

MINUTES – HULL PARKS COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 18, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

TOWN OF HULL MUNICIPAL BUILDING

4550 WOJCIK MEMORIAL DRIVE, STEVENS POINT, WI 54482

UNOFFICIAL



- 1) Call to order:** The meeting of the Hull Parks Commission was called to order on Wednesday, May 18, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. by Parks Chairperson Dave Wilz at the Hull Municipal Building, 4550 Wojcik Memorial Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54482.

Present: Chair: Dave Wilz, Committee Members: Mike O’Keefe, Brian Hicks, Jim Mendyke, Maurice Stoltz, Roland Schroeder,
Parks Secretary: Patty Amman, Pete Kaminski, Hull Road Foreman

Others Present: Janeen Cooper (1469 Torun Road, 54482)

- 2) Citizens wishing to address the commission on non-agenda items. Agenda items are for discussion and possible action:** NONE.

- 3) Announcements:**

Wilz Summary: in an effort to be more efficient, we asked the Park Commission members if it would be acceptable to e-mail the Parks Commission minutes to them without mailing a hard copy. This was agreeable to the members, to receive it electronically. So from now on, no hard copies will be mailed of the minutes and summary page. Both will be e-mailed to all members. Agenda’s will be e-mailed as soon as they are available.

Safety Committee update; will start the 3rd Thursday in June and run for 5-6 months.

Water Study update general information, a lot of interest locally.

X-Interchange update information; Brian indicated when he rides his bike in that area, the traffic in that area is much faster than it used to be. Pete indicated that there are 300 cars a day in Granite Ridge area and around North Second Drive, the traffic has tripled to 3,000 cars a day. All from the interchange situation.

- 4) Approval of minutes from April 20, 2011 Parks meeting.** *Motion made by Jim Mendyke to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2011 meeting. Seconded by Brian Hicks. Motion passed.*

- 5) Review Park Inspection Summaries.**

Jim Mendyke- Meadow Manor – It was in good shape. The benches, the first board you sit on has chips out of it. Maybe it could be filed down. The merry-go-round has some give to it if you pull it up.

Pete K. We put brand new bearings in around 2003. We grease them about every other month. I can go out and adjust it.

Mendyke The swings looked like they had a fresh coat of paint last year but one swing set is peeling while the other one is fine. The fence in the outfield, is that our fence or the neighbors fence?

Pete K. That would be the neighbors.

Mendyke A nice backstop and infield. It looks in good shape but one of the new trees didn't make it. Maybe it's too early to tell but I didn't see any buds yet. Otherwise everything is in good shape.

Wilz – Eastwood Park – A combination park that is shared with Stevens Point. Hull has the playground equipment and baseball area. About 75% of the park is Hull's, 25% is Point's. It looks pretty good overall. Chips needed at bottom of slide or raked back in. Chains on all 4 of the big kids' swings are very rusted although the pipe is good. That might be one to try the stainless steel chain on. Little kids swings need chips. I counted what appears to be 3 dead trees that I assume are from last year's plantings.

Some general discussion on the path(s) that Stevens Point took care of. Going all the way around the Point side and doing some of Hull's. Point is supposed to take care of all the paths in Eastwood include the Hull portion, that's the agreement and they seem to be doing that.

Wilz – Kirshling/Pleasant View West - Everything look good except the wood benches, 2 of the 3 need paint. There were blotches of paint missing like it had peeled off. Chips needed or need to be raked throughout. Picnic table could use paint. Swing chains looked good, no visible rust. The line of trees, there's a lot of brush in there. When you mow, is there something attached to that where you can put brush? Not really, okay.

Pete K. If there's enough, we can go out with the pickup truck and put in the truck box.

Maurice Stoltz - Treder's Woodland Park - There's nothing there except plants. One evergreen in the northwest corner is dried up. One tree wasn't budded out yet but the rest had buds.

Sorenson Park – Everything is in pretty good shape including the ball diamond. One bench has a chunk out of it, in the corner, maybe 1" x 3". Someone maybe hit the end of it and broke it off. Both picnic tables are peeling and need paint, the surface.

Mike O'Keefe – Somerset Park - I thought it looked good. A lot of the trees, especially the new maples are having a hard time. Some crowns are leafed out but the lower branches are not and maybe are dead so maybe Pete could trim those lower ones off. Some of the oaks had flowered out but some in the baseball field area hadn't budded yet at all. So I took a knife and cut into the outer branches and there was definitely moisture there so I assume they'll eventually come out. There were some dead trees that could be removed. Two jack pines, one at the entrance to the east, not sure if it's in the right-of-way but it's in the corner near the ball field. I

talked to some people while I was out there and a couple of parents asked if the toddler swing was going to be moved over so it would be closer to the other swing sets. Some families that come in have both older and younger kids and would prefer them in the same general area. The digger was over in that location before you moved it into the wood chip area. I don't see a lot using the balance beam.

Mendyke My kids love the balance beam.

O'Keefe The yellow swing set needed painting. A table underneath the light fixture by the large playground, the top is peeling and needs redoing. Some of the boards on the bench were rotted. One had shelf fungi growing on it which is unusual on dead wood. Usually you'd see it on trees like poplar. I pulled them off but the wood was rotted in there. The diamond could be re-graded probably in the springtime. I've been over to other fields and it's in a similar shape. It's okay if a lot of people play on it. We get a lot of cars parking along Sunny Crest. I don't know if anything is being considered to provide some parking there like perpendicular parking because they stack them up pretty good along that street when they're practicing. The area behind the ball field to the north, is that owned by the parks, that low wooded section with a trail that runs through there?

Pete K. We do maintain that.

Wilz When you said people were parking on Sunny Crest, how many were out playing baseball?

O'Keefe There were a couple of teams with 15-20 cars out there. Some pulled up on the grass and in that indentation the best they can down the street.

Hicks I didn't think it was congested.

Wilz We've been told by the people that use it for practice that it gets used heavily and we did some work on the infield last year for them. I just wanted to make sure that it is being used because when I drive by, there's nobody there.

O'Keefe I live close by and in the evenings, it's pretty crowded until at least 8:00 p.m.

Wilz Pete and I talked about going out and cleaning the infield up again.

O'Keefe I've lived there for 11 years and it seems to be getting more used now with younger families that have moved into the area. Either with kids by themselves or kids with parents utilizing that park, which is good to see. It would be nice to have a garbage can out by the ball diamond behind the backstop.

Wilz I stopped there tonight to look at the field and three quarters of it is still in good shape. Just around the edges it needs work and Pete will try to clean that up. I could tell by just looking at the ball field that it was being used.

Schroeder If you would get a multi-use vehicle for Pete so he could change out the attachments and take out things like that. You've got to do what you've got to do for quality. Although it was never our intent to use the parks mainly for baseball, it's great that it's getting used for that too. As for parking, our parks are meant to be neighborhood parks where families and kids can walk to them, for local use. They weren't set up for a lot of parking. It's someplace where families can send their kids where they feel safe.

O'Keefe A lot of kids have been coming in with bicycles there lately. It gets used; even some adult groups go down there and play softball and use that diamond on weekends.

Wilz The person who is using the diamond is active in coordinating the girls' softball group and he said if they come to his area, they can practice together so it is a neighborhood type use.

O'Keefe It's nice to see the people there when I'm walking around the area just for exercise. I see a lot of mom's returning over and over again with their kids.

Roland Schroeder- Conifer Acres- The intent with that one is to keep it as a nature trail. On the City side is the half basketball court which is in great shape. The benches that are built into the shelter are in good shape. I think we should put a garbage can there, we had one before but I couldn't find it. There's no picnic table there now but it could use one just off the side where it could be put in the shelter if need be. A lot of times young families come and they have a basket with food. The things I mentioned before with the fallen trees, apparently Pete has taken care of because they're all down. In the future if the budget allows, we might want to look at putting a chain link fence on the west side where it's Jim Firkus' property. We talked about that for several years, finding where the stakes are.

Pete K. We have that staked off.

