

**Parks, Recreation & Library Board
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, July 27, 2020

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1 The Meeting of the Parks, Recreation & Library Board of the City of Onalaska was called to
2 order at 5:15 p.m. on Monday, July 27, 2020 at City Hall. It was noted that the meeting had been
3 announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

4
5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Steven Nott, Brian Udermann,
6 Connor Nagy, Ohbe Johnson, Andrea Benco, Patric McGuane

7
8 Also Present: Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick, City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch,
9 Mayor Kim Smith, Parks Supervisor Mark Hanson, Buildings Manager Brian Babiash,
10 Recreation Coordinator Tyler Kettenhagen

11
12 Excused Absence: Jon Klock

13
14 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

15
16 Motion by Ohbe, second by Ald. Nott, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as
17 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

18
19 On voice vote, motion carried.

20
21 **Item 3 – Public Input (Limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

22
23 Andrea called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of
24 the meeting.

25
26 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

27
28 **Item 4 – Review trail options at the Great River Landing**

29
30 Gary Randall of Short Elliott Hendrickson began a presentation of the “Great River Landing
31 Riverwalk Conceptual Design” by introducing fellow SEH team members Caitlin Blue and
32 Molly Wagner (landscape architecture), Bob Koss (technical advisor for landscape architecture
33 and planning), and Jeremy Tomesh (civil engineer).

34
35 Caitlin began the PowerPoint presentation by telling board members SEH is attempting to
36 provide a new riverfront trail connection from Irvin Street to the spillway. Per the PowerPoint
37 presentation, the trail would provide an alternate safe route to the spillway and dissuade unsafe
38 crossing of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway. It also would provide citizens and visitors
39 with new and unique opportunities to experience the Mississippi River as it flows through the
40 city. Caitlin said SEH has performed some initial data collection from the city, including several
41 meetings with city staff, and has developed a list of best practices that is guiding the design.

Reviewed 7/30/2020 by Dan Wick

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42 SEH has produced three preliminary plan options, and board members are being asked to provide
43 feedback this evening. Caitlin said SEH will take the feedback it receives from board members
44 and regulators, make any necessary modifications, and then hold public input. The preferred
45 plan option will be finalized once input has been received from both stakeholders and the public.

46
47 Caitlin showed board members the view of looking west on Irvin Street toward the river and said
48 possibilities for this location include creating a mixed modal plaza/gateway opportunity. Caitlin
49 acknowledged there is steep slope present and said it would be necessary to have ADA
50 accessibility and address the railway crossing challenge. Caitlin said there is an opportunity to
51 enhance the view to the river and highlight the area with improved vegetation plantings,
52 interpretative signage, or artistic expression. Caitlin next addressed the three structures (storage,
53 restroom, “cottage” utilized for storage) west of the railroad tracks, and per the PowerPoint slide,
54 SEH suggests possibly removing the storage building, retaining the restroom and updating it for
55 ADA access, and either remodeling or replacing the “cottage,” which was remodeled in 2007.
56 Caitlin noted more than 80 trains per day pass through this crossing, and she said a goal is to
57 enhance safe pedestrian and cyclist crossing. This can be accomplished via pavement, lighting,
58 and art installations.

59
60 Caitlin next addressed the riverfront, telling board members the first half of the possible trail
61 location is flat and wide, and that presents challenges in terms of floodwaters. There is an
62 existing floating pier, and SEH suggests exploring maintaining, relocating, access and integration
63 with a new riverfront trail. Fluctuating river levels, a gradual sloped shoreline, and shoreline
64 soils pose a challenge for a hard, on-grade trail. Potential trail options being considered include
65 floating, paved on-grade, benched, and elevated. SEH has moved away from the floating option.
66 Caitlin showed board members another view showing the Great River Residences in the
67 background and said the development likely will contribute to increased use of the waterfront.
68 One of the goals is to preserve the existing tree canopy. The existing chain link fence is
69 currently located on the river side of the railroad tracks, and there is an opportunity to relocate
70 the fence to the city side of the tracks. Caitlin acknowledged there are fluctuating river levels as
71 well as a gradual sloped shoreline. Potential trail options include paved on-grade, benched, and
72 elevated.

73
74 Caitlin next addressed the stormwater outfall, the center point of the site, noting the concrete
75 bulkhead there provides an opportunity for potential public use. There also is the potential to tie
76 the trail into the headwall as an elevated trail. Caitlin pointed out a pinch-point, noting the city
77 must adhere to a 25-foot offset and telling board members some type of structure likely would be
78 needed to cross the opening, and also maintain stormwater flows beneath it. The nearby gravel
79 bar would be the terminus of the trail, and there is the potential at this location for a gathering
80 space. It will be necessary to verify the trail alignment and anchoring limitations within the
81 spillway embankment. The goal is to limit access to the spillway, as currently fishermen wade
82 across the swiftly flowing water.

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83

84 Caitlin told board members the design parameters must include the following criteria:

85

86 • Provide ADA access from the Great River Landing parking lot to the entire proposed trail
87 network.

88 • Keep trails outside of the regulatory floodway and a minimum of 25 feet from BNSF
89 railroad tracks.

90 • Provide a vegetated buffer between the railroad tracks and trail alignment, where feasible.

91 • Provide gathering spaces near existing gathering areas, future access points, and the
92 spillway.

93 • Allow existing buildings to remain, but allow for the possibility of future replacement or
94 removal.

95 • Maintain and connect existing floating pier to the new trail system.

96 • Maintain stormwater outfall at the center of the trail alignment, and look for opportunities
97 for improvement to aesthetics, water quality, and bank stability.

98

99 Caitlin noted the southern portion of the site has a gradual bank, and the northern portion has a
100 steep bank. Caitlin said a banked trail on the northern portion of the site would be more cost-
101 effective – either there would be a structure or a fill on the river side. Caitlin said a structure
102 likely would be easier from a DNR standpoint, while fill would be more cost-effective. Caitlin
103 also told board members it is necessary to examine meeting the grade where it is at. This would
104 put the trail below the 100-year flood level. Another option would be to fill the trail above the
105 floodplain so that it may be utilized more of the time. Yet another option would be to construct
106 an elevated trail. Regarding the southern portion of the site, Caitlin said an on-grade trail is the
107 most cost-effective option; however, it would experience more frequent flooding. The trail also
108 can be filled above the 100-year flood level or elevated further. The final elevation of an
109 elevated structure can fluctuate somewhat.

