

## PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

January 6, 2010

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at 4:15 p.m., at the City Hall.

Members Present: Dan Novitch, Dave Sukow, Mike Willman, Joan Tabor & Steve Hintze

Members Excused Absent: Ted Nickel & Jesse Bolder

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

Visitors: Schawntae Birk-Earley from MP3, Dewy Pfister, Ray Bloomer, Kelli Tuttle - Bluestem Forestry, Steve Hass, Lydia Baumann & Tom Hayden

\*\*\*Motion by Sukow, seconded by Hintze, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as printed.

\*\*Mike Willman stated on page 2 of the minutes there was a misprint. Willman stated it says fishing pier and it should state that a boarding dock will be put in at Riverside Park.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously

\*\*\*Motion by Willman, seconded by Tabor, to approve the claims from previous month as presented.

Novitch questioned why all four full time workers have a WPRA membership and what the benefits are having a membership. Wendorf stated that with the WPRA membership conferences & trade shows are less expensive and also some purchases for park equipment are less expensive.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously

The first item on the agenda was to review/approve Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan and Ash Survey. Wendorf stated that Kelli Tuttle from Bluestem Forestry Consulting Inc. was here to discuss the Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan and Ash Survey. Kelli stated that in the City of Merrill there are 536 Ash trees in parks & street right-of-way, estimated to be approximately 7% of the total population. Kelli stated that is a very low percentage for a city. Kelli stated that 524 are Green Ash, 8 White Ash, and 4 Black Ash. 92 ash trees are in dead or poor/very poor condition. Kelli stated that if the City of Merrill takes action on removing the Ash trees the cost will be extremely less than if they wait until the Emerald Ash Borer is here, which will only be a matter of time. The cost to remove and replant all Ash trees within the City of Merrill, not including privately owned trees, the estimated cost would be \$214,010. Kelli stated that it would take an estimated 4,008 man hours to remove these trees, which could cause other work to suffer within the department. Sukow stated that if the City does not remove the trees now it is going to cost the city a lot more money to remove them at a later date. Kelli did state that chemically treating the trees would cost a lot more and the trees would have to be treated every other year, which would create a lot of time and work. Willman questioned how the wood would be disposed of when the trees are cut down. Kelli stated that the market for wood is very low right now and giving the wood away would be a good option. Kelli stated that another option would be to mill the wood and use the wood for the picnic tables in the parks. Sukow stated that the public is also going to have to be educated on the Emerald Ash Borer. Wendorf stated that if the plan is passed the Park department is going to need some assistance from the Street Department.

Willman questioned if the Emerald Ash Borer is found in Lincoln County how the City Forest would be maintained. Wendorf stated that the Park Department would take care of the City Forest but not until after the City is taken care of. Novitch questioned how much training Wendorf would go through to further his qualifications and knowledge. Kelli stated that it is recommended that the city forester attains status as an ISA Certified Arborist within one year. Kelli stated that the training would cost \$100.00 and the cost for the test would be \$100.00.

\*\*\*Motion by Sukow, seconded by Willman to approve the Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan and Ash Survey and to send the plan to the City Council for approval.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously

The next item on the agenda was review/approve proposed transfer of Normal Park property from Lincoln County to the City of Merrill. Novitch explained that the County has agreed to hand Normal Park over to the City of Merrill with a few stipulations. Attorney Tom Hayden stated that he has read over the resolution and he does not see any reason why the Park and Recreation Commission should not accept the resolution as printed. Wendorf stated that the resolution came straight from the County.

\*\*\*Motion by Willman, seconded by Hintze to approve the transfer of Normal Park to the City of Merrill.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss the possible recommendation of former Department of Natural Resources site and related correspondence. Wendorf stated that he was notified a few days ago that the former Merrill Ranger Station Site is being offered back to the City of Merrill for the cost of \$1.00. Wendorf stated the a few years back it was considered to purchase the building as the office for the City Forester. Wendorf stated that right now their shop is located at the far end of the Street Shop. Wendorf stated that because he did not have time to get a lot of information on this he would like to request that this agenda item be moved to February meetings. This item will be put on February's agenda.

The next item on the agenda was the monthly reports given by Wendorf. Wendorf stated that ice rinks are up and ready to go and being used. Some of the winter activities are in full swing and more activities to come. Novitch questioned how the new plainer is working for the picnic tables. Wendorf stated that is working great. Willman questioned if the picnic tables were painted or stained. Wendorf stated that the picnic tables are stained and painted – most are treated wood and don't take stain very well.

\*\*\*Motion by Sukow, seconded by Hintze to approve the board report given by Wendorf.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is public comment. There was no public comment.  
The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 3 at 4:15 p.m., at the Smith Center.

\*\*\*Motion by Willman, seconded by Hintze, to adjourn at 5:20 p.m.

\*\*\*Carried unanimously.

Dawn Smith  
Recording Secretary