Schroeder But that might be something to consider because it's fenced behind and on the side and I think that might eliminate problems down the road with dumping.

Kirshling Park East/Pleasant View- including the nature trail: everything's in excellent shape. The older style climbing wall with pipe seems to get a lot of use. The slide with the new paint makes it look pretty new. Swings in good shape but could use the stainless steel hooks. I think the chain is okay once you'd change the hooks where the rust is and it runs down. We may want to have a chain link fence on the east side of the park. The guy next to it is keeping his stuff on his side pretty well.

Mendyke I'd just rather talk to the neighbors rather than put a fence up.

Schroeder Okay, I think that neighbor has been good now. We need to level the chips under the swings.

Stoltz I think it always needs raking under the swings.

Schroeder I think you do that when you go out there anyway. The walking paths are fair but I think this year we need to grind some of those stumps that are down on those paths. One is pretty high.

Pete K. If I stick mulch in there, a foot or 8", would that take care of it?

Schroeder If you put 4"-6" of stuff in there, I think that would be fine.

Pete K. Grinding is not cheap.

Schroeder That was why I was going to suggest the attachments to the utility vehicle for another use like that. All the spruce trees on the west side are great. One of the newly planted maples is dead so it could be replaced. On the south end of the park, there's a dead oak, maybe oak wilt got that one. I think I would just cut it off and leave it. I don't think you'd need to go around it with the lawn mower.

Hicks I'll get mine done this weekend and drop it off on Monday (*Jordan Acres*).

Wilz Just see to it that it gets to Pete. We didn't do this last year, talk about the parks that much and I think it's important that we do. It helps us all understand what we've got in the various parks.

A motion was made by Maurice Stoltz to accept the Park Inspection Reports and seconded by Roland Schroeder. Motion passed.

O'Keefe If you need any help to go out and determine if these trees are really dead or not, I'd be happy to go with you. Everything is just really slow to bud out this year in this area. About 30 miles south of here the oaks are all flowered out and starting to leaf out. (*He gave Pete his phone #.*)

Dave Wilz introduced Janeen Cooper who was in attendance as a possible new member to fill the one vacancy the Parks Commission still has. She was invited to come and sit in.

6) Review possible new park equipment & purchase (Brian Hicks).

Hicks I love these guys; they do good work (*Lee Recreation*). Let's look at the display boards they provided us with pictures of equipment on it. They (*Lee*) gave us 3 different proposals. This big piece is \$8,300. I gave her a budget of \$10,000 - \$15,000 so she came back with some good choices starting out with a couple of bigger structures. I'm not super keen on this one for that park. I don't know that it would fit all that well. I do like this next one a lot. I thought it looked like a lot of fun. It's different from all the other ones we have and it's big. That's a concern, how do we fit it in that park. It's \$9,900 for that structure. Lonna said once we decide on what we want, she'll come and help lay it out, how best to do it. This one is maybe not quite so difficult as some others. I said we're also looking for a bunch of small things and so this last board shows things that are called "play motion" which apparently is all the rage. It has

all sorts of different things that get the kids active in doing things. A lot of them have things to do with spinning. (*Brian described how some of the different pieces work or are used.*) This one looked neat too, it's kind of a standing merry-go-round; the kids hold onto it, get a running start, lift their feet up and spin around. There are some balancing things. I think she gave us some good choices. It's up to us as to what do we want to do. We talked about putting some things in Jordan Acres and maybe supplementing a little bit in Somerset Park. If we still have the \$20,000 available to us, there's certainly enough money there to do both. I think there's enough to put some of these things in Jordan Acres, maybe one of the bigger devices in Jordan Acres and some of the smaller things in Somerset. Thoughts from you guys?

Some general discussion about the different types of equipment, how they might be used and how they might fit in the various places. Some things are for one or 2 kids, some for multiple kids use. Comments about Somerset/Jordan Acres, the age of the kids out there anywhere from toddlers up to junior high kids that use the park so there's a range of ages there.

Hicks She did send me a catalog if we want to look for more stuff.

Wilz If we go smaller, do we have room for 3 items between the 2 parks?