110

111 Caitlin told board members the following three concepts are being considered:

112

113 • **Linear:** There would be a direct connection from Irvin Street, assuming the ADA
114 connection would occur from the parking lot and follow the existing trails. Some
115 regrading might be necessary at the intersection east of the railroad tracks. There would
116 be a boardwalk ramp that leads to a gathering space around the adjacent buildings before
117 hooking up with an on-grade trail. There would be stairs behind the buildings for able-
118 bodied individuals seeking a direct access point. An on-grade trail would terminate at a
119 gathering space designated for viewing events being held on the river. A removable
120 barge connection could be part of a future phase, and it would be utilized seasonally.
121 There would be an elevated span to cross the stormwater outfall, and an elevated path that
122 would lead to the final gathering space. There also would be an elevated pergola that
123 would break up the viewshed, and it would provide on-grade access to the spillway for

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- 124 fishermen.
- 125 • **Arcing:** There would be an additional access point to the existing trail network, and
- 126 potentially a future plaza that also would serve as a vehicular turnaround. There would
- 127 be a more direct accessible route behind the buildings. A ramp would provide access to
- 128 the buildings, and potentially to a future gathering space. There would be an elevated
- 129 section to avoid disturbing the roots of the cottonwood trees. This option would have a
- 130 more benched or filled concept so that the trail may be utilized more of the time. This
- 131 would transition to a more elevated condition before ending at a gathering space. There
- 132 also would be access to the spillway. Access to the island would be via an elevated trail
- 133 connection.
- 134 • **Riverine:** There would be access via the existing trail network to avoid having to
- 135 perform costly regrading. The accessible trail route would loop in front of the buildings,
- 136 and there would be a more direct trail behind the buildings before terminating at a
- 137 potentially terraced gathering space. There would be an elevated trail heading toward the
- 138 spillway. The final gathering space would be shifted toward the bank. There would be
- 139 stairway access to the spillway. An elevated path to the island would be located closer to
- 140 the spillway and part of a future phase.

141

142 Molly shared with board members the following trail typologies:

143

- 144 • Metal grating (Allows light and vegetation to penetrate through the trail).
- 145 • Boardwalk with fishing pier
- 146 • On-grade boardwalk
- 147 • Boardwalk overlook
- 148 • Wood boardwalk with pergola overlook
- 149 • Boardwalk with leaning wall and open rail (Provides a protective edge).
- 150 • On-grade boardwalk
- 151 • On-grade paved path

152

153 Molly shared the following railing typologies:

154

- 155 • Wooden kickrail (two types) and metal kickrail
- 156 • Metal handrail with timber post (two types)
- 157 • Wooden guardrail with angled top rail
- 158 • Wooden handrail
- 159 • Vinyl coated chain link fence
- 160 • Metal guardrail, and metal guardrail with wood top rail

161

162 Regarding a metal guardrail, it is Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources policy that debris

163 could become trapped between the railings if a boardwalk has a railing. The Wisconsin DNR

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164 requires that the area between the railings must be modeled as filled or ineffective for the
165 conveyance of flood flows.

166

167 Molly shared the following gathering typologies:

168

- 169 • Stepped paths with lawn
- 170 • Floating shade structure
- 171 • Stepped wood amphitheater
- 172 • Stepped paved waterfront plaza
- 173 • Fishing pier on boardwalk
- 174 • Sculptural overlook
- 175 • Terraced steps with sloped walk
- 176 • Stepped wood and metal
- 177 • Cantilevered overlook with shade structure
- 178 • Cantilevered overlook
- 179 • Stepped stone steps

180

181 Molly shared the following barge typologies:

182

- 183 • A typical shipping barge (35-by-195 feet)
- 184 • Repurposed barge (swimming pool in Berlin)
- 185 • Repurposed barge (swimming pool in Budapest)
- 186 • Repurposed barge (restaurant/bar in New York City)
- 187 • Repurposed barge (Louis Kahn Floating Arts Center)
- 188 • Repurposed barge (Elizabeth River Project Learning Barge – focus on environmental and
189 sustainable education). Partnerships could be developed with the Onalaska School
190 District and the colleges.

191

192 Molly told board members the next steps include obtaining their feedback; SEH will refine
193 alternative concepts based on feedback; SEH will created a 3-dimensional model and rendering;
194 there will be public engagement; and a preferred concept alternative will be selected. Molly
195 presented the following public engagement options:

196

- 197 • QR code generator (includes online presentation and survey)
- 198 • Social media outreach
- 199 • In-person display board at the Great River Landing Visitors' Center building
- 200 • Fliers or postcards
- 201 • Email project website link to project stakeholders
- 202 • Online presentation
- 203 • Online survey

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- 204 • “Dot Exercise” with precedent images at Great River Landing site
- 205 • “Dot Exercise” and/or scoring matrix with concepts at Great River Landing site
- 206 • Comment cards
- 207 • Online interactive presentation

208

209 Molly told board members SEH is recommending taking an online approach due to the COVID-
210 19 pandemic.

211

212 Andrea asked what type of fill could be installed that would survive the type of flooding that
213 occurs regularly at the waterfront.

214

215 Caitlin said she believes armoring would need to occur on the riverfront side of the slope, adding
216 she does not believe the fill beneath the trail needs to be anything special. Caitlin said a
217 structural soil that is sturdier and contains aggregate could be utilized, if necessary, and armoring
218 could occur on the outside of the slope.

219

220 Andrea said that when the channel is narrowed with a raised trail, the energy is being transferred
221 elsewhere, and she told Caitlin she believes a filled situation could present more challenges than
222 a raised boardwalk down the line.

223

224 Caitlin said that will need to be part of SEH’s analysis moving forward, and she told Andrea a
225 trail becomes more usable the higher it is elevated. However, it becomes more difficult to model
226 and regulate if it is elevated with fill. One option is moving the cottage from a closed structure
227 to a pavilion-type structure.

