, Director's report on updates and recent activities of the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department.

- I just have a few things to note here. So tree pruning along the streets continues. The west side crew is on Neville Street and the east side crew is on Schwartz Street. Stump removal is, currently, being done between Ashland and Oneida. Work has begun, again, at East River Optimist, as far as that parking lot expansion project goes. It's temporarily put on hold due to the wet conditions and the contractor couldn't get in there. They're now working on it, again. The sewer work is completed. We did uncover a large amount of buried glass underneath that site so we did have to, actually, bring that to a landfill and we're going to bring clean fill back in site, back on the property. Staff is, currently, working on the playground replacements at East River VanBeaver Park. Ken Muir's Happy Cat restoration project is nearly completed and it'll be done in the next two weeks or so. The only work that's left to do is to install the water control culvert feature. Bay Beach. Now's your chance to

go there. We have one more weekend where it's open for the season. After that, we're closed for the year. So this weekend, we're going to running Blue Beach, which is a Halloween themed event out at Bay Beach. It'll run on Friday from 5 to 9 and Saturday from 2 to 9. We will show a movie on Saturday night and there'll be trick or treating by the rides. And then, this year we have a maze through the train depot that's there. So it's a great event. We had it last year at, I believe, for the first year. This is the second year of it. 4K Building? So we hope to move the classrooms into the lower level within the next week or two. The contractor is just finishing up a few final punch list items before we can do that. The upper level, which is the rental space that probably won't be open until towards the end of November because the caterer's kitchen, is, all of that equipment's still on order. It hasn't arrived yet. Once it comes in, we'll get the caterer's kitchen completed and then we'll open the upper floor towards rentals. We're thinking end of November for that. And then, finally, on October 19th at the Wildlife Sanctuary, we're hosting an event called Smores, Steps, and Skits. So this family-friendly night will include a campfire with s'mores, a candlelit trail for walking, and enjoying a skit performed by some of our costumed animal characters. So if you can make it to that, that'd be great. So that concludes my Director's report.

- Thank you, Dan. Any discussion? Okay? Move to receive and place on file.

- Motion made by Alder Johnson.

- Second.

- Second by Dorff to receive and place on file. All those in favor, say aye.

- [Crowd] Aye.

- Opposed? Motion carries.

- Move to adjourn.

- Move to adjourn by Alder Johnson.

- Second.

- Second by Dorff. All those in favor, say aye.

- [Crowd] Aye.

- Aye. Opposed? Motion carries. We are adjourned.

- I didn't break this so...

- That's not mine.

- That was here.

- All right.

- Heck, it's Chris'.
- Was this he left from last night?
- It must be. I don't know who's it is. I saw it when we just got here.
- Okay. So, we were the last meeting last night so...
- So about probably
- Personnel. Joe Faulds.
- I'll just pass it to Joe.
- Thank you.
- One of the other Alders isn't... Two of the other Alders, who normally are here aren't here. Our...