



MINUTES – HULL PARKS COMMISSION
Wednesday, August 4, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.
At Hull Municipal Bldg., 4550 Wojcik Memorial Drive
STEVENS POINT, WI 54482

1) **Call to order:** The meeting of the Hull Parks Commission was called to order on Wednesday, August 4, 2010 at 6:40 p.m. by Parks Chairperson Dave Wilz at Hull Municipal Bldg., 4550 Wojcik Memorial Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54482.

Present: Chair: Dave Wilz, Marcia Locher, Brian Hicks, Jim Mendyke, Parks Secretary: Patty Amman, Maurice Stoltz, Pete Kaminski, Hull Road Foreman

Others Present: Mike O’Keefe

Absent: Carrie Butt, Roland Schroeder (excused)

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

3) **Announcements:**

Wilz In interviewing 5 great candidates for replacement of supervisor Bob Brilowski, who passed away this spring, the Board picked LaVerne Syens as his replacement. LaVerne lives in my subdivision and he currently serves on our Plan Commission. It will be up to LaVerne to decide if he wants to run for re-election next spring and he’ll need to make that decision by this December.

Kaminski Dave, did you talk with John about the sign for the Pipe area (*discussed in general at the last Park meeting.*)?

Wilz I spoke with him.

Kaminski We have some money left this year and we could do something about that.

Wilz John’s issue wasn’t that we should sign it, but what should we call it, Granite Ridge? I think he was a little concerned about the property owners out there thinking we’d be drawing more attention to the Pipe. He was more concerned about what we should legally call it.

Locher I think: Granite Ridge Park, “The Pipe”.

Wilz We've got a Board meeting coming up and we can get some input from the Board, especially Dave Pederson who lives out there and knows how people feel out there.

Locher The reason we put the sign for Plover Heights in was to include the hours and say it was closed after certain hours so it could be controlled for safety.

Wilz I could see why people out in the Pipe area might want a sign like that especially with more people out back there in the causeway, because we don't have all the signs saying that. We do have some signs saying something about hours don't we?

Locher That's the whole purpose of the sign, that the park is closed after certain hours.

Wilz I'd like to announce that Carrie Butt has resigned her commission. I had a conversation with her. So I'm expecting a letter from her. Sometimes things change in life and she is absolutely so busy with her business and it's a summer business. So I thanked her for her time on the Parks Commission. I told her we had this meeting and one more for us to be able to look to fill her position.

I'd like to introduce Michael O'Keefe. This is the person Marcia spoke about at the last meeting that might be a potential replacement and I invited him here tonight so he can get a little flavor of what it is that we do.

Some general discussion between Wilz and Locher about another person who might be a suggested replacement. Wilz will get name from Locher later.

Wilz For announcements, I'm going to try to do what we do at our other Town meetings, which is to share information that comes in on all different subjects of interest into the Town. Sometimes it's something that John Holdridge finds or people that work here or things that I find and I'd like to share this general information. I think this is a good forum to take a few minutes and share some things with you.

I'm passing around a copy of a letter that was received at our Fire Dept. and it pertains to a fire in the Maple Bluff area. This person is thanking our Town Fire Dept. for their service. I bring this up because we sometimes forget just how well we are served in protective services and also how well we're served by Pete Kaminski and his road crew. When we get something from people saying good things, I think we should be made aware of it, and we're grateful.

The next page I'm passing around is about the debt structure of the Town of Hull. This is money that we borrowed over the course of years for different purposes. Going across the top of the spread sheet are the years and going down the side are the items in the years that we borrowed them in. The first one says Bank One Chase, who we had the loan for the Jordan Road financing with. We did a reconstruction of Jordan Road and the total amount exceeded the dollars that we had in our roads budget, so we financed it with borrowed money. The next one was for a Hull Fire Dept. pumper truck that was for \$107,000, paid off in 2007. The next one is Wilshire Drive, that was a total reconstruction also, right Pete?

Kaminski Yes. It was almost a half million dollars, but I think that is paid off, right?

Wilz Yes, that is paid off. The next one is also paid off. On the bottom it says, River Cities Bank, road projects, pumper, gas control system and refinancing of existing loan and that

will be paid off in 2017. That was a total of \$321,000. Our original loan amounts for all of this was \$809,000. The Town is very frugal and we do not like to borrow money, but if you're going to do a big road project, for example, you can't do the work over 4 years, you need to do it in one year. We've been very frugal in our borrowing and even though we have \$809,000 right now, our equalized value for the Town is \$374,000,000. If you take all the value in the Town and the value of that property in terms of taxation, you'd be at \$374 million worth of property. We are allowed by Wisconsin law to borrow up to 5% of that \$374 million. So under law, we could borrow up to \$18.7 million. Obviously, we're well below that. We don't use financing unless we absolutely have to. We try to live within budgets but if something breaks or we have a major investment, that's how we adapt. So we are in excellent shape financially.

We created a matrix that we've been utilizing and informing people of their property tax distribution. If you notice when you get your property tax bill, there are various line items in your tax bill. What it says is that the Stevens Point School District gets 51% of your total property tax bill. Portage County gets 27%, Mid-State Tech. gets 8%. So between them and the Point school district, 59% goes to education. The State of Wisconsin gets 1%. If you take out what the State gets, then the smallest portion of your property tax bill is the Town of Hull at 13%. That is the only money we have to use to pay for the services that we provide to our Town for fire, cutting and maintaining the parks and road maintenance. The reason we are trying to communicate this is because, if you recall, one of the Parks meetings earlier this summer was rescheduled so that it didn't coincide with a special task force meeting downtown. At that task force meeting, we brought people in from Madison and Portage County to explain to us how all these various components come together and how this could be communicated to our property tax owners so that when they open their bill, they would maybe have a pamphlet with it explaining how the money is used and where it goes. They did this one to one and a half hour seminar to explain generally how Wisconsin is organized in taxes in the counties and townships. But nobody could really answer the question that I had as to why my tax bill went up the way it did. Why did the Town of Hull lower their portion of my taxes last year yet my overall tax bill went up 12% and the school portion went up 18%. Yet the school district said they had only raised it by 2%. So I asked how that happened. They said, "Well, you know." And I said, "No, what's why I asked." It's an equalized value thing. As property values shift within a local community, if Hull is worth this much and Point is worth that much, but Point's overall value goes down and ours goes up, we absorb a bigger piece of it. Nobody has been able to explain to us how those calculations are done. We're continuing to pursue this. Our hope is that by tax bill season, tax payers will have something they can learn and understand and more importantly, City officials can explain why this happened. We were getting inquiries and complaints. I got a lot of phone calls and tried to redirect them to the education and county officials but our Town citizens said they preferred to talk to me. I said, "No, I didn't do that budget (for the City or County portion), and you need to call him." It shouldn't be that way. We should be able to cooperate. So we're trying to do that as a Town and we're leading the charge. When our taxes go up 18% in schools, that means someone else's in the County went down. That's fine, but somebody has to explain that.

Regarding the Building Committee, as you know we have a committee for that with citizens on it and they are investigating what we need to do to fix the buildings we have and whether or not that would make sense to do. Or would it make more sense to push services together and make one master building. They're working towards that and I'm guessing that within a month or two, they'll have some recommendation. The crux of this is that our Town Fire Dept. is a very old building. It's not large enough and we really don't have property or infrastructure there to expand that particular building. When our fire chief tells you he can't

even pass the fire house on a safety inspection, you know there's a problem. It's pretty rough down there. It's time to either repair or replace.

I learned something new the other day. I always knew we had 82 miles of roads, but I also learned we have 125 culverts in those 82 miles of road.

Kaminski They vary anywhere from 72" concrete to 18".

Wilz They have to be kept flowing and repaired. With all the spring rains we had, you could see the problem if they would not have been working properly.

Kaminski But we haven't had any problems so we are very, very fortunate.

4) Approval of minutes from June 30, 2010 Parks meeting. *One change was noted by Pete Kaminski for page 10 of the minutes, where it states topping off trees, it says 50 feet and it should say 15 feet would be topped off, in the Plover Heights Conservancy. Motion made by Jim Mendyke to approve the minutes of the June 30, 2010 meeting with that one change. Seconded by Maurice Stoltz. Motion passed.*

5) Review year-to-date budget. Discuss preliminary budget for 2011.

Wilz This review is through July 31st. As far as the Parks go, Pete, we are done expending funds usually by October sometime?

Kaminski Usually October 1st we wrap it up.

Wilz It appears that we're doing quite well. Equipment and Maintenance, we still have \$221 left. Pete, anything left or just little stuff?

Kaminski Yes, just some filters.

Wilz The labor budget for this year is \$11,500 and we still have about \$7,700 left and Pete has been tracking all their park hours and so that's an actual raw figure. We're hopeful that we can stay within our budget. It appears that we are doing very well despite the fact that we've probably cut more grass this year than we've ever cut. Normally this time of year we're kind of coasting. So that's in good shape. Landscaping: Pete, the \$5,500 we originally budgeted, what was that for?

Kaminski That's mainly for woodchips which we started doing this past week.

Wilz So the expense against that is still to come?

Kaminski Yes. Most of that should be gone by the end of the season. Last year fertilizer alone was around \$2,500. I got 2 loads of chips the other day with 15 yards on a load. I got a bill today for around \$400. We'll need to get 5 more loads for sure. It's \$12 a yard.

Wilz Playground Equipment: We're in good shape there. Obviously with Brian getting that equipment at a good deal, we're really doing pretty well. I would like to move

forward and talk about the preliminary budget for next year as this is our second to last meeting for this year. I want to have a conversation about the budget for next year so as we start working on budgets for our Town, we usually begin in September or October. I want to have a sense from this group how and what we need to include in our budget for next year. We're going to buy equipment for one more park, Jordan Acres, the big stuff.

Locher For this one, you'll buy 3 or 4 pieces like for Somerset.

Hicks If we wanted to cut that back, we could spend \$15,000.

Wilz If this isn't going to be as big of a year, because we might use smaller pieces, are there other parks that need some small things too? Kirshling is looking pretty good.

Locher My thought is if you remember, some of those cool small pieces were not cheap. Just because they're not big, they still cost some. That wave piece was \$6,000. It's very cool and used a lot. The one that looks like a little bridge, that was at least \$1,000. So the ones that are independent pieces are not all that cheap. That's why you get a big play structure for a comparatively good deal in that they are really climbing items with some crawling things in between. That last one has a nice climbing wall on it.

Wilz It has activity centers in it too.

Locher The other side had an independent climbing wall. That is something I would recommend for that park, to put in a climbing wall.

Hicks I think we spent \$14,000 or \$15,000.

Wilz As far as that equipment goes, do you feel comfortable in knowing what to order?

Hicks It's up to you guys. We talked about it already, getting smaller pieces.

Wilz When we have our last meeting in September or October, Brian needs to know what he'll be doing in January or February when they come out with the 35-40% off sale so he can put in our order and get that discount.

Hicks I have ideas.

Stoltz We left it up to him last year and he did pretty good.

Wilz So what I'm hearing now is that even if we had \$3,000 or \$4,000 extra, it doesn't mean we really need it right now. Plus we may not be able to get anything decent for that amount anyway.

Locher If you put in individual things, there's the individual labor, that changes things.

Mendyke I can't think of anything missing at any particular park.

Wilz We have got all new sandboxes.

Locher I think they all have slides.

Wilz I would like to put forth a budget that reflects our intent.

Kaminski I would recommend that we ask for our same amount as last year. If we use 15 and 14, we can always get another piece. I would like to see another piece go inside Somerset Park. I'm not saying what, but if we have a little extra money We were out at Jordan Acres today and we took out that old tire. Maybe next year I'll take out one old piece in Somerset and put something else in.

Wilz So we'll leave playground equipment at \$20,000 which is most of our budget. The park labor, as we get closer, we'll see what our actual was for this year and we'll put that in.

Kaminski Our grant for trees this last year, we had to match that. So we could ask for \$2,500 less for this coming year. The DNR grant, we're not going to apply for anymore trees for next year. We'll have to baby these for 2 years.

Wilz Plus we had received a grant about 7 years ago and that was the 2nd one. Within that grant program, I forget if it was 2 or 3 times, at some point they cut you off and they say you need to step up to the next level and they'll help us with more money, but then we'd need to kick in more money from our end.

Kaminski As far as I'm concerned, we have most of the parks covered well with trees. Once those trees get big, they'll be good. Right now they're kind of small but give them 10 years, they'll fill out and we'll have enough of them inside our parks. Five years down the road, if some of those Jack Pines die, we'll take them out. I could always go buy a few and put them in.

Wilz I'm going to leave the signage at \$1,000 because even though you've caught up and they look good, things get damaged and you need to replace things, so we'll need something there. My main concern was playground equipment and labor which will be put up or down according to the actual cost this year.

Mendyke So we're going to look for a piece for Sorenson Park at a discount, or what was the plan?

Kaminski It was for Somerset.

Stoltz We're doing Jordan Acres.