228

229 Ald. Nott addressed the fencing along the railroad tracks and noted there had been a suggestion
230 about possibly moving it to the uphill side of the tracks. Ald. Nott inquired about the purpose of
231 the fence, asking if that purpose will be fulfilled if it is relocated to the other side of the tracks.

232 Ald. Nott also asked if it is even necessary to have the fence.

233

234 Gary told Ald. Nott that City Engineer Jarrod Holter is already dealing with the fencing issue,
235 and he said people could get caught in that area if they were crossing the tracks from the city side
236 of the fence to the spillway. Relocating the fence to the upper side would allow for an escape,
237 and it would prevent individuals from being caught in the track area.

238

239 Dan said the city needs to do the best job possible in getting people off the tracks as the city
240 attempts to designate the crossing as a quiet zone. Both the Board of Public Works (July 7) and
241 the Common Council (July 14) approved installing fencing on the city side of the park next to
242 the Great River Landing. Dan said Phillips Fencing will install fencing that will restrict access,
243 noting there are visible distinct pathways people have created by walking from the Great River
244 Landing, down the railroad tracks, and across. Dan said the goal is to restrict that by installing

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245 fencing on the upper side. Individuals would then utilize Irvin Street and utilize the trail to
246 access the spillway once the trail is developed.

247

248 Andrea asked if BNSF is mandating the fence.

249

250 Dan told Andrea there has been a significant amount of discussion over the years due to the
251 heavy volume of foot traffic across the railroad tracks. Dan said BNSF wants to have something
252 to protect it so that individuals are not walking on and across the tracks wherever they please.

253

254 Ald. Nott noted the fence's current location prevents people from accessing the river, and he said
255 relocating the fence uphill not only will prevent people from accessing the river, but also the
256 railroad tracks.

257

258 Dan told Ald. Nott the fence was installed when the area served as a campground, and he said the
259 fence was present when the city purchased the property either in 2006 or 2007.

260

261 Ald. Nott asked if the fence will be necessary once the trail system is installed and the city is
262 granting potentially multiple access routes to that area.

263

264 Dan told Ald. Nott, "That would be a question for us at a later time."

265

266 Gary said SEH is looking into installing a landscaped buffer at the low side so that if the fence
267 were removed, the flow of traffic would be controlled along the boardwalk, and people would be
268 kept away from the tracks via other means.

269

270 Ald. Nott said he does not think it is logical to have the fence on the uphill side if it is going to be
271 present.

272

273 Andrea said she was under the impression BNSF was mandating the fence as she has seen that in
274 other areas where there is a crossing site. Andrea said she does not know why the fence would
275 be needed if BNSF is not mandating it.

276

277 Dan told Andrea he cannot speak to that.

278

279 Andrea asked if the area where several fishermen like to fish will be impacted negatively if any
280 of the three proposed trails are run out to that area.

281

282 Brian Udermann said he does not believe it would, noting there are people who fish in the area
283 from the culvert to the spillway when the water is at a higher level. Brian said that while he is
284 not certain fishing would be allowed off the walkway, he does not believe it would be a
285 significant issue if it were allowed.

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286

287 Caitlin said anyone who wanted to fish off the trail and in that location would be allowed to do
288 so and told Andrea the area would be considered the beach. Caitlin noted the backwater area in
289 both in the Linear and Arcing concepts could be an area for habitat, which would improve
290 fishing.

291

292 Ald. Nott asked if board members are being asked to share their views on each of the concepts.

293

294 Dan told Ald. Nott both SEH and city staff had been working on the concepts so that board
295 members could provide input so that something may be brought forward to the public. Dan said
296 the online surveys and information can be prepared for the public so that people may share their
297 thoughts. Dan stressed the connection to the island is not part of this plan, and also that the goal
298 is to establish a connection from Irvin Street to the spillway. Dan noted an initial meeting was
299 held with the Wisconsin DNR, and also that meetings with other regulatory bodies are in the
300 process of being scheduled. Dan said, "They will dictate a lot of what our options may be. It's
301 trying to get it so we can get it to the public and [ask], what would you like to see? I think our
302 game plan for this project is to continue to work with SEH to get a concept that we like. Our
303 hope is that in 2021 we will put money in to start construction documents, and then we can also
304 start applying for grants for a goal of a 2022 construction timeframe."

305

306 Ald. Nott asked if it would be helpful to have decision criteria that does not have to be weighted
307 when the public becomes involved. Ald. Nott said he is speaking of cost, aesthetics, safety, and
308 durability, adding he assumes some of those factors have been addressed before SEH proceeds
309 with some of the concepts.

310

311 Gary told Ald. Nott the regulators will be the driving force behind what can and cannot be done,
312 noting positive meetings have been conducted with the Wisconsin DNR. Gary noted an email
313 has been sent to all the initial agencies to inform them what is happening, and he said, "I think
314 between here and there, between where we're at today and where we end up at the end of this, I
315 think our primary focus is alignment – do you like the alignment? What do you think about the
316 gathering spaces? What do the amenities look like in this area as far as engaging down at the
317 spillway. It's really an overview of, this is where we envision the trail going and how we
318 envision it flowing in the engagement that we're looking for." Gary said there is little difference
319 between the three concepts other than the route, elevation, and the location of the gathering
320 spaces. Gary said there will be a discussion with the Wisconsin DNR and other agencies once
321 materials come into play, and he stated, "For the purposes of this meeting, we wanted to get
322 everybody familiar with what kind of materials are out there and what this might look like, but
323 really dial into, what do you think of the flow? What do you think of the elevation? What do
324 you think of where this thing can go? Are we in the right ballpark to go to the public and say,
325 here's what we're thinking?"

326

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327 Jeremy said SEH’s engineers had examined past projects and similar situations in which SEH
328 has constructed similar projects, and he noted concerns were raised regarding the floodway and
329 whether sections of the trail can withstand high-water events. Jeremy said, “Certainly that has
330 steered our plan in that direction,” and he stated it is important to construct a structural system
331 that is able to withstand high flows and is usable when the river is at higher levels. Jeremy said,
332 “Both on the regulatory side, and on engineering and long-term maintenance, those are all things
333 that will be considered in the fold, and they’ll have to be balanced both as usability and as a cost
334 as we move forward into our more-detailed design.”

