

RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS, PARKS AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Summary Minutes

Ives Grove Complex Auditorium

Ives Groves Office Complex

14200 Washington Avenue

Sturtevant, WI 53177

Committee present: Ronald Molnar, David Cooke, Mark Gleason,
Kiana Harden-Johnson, Scott Maier

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Committee excused: Robert Grove

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Committee not present: Tom Hincz

YIG Representatives: Samantha Penzkowski (present), Hunter Ostergaard (not present),

Staff Present: David Prott, Superintendent of Highways and Parks
Nathan Plunkett, County Engineering Manager

Others Present: Dave Giordano, Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network
Ronald & Juliet Primuth

1. Call to Order, Roll Call

Roll call vote was taken and the meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Ronald Molnar.

2. Approval of the November 10, 2016, summary minutes

SUPERVISOR COOKE MOVED, seconded by Supervisor Harden-Johnson, to approve the November 10, 2016, summary minutes.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES' ADVISORY VOTES:

Youth Representative Ostergaard N/A

Youth Representative Penzkowski aye

Motion carried unanimously. VOTE: 5/0

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Review, discussion and possible recommendation concerning a proposed wetland and ravine restoration project at Cliffside Park (Dave Giordano, Root-Pike WIN Executive Director)

Pratt introduced Dave Giordano, Executive Director for the Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (Root-Pike WIN), to speak to the committee about Agenda Item Numbers 4 and 5. At the suggestion of Chairman Molnar, Agenda Item Numbers 4 and 5 will be considered simultaneously for expediency's sake.

Giordano noted that the that the Root-Pike WIN organization was formed through the DNR to address the impaired watersheds of SE Wisconsin that flow into Lake Michigan. About seven years ago, the organization undertook a strategy to develop EPA nine-element restoration plans for each of the region's five watersheds. One of the completed plans is the Wind Point Plan, which includes a recommendation for a wetland ravine and restoration project. Wetland scrapes, essentially areas where some of the water is held, would slow the movement of water across the area. The bluff line in Cliffside Park is currently being impacted by the erosive power of runoff and Lake Michigan's water quality that is threatened by sediment containing phosphorus and nitrogen. The Root-Pike WIN would like to proceed with seeking funding for the design phase of the wetland and ravine restoration project, which is listed as a critical project. Supervisor Cooke asked what the timeframe for the project would be. Giordano replied that the best case scenario for completion of the design phase would be 12 months, more than likely 18 months.

Pratt stated that there are a lot of erosion issues along the embankment of Lake Michigan in Cliffside Park and believes this project would be beneficial to the park overall. Plunkett agreed that the project would be beneficial to the park and the water quality of Lake Michigan. Pratt inquired about the County's possible shared cost for the project or if it will be 100% funded by other sources. Giordano stated that 100% funding cannot be guaranteed, but he noted that the project will receive a lot of exposure and he is aware of some possible funders who are interested in the project. Supervisor Gleason inquired about the availability of potential ACOE funding and expressed favor in moving forward with the design phase. Supervisor Maier asked if the Root-Pike WIN works solely with counties or if there are other state or federal agencies that oversee such projects. Giordano stated that this project will be subject to DNR, and possibly ACOE, standards and regulations. Pratt commented that the County has had a good working relationship with Root-Pike WIN on past projects and funding.

SUPERVISOR HARDEN-JOHNSON MOVED, seconded by Supervisor Gleason, to approve a letter of support for the proposed wetland and ravine restoration project at Cliffside Park.

DISCUSSION FOLLOWED. The question arose as to whether or not a resolution is required.

