

Presque Isle Municipal Ordinance Committee Minutes
Wednesday, May 11, 2023, 2:00 pm
Presque Isle Community Center

Attendees: Carl Watras, (Chairman), Bob Berdan (Secretary), Eric Benn (via Zoom), Kelly Dyre, Mike Brandt, Phil Harris, Tom Preston, and Carl Wolter (Town liaison). Also present Supervisor Cathy Logan Weber, Lorine Walters, and citizens in person and on Zoom.

Call to order: Chairman Carl Watras called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm and indicated public comments will be at the end of the meeting.

Approval of minutes: Tom Preston moved, and Eric Benn seconded, a motion to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2023 meeting. Four members voted to approve.¹ Mike Brandt raised a point of order re proceeding on a hazardous wake ordinance and re not addressing pending Old Business. The Chair deemed him to be out of order, but listened to his concerns.

Old Business: None scheduled to be addressed.

New Business. The board referral from the May 4th Town Board meeting was read aloud. Chair Watras opened the discussion by distributing a new wake ordinance he drafted for discussion purposes and he then attempted to walk through 7 slides he created about the history of the Town's consideration of regulating hazardous wakes, but an audience member suggested the characterization as presented was biased. Asking for patience, the chair discussed prior surveys and the scope and intent of the most recent referral to the Committee, but Phil Harris suggested the historic review was a waste of time. Following further discussion, he moved to dispense with the rest of the slides. Kelly Dyre seconded the motion. Motion failed: 3 for, 4 opposed. Further discussion followed about existing wake Ordinances enacted in Wisconsin, the objectives of any such Ordinance in PI, enforcement, and the ambiguities in 507 as originally drafted.

Chair Watras suggested the committee at its next meeting should review current regulatory options, including the handout he had created and distributed as a new 507 patterned after Rhine Wisconsin's Ordinance. Peggy Johnson Wiesner suggested the Watras handout corrected some but not all ambiguities, so Carl asked her to suggest edits to the draft he shared for the committee to also consider at its next meeting. After considerable discussion it was also agreed that another item for committee discussion at the next meeting ought to be the list of safety and natural resource protections a wake ordinance ought to address. Carl Wolter urged the seven committee members and Board liaison to discuss amongst themselves at the next meeting. Chair Watras indicated such discussion can occur but it must be an open public

¹ Subsequently, at the suggestion of an audience member, Tom Preston moved, and Phil Harris seconded a motion to record the votes of the nonvoting members. Without discussion, the motion passed unanimously. Thereafter, the votes of Phil Harris, Kelly Dyre and Mike Brandt were each recorded as nay.

meeting. Discussion followed as to whether it would be better to wait until a full 3 member Board of Supervisors is seated, but Chair Watras disagreed. Phil Harris expressed a desire to ask the current two person Board to clarify whether they want an ordinance that will ban all wake surfing, and specifically on Oxbow Lake. Carl suggested he may do so as a private citizen.

Enforcement issues resulted in considerable discussion, in part due to the lack of a Constable at this time and the likelihood of increasing rental units in the future. Lorine Walters indicated there is precedent for both lake ambassadors and deputy constables as a means to strengthen enforcement. Tom Preston encouraged the committee not to conflate wake surfing regulation with personal watercraft, and after considerable discussion, the idea of revising 503 to include regulation of magnified wakes in existing Chapter 503 was not supported, but Chair Watras asked Peggy Johnson Wiesner to work with Otto Novak and others to meld revised Chapter 503 provisions into the revised 507 which Carl Watras had distributed and agreed to post. She agreed to lead the effort to do so, which will provide the Committee with two options to review and discuss at its next meeting.

Finally, it was determined that the next meeting, which will be committee discussion with Peggy Johnson Wiesner and Otto Novak, will be held on Monday May 22d at 3:00 pm.

Adjournment. Motion by Phil Harris, second by Tom Preston, to adjourn. Unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.