335

336 Andrea said she believes what has been presented tonight is a great start, adding she likes the
337 barge concept after initially being skeptical of it. Andrea said she is concerned about the barge
338 and the Arcing option because wherever the connection comes in, boat traffic will be limited
339 through that area. Andrea said those options would be ideal if that is the desired goal; however,
340 both options might impede individuals slowing motoring through on their boats if that is not the
341 desired goal. Andrea said she likes the rounded lines and the gathering spaces associated with
342 the Riverine concept, as well as the elevated structures, because it seems as though it would be
343 easier to maintain in a long-term concept as elevated structures generally do not have vegetation
344 requirements that solid structures do. Andrea also said she knows there will be sediment issues
345 maintenance staff will have to address.

346

347 Mark told Andrea he likes the elevator that would be part of the Arcing concept as there would
348 be less maintenance, and that he also prefers the Riverine concept. Mark also said whatever
349 concept is ultimately chosen will improve what is currently at the Great River Landing. Mark
350 addressed maintenance and said, “Even if it’s at-grade and the water’s high, that’s part of living
351 on the river. ... If it’s concrete and it’s at-grade, it’s easy to clean off. If it’s wood and it’s at-
352 grade, it’s probably not the best. It’s still easy to clean, but the elevated would be ultimate, but
353 maybe you start running into cost issues. I like a mixture of both, and that’s why I think I like
354 [the Riverine concept] the best.”

355

356 Brian Udermann said he believes moving the fence or having a barrier above the tracks is a good
357 idea, noting he frequently sees individuals cross the tracks en route to the spillway. Brian also
358 said he favors higher railings, both aesthetically and for safety reasons – especially when there is
359 high water. Brian also said he likes the concept of having the walkway go out over the water as
360 well as an elevated platform versus fill and a flat path, noting the water reaches the base during
361 the spring months of the bank below the tracks. Brian said that while he likes the idea of having
362 a barge, he also inquired about the budget and he stated he believes having something with
363 which to access the island likely is a low priority and may be addressed in the future. Brian
364 asked if there would be video surveillance at the site.

365

366 Ald. Nott said he likes all three proposed concepts, and he stated the Riverine option is the one
367 that strikes him as being the most desirable at this time. Ald. Nott said his second preference

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368 would be the Linear option with the barge as it likely provides the most flexible options as to
369 what can be done with it. Ald. Nott also stated he believes a barge would be the least at-risk
370 structure for flooding as it could be moved.

371

372 Patric said he is partial to the Riverine option because of its smoother lines and it is more
373 dramatic looking. Patric noted he has seen barges utilized both as a pool and a restaurant in New
374 York City, also noting that concept could generate significant income for the city. Patric also
375 stated he likes the elevated concept.

376

377 Ohbe stated he prefers the Riverine option as the flow appears to be more cohesive and the
378 elevation is appealing. Ohbe said he believes it would ideal to discuss access to the island at a
379 later date, and he told board members the challenge will be to make the Irvin Street access point
380 more appealing.

381

382 Brian Udermann said he believes there will be a significant number of people going to the site if
383 there is a walkway going to the spillway and it is visually appealing. Brian also said he loves the
384 idea of having gathering places, adding he believes it would be desirable to have additional
385 spaces, budget permitting.

386

387 Andrea said the gathering spaces must be accessible as she knows individuals with mobility
388 issues who are excited the city is considering a path concept.

389

390 Gary told board members SEH wanted to show them the barge concept because it was appealing
391 and provided flexibility, and he said island access will be a future discussion. Gary said SEH
392 can work with whatever that would turn out to be at the time a decision is made. Gary also
393 stressed that there will never be a barge if board members ultimately choose the Riverine option.

394

395 Connor said he believes he also had stated a preference for the Riverine option in his packet, and
396 he also said he assumes events held at that location such as the Three Rivers Roleo still will be
397 held there. Connor said he thought the terrace seating that is part of the Riverine option also
398 could be utilized as gathering points for the Roleo. Connor also said that while he likes the barge
399 concept, he expressed concern it would impede kayakers.

400

401 Andrea said she is hesitant to establish a connection to the island as it is a space that is not overly
402 populated because it must be accessed by boat. Andrea said she is concerned that by establishing
403 a connection to the island will hamper the experience as well as create safety and traffic issues.

404

405 Ald. Nott asked if perhaps the designer can have additional options to consider for more
406 gathering spaces as funding allows.

407

408 Caitlin noted there are structures in the area that have uncertain futures – the cottage in particular

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409 – and she said SEH has talked with Dan and city staff about the future of that structure, which
410 currently is primarily being utilized as storage. Caitlin also noted she has seen photographic
411 evidence the structure routinely floods, and she said perhaps the public meetings could include
412 showing people options that include creating an open pavilion or a pavilion/kayak storage
413 facility/flexible gathering space.

414

415 Brian Udermann asked if it would be possible to incorporate a concept with a barge with the
416 actual walkway itself closer to the tracks.

417

418 Caitlin said the SEH team initially believed floating trails were a good concept, but shied away
419 from them due to concerns over ice flows in the winter. Caitlin suggested that perhaps the
420 terminus gathering point at the spillway could be the location for a barge and a seasonal
421 gathering space.

422

423 Andrea said it is her understanding the consensus among board members was the house located
424 at the Great River Landing was to be removed.

425

426 Dan told Andrea she is correct; however, he also said there are several questions regarding what
427 can be placed there as the current structure sits on the flood fringe. Dan said the goal is to
428 complete the trail system and then determine what is feasible to be constructed on that site. Dan
429 said he believes board members would regret discovering that nothing could be constructed on
430 that site once the current structure is removed.

431

432 Bob told board members SEH typically enters into these processes with three options, and he
433 asked them if they think it matters there are three concepts to be brought forward to the public.
434 Bob asked if the Linear concept should be removed from consideration and SEH then would
435 work with two more curve/linear options.

