Minutes
Sustainability & Natural Resources
Committee Meeting
May 9, 2022

Members Present: Mike Flaherty, Ed Wreh, Kitty Brussock, Angela Freedman, Bruce Fischer, David Wilson (joined at 6:08 PM)

Members Absent: Judy Taber, Darrel Waldera

Staff Present: Sayer Larson, Kong Thao, Phil McDade, Aimee Irwin, Jim Hessling, Matt Schuenke (joined at 6:16 PM)

1. CALL TO ORDER

   Flaherty called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM

2. PUBLIC APPEARANCES.

   None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

   No minutes to be approved as this was the first meeting for the new committee.

4. BUSINESS.

   a. Committee introductions and discussion regarding the role of the Committee.

      Flaherty directed for Larson to start introductions then named the following committee members to join in. After introductions were finished, Larson provided an explanation on the differences and overlap between the Parks and Rec Committee and Sustainability & Natural Resources Committee. Larson emphasized the importance sustainability needed than previously mentioned in past committees.

   b. Discussion and action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding acceptance of the Middle "School Forest" land from the McFarland School District to expand Indian Mound Park

      Schuenke provided a summary of the agenda item with details on trail maintenance, existing features about the school forest, proceedings on transfer, and future activity for the acquired property. Schuenke stated that the Joint School Board and Village Board Committee and the Parks and Recs Committee are supportive of the concept. If approved by SNR committee, this will be sent to the Village Board on May 24^{th}, 2022, for approval for acquisition.

Flaherty asked if there was any exchange related from the Village associated with the transfer of the school forest. Schuenke affirmed the exchange will be at no cost to the Village, the only costs associated include the proceeding fees and the incurred maintenance expenses overtime.

Wreh asked for further details of the associated fees of the transfer, dimensions for the property, and the capacity of workload for Public Works staffing.

Schuenke stated survey costs and legal fees to be around $20,000-$25,000. Since the property has not been surveyed in about 50 years, this is to be expected and a necessary process to be defined in the deed. This will be a shared 50/50 expense between the Village and School District. Larson stated the capacity of work is uncertain at this point as it is not surveyed and examined.

Freedman asked if this would have any impact on the Exchange Street reconstruction. Schuenke affirmed the impact would be limited to only the southern boundary indicated near the intersection of Exchange Street and Highland Drive. What is impacted would be restored.

Brussock asked Schuenke about the boundary of the school lines and connectivity through the woods. Schuenke stated the location of the property line will likely be situated along the walkway and the existing pathways will continue to exist.

Flaherty asked about existing mounds in the area and timeframe of tree removal. Schuenke affirmed there were none located in the area. Larson preferred a timeframe for tree removal to be prior to the land swap. Schuenke affirmed there is still about 2-3 months of negotiations before anything happens.

Wreh asked about partnership with school on the reuse of lumber. Larson stated the wood removed would be unusable and mostly degraded.

Wreh motioned to recommend approval to the Village Board in order to transfer ownership and jurisdiction of the “School Forest” from the School District to the Village of McFarland. Fischer seconded.

The motion passes with a vote of 6-0.

c. Discussion and action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding the award of contract for Lewis Park Lake Access planning and design services.

Hessling provided the background and summary on the agenda item. The RFP received one proposal. This came from Parkitecture, an organization who has frequently collaborated with the Village in past projects.

Brussock commented that the location of the access point would impact the bird viewing platform. Hessling will provide feedback to the planners of this concern.

Larson commented that there will be an educational component included in the project and not solely a launch point.

Wreh confirmed with Hessling the cost to be $10,800. Wreh asked about the timeframe for the project. Hessling stated the project to being in Fall 2022.

Wreh motioned to recommend approval to the Village Board regarding the proposal from Parkitecture for Lewis Park Lake Access planning and design services. Seconded by Fischer.

The motion passes with a vote of 6-0.

d. Discussion and action to make a recommendation to the Village Board regarding the award of a contract for a management plan for conservancy areas within the park system.

Larson provided summary on the agenda item. This action would improve the existing management plan and its capacity by the Village. Larson stated that of the five proposals received for the RFP, the deciding factor to choose RES Great Lakes was their importance on public outreach and education. Larson corrected the plan budget to be $48,180. This includes the $3,600 optional add-on focus group study.

Wreh commented on the cost savings with this project per what was stated in the packet, down from $60,250. Flaherty asked about the timeframe for this project. Larson stated it is uncertain at this time due to number of conservancy areas (10).

Wreh motioned to recommend approval to the Village Board regarding the proposal from RES Great Lakes for the conservancy management planning services in the amount of $48,180, which includes the optional add-on of $3,600. Seconded by Freedman.

The motion passes with a vote of 6-0.

e. Update regarding Native American mounds plan.

Larson provided the summary on this agenda item. Larson stated the feedback was positive and with changes to the vocabulary used, such as using “Native American Mounds” instead of using “Indian Mounds”. Larson stated Quackenbush, of the Ho-Chunk Nation, was interested in visiting the existing mounds in McFarland to provide feedback on maintenance and care, while inviting Larson to also visit mounds under their direct care. Larson intends to maintain contact with Quackenbush to further discussion on future Native American projects in the Village.

Flaherty asked about the number of mounds within the care of the Village. Larson state there are 13 throughout the Village.

Flaherty asked about the proper usage of “Indian” versus “Native American” terminology for the renaming of the mounds. Larson affirmed from Quackenbush the preferred term was “Native American”. Larson stated the opportunity to rename all existing mounds can be included with the acquisition of the School Forest. Flaherty concurred. Larson stated the timeframe at this time is uncertain.

f. Discussion regarding the Village’s Sustainability Plan.

Thao gave the summary on the background of the Sustainability Plan and provided that the agenda item is up for discussion only. Thao recommended to the committee to review the plan for the next Sustainability & Natural Resources meeting on June 13.

Wreh asked about formal process

5. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE.

    a. Monday, June 13, 2022, at 6:00 PM

6. ADJOURNMENT.

    Wreh motioned to adjourn, Brussock seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM.