

## FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE

**DATE:** January 6, 2021

**TIME:** 3:30 p.m. County Board Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Court House, Rhinelander, WI

**PRESENT:** Committee Members: Sorensen, VanRaalte, Pence, Almekinder, Mott  
Forestry Staff: Fiene, Rady, Tischendorf  
DNR Liaison: Oradei; RASTA – Guy Hansen; Assistant Corporation Counsel: Tom Wiensch

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Sorensen called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. The meeting has been properly posted in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.

### **APPROVE CURRENT AGENDA WITH THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS AT CHAIR'S DISCRETION**

Motion by Mott to approve the amended agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. Second by VanRaalte. All aye, motion carried.

### **APPROVE MINUTES**

Motion by Pence to approve the minutes of December 2, 2020 meeting. Second by VanRaalte. All aye, Sorensen abstained, motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments at this time.

### **FOREST MANAGEMENT – YTD STUMPAGE REPORT**

*YTD Stumpage Report* – Fiene reported current county forest stumpage for the year of \$1,104,418.69 plus \$28,682.72 for non-county forest sales for a total of \$1,133,101.41. Additionally there is approximately \$10,000 from December that still needs to be billed. Currently have seven or eight active sales right now.

### **UPDATE ON TOWN LINE PARK**

Fiene provided background regarding the current status of Town Line Park. Back in 2017, during the process of purchasing the Gillette/Wickham property, one of the funding sources mentioned the sale of part of the Town Line Lake property. Back around 2009 or so the park infrastructure was falling apart and the beach was over-run with weeds and was no longer getting the use from prior years, the committee voted to no longer maintain the park and turn it into a green space. The Town of Crescent has agreed to abandon the road going to the boat landing; however, the county would maintain ownership of the boat landing and keep it available to the public.

Fiene has been in contact with the DNR regarding the withdrawal of this property and there may be a “bump in the road” as there has been no withdrawal paperwork prior to the purchase of Gillette/Wickham. The state looks at the public benefit of a land withdrawal at the time of the withdrawal request and since the purchase has already happened, they will not look at it retroactively. Additionally, we have not been able to find any prior motions made by the Forestry committee or County Board to support the withdrawal approval.

Mott stated that a timeline of Town Line park provided by Tischendorf (at his request), shows May 2, 2012 closing of Town Line Park is tabled due to DNR and federal regulations of recreational amenities. In July of 2012, motion by the committee to pursue change of use for Town Line park and then a week later a request from County committee to DNR to change use status for Town Line Lake park. In May of 2013, approval from the DNR to remove obsolete amenities (bathrooms, benches, picnic tables, shelters, grills and playground equipment) and close 2<sup>nd</sup> parking lot to vehicle traffic. The next thing noted is the appraisal from 2017. Nowhere does it say we voted to close the park, just change the use of the park. Fiene agreed that it was never closed, just changed from a full amenity park to an open natural park.

Discussion on where the funds would need to be allocated if the county were to sell the property. Given the current circumstances, it is likely they would need to be placed in a land purchase account for future acquisitions.

Mott was contacted by a few people regarding this agenda item – written correspondence from David Dement, JoAnne Rajek, David Schmitz, Tracy Beckman and Leonard Cody were received and distributed to committee members. (Written correspondence is available from the Forestry Office upon request.)

Public Comment by Tracy Beckman – Part of the group formed to oppose the sale of Town Line Lake Park. Proposing a united effort to improve the park. Some ideas include: ATV respite, bog walk, a walking trail, ADA compliant fishing pier, disc golf, outdoor fitness park. Urge the committee to reconsider the sale and to commit to working with the community to help Town Line park shine again.

Public Comment by Beth Follenweider – Thank you to the committee for the Town Line time line and commitment to purchasing Gillette/Wickham property for the public. Great opportunities for Town Line park, sympathize with the county with the capacity issues and re-iterate there are people willing to volunteer time and want to be part of the solution.