SUPERVISOR HARDEN-JOHNSON AMENDED THE MOTION ON THE FLOOR to forward a resolution to the County Board recommending approval of the project. **DISCUSSION CONTINUED.**

Supervisor Cooke asked if a resolution will commit the County to a share of the estimated \$460,000 cost. Pratt replied that the resolution will only be for support of the design phase of the project and authorization to seek funding. If grants are available, the matter will come back to this committee for review and action. Molnar asked if there is a timeline urgency or if the resolution can go through the normal scheduling for County Board action. Giordano indicated the sooner, the better, given the fact that a lot of the grant cycles start in February or March of the year. Giordano will e-mail Pratt an example resolution.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES' ADVISORY VOTES:

Youth Representative Ostergaard N/A

Youth Representative Penzkowski aye

Amended motion carried unanimously. VOTE: 5/0

5. Review, discussion and possible recommendation concerning a proposed project to install manmade floating islands in Quarry Lake (Dave Giordano, Root-Pike WIN Executive Director)

Giordano addressed the Committee concerning the current condition of Quarry Lake and described the concept of manmade floating islands. He commented that rarely has the routine monitoring of the water quality of Quarry Lake revealed alarming levels; however, there is enough pollutant load to create algae along the beach, making the park less desirable and the water less inviting to swimmers and beach users. He stated that although there are more costly long-term solutions for improving the water quality of the lake, manmade floating islands have proven to be an innovative and effective green technology. He explained that manmade floating islands are essentially mats made out of recycled bottles on which native species are planted. Root structures of the plants may grow as deep as 10, 15, sometimes 20 feet into the water and act as “engines for processing pollutants”, breaking down nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment in the lake. Giordano added that there are over 5000 manmade floating islands installed worldwide and there is a lot of data supporting their effectiveness. The islands can reduce pollutant loads in the vicinity in which they’re placed by almost 75%. Root-Pike WIN suggests installing a few floating islands near the beach where water quality monitoring is routinely performed to see if a few will have a positive impact on the water quality before placement in the entire lake is considered. A proposal was received from Midwest Floating Islands for three islands at an estimated cost of approximately \$50 per square foot.

Chairman Molnar commented that the water body at the Oak Creek Town Square where islands have been installed mentioned by Giordano earlier in his presentation is much smaller and cleaner than Quarry Lake. He asked if the ACOE has recommendations for this type of project. Giordano stated he doesn’t know, but will find out. Supervisor Cooke expressed misgivings about the proposal and the fact that it will take 3-4 years before results are even seen for the beta scale project. Supervisor Gleason stated that although he is very much in favor of cleaning up Quarry Lake Park, he has many questions about the proposal. He asked if islands are installed in water areas further into the lake, will the mats have to be larger to accommodate deeper water levels; and if that’s the case, will the larger mats overwhelm the three smaller mats? Giordano didn’t have an answer, but he commented that the technology has been proven to work. He added that there are not a lot of other solutions that don’t require a significant investment. He noted that the Quarry Lake issue isn’t really part of the Root-Pike WIN watershed mission, but the organization is willing to assist the County with trying to find ways to improve the lake quality. Supervisor Gleason commented that native plantings along shorelines have been used successfully in providing a natural filtration system and this might be something to consider doing at Quarry Lake. He then asked if Midwest Floating Islands would consider greatly reducing the price for island installation at Quarry Lake as a test project, since they previously haven’t taken these measures in a quarry. Giordano stated that the company has already included a discount in its quote, but he is willing to contact the consultant about using Quarry Lake as a test project and further reducing the cost. Chairman Molnar noted that there has been a lot of interest from the public and numerous calls have been received from constituents about the condition of Quarry Lake Park. He would like to see more aggressive corrective measures taken that have some demonstrated results and would convey that the County values Quarry Lake Park as a community asset. He suggested investigating the cost of a filtered aeration system. Supervisor Cooke agreed with Chairman Molnar’s remarks. He stated that Quarry Lake is a valuable resource that has been part of the community and a fixture of Racine County for many years. He believes that the floating island project is too small scale as a first step and that with some investment, Quarry Lake could be cleaned up and made a popular attraction once again.

According to MidWest Floating Islands, at least 5-10% coverage with floating islands and aeration, at a rough estimate of \$200,000+, would be required to clean up Quarry Lake. Giordano would place the estimated cost at a higher figure. He added that there are pluses and minuses with floating islands: one of the benefits being the creation of habitat and increased visual appeal and interest to the public; a downside being the fact that the islands would require minor annual maintenance. Chairman Molnar asked if floating islands have ever been installed in close proximity to a swimming beach and expressed a concern that the islands might be used by park visitors as a swimming platform.

