

CITY OF STURGEON BAY
JOINT PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE / BOARD METING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 22, 2023
Council Chambers, City Hall, 421 Michigan Street
5:00 P.M.

A meeting of the Joint parks and Recreation Committee / Board was called to order at 5:00 P.M. by Chairperson/Ald. Bacon in Council Chambers, City Hall, 421 Michigan Street.

Roll Call [1]: Members present were Chair/Ald. Helen Bacon, Ald. Gary Nault, Ald. Spencer Gustafson, Randy Morrow, Debbie Kiedrowski, Jay Renstrom (via Zoom), Thomas Hemminger, and Municipal Services Director Mike Barker. Chris Larsen was absent. Also, in attendance was City Administrator Josh VanLieshout.

Adoption of the Agenda [2]: Motion was made by Gustafson and seconded by Nault to adopt the following agenda:

1. Roll Call
2. Adoption of Agenda
3. Review of Minutes from December 21, 2022
4. Review of Local Arts Board Minutes from January 11, 2023
5. Public Comment on Agenda Items
6. Consideration of Ice Age Trail sign location at Cherry Blossom Park
7. Mark Holey presentation on fishing tournaments during the spawn.
8. Consideration of change to Fishing Tournament Rules.
9. Chair's report
10. Director's report
11. Adjourn

Review of Minutes from October 26, 2022 [3]: No comments or changes

Review of Minutes from the Local Arts Board meeting on September, 14, 2022 [4]: No changes. Gustafson stated that he appreciates the work that the Local Arts Board is doing.

Public Comment on Agenda Items [5]:

1. J.J. Malvitz 8728 County C Sturgeon Bay, spoke on agenda item 8.
2. John Kolodziej 4511 Sherwood Pt. Rd. Sturgeon Bay, spoke on agenda item 8.

Consideration of Ice Age Trail sign location at Cherry Blossom Park [6]: Ald Reeths shared information regarding the donation and placement of the sign. She mentioned the following:

- It would be at no cost to the City
- It would be constructed of cedar.
- It will have information pertaining to the trail.
- There is a bench that is attached to one side of the sign.

During discussion it was asked to make sure that it would not be used to as an advertisement for businesses. A motion was made to allow placement of the sign at Cherry Blossom Park and for the group who is donating the sign to work with the Director of Municipal Services on the exact placement by Renstrom, seconded by Kiedrowski. All in favor, carried

Mark Holey presentation on fishing tournaments during the spawn. [7]: Mark Holey gave a presentation on the fishing tournaments during the small mouth bass spawn. He mentioned the following:

- His education and work history.
- His presentation is unbiased and comes from facts gathered from documented research.
- He has participated in the Sturgeon Bay Bass Open and for the past few years he has served on the committee of the Sturgeon Bay Bass Tournament.
- He used an article in the Fisheries Magazine from the American Fisheries Society titled *On Improved Care of Black Bass During Live-Release Competitive Angling Events-Recent Innovations and Associated Research Needs*.
- There have improvements of how the fish are handled prior to released.
- No matter what type of tournament is held, there is still stress on the fish that are caught. However, the weigh on the water format has significantly less handling of the fish.
- Fish get stressed by handling, the more they are handled the more they are stressed.
- Immediately releasing fish in the water eliminates:
 - Stress involved of being crowded in a live well including the travel time back to the weight station.
 - The amount of time the fish is out of the water.
 - The fish being relocated to a different location away from their bed. 68% of bass do not return to the original bed.
- When most of the tournaments occur here, it is before peak spawning time, this is the pre-spawn. During this time, the bass are typically searching bedding sights or clearing out beds.
- On one of the research videos from Sawyer Harbor, it shows a bass caught off its bed. The bass was immediately released, but before the bass returned there were about a dozen bluegills and rock bass in the bed.
- Largemouth bass virus presence was confirmed in 2021 by the WI DNR. Although the DNR did not institute any changes they released guidance, the guidance recommended:
 - Fish not being held in live wells unless they were to be harvested.
 - Handling the bass as quickly and gently during its release.
- There is no conclusive evidence that tournaments have an impact on the fish population.
- If the City were to adopt this rule, there would not be quick results.
- During the tournaments when fish are handled several times, the fish may choose to not make a bed for spawning that year.
- The DNR typically does not get involved unless there was a clear population effect. This has happened in Detroit Harbor (Washington Island) and the Mink River Estuary.
- In 2024/25 there is a planned study that will remove bass from their beds, relocate them and see if they return to their beds. The results should be available in about 3-5 years.
- The peak of the spawn in this area is considered in early June however there is nesting and spawning that would occur prior to that.
- If a fish is held out of the water for a minute, their heart rate and metabolism is elevated for up to an hour. The longer they remain out of the water it would prolong the elevated state which could result in fish mortality.
- Handling mortality is exacerbated by temperature. A tournament in July or August could potentially be more detrimental to the fish population.
- The DNR increased the size limit to 14" to allow fish to grow more which allows them to be able to reproduce prior to being harvested.

Board members asked questions and continued discussion.

Consideration of change to Fishing Tournament Rules. [8]

Ald Bacon read the proposed changes to the rules. She mentioned Ald Nault could discuss the topic but he would recuse himself from voting. There was discussion on the topic of changing the rules.

Renstrom made a motion to approve the proposed fishing rules with changes as outlined to begin January 2024. Hemminger seconded.

Barker made a motion to amend the recommendation for approving the proposed changes by changing number eight (8) of the proposed rules to “during the month of June” for bass tournaments instead of “prior to June 30th” Renstrom Seconded. Amendment carried, six ayes, one no (Morrow)

Original motion as amended was voted on, six ayes, one no (Ald Gustafson)

Chair’s Report [9]: Chair Bacon reported she met with an artist who applied for the mural competition. There is a possibility of him creating a mural for placement in a park, possibly on Sunset Park pavilion. There was a meeting with Steven Haas concerning his sculpture Crosswind Approach, they are attempting to raise money to purchase the piece for permanent placement in the City.

Director’s Report [10]: Mike Barker mentioned that the parks staff had removed all of the benches from the waterfront to give them a facelift, several have been reinstalled. Several parks and DPW staff were trained on pruning pear and apple trees since we have our own orchard and continue to plant fruiting trees in our parks system. Woods West Pear orchard has been pruned already. Gave up date on the Aquatic Plant Management Plan, contract was awarded and the first public input gathering meeting may be as soon as our next meeting.

Adjourn [10]: Motion to adjourn by Ald Gustafson, second by Kiedrowski. All ayes. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm.