

Jefferson County Parks Committee Minutes

Thursday, January 30, 2024

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Room: Courthouse C1021

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85374488469?pwd=QpxOjoSW7Jy97wqOMjfaqcX6fgEtYR.1>

1. **Call to order**

Christensen called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM

2. **Roll call (establish a quorum)**

Present: Christensen, Turville-Heitz, Callan, Gulig, Richardson

Staff: Wiesmann, Truman, Westphal, Klement, Luckey, Lippert, Stolar

Others: Michael Gonzales – Dog Park

3. **Certification of compliance with the Open Meetings Law**

Lippert confirmed compliance.

4. **Approval of the agenda**

Agenda approved as written.

5. **Approval of Parks Committee Minutes for December 5, 2024**

Callan/Turville motion to approve the December 5, 2024 minutes. Motion passes 5/0.

6. **Communications**

Christensen noted that he attended the Who's Woods Raptor Talk at the Hoard Museum. It was well attended, standing room only, sponsored by the Friends of Rose Lake

Wiesmann noted that he included an Email sent to Michael Luckey regarding a property inside the City of Lake Mills that a developer wants to acquire, and that the public is opposed to its development.

7. **Public Comment (Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their request at this time)**

No public comment

8. **Discussion and Possible Action on Appeal from Citizen to be allowed to use/enter the Jefferson County Dog Park**

**Wiesmann** – introduced the agenda item as an appeal from a citizen who has had his permission to enter the Dog Park revoked by Director of Parks.

**Lippert** – noted that there can be a more formal presentation of context. Wisconsin State Statutes notes there can be an oral request presented to and reviewed by the Parks Committee. This is not a formal standard of review and allows the parties to informally present their cases for the basis of the decision. The committee ultimately makes the decision to uphold or deter the determination.

**Gonzales** – thanked the Committee for the chance to be heard by those accusing me. He noted that his life has been threatened there (at the Dog Park). He noted that people at the park have their own opinions and can say what they want. Others at the Park have been threatening/pointing guns/pushing – etc. "All I want to do is take my dog there."

**Wiesmann** – stated that when there are dog park calls/complaints, the department staff records comments from both parties involved and then uses that information to make a determination and to see if there are patterns of behavior. There have been multiple escalating confrontations, and thus Gonzales was directed to not use the small dog park.

**Turville-Heitz** – Questioned on how are the areas of the Park signed and questioned how would someone know if they were in an incorrect area of the park.

**Klement** – stated that each entrance has a sign indicating the appropriate size of dogs for that given area. He also stated that the same amenities are provided in both the small dog area and the large dog area.

**Gonzales** – stated that his dog Azul likes to run and that he does not keep his dog Azul near him while at the park. He

also noted that he does not want Azul hurting an elderly person or child.

**Wiesmann** – informed the committee that confrontational park user interactions are recorded by staff, and traditionally Michaels follows with a phone. There is a pattern of repeated behavior with Mr. Gonzales. Michael has been told, multiple times, that his large dog Azul is not allowed in the small dog area.

**Callan** – questioned Gonzales about a letter dated 12/2023 which states that “Gonzales is no longer able to use areas 3 & 4 and if he does so, it would be clear violation of the ordinance”, questioning why Gonzales entered the Park after receiving such notice.

**Christensen** – questioned the length of the ban from the Park.

**Gulig** – questioned Gonzales asking he if takes any responsibility for the negative interactive interactions.

**Gonzales** – stated that “yes, we all have a part in this.” I appreciate the staff input. Gonzales also noted that there are multiple guns/firearms in the park, not only those that have been pointed at me.

**Gulig/Richardson** – motioned continue ban on Mr. Gonzales for two years from the last date of interaction, entrance to the park thereafter would be subject to all rules of the park. Motion fails 2/3.

**Richardson/Turville** – amendment was made to the original motion that it is contingent that Mr. Gonzales is approach the Parks Committee prior to the two-year deadline for approval to lift his prohibition. Amendment to the (first) motion passes 5/0.

**Turville** – questioned why a two-year review.

**Wiesmann** – stated that in prior instances, if this is a dog behavior problem (not a person behavior problem), the owners were ordered to take their dogs to behavioral/obedience classes for certification. This is a case of person behaviors, and the department would be unsure on how to determine if these behaviors have been corrected prior to allowing entrance.

**Callan/Gulig** motion to affirm the decision by the Jefferson County Parks Director to ban Mr. Gonzales from entering the Jefferson County Dog Park. Motion passes 5/0.

#### 9. **Discussion and Possible Action on 2025 Outdoor Recreation Aids Grant**

Wiesmann – noted that this is an annual resolution authorizing an application to the WIDNR for funds for the Snowmobile Trail Maintenance program.

Turville/Gulig motion to approve the 2025 Outdoor Recreation Aids Grant resolution. Motion passes 5/0.

