

Town of Verona
Open Space and Parks Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 17, 2013

Present: Keen, Hoffman, and Stellick

Absent: Siehr and Miller

Also Present: Mike and Pat Ehly, Tom Jellings, Tom Mathies, and John Wright, Clerk-Treasurer (C-T)
Called to order at 7:32 PM

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Stellick to approve agenda; 2nd Hoffman. Motion carried.

Public Comments

C-T Wright noted that at the Annual Meeting held by the Town Board and the residents of the Town of Verona on April 16, 2013, Chair Combs announced that he will discuss appointments to the Open Space and Parks Commission (OSPC) at the next regular Town Board meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2013. C-T Wright reported that he has added OSPC agendas and minutes from January 2012 to date to the Town website.

Town resident Tom Jellings was in attendance as an individual potentially interested in joining the OSPC as an appointed member. Mr. Jellings stated that he uses the local trails and parks and would like to offer his input; he has a general interest in the Commission with no particular agenda to pursue immediately if appointed. The OSPC members introduced themselves to Mr. Jellings and the other visitors who were in attendance.

Member Stellick noted that his fire number was relocated to a temporary location by his mailbox when culverts were replaced on Rock Ridge Court. He wondered if he could permanently locate his box in that location. Wright was uncertain who authorizes the location of fire numbers, but agreed to check with Town of Verona residential building inspector Dick Steele.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Hoffman to approve the March 2013 minutes; 2nd Keen. Motion carried.

Update on Property Purchase from the Bruce Company

Chair Keen reported that there is nothing new to report on this topic at this time. Keen stated that she will contact Darren Marsh, Dane County Parks Director, prior to the next meeting to see if he has any update information to share.

Update on Trimming and Brushing Statement of Policy

C-T Wright reported that when the Town Board met on March 12, 2013, several trustees supported the OSPC members' continuance to review the Trimming and Brushing Policy. Wright introduced a document developed by the Public Works Department of Ventura County, California that might be useful for further revision of the policy. Wright also reported that he met with the Assistant Chief of the Verona Fire Department, Melissa Helgesen. She agreed that the standard for trimming and brushing along residential driveways should be 12' wide and 14' high for the safe passage of fire apparatus.

Chair Keen requested that discussion of this item be deferred until the next meeting so that the Ventura County document could be reviewed by the members; without objection. Keen also requested for C-T Wright project the document on the monitor to facilitate the discussion at the next meeting; without objection.

Review Dane County Parks 2013 Prescribed Burn Schedule

Members reviewed the schedule; Wright reported he sent a copy to subscribers of the Town's listserv. Chair Keen noted that due to cooler temperatures and rain, the schedule is no longer accurate. Keen reported that he spoke with Ed Spoon, Secretary of the Dane County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance; Spoon stated that a controlled burn that was scheduled for the prior Tuesday was postponed. C-T Wright agreed to post a revised schedule and to resend it to members of the listserv if an update is available.

Review Letter of Support for the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (USRWA) to Accompany Their Grant Application to the DNR for a River Planning Grant

Chair Keen reviewed the letter with the members present; a draft was sent to members by email on April 15, 2013. Keen noted that the grant monies, if awarded, would be used to update the USRWA Strategic Plan, Mission Statement, and maps. An additional benefit of the grant would be the freeing of monies to increase the hours for Megan Phillips, USRWA Executive Director from twenty to thirty hours a week. Stellick moved to approve the letter of support as presented; 2nd Hoffman. Motion carried.

Report from Clerk/Treasurer Wright Re: Department of Natural Resources Proposed Parking Area off Valley Road Adjacent to the Sugar River

Wright reported he met Monday April 8, 2013 with Matt Zine and Chris Rehlinger to discuss the construction of the proposed lot on DNR land. Chris Rehlinger stated he has overseen the design of approximately 28 of these parking areas within the prior year. He estimated the cost of a five-car lot at \$4,000 and one for ten cars around \$8,000. According to Wright, Matt Zine requested a fence to block future access from the lot along the western edge of the parcel; the limited access would be for equipment needed to maintain adjacent fields and a proposed fire break. Approximately 1/3 of the property to the north has been seeded last year to restore the area to prairie. The southern 2/3 is under a lease agreement with a local farmer until 2015 at which time it will also be restored to prairie.

