

**Parks and Recreation Board  
of the City of Onalaska**

Monday, November 26, 2018

1

1 The Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Board of the City of Onalaska was called to order at 5:15  
2 p.m. on Monday, November 26, 2018 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. Jim Binash, Dan Stevens, Andrea  
6 Benco, Brian Udermann, Dennis Aspenson, Steven Nott, Ohbe Johnson

7

8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick,  
9 Ald. Diane Wulf

10

11 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

12

13 Motion by Dennis, second by Andrea, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as  
14 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

15

16 On voice vote, motion carried.

17

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

19

20 Steven called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

21

22 **Diane Wulf, Second District Alderperson**

23 **910 Orchid Lane**

24 **Onalaska**

25

26 “I’m here as a private citizen, but also as a Second District Alderperson. Just a little bit past  
27 history, when I got elected back to [Common] Council in April, I saw that Joyce Diveley and her  
28 group were going to go ahead and meet with a number of artists. I called her and I asked her if I  
29 could maybe sit in on those presentations, because I knew eventually the final sculpture would  
30 come to our Council and I wanted to understand the background of how it came to be. I told her  
31 that I wasn’t looking to participate, [and that I would give] no input. I just wanted to sit and  
32 observe, and I think I honored that promise. I wanted to thank her for that. It was very  
33 enlightening to me. I also want to thank her group for the countless hours ... I don’t think any of  
34 us could understand what they’ve done unless you’ve been part of that group between the  
35 meeting and all that. I want to thank them for taking that on. We’ve been talking about doing  
36 some type of sculpture [at the Great River Landing] or on the waterfront for a number of years,  
37 and it takes a group of doers to actually go out there and do something instead of just sit back.  
38 It’s really easy to sit back and do nothing and [say], wouldn’t it be nice? I wanted to thank their  
39 group for doing that. I look forward to the public hearing this evening to hear the pros and cons  
40 and what people have to say. And I look forward to this possibly coming to Council in  
41 December. Thank you very much.”

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42  
43 Steven called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that portion  
44 of the meeting.

45  
46 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

47  
48 **Item 4 – Public Hearing – Approximately 5:15 P.M. (or immediately following public**  
49 **input) for consideration of Public Art (Sculpture) being placed at the Great River Landing**

50  
51 Steven opened the public hearing and called for anyone wishing to speak in favor of public art  
52 (sculpture) being placed at the Great River Landing.

53  
54 **Joyce Diveley**  
55 **711 Pleasant Court**  
56 **Onalaska**

57  
58 “I and my committee – Mary Cody, Sue Kolve, Mike Hayes, Linda Lyche, and Jennifer Jahr –  
59 are the main people who have run this committee to put together this sculpture group. It has  
60 taken a huge amount of time to do this, and I guess I’ll give a brief background. It was over a  
61 year ago that we got the committee together for the first time. There were 15 of us at that time.  
62 We set up a list of criteria that we thought was important that would go into the sculpture. First,  
63 we met with just three sculptors, and then Michael Martino had said he thought we should reach  
64 wider, so we sent out an area search for a sculptor to do this job. At that time, we had seven  
65 people come forward. We interviewed artists, and we picked Michael Martino and his beautiful  
66 design here as what we hope we will see in the Great River Landing plaza. We are in  
67 fundraising mode right now. Right now, we just went over \$80,000. Our goal is \$175,000, and  
68 we have \$127,000 in grant money right now that is on the table that people probably will be  
69 letting us know within the next 45 days. We hope we’re going to meet our goal. I have other  
70 checks that have come in just recently today that haven’t been deposited yet. It’s kind of been  
71 like Christmas at my house because people are sending checks and we’re also doing a  
72 GoFundMe. I do think there is a lot of backup to this, and my hope would be that as we do this  
73 sculpture maybe others will be inspired to do something, too. I would love to see a testimonial to  
74 the [Native American] burial grounds down there, that maybe someday somebody would do a  
75 sculpture for that. I think there are a lot of things we can do in Onalaska, and we hope this  
76 sculpture will become a symbol of our city.”