Hicks I think we do. We don't need a lot at Jordan Acres, especially if we put something at Somerset. We don't need to crowd that park. Those parks are only about 3 blocks apart.

Wilz Let's pick out 3 pieces for the 2 parks.

General discussion on which 3 to pick out.

Jordan Acres Spinami \$3,530

Jordan Acres Duo Seesaw with backs \$1,599

2 Funky animals – maybe a horse, a ladybug – for Kirshling East/ Pleasant View

Wilz When we put these in, there's a cost to installation.

Pete K. I think I can do most of that.

Hicks We might want to talk about if we do it alone, are we forfeiting any kind of insurance or liability.

Wilz With the large activity centers, we took advantage of their installation help because of the liability issues.

Hicks With these smaller ones, do we still need to do that, I don't know.

Pete K. I can do that.

Mendyke We still have recreational immunity as a park.

Wilz Without that, we're at \$9,400.

Schroeder Jordan Acres, about \$6,000, which I think is a bargain.

Wilz We're in at around \$11,000 total and I'm comfortable with that. I told John we would come up with recommendations tonight and I will run it by the Board to get approval when the Board meets in a week and a half. Then we'll have you pull the trigger.

Hicks I can give you this sheet from this last proposal, the sheet with the costs and the pictures of all of them.

Schroeder With putting in chips for the fall area, etc. probably another \$1,500.

Pete K. I need to find out from her how big the fall zone needs to be around these to make sure it's up to code.

Wilz Without installation, we're at around \$10,200. We don't pay tax. But there is shipping.

Hicks I don't know if we'll have shipping on those individual items but there could be.

Pete K. Last year a semi came in and unloaded.

Wilz So we're looking at 6 pieces of equipment.

Hicks It would be \$600 to ship that large piece. I can't imagine we're more than that for these individual pieces.

Wilz I'm going to say shipping is \$1,500 + with a question mark.

Hicks You can have this for your meeting. It includes the costs and the fall zone specifications.

Wilz It's nice having the big display boards to see the equipment.

Hicks Yes, that helps a lot.

A motion was made by Roland Schroeder to approve the expenditures for the 6 pieces picked out, seconded by Maurice Stoltz. Motion passed.

7) Member Appointment Renewals.

Wilz This year we don't have anyone in the cycle that needs renewal. Patty and I reviewed everything last week. But with that, we still have an open position.

Schroeder That is where Janeen would come in, not for a 7 year term, but filling in the open position that would be for less years (*until 2016*).

A motion was made by Roland Schroeder to accept Dave Wilz' report on membership renewals, seconded by Brian Hicks. Motion passed.

8) Update of condition of park grounds, trees, etc. (Pete Kaminski)

Wilz Pete, as you've been out to the parks, I'd like you to report what you've been seeing for grounds, trees, etc.

Pete K. The grass is terribly high. We've been out there mowing. I wanted to have the crew out last week mowing but it was raining all week. Once a year we change the oil, transmission fluid, I was waiting 2 days for filters for the mower. We started mowing and everything should be mowed by tomorrow for the first time. Then we'll need to turn around and hit them again because the grass was so long and it grew so fast that we haven't had a chance to catch up. The trees in almost every park: at the municipal building we need 1 autumn blaze maple, at Meadow Manor Park - 1 Ironwood; at Jordan Acres - 1 Hackberry; at Somerset Park - 2 Autumn Blaze maples; at Eastwood Park - 4 are dead, 2 Hackberry and 2 maple. At Sorenson Park - 2 Hackberries. At Pleasant View East - 1 Sienna Glen maple; at Treder Woodland Park - 1 Blackhills spruce; at Pleasant View West - 3 Autumn Glen. Are those waking up now?

Wilz They might be. The only thing I noticed about trees were the ones at Eastwood Park, those things looked like there was nothing going on yet with them.

Pete K. We have a total of 16 dead trees of the new ones so far but I called up McKay Nursery and he said hold on for 2 more weeks to make sure they are dead, then he'll reimburse us for 16 trees.