Public Comment by Kelby Scheel – Tracy has some fantastic ideas. If the board is open to keeping the park, he would love to throw his hat in the ring.

Public Comment by David Walters – First learned of the sale of the park this summer. One of the points made for no longer maintaining the park was lack of use, but that seems to counter my experience with the park. I started an online petition regarding the sale of the park and currently has over 1,300 signatures and over 100 comments advocating for maintaining the park, keeping it open and upgrading the park. Feels the decision to sell the park would not benefit the community. More value in the park as a public park. Would be willing to read or share any petition information with the board.

Public Comment by Dave Dement – Sent a letter to the County Board – read letter to the committee.

Public Comment by Tracy Beckman on behalf of Kim Gauthier – Kim supports more development of the park and would love to be involved in an endeavor of this nature. The Newbold township has talked to the committee before about some type of development and their outdoor recreation committee is eager to be involved in any plans.

Public Comment by Sarah – I agree with fellow community members.

Public Comment by David Walters – Shared a few comments from the online petition. Comments from Linda Thompson, Sue Konz, Sherri Belliveau, Lori Zarm, and a lot more stating this public land needs to stay open to the public. The community is being very vocal about the opposition of the sale of this park.

#### **UPDATE ON TRAIL ISSUES ON MINOCQUA FOREST RIDER TRAILS**

Fiene and Broquard had a meeting with the President of the Minocqua Forest Riders and the club agreed to have the Oneida County Highway Department finish the repairs by the beaver dam and the culvert. The work was finished today and the trail turned out beautifully. The club is responsible for the costs of the Hwy department.

Rady added that there were some other minor areas that have been worked on as well. Still some minor items to be finished in the spring, but overall things are good.

Almekinder questioned the status of Bob Rynders working with the Minocqua Forest Riders. Fiene stated per the committee's decision from December, he is not allowed to work on county forest land. At this time, Minocqua Forest Riders are abiding by this decision.

Sorensen stated that it is imperative we give any individuals referenced in an agenda item, verbal/written notice of the meeting so they have the opportunity to attend the meeting.

**DISCUSS POTENTIAL LIABILITY FOR INJURIES & DAMAGES ON RECREATIONAL TRAILS**

Wiensch was asked by Broquard to provide an opinion on the potential liability of the county for damages on private property by recreational clubs and/or contractors hired by the club. Wiensch's written response was provided to the committee. Additionally Wiensch discussed legal generalities regarding the level of liability the county may be exposed to depending on the specific situation.

**REVIEW / APPROVE NATIONAL GUARD TRAINING EXERCISE – TOWN OF ENTERPRISE**

The Forestry Department received a request from the National Guard to waive fees for approximately 75 soldiers for a snowshoe/ski exercise proposed on the Enterprise ski trail.

Wiensch advised the committee against a fee waiver because of consistency with other groups that may have similar requests. After further discussion, it was determined the National Guard can utilize county forest land (non-ski trails) for this exercise without incurring any fees.

Motion by Pence to waive fees for the National Guard to wander through the woods on snowshoes as they will not be using any groomed trails. Second by Mott. After further discussion, a motion is not necessary. Motion is rescinded by Pence and Mott.

**SNOWMOBILE TRAIL OPENING UPDATE**

The trails are currently NOT open. At this point, Fiene feels we would need about four inches of snow to open the trail system. Rady stated the department has been in close contact with the clubs and based on a majority vote, the clubs voted to keep the trails closed at this time.

*Recess called at 4:44 p.m.*

*Return from Recess at 4:55 p.m.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Due to issues with Zoom connectivity, Chair Sorensen announced the adjournment of the meeting at 4:55 p.m. with the next Forestry Committee meeting to be held on January 12, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.

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JACK SORENSEN  
CHAIR

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TANYA TISCHENDORF  
RECORDING SECRETARY