

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

Monday, May 20, 2019

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, May 20, 2019 at City Hall. It was noted that the meeting had been announced
3 and a notice posted at City Hall.

4

5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Dan Stevens, Brian Udermann,
6 Steven Nott, Ohbe Johnson. Andrea Benco arrived with the meeting in progress (5:23 p.m.).

7

8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick,
9 City Engineer Jarrod Holter, Parks Maintenance Supervisor Mark Hanson, Ald. Diane Wulf,
10 Ald. Boondi Iyer

11

12 Excused Absence: Dennis Aspenson

13

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

15

16 Motion by Ohbe, second by Brian, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as printed
17 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 Steven called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

24

25 **Brad Engh**

26 **11445 Emmons Street**

27 **Trempealeau**

28

29 “I understand there is an agenda item tonight about the possibility of putting a vendor in city-
30 owned land for renting out bikes. I would like to express my interest in doing so. I have a
31 recreational watercraft rental company at this point. I operate in La Crosse, but I am interested
32 in entering into the bike arena and would be very interested in pursuing a relationship with the
33 city.”

34

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

37

38 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

39

40 **Item 4 – Rowe Park Master Plan presentation by MSA Professional Services**

41

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42 Dan Wick noted Dan Williams of MSA Professional Services is present at this evening's
43 meeting and told board members Dan has been working on the Rowe Park Master Plan. A
44 survey was sent out to nearly 16,000 individuals whose family members have participated in
45 Parks and Recreation Department programs. A link to the survey also has been placed on
46 cityofonalaska.com. Dan Wick told board members there have been more than 580 responses
47 and said both he and Dan Williams have examined them. Dan Wick said Dan Williams has
48 created conceptual designs for potential plans for Rowe Park.

49
50 Dan Williams began his PowerPoint presentation by telling board members that in 1851, Thomas
51 Rowe came to this area from New York. Thomas Rowe was reading a poem written by Thomas
52 Campbell entitled, "The Pleasures of Hope," and in the poem Thomas Campbell used the term
53 "Onalaska," which means "this beautiful place," and Thomas Rowe called this location
54 "Onalaska." Dan Williams showed board members a current map of Rowe Park, including
55 where the boundary for the park is located, and he said the intent of the master plan is to have a
56 report that outlines projects, including costs, that can occur over time so that Dan Wick and
57 Parks and Recreation Department staff have a roadmap to utilize for implementation of those
58 projects. Dan Williams said MSA had conducted a site analysis and noted the areas shaded in
59 red on the map being shown to the board represent steep slopes, and the areas shaded in green
60 are flatter areas. Dan Williams said topography is being utilized in the planning procedure. The
61 arcs on the map show sun activity in the park, and winds blow predominately from the northwest
62 and the southeast. Dan Williams showed board members current photographs of Rowe Park,
63 including the restroom facilities, the picnic shelter located in the southern portion of the park,
64 playground equipment, skate park, grills, the disc golf course, the Gullikson Tennis Courts, the
65 historic structure located at the high point of the park, the sledding hill, the Onalaska High
66 School football team's practice area, and the softball diamond. Dan Williams pointed out there
67 are drainage challenges in the low spot near the traffic circle, and he also pointed out the second
68 loop located behind the softball diamond.

69
70 Dan Williams next addressed the SurveyMonkey survey, telling board members a survey
71 regarding James Madison Park in Madison, Wisconsin had garnered only 260 responses. Dan
72 Williams shared the following findings from the Rowe Park survey:

- 73
- 74 • The 35 to 44-year-old age category had had the largest number of responses.
 - 75 • The majority of those who responded reside in the City of Onalaska, but some
76 respondents live in the City of La Crosse, the Town of Onalaska, and the Village of
77 Holmen.
 - 78 • The most popular activities in which to participate at Rowe Park include utilizing the
79 playground, having picnics, playing disc golf, and walking. Those who visit Rowe Park
80 also do so to utilize the skate park, and also to play tennis, softball, or horseshoes.
 - 81 • Some of the answers to the question "*What is your favorite activity in the park, and*
82 *why?*" include:

Reviewed 5/24/19 by Dan Wick

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- 83 ○ Walking – trees and setting
- 84 ○ Disc golf – fun activity and convenient location
- 85 ○ Shelter use – events, parties and quiet location
- 86 ○ Playground – proximity to other activities (also close proximity to the library)
- 87 ○ Tennis – well-maintained and lighted
- 88 ○ Softball/baseball – practices
- 89 ○ Viewing/setting
- 90 ○ Skate Park – good option for kids
- 91 ○ The site – hilly, views, location, trees, natural setting
- 92 ○ Dog walking
- 93 ○ Running
- 94 ○ Sledding
- 95 ○ Horseshoes
- 96 ● Some of the answers to the question “*What additions or improvements would you like to*
97 *see to Rowe Park?*” include:
 - 98 ○ Better variety of and more play equipment (toddlers)
 - 99 ○ Improve shelters and add shelter(s)/concession
 - 100 ○ Improve restrooms
 - 101 ○ More benches and picnic tables
 - 102 ○ Drinking fountains
 - 103 ○ Improve softball/baseball field and seating
 - 104 ○ Upgraded 18-hole disc golf course
 - 105 ○ Splash pad
 - 106 ○ Basketball
 - 107 ○ Add to skate park
 - 108 ○ Dog area
 - 109 ○ Pickleball
- 110 ● Some of the answers to the question “*When visiting parks in different areas, what*
111 *amenities have you seen that could be brought to Rowe Park?*” include:
 - 112 ○ Lighting
 - 113 ○ Exercise equipment, climbing wall, etc.
 - 114 ○ Splash pad
 - 115 ○ 18-hole disc golf course
 - 116 ○ Water bottle filler/drinking fountains
 - 117 ○ Gardens (community, ornamental)
 - 118 ○ New restrooms
 - 119 ○ New play equipment – creative/different
 - 120 ○ Ninja course
 - 121 ○ Basketball
 - 122 ○ Pickleball
 - 123 ○ Improved softball/baseball field with dugouts, seating, etc.