436

437 Dan said that based on board members' feedback they want to pursue the Arcing and Riverine
438 concepts. Dan also suggesting delving into more of the concepts of the pictures that will be
439 shown to board members and discussing construction materials.

440

441 Andrea said it appears the concept that includes island access is far enough into the future, and
442 leaving it out would simplify the discussions with the public. Andrea said board members and
443 SEH then might receive more and better feedback regarding the rest of the plan if they did not
444 have to focus on that piece.

445

446 Ald. Nott said access to the island will be a new discussion in the future, adding that based on
447 what he has heard this evening the designers have the ability to do a barge or a walkway when
448 that time comes. Ald. Nott said it might be confusing to include access to the island at this time,
449 and he stated he would choose the Arcing and Riverine concepts.

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450
451 Brian Udermann said he believes the Linear option and the path to the island can be eliminated.

452
453 Andrea said she believes taking a simple approach is the best method as the city will be utilizing
454 the internet for the survey.

455
456 Gary asked Dan if the Great River Landing Master Plan is published so that it may be referred to
457 if anyone has a question regarding the island.

458
459 Dan said the Great River Landing Master Plan is on the city's website.

460
461 Dan said the SEH team and city staff will work on putting together items for the public input.
462 Board members will hear at the September 28 meeting the input received from the public, and
463 the focus will turn toward the plan so that some of the projects may be included in the proposed
464 Capital Improvements Budget.

465
466 Gary asked how long the survey should be posted.

467
468 Andrea said it appears the majority of the input typically comes within the first week or two.

469
470 Dan told Andrea she is correct and said city staff has a vast email list of participants
471 (approximately 15,000) who have registered for the Parks and Recreation Department's
472 programs. The survey also can be posted on the city's website. Dan noted the city received
473 more than 600 responses regarding the Rowe Park project, and he said he believes there is an
474 avenue by which to reach citizens.

475
476 Andrea asked if the city still has email contacts for the people who participated in the most
477 recent waterfront project meetings.

478
479 Dan said it would be possible to find those contacts.

480
481 Andrea asked if two weeks is a reasonable timeframe in which to conduct the survey.

482
483 Gary told Andrea it is and said he wants to ensure that citizens are given ample time to respond.
484 Gary also encouraged board members to work through Dan should they have specific questions
485 they believe might be applicable for the survey or public input.

486
487 **Item 5 – Title 8 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Onalaska relating to Parks and**
488 **Recreation**

489
490 Dan noted the board had discussed this item at its June 22 meeting and highlighted the following:

Reviewed 7/30/2020 by Dan Wick

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- 512
- Title changed from Title 12 to Title 8.
 - The board had discussed Section 8.01.12.25 at the June 22 meeting.
 - Definition per State of Wisconsin Statutes:
 - 340.1(5) “Bicycle” means every vehicle propelled by feet or hands acting upon pedals or cranks and having wheels, any two of which are not less than 14 inches in diameter.
 - 340.1(15pm) “Electric personal assistive mobility device” means a self-balancing, two-non-tandem-wheeled device that is designed to transport only one person and that has an electric propulsion system that limits the maximum speed of the device to 15 miles per hour or less.
 - 340.1(ps) “Electric scooter” means a device weighing less than 100 pounds that has handlebars and an electric motor, is powered solely by the electric motor and human power, and has a maximum speed of not more than 20 miles per hour on a paved level surface when powered solely by the electric motor. “Electric scooter” does not include an electric personal assistive mobility device, motorcycle, motor bicycle, electric bicycle, or moped.
 - 340.1 (30) “Motor bicycle” means a bicycle to which a power unit that is not an integral part of the vehicle has been added to permit the vehicle to travel at a speed of not more than 30 miles per hour with a 150-pound rider on a dry, level, hard surface with no wind and having a seat for the operator. “Motor bicycle” does not include an electric bicycle.

513

514 Andrea said she is concerned that personal assistive mobility devices have been grouped with

515 recreational devices, stating she believes they should be regulated differently. Andrea said she

516 believes the wording should be changed to the following: *“Bicycles, electric scooters, and motor*

517 *bicycles may not be ridden on trails and pathways. Electric personal mobility devices may be*

518 *ridden on trails and pathways only.”* Andrea said one is an access item, and the other is a

519 recreation item.

520

521 Dan said that when one looks at the definition of an electric personal mobility device, it is a

522 Segue. Dan added it is two wheels, side-by-side, and not in front of each other.

523

524 Andrea asked if the discussion is about only that particular electric personal mobility device.

525

526 Dan said dealing with ADA is separate and is not covered by this policy.

527

528 Andrea said she would change the wording to say: *“May not be ridden on trails, unless*

529 *specifically allowed.”* Andrea added she believes motor bikes should not be operated with

530 motors at all, stating she does think the city wants to be allowing wheeled vehicles on trails as a

531 general policy as it presents several challenges.

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572

Dan told Andrea there is an asphalt trail in Van Riper Park that is frequented by bike riders. Further, Dan noted there also are asphalt trails along State Trunk Highway 35 and by Menards.

Andrea asked if those trails may be called out as allowed trails.

Dan said, “We can designate which ones they are.”

Andrea asked if there are more paved or unpaved trails in the city.

Dan said there are more paved trails than unpaved trails.

Andrea said it would be easier to post which trails do not allow wheeled vehicles.

Dan told Andrea she is correct, and he read the following from Section 25: *“The Parks, Recreation & Library Board may designate certain trails or pathways as off limits to bicycles, electric personal mobility devices, electric scooters ...”*

Andrea said she is thinking about three-wheeled mobility devices.

Dan told Andrea that is not ADA accessible.

Connor referred to another section of the ordinance and noted anyone who has a disability that limits or impairs the ability to walk is exempt from this ordinance section.

Andrea asked if this item will go before the Common Council at its August 11 meeting.

Dan said it might go before the Administrative and Judiciary Committee as part of the recodification process, and he told Andrea it will go to the next level as it moves through.

Ald. Nott asked that the state’s definition for “electric personal assistive mobility device” be attached to the ordinance as it moves on as there likely will be more confusion without it.

