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**City of Ashland, Wisconsin ~ Parks and Recreation Department**  
400 4<sup>th</sup> Ave West Ashland ~ WI 54806 ~ [www.ashlandparks.org](http://www.ashlandparks.org)

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**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday December 20, 2021 5:00 pm**

**Online**

**Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/626328757>

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**I. Call to Order 5:05pm**

- a. Roll Call  
Present: Kevin Haas (arrived at 5:08), Dave Ullman (arrived at 5:07), Mike Amman, Kelly Westlund, Sarah Jackson, Dawayne Lampson,  
Excused: Meghan Tumas  
From APR: Linda Simanovsky, Sara Hudson  
Public: Mary McPhetridge – Ashland Chamber, Ben Thoen - BATB
- b. Agenda Modification  
Move agenda item 3 to the first spot.  
Motion by Westlund, second my Amman; all in favor.
- c. Approval of Minutes
  - i. Approval of Oct 18, 2021 Minutes  
Motion Amman, second by Lampson; all in favor

**II. Public Comment Period**

Mary McPhetridge was present at the meeting and gave background information on the room tax how it is divided up. McPhetridge stated that 30% is given to the City of Ashland. McPhetridge stated that she thought that the money that the City puts into the waterfront redevelopment fund from the hotel and motel tax should be put into the PW budget to help offset costs. She also estimated that the City makes ~\$2000 over the weekend based on Hotel/ Motel taxes.

Ben Thoen then spoke that the BATB wants to support the City and all the work that is done to make the BATB happen. He stated that the explanation Hudson gave over email was good.

**III. Information Items**

- Parks and Recreation Updates
  - o Parks Projects Updates
    - The City's Tree Lighting Ceremony was held on Saturday November 27 at the Plaza Park

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- Bollards/boulders have been placed at the Hot Pond to deter traffic on the lawn. Xcel Energy paid for the rock and the PW crew placed it.
  - Recreation Updates
    - Rowan Koester-Jess, who has been with the department for almost 2 years has left to pursue other options. She will be greatly missed. Joey Eldridge, a Northland College Senior, has been hired to assist in running the No School Day and other programs.
    - BCC has opened up group (birthday party) rentals starting in Nov. The capacity has been limited to 25 people.
    - A FIKA Puppy Training Class with Charmaine Swan will be in the BCC Game Room in January.
  - Urban Forestry
    - The City of Ashland was awarded a 2022 DRN Urban Forestry Grant for \$18,313.00. This money will be used to update the tree inventory, continue reforestation efforts, dangerous tree removal and implementation of the Emerald Ash Borer Plan
    - 2021 DNR Urban Forestry Grant needs to be closed out by 12/31/21. Sara was not able to attend a DNR Community Tree Management Institute in 2021 has paid the tuition to attend in 2022 (dates TBD).

#### **V. Business Items:**

- Discussion and Recommendation on a User Fee for Book Across the Bay
  - City staff is seeking about charging a user fee (\$500), asking for a donation and/or request to be named a sponsor/supporter of this event for the time that the City Staff puts into preparing the site for the BATB. On average City staff puts in 30 hrs/year to prep the site, ~ \$2000 (includes staff, equipment and materials (sand/salt)). The City makes no direct benefit from the event, indirectly it does through property taxes and hotel/motel taxes. Hotel/Motel taxes, as an FYI, go into the Waterfront Redevelopment Fund which is used as a grant match for waterfront redevelopment projects. None of this money goes directly into the City's general operating fund. Attached is a spreadsheet from PW for time for the event and an email from Ben Thoen and Andy Matheus of BATB.
  - Hudson explained why this is being proposed; Westlund asked about the local grant program that the BATB had. Thoen explained that in 2016 that shifted to ensure the sustainability of the organization and a Work Group Fund was created. BATB then give a certain % of the proceeds to groups who work/volunteer at the event. This is managed by the BATB BOD and the Chamber. These work groups must work a certain hours or jobs to earn this \$. Westlund asked if the City could be one of these benefactors. Thoen stated they could be if they did the work. Hudson asked for a clarification on the statement: would it be the work that is done or additional work. The BOD needs to have a better understanding of PW hours that go into the prepping event (Itemized). McPhetridge stated that she would like to know what specific things the crew is doing to prep the site, she may be able to find volunteers to help with those tasks. She and BATB would like to meet with City Staff to have the conversation and have a better understanding of the work that is done for the event. Amman asked Hudson what the City would like to gain from this. Hudson stated that there is no MOU with the BATB for the event and the City would like to recuperate some costs/user fees for hosting the event. McPhetridge reiterated that the City does directly make money off the event they just choose it to go

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into fund 453. Haas asked what the Chambers is charged for the Bay Days, Hudson answered that they are charged \$75 for pavilion and special events fees. Haas also stated there is a valid point to recoup costs for hosting big events. McPhetridge stated that the group needs to have a better understanding of what PW is doing to prep the space for the event. Thoen stated that Washburn recently discussed a similar issue discussed charging for parking at the event. Ullman was surprised to hear that there is no MOU between the City and the BATB and one should be worked on. Simanovsky also stated that having the BATB take on more work is not a good idea, as it is a liability for the City. Haas stated that working on an MOU for 2023, not charging in 2022 but asked to be a supporting sponsor. Amman stated that the City does need to try and make some money directly from large special events, all government budgets are shrinking, and that we need to have an understanding of what each entity is responsible for (roles).. Westland stated that City staff also needs to better track what is done for each event and take pictures of damage or area that are not cleaned up after the event. Haas suggested that the BATB put on the registration form to donate X dollars to Washburn and Ashland Parks and Recreation Departments. Haas and other members agreed that a user fee for large events, where City staff spends a large amount of time prepping and clean up after the event, needs to be discussed.

- Westlund motion to ask the BATB to name the City of Ashland as a sponsor of the event for 2022 and a work on an MOU for 2023 using clear data from 2022 event prep. Second by Haas. All in favor.
- Approval to work with Renz Weed Science Lab at UW-Madison on a woody invasive plant management demonstration plots in Prentice Park.
  - The Renz Weed Science Lab at UW-Madison has applied for a Wisconsin Coastal Management Grant to control invasive species. They are looking to partner with the City of Ashland and if awarded the grant, they would like permission to set up woody invasive plant management demonstration plots in Prentice Park. The management would happen in summer 2022 and would involve multiple techniques, including mechanical and chemical control. We would provide informational signage to explain what is happening, and we would ask that the signage remain until we host the field day to visit the site in summer 2023. APR staff is seeking approval to enter into the partnership if this grant is awarded as Prentice Park has a very large variety of invasive species (buckthorn, Japanese honeysuckle and tansy).
  - Motion to approve working with UW-Madison Renz Weed Science Lab by Amman, second by Jackson. Unanimously all in favor.
- Discussion to update the City of Ashland's Tree List
  - Meghan Tumas brought this up, WICC and the WDNR have released an assessment of tree vulnerability for Ashland, WI. This data relates to similar data released by the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS) was used to create the City of Ashland's Tree list in 2020.
  - Members supported changing the tree list to reflect science. Haas made a motion to table to the next meeting, second by Amman. All in favor, motion carries.

#### **VI. Next Meeting Date**

Monday January 17, 2022 at 5:30 pm virtually.. Motion by Haas, second by Westland. All in favor

#### **VII. Comments and Questions**

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**VIII. Adjourn**

Motion from Jackson

Second by Amman

Unanimously approved