Stoltz In Sorenson Park, I walked into the park and noticed that one Hackberry was starting to bud out. Not the one right by the road, the one back further.

Pete K. Hopefully some of these will still come out. Otherwise we'll have 16 to plant. Which out of 56, wouldn't be that bad.

Schroeder I know that maple in Eastwood Park is an ugly tree anyway so it's good that it died. When you hit some of the branches, it crumbles like it's dead.

Wilz The grass looks lush. I'm sure it's the fertilizer we put on in the fall.

Pete K. This year we're not fertilizing. Whatever money I had in the budget in the past for that is not there anymore. We decided last year to cut that out. Some people don't like that on the ground. Maybe in a year or two we'll do it again.

Wilz We investigated that from a comment from a concerned citizen and there was some real science behind it. We weren't using that kind of fertilizer and so we weren't concerned that we were putting that kind of stuff down that would be harmful to children but then, in finding that out in conversations I had with Portage County and Stevens Point Parks, they were surprised we were still putting down fertilizer which they had stopped doing some years ago except for active baseball diamonds. It's not only the money, it's the manpower and all that goes with it. So we decided last year that would be it and we'll go for a year and see what it looks like next year. We'll take it year by year. I don't want it to turn back into a dust field with quack grass. What does that cost us?

Pete K. \$1,500 for all the parks, everything. It's not that expensive.

A motion was made by Maurice Stoltz to accept Pete Kaminski's report on the condition of the park grounds and trees, seconded by Jim Mendyke. Motion passed.

9) Discussion & possible action – updated pictures of parks.

Wilz We've had park pictures/photographs taken over the years. Those are the only pictures on our new website for the Town of Hull, our parks, and they look pretty good. Patty and I were looking at them and they were all taken from a very panoramic view, long distance. I bring that up for discussion now because is there anyone here that can take pictures or know of someone who could take pictures of our parks, maybe with some kids playing there so we could update that portion of our website, spruce it up a little?

Discussion on taking pictures with people in them and subsequent release forms that might be necessary. So Jim Mendyke said he could do some with his kids and sign off on a model release. Roland Schroeder knows of someone that he can ask and Dave Wilz will try to take some and e-mail to Patty. The idea of being something with more interest in them other than just the equipment and trees.

Amman Weren't there 2 parks that we didn't have any pictures of at all? Treder Woodland was one that was missing.

Schroeder When they're having a baseball game where the park is really being used, a far off shot might be good. I think those you can do.

Amman Otherwise, like you say, if you would use Jim and his children, he would know what he's doing and signs off for them.

Wilz Just e-mail them to Barb or Patty and maybe we can start collecting some pictures to update the website. The pictures we've got look very good, it's just that they're taken from so far away. I went on some of the other websites for various townships in the area and I've gotten some ideas. Stevens Point and Portage County's websites are gorgeous. They have IT people.

Hicks Ours is good though, I like it.

Wilz We have a support person, LuAnn Elsinger who set this up for us. We had attempted to do it ourselves, but she got it crisp and clean and user friendly. She maintains it for us.

A motion was made by Brian Hicks that we discussed updating park pictures and those that can, will take pictures to send in, seconded by Mike O'Keefe. Motion passed.

10) Set next meeting date. *The next Parks meeting will be Wednesday, July 20, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. here at the Town Hall with a final meeting sometime in September.*

Schroeder So Janeen, what do we need to do so we can make your joining the Commission pretty affirmative before you leave for the door?

Cooper I couldn't tell you for sure but I'm thinking on it.

Wilz Do you have any questions? We talked briefly last fall.

Cooper Is this the committee?

Wilz This is Pete who works with the road crew and parks. Everybody else is on the Commission. I'm also a Town Supervisor. Otherwise these are individual town citizens. Most have served for a number of years, some for several terms. Mike O'Keefe is on his first year.

Cooper The first time I got interested was years ago when the kids were little. My thought is that we need to have more people on here that have kids. Some have grandkids. I love what you did to the grass.

