

Town of Verona
Open Space and Parks Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 13, 2012

Present: Keen, Hoffman, and Stellick
Absent: Miller and Siehr
Also Present: John Wright, Clerk-Treasurer (C-T)
Called to order at 8:07 PM

Approval of Agenda

Stellick noted that the agenda did not include the discussion of invasive species in regards to the review of the revised website; Chair Keen noted that a general discussion of the new Town web page was item 7 on the agenda. C-T Wright requested for an amendment to the agenda in order to ask some questions of the Open Space and Parks Commission (OSPC) members; Chair Keen suggested the questions be posed during the Public Comment item number 3; without objection. Motion made by Stellick to approve agenda; 2nd Hoffman. Motion carried.

Public Comment

C-T Wright stated that he had read much of the updated 2012-2017 **Open Space and Parks Plan**, but noted it had not yet be submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) after its approval by resolution (2011-10). Wright noted that approval by the DNR would renew the Town's ability to submit State and Federal grant applications once a Letter of Eligibility was received. The OSPC members noted that the Dane County Parks Department has requested review of municipal parks plans prior to their submission to the DNR. Wright then noted that Wisconsin State Statute §60.66 defines the creation of a Parks Commission may occur at the Annual Meeting of the Town Board through the appointment of seven members who serve seven year terms. Wright questioned if special approval was granted to the Town of Verona to have only five members on the OSPC since its inception in 2000. The current members were unaware whether this had been addressed previously and noted that current members serve two-year terms instead of seven. Wright reported that he asked Mary Rothenmaier, Stewardship Grant Specialist for the DNR, if a parks commission can operate with fewer than five members and if so whether it would require Town Board action to approve that change retroactively. Wright is awaiting a response from Ms. Rothenmaier.

C-T Wright asked if the OSPC determines their annual budget to be approved by the Town Board. Keen replied that the tradition has been to carry over the budget from the current year to the upcoming year; the 2012 budget for OSPC is \$500. Wright noted that approximately half of that amount has been spent for 2012; Keen did not recall any expenses and requested for Wright to report those to this body at the November meeting; without objection. Wright reported that the Town has paid \$1,000 of the \$2,652 requested by the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (USRWA) and questioned what budget line this is taken from since it exceeds the annual budget for the OSPC. Keen was uncertain from which account this expense is paid, but stated the amount the USRWA requests are determined by population and the acreage of watershed within a given municipality. Keen gave a brief summary of how the Association uses the funds it collects and noted that Epic is a contributor. There was a short discussion regarding how future OSPC projects could be funded through a variety of sources including Stewardship grant funds, contributions from Trout Unlimited, corporate and private donations, and in-kind contributions.

C-T Wright asked about the approximately 4 acre lot owned by the Town near Goose Lake. Keen noted that the OSPC members do not maintain the property; volunteer members of the Friends of Goose Lake mow trails on the property. Wright then asked if a discussion item could be added to the October agenda to discuss OSPC member goals for the next five years; without objection. There was

a brief discussion regarding a mailing to have gone out with tax bills from this year; Wright agreed to follow through by locating the document and sending it out with the next mailing of tax notifications.

Approval of Minutes

Stellick noted the draft minutes from the August 8, 2012 meeting did not specifically mention the absence of invasive species information on the Town of Verona website. Motion made by Hoffman to approve the August minutes; 2nd Stellick. Motion Carried.

Discussion Regarding Public Meeting Re: Bobcat Lane [scribe's note: prior to the OSPC meeting a public informational meeting was held to discuss the 33 acre Sugar River Wildlife Area]

Chair Keen stated he will follow-up with Darren Marsh, the Director of Dane County Parks, to assist with the former Pellitteri property off Bobcat Lane. Member Hoffman stated that he was in support of signage along Bobcat to warn visitors to exercise caution because of the presence of school aged children present along the narrow road. There followed a general discussion of the informational meeting that was moderated by Darren Marsh with contributions regarding proposed signage by Sara Kwitek, a Dane County acquisition planning specialist in the Land and Water Resources area. The members of the OSPC discussed the comments and concerns expressed by neighbors to the property: Marjorie Ehle, Kevin Luginbuhl, and John Ehle. It was noted that reporter Mark Ignatowski from the **Verona Press** was also in attendance during the informational meeting as were Amanda Arnold (Town of Verona Administrator/Planner), her son Gus Arnold, and C-T Wright. Items of discussion included:

- Bobcat Lane is narrow and some parking restrictions may need to be considered and/or the promotion of parking along the cul-de-sac for visitors
- Security and sanitation concerns expressed by neighbors
- Safety of school-aged children residing in the neighborhood as well as emergency access when multiple cars crowd the narrow road
- Removal of brush that acts as a natural sound and light barrier between those in the Bobcat Lane neighborhood and Epic
- Other possible access locations for canoe launching and visitors, which could include an abandoned road off of Country View Road
- Neighbor input regarding the location, color, and number of proposed signs
- The willingness of Dane County Parks to work with neighbors to help restore the wetlands and wildlife habitat
- Visitor's use of private drives for turning around instead of cul-de-sac
- Location of buffer zone signage restricting hunting in those areas
- Availability of five DNR wardens to address any complaints/problems reported by neighbors or visitors
- Removal of some invasive species is necessary to promote the growth of burr oaks; some tree plantings may also be possible

Citizen Member

Chair Keen reported that Steve Siehr was not interested in continuing as a member of the OSPC. There followed a general discussion regarding engaging the public in the work of this commission and possibly recruiting new members through a variety of means including a press release in the **Verona Press**. C-T Wright agreed to craft an article to be approved by the members of the OSPC before submission for publication; without objection.

Review of Town Website

The members of the OSPC noted the following:

- Hypertext links to other related websites do not currently function
- The document created about invasive plant species that highlighted wild parsnip has not been posted to the OSPC portion of the website and did not get mailed with this year's tax bill as planned; Wright will attempt to find the document and include it with the next set of property tax bills to be mailed

A brief discussion followed regarding whether a Weed Commissioner should be in the employ of the Town to assist in limiting the spread of invasive plant species. C-T Wright suggested that Town Patrolman Mark Judd may be willing to report invasive species to the OSPC that he sees while performing his duties. Wright agreed to approach Judd regarding his willingness and to see whether he needs further education to identify problem species; without objection.

Establishment of agenda for September Meeting

The following items were suggested for the September meeting: Call to Order; Approval of Agenda; Public Comment; Approval of September Minutes; Report from the Clerk-Treasurer: PSA, Invasive Species Publication, and Website Update; Discussion of OSPC Members' Goals for the Near-Term and within the Next Five Years Covered by the Revised Parks Plan; Adjourn.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Hoffman; 2nd by Stellick. Motion carried at 9:15 PM.

John Wright
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: 10/10/12