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- 124 ○ Volleyball
- 125 ○ Accessibility in park
- 126 ○ Dog park
- 127 • Some of the answers to the question “*Do you have any safety concerns about the park*
- 128 *facilities*” include:
- 129 ○ Dim lighting
- 130 ○ Smoking and other deals or drug use
- 131 ○ Skate park at certain times
- 132 ○ Fast driving through park
- 133 ○ Cars parked for long periods
- 134 ○ Crossing to library
- 135 ○ General aging of park
- 136 ○ Not accessible for all
- 137 ○ Restrooms
- 138 ○ Most responses no or little concern
- 139 • A majority of individuals who utilize Rowe Park drive there.
- 140 • A majority of respondents said they were mostly satisfied with Rowe Park.

141

142 Dan Williams showed board members three different images of splash pads: a small splash pad
143 with in-ground features only (least expensive), a splash pad with four upright features (medium
144 expense), and a themed splash pad (most expensive). Dan noted a splash pad had opened in
145 2018 in Rome, Wisconsin at an approximate cost of \$250,000. MSA currently is working on a
146 splash pad in Verona, Wisconsin that will cost approximately \$250,000. Dan showed board
147 members images of three different ninja courses: one for younger children, one for older children
148 (middle and high school-aged youth), and one for adults. Dan showed board members images of
149 playgrounds, including an inclusive play structure, play structures, a hillside play structure with
150 six play elements (preferably on a 3-to-1 slope), a hillside play structure with four play elements,
151 and a small hillside play structure. Dan said there will be a discussion regarding the creation of a
152 mile loop trail in Rowe Park that could be marked with metal, wood, or steel signs. Dan showed
153 board members images of a replica stone climbing wall, a small climbing wall, and a rock
154 climbing wall panel system that also could be utilized outside Rowe Park. Dan showed board
155 members two images of softball fields with synthetic turf – one that is all artificial, save for the
156 pitching circle and areas around it, and one that is all artificial. Dan noted these fields would be
157 easier to maintain, and he also suggested taking advantage of the natural seating in the hillside
158 area by building a stadium in the hill and utilizing the backstop for movies in the park or
159 concerts. Dan addressed disc golf, telling board members that while there were 58 disc golf
160 courses in Wisconsin from the early 1970s to 2003, hundreds more have been created over the
161 last 16 years.

162

163 Dan Williams presented Concept “A” to board members. Concept “A” includes the following:

164

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- 165 • The entrance to Rowe Park would be moved to Oak Forest Drive where the slope meets
166 it. This would separate the skate park from the park shelter.
- 167 • There would be a traffic circle at the park's entrance, and visitors would be able to enter
168 the parking lot for the existing shelter, enter the park, or enter the new, larger parking
169 area for the softball field.
- 170 • The maintenance building would include another wing for future expansion.
- 171 • Hilltop Drive would remain as a smaller driveway into the maintenance area, and it might
172 be gated off and only accessible by maintenance vehicles.
- 173 • The larger parking lot would increase in size.
- 174 • A new concessions/shelter/restroom building would be constructed. It would serve the
175 softball field and a splash pad.
- 176 • The lower loop would become a one-way road. The pavement would be narrowed,
177 thereby creating more green space. The loop behind the softball field would be
178 eliminated.
- 179 • The softball field would be moved back into the slope to take advantage of the slope, and
180 also to better configurate the field. A terrace hillside seating area would be created
181 behind the backstop. The softball field could be comprised of field turf.
- 182 • The inclusive playground area would utilize the existing trees as a feature. The natural
183 hillside slope is ideal for a hillside play feature.
- 184 • Angled parking could be created along the interior loop, thus allowing visitors to park
185 near the picnic tables.
- 186 • A new restroom would be created near the historic shelter.
- 187 • Regarding the mile loop trail, markers could be placed every 100 or 500 feet. Five
188 percent or less of the trail would be accessible without handrails.
- 189 • Extra benches could be placed along the hill overlooking the Gullikson Tennis Courts.
- 190 • The disc golf course would be expanded to 18 holes.
- 191 • There would be a new restroom by the skate park.

192

193 Dan Williams presented Concept "B" to board members. Concept "B" includes the following:

194

- 195 • The entrance to Rowe Park would be moved to Oak Forest Drive.
- 196 • There would be perpendicular entrances into the parking lot off the park road. There
197 would be perpendicular parking for the shelter, and there would be angled parking on the
198 loop road. There would be a squared standard parking lot for the softball field.
- 199 • The softball field would have more formal seating, with a roof structure off the backstop
200 for a stage.
- 201 • The concession building would be larger and have a larger outdoor picnic shelter.
- 202 • The splash pad and playground would have a cohesive connection to each other. There
203 also could be a smaller playground by the existing shelter.
- 204 • The mile loop trail would remain on the park property. Light fixtures could be placed

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205 every 150 feet. The trail would allow for some viewing platforms down to the Gullikson
206 Tennis Courts. Five percent or less of the trail would be accessible without handrails.

- 207 • The disc golf course would remain at nine holes and be more centralized.
- 208 • There would be a new restroom by the skate park.

209

210 Andrea inquired about the amount of parking between the two plans.

211

212 Dan Williams said there would be significantly more parking in both plans compared to what is
213 currently available.

214

215 Andrea noted there had been past discussions regarding splash pads and pointed out they are
216 very costly. Andrea inquired about the maintenance costs associated with a splash park.

217

218 Dan Williams told Andrea water use and pump maintenance account for the greatest costs,
219 noting the splash park would need to be blown out prior to winter.

220

221 Dan Wick told Andrea, “At this time, I think we have to look at the plans and determine what
222 options we’d like to further explore. [Regarding] the splash pads, there are two ways to look at
223 it. One, you can recirculate the water, but then it has to be treated as a pool where you have to
224 staff it or you just dump it. It’s early on in that stage. If this group wants to entertain, yes, let’s
225 continue to research that and let’s come back here with plans, then we can keep that process in
226 there.”

227

228 Andrea said it was her understanding the board had decided that even the splash pads where the
229 water is dumped are prohibitive due to regulations associated with dumping water.

230

231 Dan Williams said a large storage tank is necessary for recirculating, and he noted this will
232 increase construction costs. Dan also said that while there should not be any issues associated
233 with dumping, the most significant concern is it would be necessary to pay for city water. Dan
234 told Andrea the dumping system is the system that is the most utilized and said it utilizes push
235 buttons so that it is not operating constantly. Children activate the system by pushing the
236 buttons, and then the system operates for a certain amount of time. Dan told board members the
237 system MSA is working on in Verona is computerized, and the vendor, CRS, is based in Verona.
238 Dan said CRS is in close proximity to the splash park and houses the computer program that
239 operates the bowels and the pressure that comes through.

240

241 Steven acknowledged that operating a splash pad would be costly and noted it likely would
242 operate only three months of the year – June, July, and August.

243

244 Andrea noted a significant amount of water would be wasted and said it appears the recycling
245 option would be prohibitive.

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246
247 Steven noted the Aquatic Center already exists.

248
249 Dan Williams said manufacturers are able to calculate water costs.

250
251 **Brian Manske**
252 **314 4th Avenue North**
253 **Onalaska**

254
255 Brian asked if there had been any discussions with the City of La Crosse regarding the usage and
256 maintenance costs associated with the splash pad in Trane Park.

257
258 Dan Wick said, “This is so conceptual and just looking at ideas. We have not explored any of
259 that.”

260
261 Ald. Stevens asked if the plan is ADA compliant.

262
263 Dan Wick said steps would be taken to ensure that the playgrounds and seating would be ADA
264 compliant.

265
266 Ald. Stevens inquired about the synthetic turf on the softball field.

267
268 Dan Williams said the turf would remain in place and told Ald. Stevens it can be washed down
269 with a hose.

270
271 Ald. Stevens inquired about the life expectancy of the turf.

272
273 Dan Williams told Ald. Stevens a turf field on the Onalaska High School football field would
274 need to be replaced faster than the turf on the softball field, noting football players grind their
275 cleats into the turf, whereas softball players move considerably less. Dan said it is possible the
276 infield would have to be replaced before the outfield.

277
278 Dan Wick said the topic of turf for the softball field originated from conversations with Onalaska
279 High School, telling board members there is the potential that sometime in the future the school
280 will look into putting turf on the football field. Dan said, “The idea was looking at that concept
281 of, if they’re here doing it, do we look at entertaining that idea to put it in?”

282
283 Steven said it is his perception that Rowe Park is heavily utilized because it is one of the parks
284 that is mostly comparable to a natural area. Steven said he wants to limit the amount of
285 deforestation as the feel of the park would change if several trees are removed.

286

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287 Dan Williams said a grading plan will be part of the final Rowe Park Master Plan, and the plan
288 would show where changes would need to occur. Dan also said every effort will be taken to
289 limit the number of trees to be removed.

290

291 Steven said one feature he likes as part of Option “B” is separating Onalaska High School
292 activities and Rowe Park activities due to the changes with Hilltopper Drive.

293

294 Brian asked if the trail would be paved or a natural surface.

295

296 Dan Williams said he would pave it.

297

298 Dan Wick said the goal would be to make the trail a hard surface, noting the individuals who had
299 returned the survey stated they were seeking an off-street hike. Dan said the Onalaska School
300 District also is seeking an off-street path that students could utilize.

301

302 Dan Williams said the report will include a cost estimate for a 6-foot wide trail that would be
303 ADA compliant.

304

305 Brian inquired about sledding in the survey results.

306

307 Dan Williams referred to Concept “A” and said tree removal would be necessary as Onalaska
308 High School students and other youth go sledding on the hill. Dan noted a majority of the trees
309 are small, and he also noted no trees would be removed in that location as part of Concept “B.”

310 Dan Williams referred to an aerial photograph of Rowe Park and pointed out the existing trees
311 and proposed trees. Dan said, “We’re trying to keep as many trees as possible.”

312

313 Brian said he likes the idea of a splash pad, and he asked if the splash pads are popular in the
314 communities where they have recently been installed.

315

316 Dan Williams said they are popular and told board members people drive to Rome, Wisconsin
317 (pop. 2,720) to utilize the splash park. Dan said Verona is installing a splash pad in Fireman’s
318 Park to serve as a transition between the beach and an aquatic center. Dan noted the aquatic
319 center in Erb Park, located in Appleton, has a splash pad and a waterpark, and he said the splash
320 pad probably is the most heavily utilized piece.

321

322 Dan Wick asked board members if there are any concepts they wish to eliminate.

323

324 Ohbe said that while he likes the idea of relocating Rowe Park’s entrance to Oak Forest Drive,
325 Onalaska High School students currently park along the street and this would need to be
326 addressed.

327

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328 Andrea said she likes the way the topography was considered, and that MSA has attempted to
329 turn it from a challenge into a highlighted feature.

330

331 Dan Wick told board members Dan Williams will continue to work on the plan, noting they had
332 met earlier Monday with Onalaska High School and Girls Scouts troop. Dan asked board
333 members if he and Dan Williams have missed anything.

334

335 Ald. Stevens asked if having a rock wall would create liability issues, and if staff would need to
336 be present to monitor safety.

337

338 Dan Wick said that while it would be necessary for the rock wall that would be transported into
339 the park by a truck, it would not be necessary with the other two walls as they would be fixed
340 structures within the park.

341

342 Ald. Stevens said it is his understanding lifeguards would not be necessary at a splash pad that is
343 separate from the Aquatic Center.