77  
78 **Mike Hayes**  
79 **304 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South**  
80 **Onalaska**

81  
82 “I’m on the committee. I was asked to be on the committee because I have a huge issue with art

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83 in our community being left and not taking advantage of opportunities to put up something  
84 beautiful that represents our community that we can share with everybody. As Joyce said, we  
85 got a group together. It started out as 15; it turned out to be six crazy art lovers from the  
86 Onalaska area. We worked hard and put the call out through the Pump House to get as many  
87 artists from as far and wide of this area as we could. We got artists from all over Wisconsin and  
88 Minnesota. They all had really interesting, unique pieces, and different pieces and different  
89 things to offer the community. We just thought the one that we selected would be the easiest one  
90 to recognize what's in the community. If you're coming here from somewhere else and you've  
91 never been here, you can look at that piece of art and understand a little bit more about what this  
92 area is. We've maintained we'll pay for the art and the installation and maintenance. The goal is  
93 we'll give the city a stipend to maintain it. It's going to be made of material sufficient that it  
94 won't need any kind of special care. [It will need] the occasional power wash because the glass  
95 may accumulate dirt. Other than that, it won't need maintenance of any kind on a regular basis  
96 so it's not a strain on the city. And it's going to be beautiful because it's right there and  
97 everybody drives by. I think we need something in the city that recognizes Onalaska is not just  
98 north of La Crosse. In case you ever hear of some maniac downstairs trying to talk [Dan] Wick  
99 into not chopping down trees and making little sculptures out of the stumps, that would be me.  
100 I'm not dangerous, I'm just on a mission not to let all these trees disappear forever. How dare  
101 you chop down a 100-year-old tree and just forget it? That's just hard for me, so art forever."

102

103 **Mike Martino**

104 **1640 Redfield Street**

105 **La Crosse**

106

107 "I'm the sculptor. I designed this piece. The symbolism is the water, the lake, the river, the  
108 energy of the city, and the things that are happening here. It's been really great to see how this  
109 whole area of the Great River Landing has been cleaned up and made visible, and so the piece  
110 that we designed here is more for drawing attention to it and not dominating the view. It's an  
111 open sculpture. It's large enough that from a block and a half away which, when I drive down  
112 Main Street, I notice that's when you would kind of start to see it, it will be catching the light. It  
113 will be colorful. It's not a massive piece that just dominates the scene. The idea of the opening  
114 there, the two arcs, it can be an 'O' for Onalaska. It's a gateway. The working title for me is  
115 'The Gateway to Nature's Backyard,' which is on [the city's] website. I wanted that symbolism,  
116 the symbolism of the water, and to bring color into it. And I wanted something that was  
117 dynamic, because I feel like that's what's going on here right now: the growth and the coming  
118 together of people to really make this a ... It's always been special, but to actually expand and  
119 show that to the rest of the world. I think that's what this piece does, and I'm proud and happy  
120 to be part of the group."

121

122 **Sue Kolve-Feehan**

123 **1901 Cherokee Avenue**

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124 **La Crosse**

125

126 “I own Sue Kolve’s Salon and Day Spa. In 2001, when I came before your group here in the city  
127 with our plans to build my salon and day spa, there were some pretty big asks in terms of what  
128 our building would look like and tone we would be helping to set for the community. I’ve been  
129 very proud and pleased to be able to bring my business here and have the opportunity to grow it  
130 in the way that I have. I think that this project is another one of those pieces that will really help  
131 define the community, and to really show on behalf of the entire community ... We were  
132 fortunate to have the sculpture at our holiday gala the other evening when the tree-lighting  
133 ceremony was going on. We had additional people stopping in just to see it and be excited about  
134 it. Their energy surrounding it was just so incredible, and it continues to be talked about in our  
135 business every single day. I think it is just one of those pieces that is continuing to help make  
136 Onalaska what we all had envisioned for all these years that we would become. I just appreciate  
137 your thoughtfulness and your willingness to allow us to be here tonight. We appreciate your  
138 support of the project. Thank you.”

139

140 **Judy Berg**

141 **W7463 Sylvester Road**

142 **Holmen**

143

144 “I’m not a resident of Onalaska, but I wanted to tell you how excited I’ve been to watch what’s  
145 happened in this area of Onalaska and how impressive it is. When this art project showed up on  
146 my Facebook page, I thought, ‘What a great idea.’ I’m really here tonight to support this. I’m  
147 also a donor, but I just think it says so much about Onalaska. I’m hoping I’ll come down Main  
148 Street and see it at the end of the street. Thank you for letting me speak. I appreciate it.”

149

150 Steven called three times for anyone else wishing to speak in favor of public art (sculpture) being  
151 placed at the Great River Landing and closed that portion of the public hearing.

152

153 Steven called for anyone wishing to speak in opposition to public art (sculpture) being placed at  
154 the Great River Landing.