Wright stated that according to Chris Rehlinger, the construction of the lot may entail removal of some topsoil, the installation of a puncture-resistant fabric base, and filling with 1¼" gravel to a depth of 8". Town Patrolman Mark Judd reviewed the existing culvert under the field road and felt it was adequate for drainage and would support the weight of the vehicles likely to access including the DNR equipment needed to maintain the adjacent fields. Rehlinger, Zine, and Wright conducted a site visit of a recently constructed lot built for the DNR in the Town of Montrose (see attached photos). The lot was designed for 20 cars and allowed 10' by 12' for each parking space; a three foot high soil berm separated the lot from adjacent fields being restored to prairie. A similar barrier was suggested for the lot off of Valley Road; no stone native to the field was available to construct a low wall. According to Wright, Zine stated that the DNR would be responsible for the maintenance of the lot except for snow removal. Zine also stated that any access to the river to launch canoes or kayaks needs to be designed and constructed by a third party and would not be maintained by the DNR. Wright stated the DNR wanted guidance from the Town OSPC regarding how many spaces it thinks is appropriate for this location.

After brief discussion, the members present agreed that five spaces would likely meet local needs. However, the members requested that the design allow for easy turn around for a vehicle with an attached trailer. C-T Wright agreed to pass this information to Rehlinger and Zine and will give updates to the group at the next meeting. Chair Keen noted that the USRWA may be interested in creating a kayak/canoe launch point to the west of the parking lot.

Review Request from Residents along the Cul-de-Sac Loop of De Marco Trail for Landscaping Funds

Mike and Pat Ehly gave the members a brief history of the cul-de-sac in their neighborhood. The Town agreed not to pave the interior of the cul-de-sac based upon reports from surrounding residents who thought paving would further exacerbate stormwater runoff issues. In exchange, according to Mr. Ehly, the neighbors had to agree to keep an 8 foot wide space mowed and free of obstructions inside the cul-de-sac in order to allow traffic to park on the grass. Mr. Ehly noted that the Town removed a Silver Maple tree that had previously provided a visual break between homes. For approximately 17 years, the neighbors bordering the cul-de-sac have worked cooperatively to maintain the grass, mulching, and plantings within the turnaround. This past year the sod was removed and a community garden with a small brick patio was installed. A glider and community library box were then placed on the patio.

The Ehlys stated that they were seeking monetary support to purchase supplies for their ongoing efforts to beautify the neighborhood, provide a neighborhood gathering place, and limit stormwater runoff. The group would provide the labor to maintain the site. There followed a brief discussion of how to assist this effort without setting an unwanted precedent that the OSPC could not fund for all similar requests; it was noted that the current OSPC annual budget is \$250. Currently the Town hauls downed branches and wood from the right-of-way to Purple Cow Organics; perhaps Purple Cow would include in their tipping fee the cost to mulch the organic matter for the Town to redistribute to the residents on a first come, first serve basis. Another possibility that was discussed was for the Town to rent a chipper to grind wood materials delivered by residents once or twice a year and to make the mulch available while supplies last.

Chair Keen reviewed the guidelines for the Dane County Partners for Recreation and Conservation (PARC) program to see if this neighborhood group may qualify. Per the description of the program, municipalities and 501 (c) (3) groups are eligible to fund up to 50% of their project costs. It was noted that the Friends of Goose Lake may have 501 (c) (3) status already; this group maintains a nearby green space owned by the Town of Verona (see attached map). Perhaps the groups could apply for PARC program funds together; the deadline to apply is May 3, 2013.

Tom Mathies, a resident who has requested appointment to the OSPC, suggested that the Town could potentially use its listserv to request an exchange or donation of leftover seedlings and plants between Town residents.

Establish an Agenda for the May 1, 2013 Meeting

The following items were suggested for the May meeting: Call to Order; Approval of Agenda; Public Comments; Approval of Meeting Minutes from the April 17, 2013 Meeting; Update on Appointments; Update on Property Purchase from the Bruce Company; Update Regarding Mulch Request from De Marco Neighborhood Residents; Review Trimming and Brushing Statement Policy; Report/Update from Clerk-Treasurer Wright on the Department of Natural Resources Parking Area; Establish June Agenda; and Adjourn.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Stellick; 2nd by Hoffman. Motion carried at 9:18 PM.

John Wright
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: May 1, 2013