344

345 Dan Wick told Ald. Stevens lifeguards would not be necessary with a dump system. However, a
346 recirculated system becomes a body of water, and it would require chlorination and staffing as
347 well as restroom and shower facilities.

348

349 Steven expressed his reluctance to support a splash pad, noting an area such as a dog park could
350 be utilized year-round, and basketball courts could be utilized six or seven months of the year.
351 In addition, Steven noted both would be more cost-efficient compared to a splash pad.

352

353 Dan Williams noted there were items MSA had not put in the plan and told board members to let
354 him know if they want them included.

355

356 Andrea said she assumes MSA will incorporate as many options as possible regarding
357 accessibility, and she asked if all the playground features will have accessible components.

358

359 Dan Williams told Andrea even the hillside features will be accessible, citing the example of
360 Jones Park in Appleton, which has a hillside playground that includes a tower. Dan showed
361 board members a photograph of a tower with a ramp that allows children to reach the top of the
362 tower.

363

364 Andrea said she believes a feature such as this one has more appeal than a climbing wall.

365

366 Dan Wick said he believes board members must define the meaning of the word accessible,
367 noting there is a ramp present to reach the top of the tower. Dan said, "The play features for
368 somebody in a wheelchair is going to be very limited."

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369
370 Dan Williams told board members a splash pad could be phased, noting that one could be
371 constructed for \$100,000 or less depending on its size and how many features it has.

372
373 Andrea asked if items are constructed in a sequence, or if the park must be closed for a period of
374 time before reopening.

375
376 Dan Williams said MSA will provide a phasing plan based on what should be prioritized, noting
377 it would be easy to create something such as the mile loop. By comparison, constructing items
378 such as parking lots, park shelters and concession stands are more challenging. Dan noted the
379 cost of constructing a concession stand of the magnitude being proposed is \$750,000.

380
381 Jarrod suggested bidding items so that some features could be constructed in the fall and some in
382 the spring. Jarrod also said there are instances when constructing features such as a trail, a
383 parking lot or a softball field will require weeks where the public cannot access certain areas.
384 Jarrod pointed out the site of the former Oak Forest Sanitarium, which was razed in the early
385 1970s, and noted the city's original water system was served through Rowe Park. Jarrod said
386 there is a watermain located beneath the Onalaska High School football team's field that splits,
387 and he estimated the watermain's age to be at least 70 years old. Jarrod said he will attempt to
388 replace the watermain when a concept is selected.

389
390 Andrea asked if there are any archaeological concerns.

391
392 Jarrod told Andrea that area is not in the district and said staff still would be cognizant of
393 archaeological finds as the area is undisturbed.

394
395 **Item 5 – Approve the purchase of Open Air Park Shelters to be placed in Meier Farm Park**
396 **and Hilltopper Heights Park. Proposals are due on Friday, May 17th**

397
398 Dan Wick said the following two bids had been received from vendors the city has worked with
399 in the past:

- 400
- 401 • Keeper Site Furnishings submitted a \$15,525 bid for a 20-by-24 shelter, and a \$17,125
402 bid for a 24-by-24 shelter.
 - 403 • Reese Recreation submitted a \$15,015 bid for a 20-by-24 shelter, and a \$16,801.50 bid
404 for a 24-by-24 shelter.

405
406 Dan said staff recommends putting two 24-by-24 shelters in both Meier Farm Park and
407 Hilltopper Heights Park. Dan also noted concrete will cost another \$5,000 to \$6,000 per site, and
408 he said staff recommends proceeding with Reese Recreation.

409

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410 Motion by Andrea, second by Brian, to approve Reese Recreation to install 24-by-24 Open Air
411 Park Shelters in Meier Farm Park and Hilltopper Heights Park at a cost not to exceed \$16,801.50
412 per shelter.

413

414 Dan Wick said Mark is still working on obtaining concrete prices and noted this will only be for
415 the cost of the shelters.

416

417 Steven asked if there is any difference with the warranties.

418

419 Dan Wick said both are the same, noting both Keeper Site Furnishings and Reese Recreation are
420 reputable companies. Dan also noted these types of shelters are in other city parks.

421

422 Ohbe asked what makes this type of shelter.

423

424 Dan Wick said the prefab shelters are made of steel and told Ohbe there is no need to design a
425 shelter and utilize concrete. Dan said these types of shelters are limited as to what can be
426 provided, adding, "If you're limited on size, we have the space we can put them in and go with
427 it."

428

429 On voice vote, motion carried.

430

431 **Item 6 – Great River Landing**

432

433 a. Multiuse trail discussion

434

435 Dan Wick noted there have been several conversations regarding the multiuse trail located at the
436 Great River Landing. Dan directed board members' attention to the video screen, which showed
437 the plan that was brought forward, and said he had met with representatives from both the U.S.
438 Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Dan told board members U.S.
439 Fish and Wildlife Service representatives told him that while they do not oppose bringing a trail
440 system through the Wittenberg Marsh area, they would not be able to review this proposal for at
441 least another 12 months due to the service's current workload. In addition, because the trail
442 would enter the refuge area, Dan said work could not begin until the plan was reviewed by
443 federal authorities. Dan said, "That's very long-term, and still with no idea if there's an
444 opportunity for it or not. But they're very willing to work."

445

446 Dan next addressed his meeting with representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
447 who have regulatory jurisdiction in this area, and he told board members that while the U.S.
448 Army Corps of Engineers are not saying the trail cannot come to fruition, they said "it becomes
449 very costly." Dan said the city must fill out an individual permit and determine mitigation if it
450 disturbs more than 10,000 square feet of topsoil. Dan told board members, "If the trail system is

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451 something that wants to be done down here, which I'm all in favor of, I think we need to move
452 forward and start planning for the 2020 budget and beyond of trying to do a boardwalk or some
453 sort of a trail system from Irvin Street north to connect us up to the spillway. That's where a
454 majority of the individuals who are going to the park ... They're utilizing it. They're fishing
455 along the banks. ... I think we need to move forward and look at that option so that we can get
456 plans put together for the 2020 budget to work with that."

457

458 Ald. Stevens asked if the board is in a position to start discussing the boardwalk and add on other
459 items at a later date if the board so chooses.

460

461 Dan Wick said yes and also told board members governmental bodies such as the Wisconsin
462 Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Army Corps
463 of Engineers may regulate what will occur in this area. Dan said, "By having these
464 conversations early on, we can continue to have these conversations [and] have these people
465 seated at the table, and they can help us move through this process. But it's not going to be a
466 project where we budget something in 2020 and expect to have something done in 2020. This is
467 going to be a longer-term process that we can look to try to move forward with."

468

469 Andrea said she still would like to come up with a concept for that area, stating she believes
470 guidelines should have come out of the last master plan that was created. Andrea said, "We've
471 talked about what to do with the building and what not to do with the building. Before we
472 commit to anything other than the north branch, which has been a priority since the beginning, it
473 just seems like we ought to have a concept of what we want to do. If we want to try to do
474 gathering space down there we need one kind of development. If we want to do campgrounds
475 we need a different kind. We just really haven't had an opportunity to have those discussions.
476 That might factor into the trail discussions as well – how many or where they go or what kind of
477 trails they are."

478

479 Jarrod told board members engineering and architectural costs will be significant, noting it is a
480 specialized permitting process. Jarrod also said it is essential to be working with individuals who
481 have the necessary contacts, know how to complete the necessary forms, and also know how to
482 make a specific goal work. Jarrod said, "I think if you do the northern part as you get toward the
483 spillway, during those permitting discussions you could have a consultant who specializes in that
484 work on other areas of the park at the same time, and [you will] get a better field of what it's
485 going to cost."

486

487 Motion by Andrea, second by Ald. Stevens, to continue investigating going north with a multiuse
488 trail at the Great River Landing.

489

490 On voice vote, motion carried.

491

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492 b. Shelter replacement options and ideas

493

494 Dan Wick told board members he and Mark had gone to Goose Island, where a number of 24-by-
495 40 shelters had been constructed. The shelters have sliding doors at the ends, brick veneer on the
496 sides, and cement board siding. Dan said he believes overhead doors would be necessary if a
497 shelter is either wanted or needed at the Great River Landing, as would an additional pillar in the
498 middle. The doors would be open a majority of time. Dan said he and Mark have the plans for
499 the shelters at Goose Island, they have seen the shelters, and they know what the bids came in at.

500

501 Andrea inquired about the cost.

502

503 Dan Wick said the shelters cost approximately \$100,000.

504

505 Ald. Stevens asked if the shelter would replace the current structure at the Great River Landing.

506

507 Dan Wick said yes.

508

509 Brian said the structure likely would flood.

510

511 Dan Wick said the overhead doors could be opened during high-water situations during the
512 spring, and they could be closed if there was an activity inside. Dan also said he recommends
513 constructing the shelter with a steel roof as maintenance would be minimal.

514

515 Brian said that while he likes the idea, "it would be hard to put it anywhere where it wouldn't get
516 flooded."

517

518 Dan Wick told Brian he agrees and said that is why he and Mark examined the concept of
519 overhead doors.

520

521 c. Request from Historical Society to display rail car

522

523 Dan Wick said the Historical Society has asked to place a rail car at the Great River Landing.
524 Dan noted the rail car would be placed on Wisconsin DNR property, and he told board members
525 he had spoken with Wisconsin DNR representatives, who told him they want to do a
526 walkthrough to determine if the location would be suitable for the rail car. Dan noted he also has
527 spoken with Cities & Villages Mutual Insurance Company (CVMIC) representatives, who told
528 him they do not think it is the best location for the rail car. Dan said CVMIC is concerned with
529 snowmobile traffic, as the Great River State Trail is a snowmobile trail during the winter months.
530 Dan said there are concerns a snowmobile rider would strike the rail car if there was significant
531 snowfall as the rail car is not very large and would not be placed very high. Dan said, "Then it
532 becomes our liability with it there." Dan noted he has visited communities that have put in full-

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533 size locomotives and later installed a chain link fence around them to prevent the public from
534 touching them. Dan said recreation immunity is the city's best asset in protecting it in this type
535 of situation, and he told board members a CVMIC representative had asked him if the city is
536 willing to risk its \$17,500 insurance claim. Dan said, "I think if we can find the correct location
537 here, I think it could be something that could be added to it and just hope it doesn't become a
538 nuisance."

539

540 Andrea asked if it would be possible to put the rail car on the hillside below the trailhead where
541 the switchbacks are located.

542

543 Lois Riniker, a Historical Society representative, told board members she has a photograph
544 showing where she and other Historical Society members believe the rail car should be placed.
545 Lois noted she and Historical Society President Bert Sasse had designed the rail car, and he had
546 drawn pictures of it. Lois said members of the Historical Society believe "where you're starting
547 to go up on the bike trail and off to the left is the perfect place for [the rail car]."

548

549 Andrea said she is trying to think of a safer location for the rail car.

550

551 Lois told Andrea the rail car would be out the way and said she believes it would be safe in a
552 location that is likely six feet or more off the bike trail.

553

554 Ald. Stevens asked Lois to speak to the historical significance of the rail car.

555

556 Lois told Ald. Stevens it likely is the only remaining part of the old railway station, which has
557 since been razed. Lois told board members there is a gentleman who resides in Fountain City
558 and works on metal for a reasonable rate. Lois also told board members it would be possible to
559 have a photograph of the railway station, with some of the history underneath it. Lois said she
560 believes the rail car could be placed in a position that children would not be able to climb on it,
561 and she told board members she believes the Historical Society would be able to provide some
562 financial assistance, if necessary.

