

Town of Verona
Open Space and Parks Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 2, 2014

Present: Stellick, Keen, Mathies, Hoffman, and Jellings
Absent: Siehr, Miller
Also Present: Lisa Keen and John Wright, Clerk-Treasurer (C-T)
Called to order at 7:34 PM

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Mathies to approve the agenda as presented; 2nd Jellings. Motion to approve the agenda carried as presented.

Public Comments

Lisa Keen introduced herself and stated she was in attendance as a representative of the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association. C-T Wright reported that the local Dane County composting site has been closed; Planner/Administrator Arnold presented the Town Board with possible options to provide services to residents. Some options may require the input of the OSPC members at a future date.

Discussion with Chris James of Dane County Parks Regarding Proposed Surface Lots off State Highway 69 and Sunset Drive

Dane County Parks and Open Space Parks Planner Chris James presented two printed maps for the group to review. Mr. James showed the group the location of the proposed North Loop walking trail which was indicated by a segmented yellow line. He noted that at this time, the two properties with public access purchased by the Natural Heritage Land Trust do not connect. There may be a future purchase that allows a trail to link the lands acquired from the Bruce Company in Verona to connect with the property from the same source located in Montrose near Paoli. Mr. James stated that a contractor has been hired to remove some of the existing bridge decks from the properties. At this point in time, three bridges will be removed, two will remain, and one will be replaced. Some existing bridge abutments will likely remain to add stability to the river banks. Mr. James noted that red asterisks on his map denoted possible future bridge locations. There was a brief discussion regarding possible walking trails on the parcel located in the Town of Montrose.

The surface parking area off of STH 69 south of Sunset is underway, but progress has been temporarily interrupted by repeated precipitation. Mr. James stated that a master sign with the park's name will be located near the existing oak tree by the STH 69 surface lot entrance. James showed the group a second map that showed the proposed location of the Sunset lot; it has been moved east of the original location that had been proposed to match the grade of the road and improve sight distances. He anticipates that the principal use of the property surrounding the proposed Sunset Drive lot will be for hunting during the fall season. It was noted that there will be a restriction on discharging a firearm within a hundred yards of the existing residence to the east. The ten car lot under construction adjacent to STH 69 will likely be used by those wishing to launch canoes and kayaks as well as access for hunting and fishing. It was noted that the Bruce Company has been granted permission to remove the existing trees they planted for up to five years. Chair Keen noted that another potential lot could be added off of the south side of Sunset further west of the proposed one. There was brief discussion regarding the distance between the Falk Wells Sugar River Wildlife Area and the Scheidegger Forest County Park to the east on Range Trail and the possibility of connected the two with a trail easement.

Mr. James reported that members of Trout Unlimited and the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (USRWA) assisted with the removal of trash from the acquired park land. After the leaves are off the trees this fall, the plan is to remove invasive species, primarily Buckthorn. Chair Keen noted the grant-supported work by the USRWA to provide GPS coordinates to known locations of invasive species along the Sugar River south of Bobcat Lane. He did not believe that survey included Buckthorn. There was brief discussion about chainsaw use and safety demonstrations by Don Ferber, Restoration Assistant at

Dane County Parks. Member Hoffman asked about the size of the STH 69 parking area and whether a truck with a trailer can turn around. Mr. James estimated the finished size of the lot to be 100' x 60'. If other vehicles are in the lot, Mr. James figured the area surround the lot was level enough that a truck with trailer could turn around if they went beyond the compacted gravel surface. There followed a brief discussion regarding the planned future scrape adjacent to the STH 69 lot after its completion. The scrape and planting of native plants to create a shallow wetland will be funded in part by Fish and Wildlife money, according to Mr. James. The wetland should capture stormwater and release it slowly back into the ground and into the river. There was brief discussion about volunteer groups who could construct and site bat houses along the Sugar River.

Member Mathies noted that the proposed trail that originates at the proposed lot on the south side of Sunset Drive does not return to the point of origin. He worries that someone walking the trail when they arrive at the terminal point to the west will attempt to return to the surface lot along the edge of Sunset Drive which is uneven and potentially hazardous for foot traffic. James thought that most people using the trail would only walk a portion instead of the entire length. He thinks most visitors will use the trail to access hunting and fishing opportunities or to snowshoe and hike. There was brief discussion of the possible continuation of the proposed southern trail to the Badger State Trail, possibly five to fifteen years from now. This would likely be a bike trail, according to James. Member Stellick asked what material would be used for the proposed bike trail surface; James imagined limestone screenings would initially be used with a long-term plan to pave to reduce maintenance. Chair Keen asked James if there were plans to purchase property to the north of the Paoli Dam. James said it would depend on where it was decided would be the ideal location to link the two properties with public access; another bridge would be required as well.

Member Stellick asked Mr. James when the new parking area for the Prairie Moraine Park would be paved. James replied that when the weather cooperates it will be paved; however, it will not open to the public until some improvements including a kiosk are completed. The new lot will accommodate seventy-two vehicles; the old lot will be reduced to hold only ten vehicles. Stellick asked about a past plan produced by Dane County Parks that included a possible trail to the Scheidegger Forest from the Prairie Moraine Park. James stated that is no longer a priority for the County as surrounding property owners voiced concern over pet owners continuing on to the Forest with their pets off leash. The County would be more supportive of a trail between Scheidegger and the Falk Wells Sugar River Wildlife Area. If such a trail was possible, it may then allow for use of the Scheidegger Forest parking area during the winter months to supplement parking at the planned lot on the south side of Sunset Drive. There followed brief discussion of the possible sale of park land in the northern part of the State and discussion of the replacement of existing cattle fences adjacent to bridges that cross the Sugar River.

Updates on Dane County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Activities

C-T Wright reported he received an agenda for the July 7, 2014 meeting that he forwarded by email to the members of this Commission (see attached). Wright included the minutes from the April 24, 2014 meeting in the members' packets (attached). Minutes from the May Steering Committee meeting had not been posted online as of this evening.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Stellick to approve the June minutes; 2nd Hoffman. C-T Wright noted that he inadvertently omitted the word *meeting* in the first sentence of item 5. Stellick noted that in the first sentence of item 7, the second reference to *Sheets* should be capitalized as a proper noun. Motion to accept the minutes from the June 4, 2014 meeting as amended carried.

Update from Clerk-Treasurer Regarding Access Signs for Goose Lake Property Owned by the Town of Verona

Wright reported he ordered the two 9" x 12" signs from Badger State Industries. He will make arrangements with the Patrolman and Steve Sheets of the Friends of Goose Lake group to place the signs on the property. He noted that the Pheasant Lane entrance will have the DNR-provided sign in

addition to the Town sign. The DNR sign states that the property had been purchased in part through Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Funds. Diggers Hotline will need to be contacted prior to placement of the signs.

Continue Discussion of Future Conservation Efforts within the Town of Verona

There was no additional discussion on this topic this month.

Establish an Agenda for the August 6, 2014 Meeting

Call to Order; Approval of the Agenda; Public Comments; Approval of meeting minutes for July 2, 2014; Update on Parking Lots for Falk/Wells Sugar River Wildlife Area; Updates on Dane County Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Activities; Update on Access Signage for Goose Lake Property Owned by the Town of Verona; Continue Discussion of Future Conservation Efforts within the Town of Verona; Establish September Agenda; and Adjourn.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Stellick; 2nd by Mathies. Motion carried at 8:57 PM.

John Wright
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: August 6, 2014