It was the general consensus of the Committee that more information about cost and other long-term remedial measures with more demonstrable results, including a filtered aeration system, to improve Quarry Lake is needed. **THE COMMITTEE LAID OVER** action on this proposal in order to allow time to further investigate remedial measures/costs and to explore other possible options for the improvement of Quarry Lake. The topic will be placed on a future agenda for consideration and possible action.

6. Review, discussion and possible recommendation on a resolution authorizing the release of restriction to right of access contained in deed for highway conveyance recorded in Volume 1578 of records at Page 453, Document No. 1079221 (related to access along CTH "C" for a residential access east of Borgardt Road in Mount Pleasant) (1st & 2nd reading requested at County Board meeting on December 20, 2016)

Nathan Plunkett presented background information. Present tonight were Ronald and Juliet Primuth, who would like to subdivide their property on the corner of Spring Street and Borgardt Road into four lots. The property is basically agricultural, with a house and buildings on Lot 2. The Primuths are requesting a driveway off Lot 1 onto Borgardt Road, north of Spring Street, and a driveway off Lot 3 onto Spring Street. The Committee will render a decision tonight about access on Spring Street, as this is a county trunk highway (CTH "C"). Plunkett stated that a resolution would be required to rescind the access restriction (only 1 access in its current position going into the residence is allowed) placed on the parcel when the County purchased the parcel in 1980 for a reconstruction project. Ms. Primuth addressed the Committee. She stated that their 28-acre property is listed for sale. Since there haven't been any prospective buyers since the beginning of September, they decided to do a CSM to create four lots. Rear Lot 1 will remain agricultural and be farmed and Lots 1 and 3 will be listed as potential home sites. Perk tests on the property have been done and the CSM has been placed on the December 21 Mount Pleasant Plan Commission agenda for consideration. County engineering staff has no safety concerns and has no objection to the proposed Spring Street access. Chairman Molnar asked if Village approval for the CSM is needed before County approval. Plunkett explained that if the resolution moves forward and the County approves the access point, Engineering staff will add comments to the proposed CSM and illustrate the approved access on the document. Removal of the access restriction is necessary before Village approval of the CSM.

SUPERVISOR COOKE MOVED, seconded by Supervisor Gleason, to forward a resolution to the County Board for 1st and 2nd reading on December 20, 2016, with a recommendation to approve.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES' ADVISORY VOTES:

Youth Representative Ostergaard N/A
Youth Representative Penzkowski aye

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Motion carried unanimously. VOTE: 5/0

7. **Review, discussion and possible recommendation on a resolution authorizing relocation and acquisition of right-of-way for a highway improvement project on County Trunk Highway (CTH) X, from County Trunk Highway (CTH) Y (Meachem Road) to Bankers Road in the Village of Mount Pleasant and City of Racine (1st & 2nd reading requested at County Board meeting on December 20, 2016)**

Plunkett presented background information. About 1 ½ miles of county highway, from Highway Y to Bankers Road, will be reconstructed in 2017, funding for which was approved in the 2017 County budget. Fourteen parcels will be affected with right-of-way acquisition, mostly temporary easements/construction easements and some fee acquisitions (small strip acquisitions, all under 1/10 of an acre, needed for radius' and improving slopes on intersections with Wood Road, Braun Road and some side roads). The Committee had questions concerning costs. Plunkett indicated that the anticipated cost is approximately \$50,000-\$60,000 (roughly \$50,000 for consultant fees and under \$10,000 for parcel costs). The resolution's draft fiscal note given to the Committee tonight will be corrected to note that existing funds from the 2015 budget will be used and additional funds from the 2017 budget will be used to fund the acquisitions.