Schroeder You'll find Janeen, as you go around the parks, the younger couples seem more open to talking to you about things. They'll stop me to talk and I'll tell them this is one of the parks I oversee and ask them if they have any comments. That's a plus side with the younger families, they're saying they like what we're doing, don't stop, are you going to put some more things in and I'll tell them we're talking about it. That brings a lot to the table.

O'Keefe It'll be interesting to see what happens with park use this year with gasoline being so high. If there won't be more use throughout the summer.

Schroeder I'm seeing a lot more people in them, even considering the weather.

Wilz I am too, during the week and during the day they're showing up.

Schroeder A lot of them with grandparents.

Stoltz In the last 7 years, this will be the last park that we're updating with equipment.

Cooper It's noticeable.

Stoltz We still have some of the old stuff that's still tried and true. Good stuff to use and keep but we've updated each park.

Cooper When I investigated a few times, there were no designated funds for the parks. Has that changed at all?

Wilz That has changed. For many years they tried to have an active Parks Commission but there wasn't a budget for it. There were lots of ideas and they'd get together but there was no organization and it went nowhere. So the commitment was made some years ago.

Schroeder John Holdridge had asked me to work on the Commission but I didn't want to work on a Commission that couldn't do anything because it got bogged down by the Town Board. It wasn't that the funds weren't there, but nobody on the Commission knew that you had to take those funds and get them over on the budget and once it was on the budget you could come back and you could plant. John said there was money but that we never come forward to spend it. But if you don't know the process, it was tough. John was looking for the parks to get better and we weren't doing anything. Now it's all straightened out.

Cooper Is it still coming out of the new subdivisions?

Schroeder Somewhere in our past minutes we mentioned when a new subdivision comes in, then we're addressing that.

Wilz Our Plan Commission is working on a new subdivision ordinance with the help of Portage County and the old one of ours and when they get to that part, we will address recreation in subdivisions whether it's a park or connecting it to a green circle or having some opportunity for outdoor activity. It will be a long time before they get to that. Once we got organized and got money in the budget, we've gone through the parks quite meticulously over the past 8-9 years putting in new pieces. We don't have a big budget, about \$35,000-\$40,000 a year of which about 40-50% we spend on equipment. The rest is labor, gasoline, lawn mowers and maintaining the equipment and parks.

Schroeder Our plan now is to put just one or 2 little things in, or move them around. I don't think our capital expenditures will be very high now after this year.

Wilz It's not just about the parks but I envision this Commission being involved in other forms of recreation. There's a safety committee starting up soon to get input from citizens that are very active in this community. The bikers, joggers, skaters and the fun runs and we're trying to work with all this and keep it all safe and how to do that. Depending upon where that goes, we might get involved in that too.

Schroeder John Holdridge had suggested that he'd like to see something indicating that people are entering the Town of Hull. Like Whiting did. But we left that on the back burner because we wanted to get the parks in shape. I don't know where we would do that because we have so many entrance and exit places in Hull.

Stoltz I know a few years ago they mentioned getting a new entrance sign like up here on the corner. I forgot all about that.

Wilz Was that part of the sign-the-town concept?

Schroeder Yes, for some reason he brought it to us. Maybe we'd put something together and it would go to the County Board. After it was done, we'd probably have the upkeep of the flowers and shrubs.

Wilz We used to meet 5 or 6 times a year in the past starting in early spring and being done in September. This year we're trying to cut down to 4 meetings since we're more organized and have it going smoothly. We want to keep people involved but not coming to any more meetings than are necessary. It's a good group. It's a 7 member Commission and we try to actively fill any openings but we can operate with less. We're not really dealing with anything controversial.

Schroeder Now that we have a chairperson, and secretary to take minutes, it's been a lot easier to manage and get things done. I think you would bring a lot to the Commission.

Wilz You were recommended by a previous Commission member that I highly respect so that's why I'm reaching out to see if you are interested.

Cooper It sounds like you've gotten the bugs worked out that were previously irritating.

9) Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. with a motion made by Maurice Stoltz and seconded by Roland Schroeder. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Amman
Parks Commission Secretary
Town of Hull, Portage County