

***MINUTES OF THE
HIGHWAY, INFRASTRUCTURE & RECREATION COMMITTEE***

DAY & DATE: Tuesday, June 21, 2016

PLACE: Wood County Courthouse, 400 Market St, Room 115, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

MEETING TIME: 8:30 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT TIME: 9:20 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Al Breu, Secretary Marion Hokamp, Member David LaFontaine

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:
(UNEXCUSED)** Vice-Chairman William Winch, Member Joseph Zurfluh

OTHERS PRESENT: County Board Chairperson Lance Pliml, County Board Supervisor Bill Clendenning, County Board Supervisor Dennis Polach, Park and Forestry Director Chad Schooley, Highway Commissioner Doug Passineau, Highway Accounting Technician Caitlin Carmody, Wood County Sheriff Department Shawn Becker, Aqua Skier Member Jason Sachs, Aqua Skier Member Maggie Muleski, Aqua Skier Member Mike Wiberg

1. Chairman Al Breu called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

3. Review, discuss and possibly act on the Special Use Permit request to close the Red Sands Beach for the purpose of holding Aqua Skier practices and shows.

Chairman Breu asked for feedback from individuals in favor of closing down Red Sands Beach for the purpose of allowing the Aqua Skiers Inc. to use the beach area for practices, according to the provided calendar. The schedule would allow use of the beach Sunday evening from 4pm to dark, and on evenings Monday through Thursday from 5pm to dark, through the remainder of June and through July. This would be in addition to the already approved dates for the State and World Ski tournament.

Jason Sachs, a member of the Aqua Skiers, stated that, although they have been at their current practice location (off of County Highway U [CTH U] on the Biron Flowage of the Wisconsin River) for 40-50 years, increased traffic on CTH U has created an unsafe parking condition for the team. Sachs referenced an accident wherein a young boy was hit by a vehicle driving on CTH U and sustained multiple injuries. The vehicle was reportedly driving at a slow speed but the boy ran out in front of it and was struck. He has recently been released from the hospital and is

recovering from his injuries according to Officer Shawn Becker. Becker stated he had traffic safety concerns for their current location and that the Lake Wazeecha site would be a much safer location for them in regards to parking and road traffic. Sachs indicated their involvement in the community and how much economic development they have encouraged in Wisconsin Rapids due to their shows and activity should be viewed as additional reasons to provide them the opportunity to use Red Sands Beach exclusively for their practices and shows on the dates and times indicated in the permit. Later in the meetings, Sachs also stated that other ski show organizations have their permanent sites located in a public park and even have bleachers on the shores. He stated it was their goal to get to a situation like that.

Sachs said the Aqua Skiers could park their boats at a field near the boat launch instead of within the slips at the boat launch itself. He also indicated they could put up signs for their members and audience to direct them away from the main parking area so as not to cause conflict with the park's other users. Their equipment trailer would need to use the "Stone" gate to park nearer the lake, however.

County Board Chairperson Lance Pliml expressed his support of allowing the Aqua Skiers to utilize the Red Sands Beach Area. He explained the process of needing the HIRC to approve the use of this area with a "rubber stamp" by approval of the Special Use Permit. Chairman Pliml expressed the economic impact that the Aqua Skiers bring to the community and the positive impact it has on area youth. He stated that they were responsible for clean-up of the lake and the development of the "Aqua Skiers Shelter Building" at South Wood County Park. Chairman Pliml then passed around photos he took of the Biron Site and of South Wood County Park. He stated he took pictures on multiple evenings at both locations to get a better sampling of the traffic issues present. The Biron photos indicated heavy traffic use near the Biron Site during a Sunday evening show. The pictures from South Wood County Park shows very little activity near the Red Sands Beach, boat landing, and surrounding areas during weeknights.

Chairman Al Breu then asked for feedback from individuals opposed to the special use permit.

Park and Forestry Director Chad Schooley started out by stating that he hoped that this meeting was not just a "rubber stamp" approval of the special use permit, as was indicated by Chairman Pliml. He also stated that the name of the new shelter building on Red Sands Beach is not the "Aqua Skiers Shelter Building", as indicated by Chairman Pliml. He stated that the Red Sands Beach Pavilion was constructed to replace the old failing beach house, and (per the grant received to build it) was designed to be a multi-use facility for day users and different family and community events throughout the year, and not just for Aqua Skier events. Schooley voiced concerns about the closing of the beach and the additional boat traffic on the lake during the shows and practices. He shared a calendar with the proposed dates for closure, in addition to the prior approved dates for closure (approved at a prior committee meeting in the fall of 2015). Schooley stated the park is multi-use (meaning used for a variety of different activities) and is there to serve all County residents and visitors. He felt closing the beach would be a contradiction to that objective. He had concerns about the campers, swimmers, hikers and shelter renters/users being impacted by the shows and practices as well. One of the main concerns was the increased use of the lake by Aqua Skier boats, and how that would affect other boaters. He stated that, although that part of the lake would not be officially closed off by the Township, it really would be unsafe for other boaters to be in that area during practices and shows. Schooley stated that every water body has a carrying capacity for the number of boats it can safely handle and that, although he is grateful that the Aqua Skiers were willing to park their vehicles and boat

trailers outside of the boat landing parking lot, this wouldn't reduce the number of boats on Lake Wazeecha.

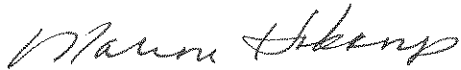
Schooley recommended not approving the special use permit. However, he stated that, should the committee approve the Special Use Permit, he thought it would be best to "continue as is" for the remainder of this year (prior approved shows and practices would be allowed unless conflict with shelter renters arose). Schooley also stated that if the HIRC approved the special use permit, we should use this season to collect feedback from park users on the pros and cons of allowing this to take place. He stated that if it were to be a permanent change, the voice of the general public should be present at the committee meeting and he would publicize it more to that end. Schooley stated that if/when the Biron Development project is completed, there will be a dedicated area for the Aqua Skiers to perform on the Biron Flowage once again.

M. Hokamp stated that if there are any conflicts with the situation as presented in the Special Use Permit, Schooley needs to be informed of them immediately.

Chairman Breu asked the Aqua Skiers to bring the committee a progress report at the next committee meeting.

Motion to approve the Special Use Permit and all requested times and dates made by D. LaFontaine and seconded by M. Hokamp. Motion carried.

- 4. Motion to adjourn made by D. LaFontaine at 9:20 A.M. and seconded by M. Hokamp. Motion carried.**



Marion Hokamp, Secretary

Minutes taken by Caitlin Carmody, Highway Accounting Technician