Motion by Ald. Nott, second by Connor, to approve Title 8 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Onalaska relating to Parks and Recreation.

On voice vote, motion carried.

Item 6 – Approve contract with RecDeck Software for registrations, reservations, and point of sale operations

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15

573 Dan noted the city has been operating with ActiveNet since 2005, and the Omni Center was
574 utilizing a MacSolutions product in late 2010. Staff upgraded to a new program via the same
575 provider in 2015. ActiveNet bought out MacSolutions in either 2016 or 2017, and Dan said that
576 while staff is working with the same company, it also is working with two different programs
577 and two different costs. Dan said ActiveNet would not work for staff due to its scheduling piece
578 that is critical to Omni Center employees, noting staff needed to find a system that has a robust
579 calendar visible to user groups. Dan said staff discussed utilizing MaxGalaxy for all its
580 programs, and he told board members MaxGalaxy will not be a supported system through
581 ActiveNet as of November 2021. Dan said staff had done some demos with RecDesk, and he
582 referred to the PowerPoint slide showing the comparison between ActiveNet (\$3,000 in annual
583 fees) and RecDesk (\$6,800 in annual fees). Dan noted they both can do the same system, and he
584 also noted ActiveNet levies a \$750 quarterly fee, and it charges the city above and beyond if it
585 does not have a sufficient number of convenience fees. The city paid ActiveNet \$10,319.34 in
586 fees in 2019. RecDesk levies an annual fee of \$6,800 no matter how many users.

587
588 Ald. Nott asked Patric if he has experience with RecDesk.

589
590 Patric said he has utilized RecTrac. Patric told board members he likes the fact credit card fees
591 may be passed on, and he suggested speaking with individuals employed by other parks and
592 recreation departments that utilize RecDesk to ensure there are no technical difficulties
593 associated with the program.

594
595 Dan told Patric staff had emailed eight different departments in the state, and he said that
596 employees from five or six departments had informed him they were happy with the program
597 even though there are some things that need to be improved upon. Dan said customer service
598 currently is a struggle due to the current provider, adding he has learned that RecDesk's
599 customer service is exceptional. Dan noted that approximately 30 percent of the department's
600 transactions are run online and said staff hears a significant number of complaints due the tiered
601 structures and the percentages people must pay. Dan said, "This is going to save the city money,
602 but it's also going to save all of our participants and users money from what they are taking in
603 and what they are paying for." Dan pointed out that RecDesk has the ability to integrate with
604 Tyler Encode, the city's financial software, noting staff takes in all transactions during the day
605 and then make one manual transaction into the city's financial software. RecDesk, which has
606 worked with clients across the nation that utilize the same financial software the city utilizes, has
607 the ability to make a transaction into finance without the city having to do a transaction with it.

608
609 Motion by Brian Udermann, second by Patric, to approve contract with RecDeck Software for
610 registrations, reservations, and point of sale operations.

611
612 Dan noted this software is for all the facilities and not just the Omni Center and said staff would
613 attempt to immediately start utilizing this system.

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16

614
615 Connor asked if the fee will be an annual fee.

616
617 Dan said yes.

618
619 On voice vote, motion carried.

620
621 **Item 7 – Approve Aquatic Center slide repairs to Fischer Brothers in the amount not to**
622 **exceed \$10,350 (this was a 2019 project)**

623
624 Dan noted this project was a carryover from 2019 and noted the project was not completed that
625 year. Fischer Brothers installed the slides and has been performing all the maintenance on them.

626
627 Andrea asked if this item had gone out for bids.

628
629 Dan told Andrea it had not and said Fischer Brothers has performed all the maintenance work on
630 the slides since they were installed in 2005.

631
632 Andrea asked if Fischer Brothers will be able to complete the repairs in 2020.

633
634 Dan said Fischer Brothers has told him the repairs can be completed this year.

635
636 Motion by Connor, second by Ohbe, to approve Aquatic Center slide repairs to Fischer Brothers
637 in the amount not to exceed \$10,350.

638
639 On voice vote, motion carried.

640
641 **Item 8 – Approve contract with LiveBarn to provide automated online broadcast services**
642 **at the Omni Center**

643
644 Dan said he had received an email from LiveBarn’s sales team, who informed him there would
645 be no cost to the city to install cameras in both the Omni Center’s arenas. Dan told board
646 members LiveBarn had sent him contract documents, which City Attorney Amanda Jackson is
647 reviewing. Dan noted one vendor broadcasts some high school hockey games, and he told board
648 members LiveBarn said this would not cause any issues for its organization. Dan noted the
649 Omni Center has full ability to black out practices or anything staff does not want to have on
650 LiveBarn, and he said this service would give everyone the opportunity to log in and watch
651 games. Dan noted the hockey rink in the City of Sparta utilizes LiveBarn, and he said members
652 of Sparta’s hockey association like the service, especially for the families who have multiple
653 children playing.

654

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17

655 Ald. Nott asked if there are any copyright concerns for a broadcast with a team coming to the
656 Omni Center for a game.

657

658 Dan told Ald. Nott he does not know and said he will ask Amanda.

659

660 Andrea asked how LiveBarn earns income.

661

662 Dan said LiveBarn is a subscription-based system, and he told Andrea the city would earn some
663 money from it. LiveBarn would retain most of the subscription fees.

664

665 Ohbe told board members he knows individuals who have opted out of LiveBarn because it is
666 not conducive to viewing games. Ohbe noted much of the action is not captured on cameras,
667 also noting LiveBarn had switched the type of cameras it utilizes a couple years ago. Ohbe said
668 LiveBarn's cameras went from showing a panoramic view to a "follow the action" view.

669

670 Patric asked if the service is limited to family members of the hockey players who participate in
671 various leagues, cautioning that there is the potential for trouble if individuals who do not have
672 family members participating in a hockey program are allowed to subscribe.

673

674 Dan told Patric said anyone who subscribes to the service has the ability to go to any rink that
675 has this system, log in and watch what is happening.