563

564 Andrea asked Lois if the Historical Society sees the rail car as something with which to interact.

565

566 Lois told Andrea the rail car would only be for the public to view.

567

568 Ald. Stevens asked Lois if the Historical Society's preference is to display the rail car at the
569 Great River Landing and not in the museum in the library.

570

571 Lois said there would not be room to display it at the museum. Lois said that perhaps there is
572 another location to place the rail car at the Great River Landing, and she reiterated the Historical
573 Society believes the Great River Landing is the ideal location to display the rail car.

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574

575 Ald. Stevens said he likes the concept of having historical points of interest, especially along the
576 trail. However, Ald. Stevens also said he does not want to put the city in a difficult position, and
577 he asked if perhaps the rail car may be placed in a location where the public can enjoy it without
578 causing risk to the city.

579

580 Dan Wick noted the property on which the Historical Society wishes to place the rail car is
581 owned by the Wisconsin DNR, and he told board members the city cannot say the rail car may
582 be placed there. Rather, the Wisconsin DNR must authorize the City of Onalaska. Dan said, "I
583 think the board needs to understand if we're willing to do this, we can make a motion that we can
584 continue to look at it and maybe we could try to find a location on our city property if the DNR
585 says no."

586

587 Ald. Stevens asked why the city would have liability if the Wisconsin DNR owns the property.

588

589 Dan Wick told Ald. Stevens the city would be placing the rail car on the property, and he said he
590 had discussed with the CVMIC representative whether or not the city should or should not
591 proceed.

592

593 Steven said the Historical Society's intent is to place the rail car in a high-traffic area where the
594 public may view it, and he told board members he would like to entertain a motion to look at an
595 area where there is high traffic, it will meet the intent, and it is an area that is deemed safe by city
596 legal counsel if the Wisconsin DNR denies the request to place the rail car on its property.

597

598 Motion by Steven, second by Ald. Stevens, that the City of Onalaska continue to discuss looking
599 for an alternate, high-traffic area to display a rail car that would be deemed safe and low-risk for
600 liability to the city if the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources denies the city's request to
601 place the rail car on its property.

602

603 Dan Wick told board members it might take several months for the Wisconsin DNR to respond.

604

605 Steven stressed that the motion does not state that the board is approving placing the rail car at
606 the Great River Landing; rather, the board is seeking other alternatives.

607

608 Andrea said she has liability concerns not only for the City of Onalaska, but also the liability for
609 rail car, which she described as an archaeological artifact. Andrea said she does not want the
610 city to be liable if the rail car is displayed at the Great River Landing and something happens to
611 it.

612

613 Steven said there is no question that over time the rail car will degrade from weathering and
614 people climbing on it unless a suitable location is found to mitigate the degradation.

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615
616 Lois said she realizes the rail car will not last forever, and also that she does not think the
617 Historical Society is concerned about that. Lois said she believes it would be difficult for anyone
618 to climb on the rail car if mulch, trees or bushes were around it. Lois also said the Historical
619 Society is willing to do some of the work, and that she understands the liability issues.

620
621 On voice vote, motion carried.

622
623 Ohbe excused himself from the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

624
625 **Item 7 – Discussion on possible uses of Park Avenue Park, including parking**

626
627 Jarrod said residents in this area have emailed the city asking to examine parking along both
628 West Avenue and Park Avenue. Jarrod said the Blue Moon Restaurant attracts many patrons
629 who park in the vicinity of the restaurant both day and night. Jarrod referred to an aerial
630 photograph taken of the area in April 2018 and pointed out two red trucks parked along West
631 Avenue, and a van parked along Park Avenue. Jarrod also said it is difficult for the Street
632 Department to get a full-sized plow through if there is one vehicle parked on one side, and the
633 plow cannot get through if there are two vehicles parked on one side. Jarrod described West
634 Avenue as a substandard street that is only 30 feet wide – the standard width of a city street is 37
635 feet – and has 50 feet of right-of-way. Jarrod told board members the city had sent out public
636 notices to the neighborhood ahead of the April 2 Board of Public Works meeting. Jarrod said the
637 citizens who attended the meeting told the Board of Public Works they did not want to see
638 parking along the street, and Scott Nimtz, the owner of Blue Moon Restaurant, told the Board of
639 Public Works that on-street parking is crucial to the restaurant’s success. Scott Nimtz suggested
640 putting angled parking on the street and converting it into a one-way street. Jarrod said he does
641 not like that suggestion from a traffic flow standpoint because it confuses motorists and presents
642 challenges for the residents on that street.

643
644 Jarrod said he and Dan Wick discovered most of the Park Avenue Park equipment sits on city
645 right-of-way and not on the parkland. Jarrod referred to the yellow arc on the aerial photograph
646 and noted the city right-of-way is located below the swing set. Jarrod said he wanted to bring
647 this item before the Parks and Recreation Board before he brings it back for another public
648 meeting at the Board of Public Works and obtain feedback regarding which direction the Parks
649 and Recreation Board wishes to take regarding Park Avenue Park. Jarrod said one possibility is
650 to create 12 angled parking spots on both sides if part of the parkland is utilized and the
651 equipment is moved out of that location. Jarrod said the equipment is older and likely is at the
652 end of its useful life and told board members, “We don’t want to do something different with the
653 parking and then have the Park Board change something five years later, or vice-versa. We don’t
654 want to do something with the parking and then all of sudden come back and say it’s not a viable
655 solution.”

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656

657 Dan Wick said perhaps a neighborhood meeting should be held to discuss the best options,
658 asking, “Is this the best location for a park here? [It’s] very limited size. Do we spend the
659 money to put a new playground in? What are our best options?”

660

661 Andrea asked, “You said the neighbors didn’t want parking on the street? Or they didn’t want
662 parking here at all?”