Kaminski Yes but he was indicating an extra piece for Somerset.

Mendyke The parks are so close together, it makes sense to do it right away instead of waiting.

Wilz For our next meeting, bring in some suggestions Brian for next year. Forget about the \$3,800 we have left this year. But for next year, doing Jordan Acres and something for Somerset. Why don't we do it that way. As far as your other question, if we don't spend out the \$3,800 left this year, are we going to lose it, the answer is no. It goes back into the general fund.

The budget we'll submit to the Town Board will be based on our needs for the next year. I just need to be able to defend it.

Kaminski Of that \$3,800 we have left for this year, I might buy some new swing seats. I bought some last year but some of them are getting bad. Those small plastic ones where the small kids sit in them, those are \$450 each. I checked into them last year. We do need some. Do we want to stick that style back in there, or do we want to go with the belted ones? You almost have to have that for small kids. If you figure \$450, if they last 20 years and average that out, it's not so bad.

Stoltz When we were working in Kirshling East planting those trees, those ladies were there with those kids and saying they wished we'd have more of that.

Kaminski I will order more of those then.

Wilz We'll do a couple each year. Then as long as you're going to purchase anyway, as long as you have needs, as I'm hearing, I do have a question. It's always a complaint at the beginning of the season and it's always there at the end of the season, the rusty chains on the swings.

Kaminski I did order chain last year and we got Meadow Manor done.

Wilz What would happen if the last few feet would be stainless steel chain? Not the whole thing. Where the parents are complaining about their children's hands getting stained.

Kaminski Where do you buy stainless steel chain? Somebody must have it.

Wilz So we don't have to deal with this every year. Because even if you put new chain on, in a few years, it's the same issue.

Kaminski It rains and it runs down and rusts anyway.

Mendyke They do have plastic chain covers.

Stoltz Stuff that's dipped in plastic.

Kaminski My experience is when it gets hot outside and flies get in there and mess it up and it gets bad inside.

Wilz As you're looking for these seats, keep that in mind as I'd like to experiment someplace to see if we can crack the code on rusty chains once and for all. I heard from some neighbors, their daughter went to the park and got rust all over her new shirt. So we have to listen because that's a reality.

Mendyke They could take care of their neighborhood park with wire brushes.

Wilz I'll get them organized.

Locher "Friends of the park."

Wilz We can take care of that, be there on Saturday morning. Anybody want to make a motion to take a run at this preliminary budget?

Stoltz So moved.

Hicks Second.

Motion passed without further discussion.

6) Select potential new park equipment for Jordan Acres Park.

Wilz I would suggest based off of our discussion that someone make a motion to table this with the understanding that Brian will bring back recommendations at our next meeting.

Hicks So moved.

Stoltz Second.

Motion passed without further discussion.

7) Review of Annual Planner

Wilz If you remember, it's all the things we should be doing in the month of August. One thing that came up in early June and resurfaced this week is a concern by a citizen over on Somerset about the Somerset Park. I'm putting it under this section as a to do. He had a concern about the infield at Somerset and I met him tonight to discuss it. He was very nice and a very active guy, very complimentary to the park overall and the kinds of services he receives in Hull. He's a transplant from 5 years ago and he said he's not used to having his streets plowed and his garbage picked up on time and thought that was wonderful. He is heavily into baseball with his kids and everybody in the neighborhood, they like baseball. His kids are involved and he coaches fast pitch for adult women in town. Somerset has a sand infield and he said 5 years ago it was nice but over the last few years it's filled in with quack grass. They can't field balls because they are bouncing around. I'm going to get back to him and I've discussed this with Pete. Pete is going to try to get a drag behind the rotor tiller and rip up that quack and clean it out. I wasn't trying to take care of his personal need, but I looked at it as we've got a field here with a sand infield and we're not keeping it that way. If it's a sand infield, what do we need to do? The field is in really great shape but it is just that the quack this year has covered it.

Kaminski With a lot of rain, it's filled in.

Wilz He said he's piling all the kids in the neighborhood in his van and they're doing their practices elsewhere and it would be wonderful if we could get this restored and I said we'd do what we could. I just wanted to let you know that came up, but he left feeling pretty good that someone was listening. I told him we would not make anything new that wasn't already there, but we would try to restore it. When he got the sense that I was listening, he started to talk about how far apart the bases should be and how far out.

Hicks I know who you're talking about, Houston is a great guy.