676

677 Patric asked if LiveBarn knows who is utilizing its system based on user data.

678

679 Dan said it would be a subscription fee that people would have to have.

680

681 Ald. Nott said it appears to him there is no potential for a downside if the city utilizes this
682 service.

683

684 Brian Babiash told board members the rink managers he has spoken to that utilizes the service
685 likes it, and also that the individuals who utilize the service are happy that other rinks have it.
686 Brian said the service will allow families who have children in each of the Omni Center's two
687 rinks will be able to watch them simultaneously. Brian also noted parents who have a high
688 school player traveling to play in another city and another child is practicing in Onalaska will be
689 able to monitor what is happening at the Omni Center.

690

691 For clarification, Andrea asked if one does not have to have a family member involved with a
692 hockey program in order to purchase a subscription.

693

694 Brian Babiash told Andrea it is not necessary for someone to have a child in one of the hockey
695 programs to purchase a subscription and said perhaps the difference with hockey as compared to

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18

696 other sports is the athletes are wearing pads and helmets. Brian said someone would not know
697 who is skating unless he or she knows the children.

698
699 Patric noted he had examined LiveBarn's website and said it appears to be a good service for the
700 city to offer.

701
702 Ald. Nott said he believes the upside to utilizing this service this season likely will be bigger than
703 usual due to potential restrictions for attending athletic contests. Ald. Nott said he believes the
704 potential for subscriptions could be significantly higher, perhaps also meaning the city
705 potentially could earn additional revenue.

706
707 Motion by Brian Udermann, second by Ald. Nott, to approve contract with LiveBarn to provide
708 automated online broadcast services at the Omni Center.

709
710 On voice vote, motion carried.

711
712 **Item 9 – Review options related to the Omni Center participation in Global Biorisk**
713 **Advisory Council (GBAC) Accreditation program**

714
715 Dan noted he had been forwarded information regarding this program, and he in turn had
716 forwarded the information to Brian Babiash.

717
718 Brian Babiash told board members GBAC has an accreditation that states a municipality's
719 facility is being cleaned and sanitized in the manner GBAC suggests it be done so that it may
720 become a GBAC Star Facility. Brian said a municipality completes an inquiry stating it wishes
721 to become a member, and the fee for a building such as the Omni Center to become a GBAC Star
722 Facility is \$1,000. Brian told board members half of that fee is paid up-front, and the city
723 submits the information it has regarding the cleaning tasks and the manner in which the Omni
724 Center is cleaned and sanitized. GBAC reviews the information and has a 20-step process.
725 Brian said some facilities complete the 20 steps within 1½ months, and some complete the steps
726 in two to three months. Brian said a GBAC representative told him some of the largest facilities
727 GBAC works with need more time to be finished because GBAC completes tasks in the manner
728 it perceives they should be completed.

729
730 Brian said GBAC reviews a facility's standard operating procedures regarding cleaning and
731 sanitizing, and GBAC in turns provides direction as to what it believes should be done in terms
732 of staff members and PPEs, as well as how much time they should be spending on certain
733 processes and what chemicals should not be mixed. Brian said he asked a GBAC employee if
734 the company works with a certain chemical company that is encouraging the use of its products,
735 and he said she told him GBAC is simply asking that chemicals with a certain formula be
736 utilized because they sanitize better, and GBAC documents the reasons. GBAC reviews the

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19

737 information and the recordkeeping once the 20-step process has been completed. Brian said
738 GBAC would receive photographs of the Omni Center, and GBAC would then send individuals
739 who have been through the process to the Omni Center for an inspection. Brian said GBAC then
740 would receive the second half of the \$1,000 payment, and GBAC would examine the paperwork
741 to ensure the proper actions have been taken. At that point, the facility would be labeled a
742 GBAC Star Facility.

743
744 Brian said it appears that a number of larger facilities are attempting to utilize this type of
745 process, and he told board members it appears that GBAC is a legitimate organization that
746 follows the proper procedures. Brian said, “My thought is anything we can do to show we’re
747 doing our part is going to be better trying to bring different events back into the Omni Center.”
748 Brian said if the Omni Center is accredited through GBAC, his goal is to incorporate the
749 standard operating procedures at City Hall, the Public Works Facility, and the library. The Omni
750 Center would be the first city facility to be accredited as the goal is to bring user groups into the
751 facility, and Brian said he believes having the facility designated as a GBAC Star Facility will
752 benefit the city.

753
754 Andrea asked Brian Babiash if he knows if there would be a discount if the city added facilities,
755 also asking if the city would have to pay \$1,000 for each building.

756
757 Brian Babiash told Andrea the cost would be less as square footage is utilized. However, Brian
758 also told Andrea square footage of City Hall, the Public Works Facility and the library cannot be
759 added to the Omni Center’s square footage. Brian said each building would be another building
760 to add onto, and he also said he believes a discount would be applied once the city either gets to
761 or past the third building. Brian said staff can ask GBAC representatives what the city needs to
762 do if it is following the same procedures at the Omni Center as it is the other city facilities.
763 Brian said the Public Works Facility and the library would be part of GBAC’s smallest group,
764 adding he believes the cost for those facilities to become GBAC Star Facilities would be \$500
765 for the year.

766
767 Brian Udermann asked what the benefit of following GBAC’s procedures would be compared to
768 following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or State of Wisconsin guidelines regarding
769 the cleaning of facilities. Brian also asked if the purpose is to have a safer facility, or if the city
770 could advertise that the Omni Center is GBAC accredited.

771
772 Brian Babiash said he believes it is a combination of everything Brian Udermann had mentioned,
773 telling board members the CDC and the State of Wisconsin both have their own ideas regarding
774 cleaning and sanitation. Brian noted there are “gray areas” regarding what the aforementioned
775 bodies believe should and should not be done, and he told board members the GBAC
776 representative had gone through a list of items he had not even thought about adding to the
777 cleaning list on a regular basis. Brian told board members, “I think that by the time we’re done,

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20

778 the whole process is going to be more complete than what it is now.” While Brian complimented
779 city staff for the manner in which it cleans and sanitizes, he also asked if items that also can be
780 cleaned are currently being overlooked.