663

664 Jarrod told Andrea they did not want parking on the street, and he said, “If those angled stalls
665 would come in, I would propose that there would be no parking along West Avenue, and
666 probably Park Avenue. Those would be public stalls, but I think you’re getting into other issues
667 such as, who builds the parking area? Who maintains the parking area? Is it public? Is it
668 private? Those are all concerns that would have to get figured out once we would get a plan.”

669

670 Andrea asked if perhaps the city could sell the land to the Blue Moon Restaurant.

671

672 Dan Wick said, “I think any and all options could be on the table.”

673

674 Jarrod referred to the two red boxes on the aerial photograph – one measuring 7,814 square feet,
675 the other measuring 7,864 square feet – and said they basically are two residential lot sizes.

676

677 Andrea noted the two lots are larger than the space on which the playground equipment sits.

678

679 Dan Wick noted the city has been utilizing the entire space as park space.

680

681 Steven asked if it would be possible to plant trees, shrubs, or a garden area if the city chooses to
682 create parking stalls.

683

684 Dan Wick said it is possible to do anything in the park area.

685

686 Ald. Stevens noted he had spoken to some of the residents along Park Avenue and told board
687 members they had told him they understand Blue Moon Restaurant is a business that will attract
688 patrons until late in the evening. However, Ald. Stevens also told board members that while
689 Blue Moon patrons park in front of the residents’ homes along Park Avenue, he had not heard
690 that as much regarding parking along West Avenue. Ald. Stevens said it is his understanding
691 that installing slanted parking slots would mean there would be no parking along the residents’
692 side of the street.

693

694 Jarrod told Ald. Stevens he is correct and said parking along the outer halves of Park Avenue and
695 West Avenue would be eliminated if the city proceeds with a plan to create slanted parking in the
696 center. Jarrod said it would be possible to create a 20-foot planting strip with stone mulch, trees,

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697 or shrubs that is represented by the white lines labeled as a sidewalk on the aerial photograph.

698

699 Ald. Stevens asked if the two lots shown on the aerial photograph could be sold for residential
700 development.

701

702 Jarrod said the goal was to show what could go on those lots.

703

704 Dan Wick said the board could entertain that possibility if its members so choose.

705

706 Steven said he doubts the park is frequently utilized.

707

708 City Administrator Rindfleisch told board members the only way the park may be accessed is
709 walking on the street right-of-way. Further, City Administrator Rindfleisch said the narrowness
710 of the park also is a concern as people who utilize it are never far from moving traffic. City
711 Administrator Rindfleisch said that while he typically does not advocate for moving park space,
712 the park has challenges in its current form. City Administrator Rindfleisch addressed the
713 possibility of selling the property to Blue Moon Restaurant, noting it currently is right-of-way,
714 and that vacating that right-of-way means the city would have to create a lease.

715

716 Jarrod said he is seeking the board's guidance regarding the possibility of holding a
717 neighborhood meeting to discuss parking, adding he wants to know every available option if
718 such a meeting is held.

719

720 Steven said he would encourage a neighborhood meeting, with possible options including the
721 elimination of the park as a play area and possibly creating green space along with parking
722 spaces.

723

724 Andrea said it seems as though the residents will want to both keep the park and not allow
725 parking.

726

727 Jarrod noted he has been speaking to West Avenue resident who has lived in his house for 40
728 years, and this individual has utilized the park for family functions. Jarrod said the resident told
729 him that while the park is not frequently utilized, there has been an increase of younger families
730 in the neighborhood.

731

732 Andrea suggested that perhaps another option would be to remove the playground equipment and
733 install an open-air shelter on the other end of the park. Doing so would allow a neighborhood
734 gathering space.

735

736 Jarrod noted there are only 12 angled parking stalls on each side on the aerial photograph and
737 said it likely would be better to have 15 to 18 stalls on each side if parking is removed from both

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738 sides.

739

740 Andrea admitted the park space is challenging and it is not as highly utilized as other city parks.

741

742 Brian said it is difficult for the board to give recommendations as there are several options on the
743 table, and he suggested perhaps expanding parking into the 7,864 square-foot lot and create a
744 small play area in the top area.

745

746 Dan Wick said he and Jarrod will attempt to put together a public meeting and obtain feedback
747 from the residents regarding park and parking issues.

748

749 Jarrod said the goal is to resolve the parking and park issues prior to winter.

750

751 **Item 8 – Discussion regarding options related to allowing selected vendors or contractors to**
752 **operate in City Parks**

753

754 Dan Wick said staff was approached by Brad Engh, who had spoken during the public input
755 portion of the meeting and expressed his desire to operate a private business in the city parks.

756 Dan told board members he and City Administrator Rindfleisch have discussed the proposal, and
757 he asked them if this is something they would entertain. Dan said, “We can’t just have a select
758 vendor call us and say, ‘Can we go do this? [and we say], ‘Sure, go ahead.’ There’s an RPF
759 [Request for Proposals] process, [and] legally, procedures, and policies all need to be developed
760 if this is something we want to entertain the idea to do. I think the biggest question is, yes or
761 no?” Dan said Brad Engh wishes to rent bicycles, and also to utilize the Great River Landing for
762 renting canoes, kayaks, and jet skis, and also potentially pontoon boats.

763

764 Ald. Stevens asked if this potentially could become a type of Enterprise Fund for leasing rights
765 to utilize the city’s property.

766

767 City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “Just by contracting out does not automatically create an
768 Enterprise Fund for that purpose. The fund has to be self-sustaining, both in revenue and in
769 expenses. Parks potentially could become its own Enterprise Fund if we review the Impact Fees,
770 for example, but that’s not on the board right now. It would still be an expense and it would still
771 be General Fund revenue coming in. But beyond bicycle rental or anything else, it could also be
772 concessionaires making a pitch for any of the parks in selling concessions or even the pool area.
773 Seemingly, when someone comes in and says, ‘I have a business and it’s a great way to offer a
774 benefit to the community,’ it’s a bigger picture. That’s why that point about RFP proposals is
775 that it’s not individual staff, or it’s not even this board that says, ‘That’s a great idea. Go do it.’
776 It’s ultimately a bid process. And as Dan said, do we want to start utilizing our park space? I
777 think we’ve talked about that with food trucks quite a bit, [but] this would be an investment in
778 our parks itself to privatize concessions of food or concessions of activities.”

