WHITEWATER PARK STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
June 15, 2020
8:00 AM
Virtual Meeting

Present Members: Regina Hirsch, Pete Manley, Alex DeSmidt, Brandon Holstein, Bob Diebel, and Parks & Recreation Director Dan Glynn
Guests: Mark Hale, John Bottorof, Darren Hartberg, Marty Melchior, David Pfeiffer, Dan Hanson, Tim Swadley, Jennifer Wendt, Audra Dalsoren, Gary Giesfeldt, Andy Paulios, John Seidlitz, Laura Dvis, Mack Krumme, Rick Kalvelage, Merle Lebakken, Eric Olsen, John McLain, Michelle Denk, Erin Savaske

1. Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 8:01 am.

2. Approval of the May 18, 2020 Minutes
Motion by DeSmidt and seconded by Manley to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment
Gullickson commented that he has lived and worked in Stoughton his entire life. He doesn't understand why the dam is being removed when the city repaired it in 2009. He believes the city should open up the dam's gates to simulate the water impacts.

Davis shared that she is the interim chair for the Dunkirk Dam Lake District (DDLD). The DDLD endorses the project and is looking to collaborate with the city to improve the river. The county does not have a good place to launch their weed cutter and possibly collaborate on a launch site.

Bottorof shared that he lives on Lake Kegonsa and represents the Friends of Lake Kegonsa. He questioned what the impact of the county's dredging of the Yahara River will be and wait until after the dredging to move forward with the dam removal.

Hale shared that he believes the city is too focused on the project and is not exploring all options.

Kalvelage had questions about how the millpond contamination would be remediated, is water quality considered in the visitor report, and if COVID-19 factors into potential future use.

4. Communications
Glynn shared that the Mandt Park Master Plan was adopted by City Council the previous Tuesday. The only change since the steering committee saw the plan was that the restrooms in the northwest corner of the park were moved into the first phase of improvements. Glynn shared that the grant notifications should be known this summer or early fall. Glynn shared that there was coordination between Recreation Engineering and Planning and Strand regarding the first phase of improvements. The pedestrian bridge improvements will need to be inputted into their hydraulic modeling showing a no rise flood situation.

Old Business

5. Yahara River Wildlife
Paulios explained that when dams are removed and shoreline is restored that the DNR looks for impacts to rare and endangered species. Generally speaking, dam removal decisions are not dependent on wildlife impacts. Paulios shared that the upper reaches of the river in Pleasant Springs wouldn't rank as critical waterfowl habitat.

The national Audobon Societry has certain thresholds that need to be met to be considered an important bird area. An area like Lake Koshkonong would be considered an important bird area because it provides habitat to 15,000-25,000 ducks annually. If the upper reaches are changed to a more riverine environment with swift water that some species of birds would change, but that would not be good or bad. Species such as ospreys are not specific to the type of water.

The Dane County area is at peak sandhill crane population. They are becoming a nuisance in Madison. Regardless of what happens with the dam, they should be unaffected. Pelicans are not breedin the Madison Chain of Lakes.

The wildlife bureau does not give a lot of input during the permitting process. They will be asked about critical habitats. They will also need to comment on general conditions as the project moves forward.

New Business

6. River Mapping
Glynn shared that the county has bathymetry of the upper reaches of the Yahara River. The city and county will coordinate to show the public what impacts of the dredging project and whitewater park will be.

Future Agenda Items
- County Coordination
- Grants & Project Timeline Update

Adjournment
Motion made by Diebel and seconded by Manley at 9:18 am. Motion carried unanimously.