

Town of Verona
Open Space and Parks Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 10, 2012

Present: Keen, Hoffman, and Stellick
Absent: Miller and Siehr
Also Present: John Wright, Clerk-Treasurer (C-T)
Called to order at 7:36 PM

Approval of Agenda

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

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Hoffman to approve the September minutes; 2nd Stellick. Motion Carried.

Report from the Clerk-Treasurer

1. Clerk-Treasurer (C-T) Wright reported on Town Board discussion regarding a seven-member versus five-member Commission. Town Board members expressed limited concern regarding the number of members originally appointed to the Commission (5), which is fewer than defined by State Statute (7) in light of the fact that the DNR will not withhold a Letter of Eligibility for the 2012-2017 Parks and Open Space Planning cycle. Nevertheless, the members of the Board were interested to see whether a press release may result in enough interested persons to possibly consider a 7-member body.
2. C-T Wright reported on the Town Board response regarding the remaining balance of the recommended Town contribution to the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (USRWA). Wright noted the Town Board agreed that this topic could be discussed further within the larger context of the 2013 budget at the November 7, 2012 meeting. Wright reported that Administrator/Planner Amanda Arnold discovered an annotated 2012 budget prepared by former Town Administrator Rose Johnson, indicating that the budget for the USRWA for 2012 was \$1,000, which has already been paid. Wright encouraged any members or property owners who were in support of more funding for the USRWA to attend the November Town Board meeting or to forward an email or letter of support that Wright would present to the Board.
3. The members agreed for Chair Keen and C-T Wright to work together to craft a press release regarding membership; without objection. The members briefly discussed elements to include and agreed portions of the Purpose and Intent statement in the **Parks Plan** should be included:
 - Identify the natural areas the Town of Verona seeks to preserve
 - Allow for additional lands town property owners have requested for inclusion to natural areas for conservation
 - Allow for the removal of previously identified land in the Town OSPC Plan at the request of individual town property owners
 - Facilitate the acquisition of land and development rights from willing sellers
 - Foster new and innovative partnerships with other units of government and community organizations to support land acquisition and park and trail development projects
 - Facilitate the acquisition of land and development restrictions from willing sellers

The members worked to suggest the following:

The Town of Verona Open Space and Parks Commission are seeking individuals interested in participating in the promotion of land conservation, water quality

improvement, and recreational opportunities. Those who are interested can contact John Wright, Clerk-Treasurer for more information: (608) 845-7187.

Member Stellick noted he was drawn to the OSPC because of their review of sites that would be considered for rezoning, reclassification, and/or development. Chair Keen stated that the Commission does act in that capacity at times, but only if invited to do so. He recounted past projects where members of the OSPC were consulted, including review of proposed changes to land adjacent to the Dog Park, the preservation of property within the Ice Age Trail, and review of the proposed Grandview-Fitchrona development. There was brief discussion of a current project involving land adjacent to the dog park to be possibly repurposed for parking connected with a commercial venture.

Members reviewed OSPC expenses year-to-date that included payment to MSA for updating a map for the 2012-2017 Parks Plan and expenses for the publications of agendas in The Verona Press. C-T Wright reported that agendas need to be physically posted in three locations and in a newspaper. However, per the advice of legal counsel through the Wisconsin Towns Association, publication can legally cease, but it was noted that the Department of Justice suggests that the public be notified of this action over the course of a three month period while the agendas are still being published. Without objection, the OSPC members agreed to a phasing out of publication providing that the published Town Board agenda includes a statement at the bottom which indicates the physical posting locations of the OSPC agendas and the website address for the Town where agendas are electronically posted.

4. Wright presented the members present with copies of an Invasive Species document he thought might be the one that was to be sent out with the 2011 tax bills. The members confirmed this was the document. Wright reported that Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Dresser would attempt to format her annual newsletter to include the document that is mailed with tax bills, but some of the photos may have to be reduced considerably in order to fit. C-T Wright will send the OSPC members a draft copy of the proposed newsletter once it has been assembled.
5. C-T Wright projected the Town website that is currently under production so the members could review the changes and enumerate elements yet to be updated and/or fixed. It was noted that the following hypertext links were no longer active:
 - Military Ridge State Trail
 - All links through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 - All links under the Conservation heading
 - Sheidegger Forest

C-T Wright agreed to find the active links for these resources and will submit them along with the invasive species document and recent agendas and minutes to the web developer.

Discussion of Open Space and Parks Commission member goals for the near-term and five-year period covered by the revised Parks Plan

Member Stellick stated his initial goal was the support of the dog park to the south of town. He reported that some trails are temporarily closed and that approximately one quarter of the dog park is truncated while a new antenna is added for emergency services. Stellick reported he had spoken to Dane County Park Rangers; four acres of the property that contained the Wesner home used for a fire exercise has been purchased by Dane County to become the new center for the dog park.

Member Hoffman proposed educating the public about safety of the water supply, including the proper disposal of prescription medications. He proposed posting information on the OSPC section of the Town website.

Chair Keen proposed the continued conservation of local waterways. He noted the River Alliance of Wisconsin (<http://www.wisconsinrivers.org/>) has seen an increase in blue-green algae due to phosphorous run-off. Keen would like the Town to support the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association per their rate recommended for 2013. He reported that the Association is run by a half-time employee and unpaid volunteers. The Town's support could well be critical in the successful completion of the current grant with a three-year cycle as well as pursuing future grants and their implementation. The current grant is to study the scope of infestation of invasive aquatic species and in turn to remediate their negative impact. Chair Keen proposed soliciting assistance for tree removal along local streambanks by notifying local volunteers, by working cooperatively with Oakhill Correctional Institution, located in Oregon, Wisconsin, and with Operation Fresh Start (<http://www.operationfreshstart.org/>) in Madison, Wisconsin.

C-T Wright thought a number of these project ideas could be turned into public service announcements and/or requests for volunteers for specific projects. Wright noted that not all individuals who may be supportive of OSPC goals can dedicate themselves to the ongoing responsibility as a member, but may be willing to lend a hand on a limited-term basis. Chair Keen announced that he will lead a Natural Resources Foundation (<http://wisconservation.org/>) field trip in the spring of 2013.

Establishment of agenda for November Meeting

The following items were suggested for the November meeting: Call to Order; Approval of Agenda; Public Comment; Approval of meeting minutes for October 2012; Report from the Clerk-Treasurer: Website update and Response from Chris James, Dane County Parks and Open Space, re: review of Town of Verona 2012-2017 Parks Plan; Chair report: Upper Sugar River Watershed Association discussion at Town Board meeting, November 7, 2012 and Decision regarding continued publication of OSPC and Plan Commission agendas; Discussion of Emerald Ash Borer treatment, led by member Stellick; Consideration of changing the regular meeting schedule from the second Wednesday to the first Wednesday of each month; Establish an agenda for the December meeting ; and Adjourn

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Stellick; 2nd by Hoffman. Motion carried at 9:00 PM.

John Wright
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: 12/12/12