

**VILLAGE OF FONTANA ON GENEVA LAKE  
WALWORTH COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

**(Final Minutes)**

**Park Commission Monthly Meeting**

September 20, 2023

The Park Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Trustee Livingston at 5:00 pm on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at the Fontana Village Hall.

**Members Present:** Sarah Lobdell (arrived at 5:05), Mary Green, Susan Olson, Zina O'Callaghan, Stan Livingston, Robin Nuzzo

**Members Absent:** Cathy Somers

**Also Present:** Kevin Day, Theresa Loomer, Drew Lussow, Kyle (Midwest Prairies), Dusti (Never Say Never-Presenter), Scott (Never Say Never), Kathy (Never Say Never)

**Approval of Minutes: August 16, 2023**

Commissioner Olson/Commissioner Green 2<sup>nd</sup> made a MOTION to approve the minutes as submitted for the August 16, 2023 meeting, and the MOTION carried without negative vote.

**Visitors Heard**

None

**Announcements**

None

**General Business**

**Treasurer's Report**

Commissioner Lobdell reported that there is currently \$72,863.14 in the Park Commission Funds.

**Public Works Report**

Public Works Director Day stated the only update he has is that the fence has been completed and has been set up around the Duck Pond area.

**Old Business**

**Update on Memorial Bench or Picnic Table request to be Installed Near Hildebrand / Mill Street**

Village Clerk Lussow explained to the Commission that this is back for an update because at the previous meeting there was some discussion about a memorial picnic table rather than a bench and some quotes for a picnic table have been included in the meeting packet by Public Works Director Day. In addition, a location still hadn't been solidified by staff as to where the bench or picnic table was being placed and further discussion was needed. Commissioner Green mentioned that she had spoken with the resident, and they are currently trying to raise the funds to cover the costs for either the bench or picnic table and reiterated that they would like to have it placed on or near the walking path back near the Hildebrand that runs near the Mill St location. Administrator Loomer stated that she recently received an email from the Conservancy regarding this agenda topic and they reiterated that they own an easement in the area that is being suggested and want to make sure that it isn't placed on their easement without approval from them first. Administrator Loomer stated she would look further into the easement and in the meantime have Public Works Director Day further investigate the area to see if there are some places to place the bench or picnic table that wouldn't be on encroaching on the easement of the Conservancy.

**New Business**

**Discussion or Action on Never Say Never Group Building a Park Playground at Duck Pond**

Dusti from the Never Say Never Group gave a brief presentation about her group and their goals of having an all-inclusive playground constructed somewhere in Walworth County. Dusti stated

that they have been fundraising the project for about eight years and have about \$280,000.00 of the \$655,000.00 necessary to complete the project as presented. Dusti explained that they originally reached out to the City of Lake Geneva to help raise the remaining funds and complete the project there but have gotten little support and seem to be stuck in somewhat of a holding pattern. Dusti stated that because they haven't seen enough movement on the project they are looking to see if any other municipalities in the County would be interested in pursuing the project and having it built in their municipality. Dusti then went into detail about some of the features of the proposed project which include a park that would have one entrance for entry and exit to keep all the visitors contained, the playground would be made of composite lumber, it would have ramps to be inclusive of all kids and adults of every ability, and lastly Dusti mentioned that the project comes together as a community build. She expounded on this by saying that they usually get a certain number of volunteers from the community and organize it in a way that they all assist with putting the playground and park together usually in around 8 days, but it really brings the whole community together and everyone gains a sense of accomplishment and pride knowing they helped establish such a wonderful place for kids to play. Administrator Loomer then explained that her and President Pat Kenny have spoken to this group and have had some initial conversations about potentially using Duck Pond as the home for the proposed park playground if the funds could be procured. Administrator Loomer then asked the Never Say Never Group about how much of the fundraised amount has been promised and how much has been raised. Dusti stated that of the \$280,000.00 raised, \$193,000.00 has been secured and is in a bank while the remaining \$85,000.00 has been promised and will be provided after the remainder of the funds are secured. Commissioner Lobdell asked once the park is completed who would be responsible for any maintenance and who would retain ownership rights to the park. Dusti explained that since the site is made of composite lumber there isn't too much maintenance. However, if any is required it would fall on the Village to maintain and repair it since they would be the ones who own the park once it is completed. Chairman Trustee Livingston asked if this is the first build this company has done or if there are any prior examples in the area of this being completed. Dusti stated that the cities of Franklin and Kenosha have had similar projects that have went great and would be excellent references if the Village of Fontana would like to reach out to them about any questions in the process. Administrator Loomer stated that it seems like the biggest issue is raising the additional funds and while the Park Commission is on board with the potential project, it is quite a large amount still to go that would need to be raised. The best thought would be to have the Commission think over the project some more and see if there is anything the Village or community can do to include Never Say Never in some future fundraising ideas or project and invite them back to a future meeting to further discuss if we are able to proceed with the project. Chairman Trustee Livingston agreed and thanked the Never Say Never group for coming out and presenting the project and giving the Village an opportunity to review and think about it.

**Discussion or Action on Adding a Memorial Bench Request by Darrell Fredrick in Honor of William Austin**

Administrator Loomer stated that a request came in for a Memorial Bench requested by Darrell Fredrick to Honor William Austin who had recently passed away. Administrator Loomer stated that the Austin's have been a staple in the Fontana area and have been heavily involved in the community for many years. She believes it would be a great way to honor him since he and his family have had a large impact in the Fontana community. Director of Public Works Day mentioned that Mr. Fredrick had included some pictures within his application of an area near the lakefront that they preferred to have the memorial bench placed. Director of Public Works Day stated the village could accommodate the area requested.

Commissioner Nuzzo/Commissioner O'Callaghan 2<sup>nd</sup> made a MOTION to recommend Village Board approval of the Memorial Bench request by Darrell Fredrick in honor of William Austin, as presented, and the MOTION carried without negative vote.

**Discussion or Action on Midwest Prairies Contract**

Kyle from Midwest Prairies stated that this past year they have been caring for properties at Mohr

Road, Wild Duck Road, the Fen, and Hildebrand. Kyle stated that everything is looking good and healthy at all the locations. He did suggest that the Village might want to look into removing Walnut trees at the Hildebrand due to the trees becoming too large and now providing too much shade to the plants and flora that are around them, shading them out and causing them to die and instead cause weeds to grow in their place. Kyle also mentioned that some of the “cup” plants that are down there could also use some cleaning up since they’ve grown quite tall. Public Works Director Day stated that they are very pleased with the work that Midwest Prairies has done in the past year and would support either a one-year or two-year contract with them going forward. Kyle mentioned that the contract he brought from Midwest Prairies is for two years and a 5% increase to cover costs of goods and services and mentioned that in the new contract he has also included options for 5-7 visits rather than the previous five visits in this year’s contract to allow for more visits as needed in case of having a dry summer like this year or any other needs.

Commissioner Lobdell/Commissioner Green 2<sup>nd</sup> made a MOTION to recommend Village Board approval of the 2-year Midwest Prairies Contract to begin in 2024 with a 5% increase each year for a total amount of \$2,300.00 per visit in 2024 and \$2,415.00 per visit in 2025, as presented, and the MOTION carried without negative vote.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Olson/Commissioner Lobdell 2<sup>nd</sup> made a Motion to adjourn the Park Commission meeting at 5:33 pm, and the MOTION carried without negative vote.

Minutes prepared by: Drew Lussow, Village Clerk  
Approved: 10/25/2023