

Village of Fall Creek

Minutes of Community Relations, Recreation & Health Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

1. **Call to Order:** 5:00 p.m., Village Hall Meeting Room, 122 E. Lincoln Ave., Fall Creek
2. **Roll Call:** Committee Members Present: Chairperson Karen Hurd, Trustees Ben Burch, Matt Mattoon, Tim Raap, Karen Strasburg. Absent: None. Staff Present: Clerk/Treasurer Renee Roemhild. Staff Arriving Later: Administrator/Public Works Director Jared McKee. Also Present: Trustees Karen Herbison & Sheena Kaatz, approximately 60 citizens.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance**
4. **Certify Open Meeting Law Requirements Have Been Met:** A notice of the meeting and an agenda was posted at the three public places and local newspapers were notified.
5. **Adopt Agenda:**
 - **MOTION (Strasburg/Raap)** to adopt the agenda with two modifications: addressing agenda item #6B regarding the possible ballfield first and to add a citizen comment section to follow it. PASSED, without negative vote.
6. **Old Business:**
 - B. Possible Ballfield at Keller Park:** Committee Chairperson Karen Hurd began with giving a presentation discussing the history and need of the summer rec ball programs. The program has been growing significantly in recent years so there is need for an additional ballfield. Hurd mentioned the possibility of an additional field at the school. Trustee Ben Burch stated that in the meeting with school district representatives, it was indicated the likelihood of that would be 5-7 years down the road. Hurd stated some factors to consider were:
 - The Fall Creek Youth Sports participants include students of the +School District, many of whom live outside village limits. When thinking of who will pay for the project, this is something to consider.
 - Park is small, lack of green-space.
 - Emergency vehicle access – need to follow State regulations.
 - Run-off into pond – need to follow State regulations.
 - Urgency of the moment – have volunteer substantial volunteer labor and materials available now that may not be available later.

Citizen Input

- Marcus Wahleithner, 378 E Adams Ave, Fall Creek. A ballfield at the school would have to go to referendum, there is no guarantee it will happen. There are a lot of people who are willing to help now.
- Matt Bartow, Co-Director of Youth Sports Association, lives in Town of Seymour. A ballfield located at Option A has an estimated cost of \$170,000. The Youth Sports Association has already raised about \$100,000 and expect they can easily raise more. He stated if you are concerned about what the taxpayers would have to pay, there is significant money, materials, and labor being donated from outside sources. They are also looking at making improvements to the current field and possibly expanding a pavilion in hopes of addressing the concerns of the Lions Club for their Fun Fest needs. Their request is to put the field at Option A, which is a space of the park that has not been used for 10 years. Bartow stated we enjoy the Fun Fest; it's about what we can do to make it better for everyone.
- Joe Salter, Coach, Township of Ludington. He agrees there will not be a problem in raising the funds. He thinks notice should be given to the extra people that will be brought into town which will boost the local economy.