#### 10. **Discussion and Possible Action on Repurposing Buildings at Dorothy Carnes Park East into a Warming Shelter for Cross Country Skiing**

Wiesmann – introduced Andy Didion. He noted that included in the packet are two maps from the Dorothy Carnes Park Master Plan, that provide direction on development of the Park. A group has recently approached the department asking to refurbish an existing building into a space for winter access/utilization space for cross country skiing. There was a Design Charrette giving more detail on future site uses that provided direction on how to move forward with existing buildings. Wiesmann asked the Committee for some direction on how a warming building would lend itself to future development at Carnes East.

Turville – questioned if the existing building(s) can be modified.

Didion – introduced himself as retired, from the Jefferson Community Foundation, park of the Friends of Crawfish River Park. He noted that the park lends itself to cross country skiing, and that the park is consistently used by runners/walkers. During past snow events, there were patrons from Lake Mills, Fort Atkinson, Madison, Watertown, etc. The challenge for skiers is that there is not a place to put on/take off equipment, a place out of the weather – sit down, change boots, take a break. Current buildings could offer some liability issues. The proposed Idea is to take down the existing building, store it, and plan to rebuild/refurbish. Dorothy Carnes Park could be a destination spot for families and skiers.

Gulig – noted that he is also a skier at DCP. Excellent conditions. This is a great project. This would be a fantastic addition to the park.

Turville – questioned what the department is looking for in guidance. In favor of looking at the space, but need to view the big picture to best understand how to use the space.

Wiesmann – is asking for guidance on how to fund, how to secure, and what is the structure size/configuration. A project of this nature needs to be planned and designed to fit into the current park plans.

Wiesmann also questioned:

- Is this value added?
- Do we move forward with fundraising?
- Do we hire a landscape architect?

Gulig – knows of an architect that also skis at the park. Need an evaluation that could be scale-able.

Christensen – noted that a new development at the north end of Fort Atkinson is near the park and there have been discussions about bike paths to and near the park.

Callan – noted that she is unclear as to where things are with planning for the barn restoration/four season facility and where funding currently stands.

Turville/Callan motion to publish an RFP for site design of existing buildings at Dorothy Carnes Park East. Motion passes 5/0.

#### 11. **Discussion and Possible Action on Tom Jennings Memorial Bench**

Wiesmann – noted that the department would like to use some (\$500) of the 50/50 raffle funds to help purchase a bench in honor of Tom Jennings for his contributions to the Jefferson County Parks Department and to waive the fees for the staff install time.

Gulig/Callan motion to approve moving forward with the memorial bench as noted above. Motion passes 5/0.

#### 12. **Update on Interurban Trail Phase III Project**

Wiesmann – the department has been pushing to get the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) approvals on the Interurban Trail design in an effort to get the project to bid in January, 2025. WISDOT was delaying the process. Funds were frozen by the President/current Administration. The project is now behind on bidding. Historically, the later the bid packet is released, there is a higher potential for higher bids. The future of WISDOT TAP funding is unknown at this time. A special meeting of the Committee could be in order once the notice to proceed is issued.

Luckey – will continue to monitor the process.

Gulig – should be cautious moving forward with the process.

#### 13. **Update on Trieloff Property Acquisition**

Wiesmann – noted that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) closed the case on the site soil contamination allowing closure. Groundswell will be notifying landowner. Appraisals are done. Hoping to close on property by the next meeting. People are asking how soon the site will be open for use.

No action taken.

#### 14. **Update on 2025 Capital Projects and Equipment**

Wiesmann – noted that staff has been assembling cost quotes. The funds that were in the approved budget for restrooms at Carnes East have been reallocated into the Capital Equipment fund. Equipment replacement is priority.

#### 15. **Field Staff Updates**

Klement noted that staff has been working on:

- Workshop days/equipment PM's and Inspections
- Carlin Weld invasive species removal
- Kanow/BV/HWY 16 – down/dead tree removals
- Partnering with the Friends of Korth Park on Volunteer Days

#### 16. **Admin Staff Updates**

Truman has been working on:

- Requisitions/Purchase Orders Old/New
- Grant Paperwork
- Web Updates
- Monthly Work Orders

Westphal has been working on:

- Dog Park Annual Tags
- Shelter Reservations

**17. Discussion on Parks 2024 Year-End Budget**

Wiesmann – noted that at this time it appears as if the Department ended up with minimal leftover/carry-over.

**18. Discussion on Agenda Items for the Next Meeting**

N/A

**19. Next Scheduled Meetings per the 2025 Proposed Meeting Schedule (4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, Monthly)**

- February 27, 2025
- March 27, 2025
- April 25, 2025

**20. Adjourn**

Gulig/Richardson motion to adjourn at 11:50 am. Motion passes 5/0.