781

782 Ald. Nott said he sees the benefit in involving a third party and stated, “It can only make an
783 improvement, in my view. Maybe Brian’s [staff is] doing everything possible, but I think it
784 would be hard for any organization to be doing everything possible. It’s always good to have
785 that third set of eyes, and I think it is a great idea to start this at the Omni Center. It makes total
786 sense to me. ... It’s really not a lot of money, and it looks to me like it could be beneficial.”

787

788 Andrea, who works in retail, told board members her employer receives telephone calls asking if
789 the store is following local health department recommendations, and she said she believes it
790 would be worth the \$1,000 fee if the Omni Center is accredited and gives the city a significant
791 advantage in advertising. Andrea said the reassurance gives individuals peace of mind, and she
792 stated she would support this if there is sufficient funding available.

793

794 Patric said he believes the Omni Center stands to gain a significant amount being accredited by
795 GBAC and publicizing it as there is apprehension among the public regarding reentering public
796 facilities due to the pandemic.

797

798 Ald. Nott noted the agenda states the board is to review its options regarding the Omni Center
799 participating in Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) Accreditation program, and he asked
800 if a motion should be brought forward.

801

802 Dan told Ald. Nott he wanted to obtain board members’ feedback and said he would make a
803 recommendation to proceed if they wish to do so.

804

805 Motion by Ald. Nott, second by Brian Udermann, to recommend approval of the Omni Center
806 participating in Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) Accreditation program at a cost of
807 \$1,000.

808

809 On voice vote, motion carried.

810

811 **Item 10 – Report from Blufflands Coalition**

812

813 Dan told board members the Blufflands Coalition had met the week of July 19-25, but he was
814 unable to attend the meeting.

815

816 Mayor K. Smith noted she had attended the meeting, which was a reorganizational meeting, and
817 she said Dan has been working with the group on establishing work days at the Onalaska
818 properties, including Greens Coulee. Mayor K. Smith said the group is attempting to find ways

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21

819 to contact property owners in the bluffs around La Crosse County who might be interested in
820 selling their property and having it put aside with the coalition so that it could be for public use.
821 The goal is to make the bluffs accessible to the public.

822

823 **Item 11 – Report from Onalaska Enhancement Foundation**

824

825 Dan noted the OEF had met July 15 and said there are plans to hold the annual Onalaska
826 Community Thanksgiving Dinner remotely. Meals would be delivered. Dan also reported that
827 “Celebrate Onalaska,” which had been moved from late June to Labor Day Weekend, has been
828 cancelled. Dan said event organizers want to hold a charitable donation via some of the funds
829 that have been raised through “Celebrate Onalaska.”

830

831 **Item 12 – Director’s Report**

832

833 a. COVID-19

834

835 Dan told board members city staff has been communicating with La Crosse County and said that
836 with the exception of golf, all of the recreation programs have been cancelled and refunds will be
837 issued. La Crosse County also will allow hockey events at the Omni Center and has provided
838 staff with guidelines for the hockey programs.

839

840 **b. Parks Update**

841

842 Mark thanked Parks Department staff for their work this summer, including cleaning the city’s
843 parks and installing new shelters at Meier Farm and Hilltopper Heights Park. Mark also reported
844 the following:

845

- 846 • Staff has been utilizing a new organic product (“Avenger”) to exterminate weeds.
847 However, it has killed grass and not weeds. Staff is seeking out a product that might be
848 effective.
- 849 • Staff is trimming some of the bluff trails, and will begin cutting dead trees located in the
850 city’s section of the state bike trail.

851

852 **c. Recreation Update**

853

854 Tyler thanked Nick Hubbard for continuing golf lessons at the Omni Center and said staff is
855 working on options for fall programming.

856

857 Dan told board members Tyler has accepted another position in another state, and he thanked
858 Tyler for his work. Tyler’s last day serving as Recreation Coordinator will be August 6.

859

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22

860 **d. Aquatic Center Update**

861
862 Dan reported Badger Swim Pools is on site and has brought in its plaster crew. The plastering
863 process is expected to last two to three weeks. Dan said the pool will be filled in August as part
864 of the cure process with the plaster.

865
866 Andrea asked Dan if he is aware of any area aquatic centers that are still open.

867
868 Dan said he believes the aquatic centers in La Crescent and Tomah have been operating.

869
870 Andrea noted there is a mask mandate in the State of Minnesota and asked if individuals must
871 wear masks at the La Crescent pool.

872
873 Dan said he had purchased masks for the lifeguards at the Aquatic Center when the board was
874 deciding whether or not to open the facility this summer. Dan also said a number of aquatic
875 centers have been requiring lifeguards to wear masks.

876
877 **e. Omni Center Update**

878
879 Brian Babiash reported the following:

- 880
- 881 • The facility had closed due to the Coulee COVID-19 Compass being in the “Red”
882 (“Severe Risk”) category. The facility was allowed to reopen even though La Crosse
883 County still was in the “Severe” category thanks to cleaning and sanitation procedures.
884 User groups are allowed to only practice and not play games.
 - 885 • There was a significant number of people utilizing the facility when the Coulee COVID-
886 19 Compass was in the “Orange” (“High Risk”) category.
 - 887 • Brian told user groups when the compass returned to red the week of July 19-25 they had
888 to be cognizant of participants as well as the health mandates. Brian said the groups have
889 been “amazing.” The facility opens 10 minutes before a group’s scheduled ice time, and
890 the doors are locked after a group begins its ice time. Staff sanitizes between groups.
891 Groups utilize the hallways to finish dressing as the locker rooms are closed.
 - 892 • Approximately 10½ hours of ice time was rented July 23. This is equivalent to a
893 tournament hockey weekend during the winter.

894
895 **f. Library Update**

896
897 Brian Babiash reported the following:

- 898
- 899 • A Village of Holmen resident who had performed cleaning duties at the Omni Center is
900 serving in the same capacity at the library.

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23

901 • Brian complimented the gardeners.

902

903 Dan noted the board will be discussing the 2021 budget at its August 24 meeting and said he will
904 drop off budget binders at board members' residences.

905

906 **Adjournment**

907

908 Motion by Ald. Nott to adjourn.

909

910 Andrea noted the meeting is being adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

911

912

913 Recorded by:

914

915 Kirk Bey