155

156 **Bill Leathen**

157 **601 Lake Street**

158 **Onalaska**

159

160 “I don’t know that I’m actually technically opposed, but I am concerned with the level of  
161 maintenance that may be required for this. I was on the [Common] Council when Joyce Diveley  
162 talked us into putting the hanging baskets along Main Street, and those were supposed to be low-  
163 maintenance. Now, I’ve been out of the Council, so I don’t know what the maintenance costs on  
164 those are, but I suspect they’re higher than we anticipated. My concern is that this will also be

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165 an expensive piece of artwork. Also, sitting straight in front of Main Street, as you're sitting at  
166 that light, it's going to be a pretty dominating piece of work. Now, it's beautiful, but I'm not  
167 sure that ... I think it may belong in someone's lobby more than in front of Main Street. In my  
168 opinion, it's a little dominating for that location. There are other areas in the park that, in my  
169 opinion, even if maintenance was an issue, it could be in an area where it's part of the park and  
170 part of the overall feeling, but not in such a dominating location. That's my concern. Thank  
171 you."

172

173 Steven called three times for anyone else wishing to speak in opposition to public art (sculpture)  
174 being placed at the Great River Landing and closed the public hearing.

175

176 **Item 5 – Approve the Public Art (Sculpture) to be placed at the Great River Landing**

177

178 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Dan Stevens, to forward to the Common Council, with the  
179 support of the Parks and Recreation Board, approval of Public Art (Sculpture) to be placed at the  
180 Great River Landing.

181

182 Andrea said she also is concerned about the maintenance costs associated with the sculpture and  
183 asked to amend the previous motion and approve the sculpture, subject to funding for  
184 maintenance and repairs that would come from the committee installing the sculpture. Andrea  
185 said, "I think when you came to the board last time you had suggested an endowment – or today,  
186 the word 'stipend' was used – that would help with those maintenance costs. With the continual  
187 budget cuts, we just keep cutting the services we provide. Realistically, there could be some  
188 expense with this sculpture, and I don't want to burden the taxpayers with that when there are so  
189 many other parts of that project that they're already expecting to pay for."

190

191 Motion by Andrea, second by Dennis, to amend the previous motion and approve the Public Art  
192 (Sculpture) at the Great River Landing, subject to outside funding for maintenance and repairs.

193

194 Ald. Binash said, "As we know, when the Great River Landing was coming to fruition, it was  
195 always understood that we would be putting some type of structure along with the Great River  
196 Landing. It looks like we've found this particular art piece, which I think is very well done. We  
197 also recognize that we have a Room Tax Commission here in Onalaska, and part of what the  
198 Room Tax [Commission] does is we do have money that we do set aside for the Great River  
199 Landing. That would help with costs, maintenance, and vandalism. [There are] other things that  
200 we can help out with, with restrictions, for the Great River Landing and other tourist items. I'd  
201 like you to keep that in mind, too, that although there was discussion about having some money  
202 set aside to help with any maintenance costs ... I recall being there when we were discussing this  
203 particular project, and maintenance costs are really negligible. The thing that it would require, if  
204 it really gets dirty, would just be a very careful cleaning, but a cleaning nonetheless. I'm not so  
205 sure that the maintenance costs are going to be that extravagant. In all likelihood, [they] will not

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206 be a burden on the taxpayers.”

207

208 Dan Stevens asked, “Given that the committee has graciously endowed as part of their  
209 fundraising efforts money for maintenance, is the motion already inherent in [Ald. Binash’s]  
210 initial motion, meaning that money is already put into that budget for the sculpture for  
211 maintenance and upkeep? Is that [amendment to the original] motion necessary? Or is it just  
212 doing the same thing?”

213

214 Andrea told Dan Stevens she does not believe it is inherent in Ald. Binash’s motion to approve  
215 the sculpture, noting it is Ald. Binash’s recommendation to send this item to the Common  
216 Council.

217

218 Dennis asked Ald. Binash if in his motion he is indicating he approves of the sculpture’s location  
219 as well as its design.

220

221 Ald. Binash said he is willing to withdraw his original motion and state his position more clearly.

222

223 Motion and second to the amendment to the original motion withdrawn.

224

225 Motion and second to the original motion withdrawn.

226

227 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Dan Stevens, to forward to the Common Council, with the  
228 approval of the Parks and Recreation Board, approval of Public Art (Sculpture) to be placed at  
229 the already-specified location at the Great River Landing, and the possibility of an endowment  
230 that will address maintenance costs, should there be sufficient funds to establish such a  
231 maintenance program.

232

233 Andrea asked the sculpture committee members if there are other possible locations the sculpture  
234 could be placed aside from the already-specified location. Andrea said she shares Bill Leathen’s  
235 concern that “the dominant feature there was supposed to be the lake and the views. The open  
236 concept certainly helps with that, but are there other possible locations for it?”

