

Town of Verona
Open Space and Parks Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 2, 2013

Present: Mathies, Stellick, Keen, Hoffman, and Miller (arrived 7:35 PM)
Absent: Siehr and Jellings
Also Present: John Wright, Clerk-Treasurer (C-T)
Called to order at 7:32 PM

Approval of Agenda

Chair Keen noted due to the absence of Town Chair David Combs, item 5 should be removed. It was further noted that item 11 should read November instead of October. Motion made by Mathies to approve the agenda as amended; 2nd Hoffman. Motion carried.

Public Comments

Chair Keen reported that he and Steve Gavin attended the October 1, 2013 Town Board meeting to advocate for the continued membership of the Town in the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Stellick to approve the September minutes as presented; 2nd Mathies. The minutes from the September 4, 2013 meeting were adopted as presented.

Discussion with Town Chair David Combs Regarding a Future Vision of the Open Space and Park Commission's Role in the Future of Open Space within the Town of Verona Including a Possible Advisory Partnership with Epic for their Undeveloped Properties

The planned meeting with representatives from Epic was rescheduled the second week of October. Without objection, this item will be added to the November agenda.

Report on Action Before Town Board Regarding Request to Adopt Proposed Logo Design for the Open Space and Parks Commission

The Town Board moved to accept the recommended logo design for the Town of Verona Open Space and Parks Commission at the Board's regular meeting held October 1, 2013.

Continue Review of Amended Trimming and Brushing Policy and Notification Letter if Attorney Review has been Completed

Attorney Reuter did complete his initial review of the revised policy that had been recommended to the Town Board at their September meeting. The members present reviewed Attorney Reuter's comments and suggestions in the order they appeared. The members offered a variety of possible rewordings for dealing with trimming and planting removals when Town roads are not centered within the right-of-way (ROW). There was brief discussion of the various ways that property descriptions are recorded; some indicate land ownership to the centerline of the ROW, whereas others exclude the ROW. There followed a brief discussion of the need to include the concept of trimming to preserve vision areas at intersections and whether it was appropriate to require or recommend vision areas for driveway/public road intersections that are less visible due to hills, curves, or other limiting factors. The group agreed to reword the sentence in question to now read, "Most Town roads have a 66' wide ROW; no obstructions should be within the ROW and/or vision corner." There followed a discussion on whether the width of a typical ROW should be mentioned; member Stellick was in favor of striking the reference, whereas member Mathies was in favor of retaining the reference so that property owners know an approximate distance from the centerline of Town roads that are within the Town's right to manage.

Stellick did not support Town authority to maintain vision corners at the intersection of a public road with a private driveway. Instead, Stellick proposed notification of landowners who should trim or remove trees outside of the ROW to maintain vision corners; if the land owner opts to take no action or insufficient action, the Town would have demonstrated due diligence through notification. Member Miller noted that Dane County Zoning or the Land Information Office sometimes requires the recordation of a vision corner on a Certified Survey Map for problematic public road/private driveway intersections.

Chair Keen recommended that research be done prior to trimming or removals to find out the extent of the ROW. Member Miller agreed and suggested that the review be done prior to contracting for services. Keen also recommended accepting the balance of Attorney suggestions with an addition at the end of the Forward as follows: "Town notification will not cover work to be performed by a public utility working within the ROW." The members present agreed that item I G 1 should be removed entirely as no tree species are desirable within the ROW. Items currently numbered I G 3 and I G 4 were reworded for clarity (see attached document); without objection. C-T Wright did not think an action was required for the changes proposed above as there were no objections and since the revisions will be returned to the Town Attorney for review prior to recommendation for Town Board adoption.

Craft a Sample 30-Day Notification Letter for Removal of Plantings Referenced in the Proposed Revisions to the Brushing and Trimming Policy with Possible Action to Recommend to the Town Board

C-T Wright presented the members in attendance with the document introduced at the September 4, 2013 OSPC meeting with the recommended changes tracked in red. It had previously been noted the Town Board will likely treat future, non-emergency tree trimming and removal like road work in that it will be scheduled at least one year in advance, included as a recurring item in the Annual Town Budget based upon a multi-year plan, and be performed by a private service to reduce Town liability and increase efficiency. Based upon this policy change, no further action will be taken to develop this letter until requested by the Town Board.

Report from Clerk/Treasurer Wright Regarding Available Resources That Recommend Planting Setbacks from Public Rights-of-Way

C-T Wright reported that he did an extensive search of resources available online, but found mostly recommendations on what to plant within the ROW instead of where not to plant. Those websites, whose theme focused upon how to choose a species and setback appropriate for plantings adjacent to a ROW, were dominated by electrical utilities with overhead power lines. Wright did state that several of the publications were better designed and could potentially suggest a way to organize Town suggestions once they are defined. Member Mathies was willing to work with C-T Wright to develop information to add to the Town's website regarding landowners who are landscaping adjacent to the ROW. Wright agreed to share online resources with Mathies whose designs could be adapted for OSPC purposes; without objection. Member Miller recalled the Town Board gave neighbors bordering the De Marco Trail cul-de-sac directives for appropriate plantings within the limits of the cul-de-sac. Chair Keen requested those directions be located. There was a general discussion regarding a possible notification within the annual newsletter included with tax bill mailings to make land owners aware of a revised trimming/brushing policy and general suggestions about plantings adjacent to the ROW.

Update on Valley Road Parking Area for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Property and Update Regarding Epic's Continued Willingness to Donate and Place Boulders

C-T Wright reported that the lot has been completed, but the proposed gate for DNR use has yet to be installed. There is no signage for the property and a path to the Sugar River for putting in canoes and kayaks has yet to be cleared. Town Chair David Combs, whose residence is adjacent to the

property, has reported the lot is already being used by cyclists who park their vehicles there prior to biking on nearby roads. Wright reported that he contacted Bruce Richards at Epic by email about placing boulders around the perimeter of the lot. Wright shared a diagram of the lot with approximate dimensions he had sent Richards along with photos of the completed lot (see attached).

Establish an Agenda for the November 6, 2013 Meeting

The following items were suggested for the November meeting: Call to Order; Approval of Agenda; Public Comments; Approval of Meeting Minutes from the October 2, 2013 Meeting; Discussion with Town Chair David Combs Regarding a Possible Collaboration of the OSPC and Epic to Define a Plan for the Green Space Surrounding Epic's Campuses; Response to Amended Trimming and Brushing Policy by the Town Board as Reviewed by Town Attorney and the Opens Space and Parks Commission; Continue to Craft a Sample 30-Day Notification Letter for Removal of Plantings Referenced in the Proposed Revisions to the Brushing and Trimming Policy if Authorized by the Town Board; Report from Member Mathies Regarding Recommend Planting Setbacks from Public Rights-of-Way; Establish December Agenda; and Adjourn.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Miller; 2nd by Stellick. Motion carried at 9:10 PM.

John Wright
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved: November 6, 2013