- Nicole Saastad, Pine St, Fall Creek. Is there a reason there couldn't be one new field at Keller Park and one at the school?
- Matt Bartow. If we do not build the field now, we expect there will be 50-60% drop off in participation. We need the field now to not lose participants. We are trying to create an entity for the Youth Program, that will move onto the High School program. Bartow felt if the School does build a new field, it will be because the Youth Program brought more participants to the High School Program, rather than the likelihood of them building it just for the Youth Program. The location at Option B would cost approximately \$100,000 more. The Youth Sports Association prefers Option A.
- John Elkins, Coach, Town of Lincoln. The Youth Sports Association prefers the field at Keller Park for a few reasons: they want some separation from the school; they want the revenue from concessions to be used for the Youth Sports Program, not the school; they want both fields – one a Keller Park now, one at the school in 5-7 years.
- Justin Thur, 400 Kopplin Rd, Fall Creek. He moved here because he liked the school district. He is a Village resident and helps coach the Youth Sports. The Youth Sports Association has done much work to get volunteers/donations to help with the cost. He thinks it's the Village's responsibility to help financially as much as possible. The Youth Sports Association wants Option A because it's more affordable. We want to work with the Lion's Club, we've established that. He is a member of the Lion's Club too. He was at the meeting when they voted on whether to support another ballfield at Keller Park – it was almost unanimous except for one in favor of it. Our motto is We Serve and this is going to be good for the community.
- Trustee Karen Herbison. When we voted on this project, it was to put a place holder (a budget) in place. We did not yet vote to spend the money.
- Amy Gustafson, Co-Director of Youth Sports Association. FC Youth Sports is not part of the School District. Regarding selling concessions, we can talk to the Lion's Club about the proceeds from concessions during Lion's Fest. Other tournaments, they would need the revenue to help fund their program.
- Eddy Herbison, 439 S Victory St, Fall Creek. He is in favor of the field, he would donate and work for it. He felt the committee should come up with an amount the Village would spend. He felt Trustee Ben Burch should abstain because he was a member of the Youth Sports Association. Members of the Committee responded to this saying there was no basis for abstaining as there is no monetary gain for Burch, and all members are involved in groups that bring matters before the Board.
- Committee Chair Hurd asked if the Youth Sports would agree to entering into a contract so the risk would not be on the Village.
- Matt Bartow responded the Village needed to define what they were willing to do before that can happen. He needs a green light that the project can happen in 2022 and needs to know what the Village is willing to do for funding in order for the Youth Sports Association to continue to make contacts and raise more funds.
- Joe Salter felt some comments made tonight reflected the Village not taking responsibility, that the Village shouldn't be satisfied with a sub-par facility. The Youth Sports Association has shown the need for a new ballfield and has brought so much to the table. He said they are asking for support from the Village.
- Trustee Matt Mattoon spoke about how this project fits with the Village's Outdoor Recreation Plan and the bequeath money recently received by the Village which could be used for a purpose such as this.
- Brad Craigs, Town of Lincoln. He thinks it's more than a ballfield, it's about an enhancement to the community, it will bring social and economic benefits.

- MOTION (Burch/Raap) to close the citizen input time @ 6:18 p.m. PASSED, without negative vote.
- MOTION (Burch/Mattoon) to recommend to the Board to move forward with building a ballfield at Keller Park, the location to be Option A, naming Matt Bartow as the general contractor, with the Village contributing up to \$70,000, and with Ben Burch as the point of contact for the Village Board.

Discussion took place before voting on the motion. Hurd felt the Village residents didn't know about the project. Burch and Strasburg said we've had several meetings about this with public minutes on the website. We have talked about it in the newsletter. There has been communication out to the public. Raap stated the remaining projected financial need is \$70,000 which is the amount that was budgeted for in 2022. Raap said we just did a survey and a new ballfield was included in that. Raap stated we may want to the Board to add a few clarifying points to the motion, such as enter into a contract and working with the Lions Club. Strasburg stated she felt confident the Lions Club and the Youth Sports Association would be able to work together to come up with a solution that will satisfy both. Kaatz stated we just had a survey in which anyone could participate it, we had a large group of people recommending uses for the park, we've already stated we're for it, to pump the breaks now feels like going backwards. Kaatz said even if some of the people talking tonight were not from the Village, they are people who will use the Village parks and she felt it was valid input.

PASSED, roll call vote: Burch-yes, Mattoon-yes, Raap-yes, Strasburg-yes, Hurd-yes.

- A. Village of Fall Creek Outdoor Recreation Plan 2021-2026:** Administrator/Public Works Director Jared McKee arrived. The committee reviewed and ranked in order of importance action items arrived from the park survey.
 - C. Eagle Nest Update:** Hurd reported the school is interested in the project. A representative from the National Eagle Center in Wabasha will come in late winter to help determine the best location.
 - D. Community Garden Update:** No residents came forward as interested.
 - E. Business/Church/Community Organizations Directories Update:** The directory is now on the website.
- 7. Reports**
- C. Fall Creek Pond Community Partnership Team:** Trustee Herbison updated the committee stating 1500-1800 cubic yards of sediment has been removed. It will just be continued annual maintenance from now on. The contractor will invoice this year so that Eau Claire County can pay it's share in 2021.
- 8. New Business**
- C. None**
- 9. Adjourn:** @ 8:01 p.m.

Renee Roemhild, Clerk/Treasurer