Wilz Pete will try to come up with some solutions and actively work on it. I'll call him back, Pete, and let him know what we talked about at this meeting and what we decided.

Mendyke Have base distances changed since that park was set up?

Stoltz I don't think there were any bases set up in those parks, just a backstop.

Mendyke But the infield would have been set at a certain size to start with.

Wilz I'm not so sure. I'm not sure anybody did any measuring.

Mendyke If we could make it close to regulation, that would be good.

Kaminski How do we know the measurements for regulation?

Hicks Houston will know.

Kaminski If you want to call him and tell him he could go out there and mark it with some paint, whatever circle he wants done.

Wilz I invited him to this meeting but he had another meeting in Rapids but I can call him later and ask him, if he could get it his way, what would he like to see and then decide if it's a big issue or not.

Kaminski Within reason.

Hicks I'm pretty sure it's 60'.

Locher I think that if those parks are being used for baseball again, we should pay attention to that. A couple of years ago, we had been thinking about taking the backstops out. It's nice that people are using them.

Wilz We know that two of the parks were used this year for baseball. They get used 8 weeks, 2 times a week and there's 3 games each night.

Kaminski If we do bring that ball diamond back, it would be good for the Town to have the equipment to maintain it, that 4' digger, rotor tiller with a small tractor. That's something I could use on the road shoulder maintenance too. A 30 horsepower John Deer or whatever size you want with a small loader and with these little attachments. One year if we don't buy playground equipment, maybe buy a tractor and a rotor tiller. We really should have our own equipment.

Wilz That went through my thoughts. We have baseball fields but no way to really maintain them.

Kaminski We don't need a new tractor, a good used one would be fine. It is expensive, but not that bad.

Wilz We'll put something together as we get closer to budget time. For next year, we do have one more park to do.

Kaminski That would be something for the future.

Wilz Anything else out there that Pete should be made aware of? I think the parks are looking wonderful.

Kaminski We've got all the sandboxes in. We started with the mulch chips.

Wilz When you paint in the fall, do you paint every year?

Kaminski I don't think those things were ever painted. When it was bought, that was its original color. I think once in 2003 in the one park they spray painted with silver but it wasn't the right paint and most of it came off. Last year we bought galvanized primer and paint and for the most part, it's sticking. Last year after we were painting, there was vandalism shortly after, chipping at the paint.

Wilz Things like picnic benches you don't do every year.

Kaminski Every other year. As it needs it more or less.

Wilz I know the fall can get pretty busy with parks.

Kaminski We're pretty much caught up. Once we finish up with those chips, we'll change some of the swings, chains. There's work, but it's slowing down.

Wilz Anything else under this agenda item? Somebody like to make a motion to accept Houston Parish's request regarding Somerset Park.

Stoltz I'll move to accept Houston's request.

Mendyke Second.

Motion passed without further discussion.

8) Appointment of New Parks Committee member(s).

Wilz The last meeting Marcia gave notice. We really appreciate all the service you've given us. One of the things I wanted to check on was how we replace someone. I got a copy of the bylaws. This is how it works: "The Board of Park Commissioners shall consist of 7 members", which we have and we do not appoint, we do not vote in, we do not do anything. We recommend to the Town Board and they appoint. That really gives this Parks Commission a lot of legitimacy because the Town Board says this is our Parks Board and they are recommending the budget, etc. My intent is to talk with Mike O'Keefe after the meeting and get to know him a

little bit. Then I would take to the next Town meeting Mike's name, if he's interested as a replacement for Marcia. With my announcement that Carrie Butt is resigning, I throw that out to this group also, if you have anyone you think might enjoy serving, I'll start looking, but we need to replace Carrie also. We can operate as long as we have a quorum of 4.

Hicks I think maybe Houston.

Wilz You know what, I was almost going to ask him. I didn't know much about him, but if you could validate my opinion.

Hicks He's a good guy. He has opinions on things, but he's a go-getter.

Locher And I had another name too.

Wilz If you could get me that name after we're done. We don't need to vote on that. I was just explaining it. It would be my hope that by the end of the next meeting, we would have at least one of the positions replaced. They will fulfill the length of the terms for the person they would be replacing. They are 7 year terms. Marcia's expires in 2013 and Carrie's in 2016 and we're all still in rotation.

9) Select next meeting date.

Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at 6:30 here in the Town Hall.

10) Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m. with a motion made by Marcia Locher and seconded by Jim Mendyke. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Amman
Parks Commission Secretary
Town of Hull, Portage County