237

238 Joyce said, “When we started out, the original plan that I understood was that it would be  
239 something in the plaza area. We felt that we didn’t want to take up the cement plaza because  
240 that’s supposed to be where people are supposed to gather. When we got out there and were  
241 really looking, Mary [Cody] said it has to go in the planter because then it’s out of the way. That  
242 just seemed to make sense. If you were going to put it someplace else, I think it would be a  
243 waste. I think it’s a dynamic piece that is going to become the symbol of our city. I don’t think  
244 it’s overpowering. I think it’s fabulous. I think it frames the view. We had seven artists who  
245 came forward. We had six who had a big [piece] that was going to sit there, and we all said ‘no’  
246 because we don’t want to obstruct the view. Another thing would be there is electrical there.

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247 There are already footings in there. We only have to add to the footings that are currently there,  
248 which is keeping our costs very affordable. The estimate to this point on the lighting, the  
249 construction of the additional footings, and the white dome that it sits on, that all runs \$10,000 to  
250 \$12,000. That's our current estimate on that. The cost of the actual sculpture is \$150,000, so  
251 that takes us to, let's say \$162,000. If we meet our goal of \$175,000, whatever is left over  
252 between the \$162,000 and the \$175,000 will be what will go to the city for the additional money  
253 for maintenance and things like that. Again, Mr. Leithen, I don't think there's going to be a lot  
254 of maintenance on this. Obviously, we can't control vandalism, but I would think insurance  
255 would cover some of that. Again, the fact there's electrical right there that we can get at that  
256 could light this up at night, if we move it down into the marsh no one is ever going to see it. We  
257 would have to run in electrical. We would have to put in footings. It just made the most amount  
258 of sense to put it right there."

259

260 Steven said, "Location is normally going to be considered when artists develop a piece of  
261 artwork. By moving it, that could potentially change the entire intent. I would have to speak to  
262 [Michael Martino], but normally when you're dealing with a sculpture, the location would be  
263 considered during the development of the artwork itself."

264

265 Andrea asked, "Who carries the insurance for this?"

266

267 Dan Wick said it would be part of the City of Onalaska's insurance plan. Dan also said, "We are  
268 responsible for the first \$1,000 on any insurance claim that is covered."

269

270 Dan Stevens noted the city has two other pieces of art in the community – Sunny the Sunfish,  
271 which is located along State Trunk Highway 35, and a statue created by Michael Martino near  
272 the library – and he asked Dan Wick if there have been extensive maintenance costs with either  
273 piece of art.

274

275 Dan Wick first addressed the statue at the library and told Dan Stevens maintenance is "very  
276 minimal," noting that city staff cleans it. Regarding the sunfish, Dan Wick said it is "a difficult  
277 one to compare" as it is constructed of fiberglass. Dan admitted the city has invested "quite a bit  
278 of money" in the sunfish and noted it had been "completely redone" either three or four years  
279 ago. Dan also admitted the wayside where the sunfish is located has been vandalized "multiple  
280 times" with graffiti. Dan said, "It's a different product, being fiberglass than being something of  
281 the bronze material."

282

283 Dennis asked that the motion be restated.

284

285 Motion restated:

286

287 For the Parks and Recreation Board to approve the location of the public art (sculpture) at the

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288 Great River Landing and the possible endowment for the maintenance of the sculpture.

289

290 On voice vote, motion carried, 6-1 (Andrea Benco).

291

292 Dan Wick told the sculpture committee members this item will be forwarded to the December 11  
293 Common Council meeting.

294

295 **Item 6 – Discussion on December meeting date**

296

297 Dan Wick said the board has typically voted to cancel the December meeting as the fourth  
298 Monday of the month falls during the holidays. This year, the fourth Monday falls on December  
299 24 (Christmas Eve). However, Dan said the board has the capability to call a special meeting, if  
300 one is warranted.

301

302 **Item 7 – Report from Blufflands Coalition**

303

304 Dan Wick reported the Blufflands Coalition had met November 21, and he told board members  
305 the coalition is continuing to form. A new member joined at the November 21 meeting. The  
306 next meeting will be held in January, at which time there will be more discussion regarding the  
307 bylaws and the organizational structure. Dan noted Mayor Joe Chilsen chairs the Blufflands  
308 Coalition, and also that he attends meetings as Mayor Chilsen's backup.

309

310 **Item 8 – Report from Onalaska Enhancement Foundation**

311

312 Dan Wick noted the OEF had met November 14 and said the discussion had involved the  
313 preparation of the Onalaska Community Thanksgiving Dinner.

314

315 Andrea asked how citizens may attend the Thanksgiving dinner if they do not have  
316 transportation.

317

318 Dan Wick said meals are delivered to individuals who are unable to go to the dinner.

319

320 **Item 9 – Report from Great River Landing Committee**

321

322 Ald. Binash asked Dan Wick if there had been further discussions regarding the installation of a  
323 pier at the Great River Landing, and also inquired about the condition of the house there.

324

325 Dan Wick said he believes the building continues to deteriorate on a daily basis, and he said the  
326 board will discuss during the first quarter of 2019 how its members want to proceed in 2020.  
327 Regarding the piers, Dan said they had been approved through the budget process, and that he  
328 anticipates having the design either by January or February from the company with which the

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329 city has been working. Dan said a bid process based on the design and the layout will be  
330 necessary.

331

332 Ald. Binash noted the Room Tax Commission will be providing assistance with the piers, and he  
333 also noted funds had been set aside in the 2019 budget for the house at the Great River Landing.  
334 The funds would be utilized for temporary repairs or removal of the building.

335

336 Dennis asked Dan Wick to place an item regarding the building on future board meeting  
337 agendas.

338

339 Dan Wick told Dennis he had planned to do so for the January 28 Parks and Recreation Board  
340 meeting. Dan said he also hopes to present to board members the layout for the docks at the  
341 January 28 meeting.

342

343 **Item 10 – Director’s Report**

344

345 **a. Parks Update**

346

347 Dan Wick reported the following:

348

- 349 • Staff plowed or shoveled following the first significant snowfall earlier in November.
- 350 • Shelters are being cleaned.
- 351 • Work has begun on the outdoor ice-skating rink at the Omni Center. Flooding likely will  
352 occur the first week of December.

353

354 **b. Recreation Update**

355

356 Dan Wick reported the following:

357

- 358 • Most of the basketball programs have started.
- 359 • Tournaments for the girls’ traveling basketball program will be held the next two  
360 weekends at Onalaska High School. Twelve teams will be participating in this  
361 weekend’s tournament, and eight teams will participate in the tournament being held the  
362 weekend of December 8-9.

363

364 **c. Aquatic Center Update**

365

366 Dan Wick reported the following:

367

- 368 • The chlorine and chemicals in the pump room have caused the tube heater that serves as a  
369 backup to malfunction. The temperature in the room has been increased, and staff will

Reviewed 11/28/18 by Dan Wick

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370 monitor the room daily.

371

372 **d. Omni Center Update**

373

374 Dan Wick reported the following:

375

- 376 • Boys and girls high school hockey season has begun.
- 377 • Lunchtime skating periods have been added at both rinks.

378

379 Steven asked how customer through-put this autumn compares to that of autumn 2017.

380

381 Dan Wick said it seems to be going well and told Steven it depends on the number of games  
382 being played at the facility.

383

384 Dennis inquired about the percentage of ice that has been pre-rented.

385

386 Dan Wick said 100 percent of the ice in both rinks likely has been rented from 3:30 p.m. until 10  
387 p.m. Dan noted a men's open hockey league plays Tuesday mornings, and also that there is open  
388 hockey at various times. Dan also told Dennis the Sunday winter open skate times "are really  
389 starting to pick up."

390

391 Steven stated for clarification an invitation-only adult open hockey league plays Tuesday  
392 mornings, while the adult hockey league plays Wednesday evenings.

393

394 Dan Wick told Dennis that Omni Center staff has approached the user groups and asked if they  
395 would like to utilize the ice during the morning. However, Dan said none of the groups have  
396 shown an interest in doing so.

397

398 Dennis expressed concern that after this year the Omni Center will feel the effects of the  
399 significant amount of ice available in this area.

400

401 Dan Wick said there potentially could be another sheet of ice in the facility from 4 p.m. until 8  
402 p.m. Dan noted Ohbe is in charge of the schedule for youth hockey, and he said he believes the  
403 process in place is adequate.

404

405 Dennis noted the Village of West Salem is putting in a new sheet of ice and said the village will  
406 be pursuing the same user groups the City of Onalaska does.

407

408 Dan Wick said he speaks with the managers of the area's rinks, and also that the Village of West  
409 Salem's ice is booked with what it already is doing. Dan noted West Salem's rink will be  
410 seasonal as it will be utilized for other programs, and he said, "I don't think we will see a big

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411 decrease from what I am forecasting early on. The biggest question that we always have is that  
412 spring/late spring/summer ice with it.”

413

414 **Adjournment**

415

416 Motion by Andrea, second by Ohbe, to adjourn at 5:54 p.m.

417

418 On voice vote, motion carried.

419

420

421 Recorded by:

422

423 Kirk Bey