SUPERVISOR COOKE MOVED, seconded by Supervisor Harden-Johnson, to forward a resolution, with above-noted fiscal note corrections, to the County Board for 1st and 2nd reading on December 20, 2016, with a recommendation to approve.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES' ADVISORY VOTES:

Youth Representative Ostergaard N/A

Youth Representative Penzkowski aye

Motion carried unanimously. VOTE: 5/0

8. **Review, discussion and possible recommendation on a resolution authorizing and approving the transfer of funds using Performance-Based Maintenance (PBM) proceeds for the purchase of confined space equipment for the Racine County Public Works Division (1st reading at County Board meeting on December 20, 2016)**

Pratt informed the Committee that the County has been working with a Racine County safety consultant regarding confined space equipment. Recently, the State has required highway crews to enter catch basins/vaults, specifically on the I-94 system. Current Public Works policy is to not enter these spaces due to the lack of formal training with the use of confined space equipment. Performance-based maintenance (PBM) money is available in the 2017 County budget and staff believes the purchase of confined space equipment would be an appropriate use of the money. The purchase of equipment will be based on the recommendations of the safety consultant and training will be provided to Ives Grove and Rochester Shop Public Works employees. Staff recommends moving forward with approving the purchase of equipment, so training may proceed. Supervisor Gleason inquired about the cost of the training program. Pratt replied that training is built into the department's operation budget, so there will be no additional cost for confined space training. Pratt reassured Supervisor Gleason that equipment cannot be used until employees are trained. Supervisor Cooke agreed that without proper training, equipment cannot be used. He noted that some necessary confined space equipment is not included on the list provided to the Committee.

Pratt indicated that some of the items that are possibly not listed are pieces of equipment already being used by highway crew and, therefore, need not be purchased. Supervisor Cooke expressed concern about ensuring that someone is accountable and properly trained in inspection when equipment is checked out to employees. He would recommend in-training. Pratt stated that in

addition to the training that occurs as part of the program, newly purchased equipment must be annually inspected by the safety company. Supervisor Cooke commented that daily inspection prior to use, not just an annual inspection, is critical. He then noted that he has found that Bird Ladder and Equipment and Jensen Equipment in Milwaukee have the most economical pricing on this type of equipment. Supervisor Cooke asked for clarification on the purchase of four gas detectors included on the equipment list. He asked what the stipulations for discovery will be, respirator or stopping short of respirator-type entry? Prott commented that employees will only be entering storm water spaces, not any spaces where there will be confined gas. It is his understanding that respirators will not be needed for the confined space training the Public Works crew will undergo. As an aside, he noted that as part of annual Public Works Spring training some selected employees receive training with respirators. Supervisor Cooke cautioned that if an employee is given a respirator and is not signed off by a medical physician stating one is capable of wearing a respirator, liability becomes an issue if there are physical reactions. Prott commented that a very robust department policy for use of respirators is currently in place, including medical authorization and fit tests. Chairman Molnar indicated he knows of a source (i.e., fire department) that may possibly provide at a lower cost or donate confined space equipment that is no longer being used.

THE COMMITTEE TABLED recommendation/action on this matter until more information is obtained.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES' ADVISORY VOTES:

Youth Representative Ostergaard N/A

Youth Representative Penzkowski aye

Motion carried unanimously. VOTE: 5/0

9. Review, discussion and possible recommendation concerning a letter of support for proposed improvements on the Amtrak Hiawatha Service between Chicago and Milwaukee

Plunkett informed the Committee that the County Executive's Office received a letter from the WisDOT requesting that the county review a proposed plan for expansion of service on the Amtrak Hiawatha line. The public comment period for the proposed plan has been extended to January 15, 2017. The plan proposes an increase in the number of round trips from seven to ten and an increase in the speed limit to either 79 or 90 mph, slowing for the Sturtevant station. The only impact on the County would be slight additional delay and queuing for the traveling public at railroad intersections within the county as a result of the increased trips and the potential for a higher volume of traffic on Highway 20 as a result of the increased number of stops at the Sturtevant station. Staff has no concerns or objections to the proposed plan. If recommended by the Committee, a letter of support could be sent to the WisDOT before the public comment period ends on January 15, 2017.

SUPERVISOR MAIER MOVED, seconded by Supervisor Cooke, to approve a letter of support.

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES' ADVISORY VOTES:

Youth Representative Ostergaard N/A

Youth Representative Penzkowski aye

Motion carried unanimously. VOTE: 5/0

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10. Miscellaneous Public Works Business

- No meeting on December 22, 2016, due to holiday schedule
- Next regularly scheduled meeting: January 12, 2017, if warranted

11. Adjourn

There being no further business, Chairman Molnar adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.