

Presque Isle Parks and Recreation Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2023
Convened at Presque Isle Community Center

Item 1-Call to order—The regular meeting of the Presque Isle Parks and Recreation Committee was called to order by Chair, Barb Peck, at 10:00 A.M. Wednesday, September 20, 2023. Also present were committee members Al Drum, Rich Schmalzer, Brian Luetzow, Eric Benn, Liaison Cathy Weber and town crew member Max Wallace.

Item 2-Approval of the minutes of August 16, 2023--- Eric and Al changed the last sentence of Item 5a to provide a more correct statement; Rich moved to approve the minutes of August 16, 2023, incorporating the modified sentence, seconded by Brian. Motion passed.

Item 3-Public Comment---Max pointed out that the new band platform/pontoon boat is positioned in the way of the winter sledding enthusiasts. He suggested hay bales be placed along the hull to protect sledders. As a more certain measure, Max suggested that the boat be moved slightly to get it away from sledders when water level allows the boat to float. Max observed that the siphon is not flowing at this time, likely having become plugged with debris. Members discussed whether or not to operate the siphon during winter months.

Item 4-Correspondence---Town cleanup is scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 10:00 A.M. Various discussion followed, beginning with a brief description of the playground surface material just received. Members then commented on the Sensenbrenner Park equipment (bench, picnic table) that is slowly sinking, making them hard to use. Further remarks focused on the future of the Sensenbrenner sand box and digger. Attention shifted to Pipke Park, where members wondered whether or not the vegetation taking over the south pond wading area should be removed by covering with a tarp to kill the invading plants. Members suggested that the previous band platform should be disassembled and stored out of the way.

Item 5-Old Business

Item 5a---Pipke Park Dam Project Update---MSquared project engineer Graig Neville previously expected to submit the Dam Failure Analysis (DFA) latest results to the DNR during the week of September 11 to September 15; members of the PPRC don't know yet whether or not this has happened, but will check this week with MSquared. Members did update the Vilas County Zoning Administrator that the DFA is nearing completion and submittal to the DNR. (As a reminder, the PPRC will notify the county zoning administrator whenever the DFA is approved, signaling the administrator that it is time to consider modifying the county flood management ordinance in light of findings in the Pipke Park DFA.) Members also are gathering easement agreements for fiber broadband cable buried in Pipke Park, as well as buried gas supply piping. MSquared needs to refer to these agreements when planning piping and spillway placement details. On a final note, the water level gauge in the south pond indicates that the pond level is dropping much slower in the last ten days (about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch) than normal; overall, since May 17 when PPRC members began to discharge water from the pond, at first from an existing pipe, and later through a siphon placed on June 20, the pond level has dropped a total of 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Item 5b---Memorial Plaques on Benches at Sensenbrenner Park and Pipke Park---Barb discussed samples of memorial messages placed on memorial benches that are either machined into the bench by routing, or are applied to bench surfaces by fastening a printed plaque. Members decided

that plain benches are the best way to go, leaving the Town not involved directly in any memorial bench purchases. Members discussed the need for the Town to develop a policy or ordinance for “naming rights”.

Item 5c---Town Cleanup...Community Center Playground & Sensenbrenner Park---In addition to comments in Item 4 above (Public Comment), further discussion continued concerning the cleanup day on September 27. Members considered organization on cleanup day. Specifically, members talked over cutting trees leaning into the water of rivers and lakes, and leaving the cut tree parts in the water for fish habitat, encouraging a more vigorous fish population.

Item 5d---Water Level in the North Pond---Members discussed concerns about the low water level in the north pond, and fish survival. One important advantage of low level is that beavers are much less likely to build structures blocking the pond discharge mechanism. Discussion then followed describing the various control structures on both ponds, and the likely current depth of the north pond. Further considerations concerned fish habitat structures such as the PVC pipes embedded in pond shorelines for fish protection. Questions arose—Should artificial habitat stay, or be removed? Should the north pond level be raised 2 or 3 feet to save fish? Discussion focused on the north pond discharge mechanism and beaver activity there blocking the water flow. Should we try to raise north pond level by allowing water flow from the infeed creek through the 1200-foot long pipe? The group consensus was to try slowly to raise the north pond, and try not to allow excessive leakage into the south pond during this trial. The Committee believes this activity falls within normal maintenance and pond management activities. At the first indication that we are leaking into the south pond too much, or are filling the north pond too quickly, the process should be halted to take stock. A status report should be made at the October 19 town board meeting. Members agreed also that beaver removal efforts should be authorized by the Town Board. Members agreed further that MSquared should be encouraged to design water control devices that have beaver activity and control in mind.

Item 6-New Business---Next meeting is October 18, 2023, 10:00 A.M.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alan Drum
Secretary, Presque Isle Parks and Recreation Committee
Transcribed September 23, 2023