Board of Park Commissioners
Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Present: Bahling, Freckmann, Glodosky, Hall, McDonald, O'Meara, Okonek, Slowinski, Sorenson

Excused: Wiza

Also Present: Director Schrader, Peggy Rentz, Lt. Ron Carlson, Dave Smith, Ald. Mary Stroik, Ald. Trzebiatowski

4. Consideration and Possible Action on Adopting No Parking from 11:00 am -1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday in parking Area in front of Bukolt Lodge while school is in session. Request from Police

Lt. Ron Carlson, Stevens Point Police Department, explained that the problem of High School students and some non-students creating havoc in Bukolt Park over the lunch period has been ongoing for at least 15 to 16 years. He said among the complaints are speeding, fights, disorderly conduct, foul language and littering. He said the Police Department has tried many things like citations and videotaping to show parents. They have even tried cook outs with the group but so far nothing has deterred them. He has been working with the school to come up with a solution as the school can do little when the students are off campus, but they could restrict privileges of those caught misbehaving during the lunch period. While working with the school they came up with the idea to create a No Parking from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Monday through Friday while school is in session. They would leave three stalls open closest to the playground equipment for regular park users. He said he read Mr. Wiza's email where he said he didn't have an alternative but he thought restricting parking wouldn't solve the problem, they will just go elsewhere and the three spots left open would be used by the students anyway. Lt. Carlson said the youths will likely displace to somewhere else, he doesn't know where, but any other location would get them away from the children who use the playground equipment. He said he doesn't know if this will work but would like to give it a try. He said they will deal with the problem at the next location.

Carlson went on saying that this problem has required the department to have several officers at Bukolt during what is a prime time when officers are needed at other locations to assist people.

A discussion followed and several of the main concerns were that by restricting parking we were restricting public use of the park and that the youths will go to the boat landing parking lot or the skateboard park when it opens. Carlson said the skateboard park conflict might come up anyway since the youths will be going right by it. He said he doesn't know what will happen, just what the present problem is, and if this request doesn't work, we can remove the signs.

Director Schrader said very few parents or other park users go to Bukolt between those hours because it is a known hangout, they feel intimidated by the youths and are not using the park. He said this would be an inexpensive experiment, if the parking restrictions don't work, we would just remove the signs.

O'Meara expressed concern that other users have to feel intimidated but he said he would like the sign to read, "On Those Days School is in Session" instead of "While School is in Session".

O'Meara moved, seconded by Slowinski to Adopt the No Parking at Bukolt Park as presented with changing the wording to "On Those Days School is in Session" instead of "While School is in Session".

Additional discussion took place reiterating the concern that the youths will just move somewhere else and the problems will continue anyway, that this is restricting public use of the park, and also suggestions such as use of cameras which Lt. Carlson said it is difficult to get funding for, and actual television taping which the consensus of the Board was that television taping would only escalate and even promote worse behavior. Also suggested was to have those caught misbehaving clean the park as punishment and thereby embarrassing them in front of their friends.

Director Schrader said during the winter we plowed only what was necessary eliminating the parking because the youths would go there on nice winter days, and he said that stopped them.

The point was brought up that use of the park is already being restricted by the youths hanging out there and intimidating and bullying other users.

Sorenson suggested a trial time limit and if it doesn't work, we can remove the signs. Lt. Carlson said he liked that idea.

President Freckmann said if Mr. Sorenson would like to add that to the motion and if the originator of the motion and person seconding the motion agreed, we would not need an amendment. Sorenson said he would like to suggest we add a trial time limit on the motion until June 1, 2010. Both O'Meara and Slowinski agreed to the addition to the motion.

Director Schrader said he will keep the Board up to date on the progress through his report and said if there are any problems we can always bring it back.

President Freckmann called for a voice vote on the motion to Adopt the No Parking at Bukolt Park as presented with changing the wording to "On Those Days School is in Session" instead of "While School is in Session" and to add a trial time limit until June 1, 2010.

Ayes - 6, Nays - 3 (Bahling, Glodosky, McDonald); Motion carried.