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779

780 Steven said he would not have sufficient information to make an informed decision, telling board
781 members he would need to examine studies on cost versus benefit for the city, and cost versus
782 benefit for the citizens. Steven said, "If private vendors can offer a similar or better service at a
783 lower cost to the citizens, I would be very interested in looking at it. If it's going to be a higher
784 cost to the citizens and a lower benefit to them, then I don't know why we'd go down that path."

785

786 Dan Wick said the board would have to review every RFP, and that, "If we wanted to entertain
787 the idea, we'd have to develop an RFP saying, would you like to do a concessionaire or a
788 business in town? Then submit your plans. Is there more than one that wants to? I don't know
789 that. But you wouldn't be able to make an informed decision until that time when you have
790 received the RFPs back to be able to review that document if that was something we wanted to
791 entertain."

792

793 Ald. Stevens said his instincts are telling him this is something in which the city might not want
794 to participate. Ald. Stevens also said, "If we can provide more services without us really having
795 to provide more services, that's interesting. But it sounds like it would take a lot of staff time
796 and energy to determine that."

797

798 City Administrator Rindfleisch suggested waiting to render any decision until the Wisconsin
799 State Legislature adjusts current state statutes, and also until the Supreme Court renders
800 decisions on a pair of cases. City Administrator Rindfleisch referred to when the City of
801 Madison terminated the contracts of four golf professionals at public golf courses and the case
802 had gone through the legal system, and he said, "Under Wisconsin Franchise Law, it was
803 established they had actually created a franchise. If you own a franchise in the state, you know
804 how difficult it is to have one pulled from you. Do we want to create a contractual agreement
805 with someone who could come back and then claim a franchise to sell items within the parkland?
806 If we are interested in doing that, I would suggest taking a wait-and-see approach. That's the
807 first point. The second point is, conceptually, if it can work and can lead to dedicated revenues
808 to the parks and expenses to the parks that reduce the cost or increase local services, would you
809 like staff to spend time to pursue the feasibility of it?"

810

811 Andrea said she does not believe the concept of a private business operating in a public park is
812 appropriate as public parks are for the public. Andrea further stated, "If they were to do that, it
813 seems like we would have to be open to anybody. We couldn't be as selective as we might.
814 That having been said, if we were to decide to go about something like that, I would think that
815 we would need to come up with a policy that would somehow explain that the kind of things that
816 might be welcome would be something that would operate in conjunction with the mission of the
817 Park and Rec Department or somehow benefitting the public. But again, we're talking about a
818 public space. We've talked about these discussions with some of our other spaces in terms of, if
819 you close a park for a private function, is it a public park anymore, or are we eliminating the

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820 opportunity for some public people to use that – especially with a business where you may have
821 competing entities? I just think it may not be appropriate for the public park to work on that.”

822

823 Steven told Andrea, “We do a lot of that with the food vendor trucks right now.”

824

825 Andrea said, “We do. But we allow all food vendor trucks that go through the process of the
826 food vendors. And they’re not permanent fixtures.”

827

828 Steven said it is his perception the board is not prepared to move forward on this, adding it
829 would be premature to take action at this time due to the legal challenges currently working their
830 way through the court system.

831

832 Motion by Ald. Stevens, second by Brian Udermann, to table discussion regarding options
833 related to allowing selected vendors or contractors to operate in City Parks until further
834 information becomes apparent through the courts.

835

836 On voice vote, motion carried.

837

838 **Item 9 – Pay Estimates: MSA Professional Services**

839

840 Motion by Andrea, second by Ald. Stevens, to approve Pay Estimate No. 1 for MSA
841 Professional Services for the Rowe Park Master Plan in the amount of \$2,620.

842

843 On voice vote, motion carried.

844

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

846

847 Dan Wick reported the Blufflands Coalition had met May 15 and noted two grant applications
848 with which the coalition had assisted were submitted. The coalition also had discussed which
849 projects to address next.

850

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

852

853 Dan Wick told board members the OEF will meet again in July, and he also reported the Fleis
854 Nightfall Frolic had been held April 26.

855

856 **Item 12 – Report from Great River Landing Committee**

857

858 No report.

859

860 **Item 13 – Director’s Report**

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a. Parks Update

Mark reported the following:

- Staff is mowing and preparing the shelters.
- The Aquatic Center pool has been filled.
- There are a few part-time employees returning for the summer. Four employees were able to mow Monday.

b. Recreation Update

Dan Wick reported the following:

- The traveling baseball and softball programs have begun
- The spring soccer and volleyball programs ended this past weekend.

c. Aquatic Center Update

Dan Wick reported the following:

- Seasonal staff is being hired.
- The Aquatic Center opens Saturday, June 1.
- Staff is being trained, with the first orientation meeting scheduled for Wednesday.

Andrea asked how long it takes to fill the pool.

Dan Wick said it takes approximately between 35 and 40 hours.

d. Omni Center Update

Dan Wick reported the had facility hosted two youth volleyball tournaments, the Beer Memorabilia Show, an MMA event, and the Driftless Outdoor Sports Show. Dan said the vendors who had participated in the Driftless Outdoor Sports Show had responded positively. Dan said the goal is to start making ice for Arena No. 2 in early June, and he also told board members the Omni Center is prepared for the busiest summer schedule it has ever had.

Adjournment

Motion by Andrea, second by Brian, to adjourn.

Reviewed 5/24/19 by Dan Wick

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23

902 The meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m.

903

904

905 Recorded by:

906

907 Kirk Bey