

**Village of North Hudson
Park Board Meeting
Thursday, November 3, 2016, 6:30 p.m.
Village Hall, 400 7th Street North
Hudson, WI 54016**

Call to Order: roll call

Chair Colleen O'Brien-Berglund called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Answering the call were members John Helgeson, Mona Houston, and Todd Wolf. A quorum was present and the meeting was duly noticed. It was noted that Doug Ernie, Howard Novotny and Michelle Ortner were absent. Also in attendance was Recording Secretary Anne-Marie McDonald.

Approval of minutes from July 11, 2016 Park Board Meeting

Motion (Helgeson/Wolf) to approve the minutes of October 6, 2016 meeting as written. Motion carried.

Comments from the floor

None

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Mark Ekblad was absent.

October Tree Planting

Arbor Day trees have been planted in Woodcrest and Chief Jansen Parks. Derrick Construction has also planted some trees in Chief Jansen Park.

Ferry Landing Beach

Wisconsin DNR Conservation Officer Paul Sickman and St. Croix County Sheriff's Deputy Chase DuRand attended the meeting. O'Brien-Berglund summarized the previously reported problems at Ferry Landing Beach with personal watercraft (PWC) operators taking over the beach and operating their PWCs loudly for hours just offshore. Currently, the beach is not an official improved boat launch, but is used as a boat launch. Chief Richert has trouble responding to calls due to staffing shortage and has few ordinances which his department can enforce. Several solutions were suggested: 1) Disallow boats from launching south of the pedestrian walkway; 2) designate a swimming area with buoys; 3) prevent gas cans from being left on the beach. Resident Bryce Thorpe of 232 Sommers Landing Road N. asked Sickman and DuRand what rules are in place for safe boating. Sickman stated that boats must operate slow/no wake within 100 feet of shoreline, swimmers, and other boats, and use reasonable and prudent speed further away from shore. The PWC group has been approached by DNR staff – they slow down while law enforcement is nearby, and speed up after law enforcement is gone. Thorpe asked about the existence of a noise ordinance on the St. Croix River. Sickman stated that a boat's motor cannot be louder than 86 decibels. Resident John Borup of 242 Sommers Landing Road N. reiterated issues his family has encountered. He must keep the windows closed on his home in the summer. Borup will not bring his grandchildren to the beach while one of the PWC groups is present. The jet ski group is viewed as not

welcoming, and acts as if they own the beach. O'Brien-Berglund asked about the possibility of designating a swimming area. Sickman said that a swimming area can be designated – an application must be submitted to the state for placement of marker buoys.

O'Brien-Berglund asked whether a fee can be charged for the boat launch. Sickman stated that a fee is okay with DNR guidelines. He also stated that the village jurisdiction is over the river to the state line in the St. Croix River. He explained that the Wisconsin legislature made the statute for 200 feet of no-wake zone on lakes, but not for rivers. The legislature has to address the issue to make a change. The DNR can't stay in the area of the PWC groups waiting for someone to break a law. Noise testing is done while the craft is in the water, and a PWC will not go over the noise limit while in the water. Sickman said the village can close the boat launch, however, it may receive some backlash from residents. DuRand stated that others have been witnessed using alcohol in the park. He said that he has had good and bad interactions with the PWC groups. When asked, Sickman wasn't sure how many citations are given on a yearly basis, however, most are registration infractions. DuRand said that if residents can get clear video with registration of operators breaking laws or ordinances, the county and DNR can write citations based on the video. Sickman stated that a beach area can be designated, but that the PWC groups will simply move further north for their activities. Thorpe asked the board to consider whether creating new regulations will just antagonize the groups. O'Brien-Berglund thinks it would be a problem to prohibit only PWCs from launching. An option would be to allow only village residents to use the boat launch with a permit. Houston questioned the ability to enforce any new ordinances which may be created. Sickman stated that he or the village would have to check the legality of a village ordinance which restricts certain types of watercraft from using the boat launch. If the park is open to the public, the board may not be able to prohibit some people from using the launch. Sickman offered to investigate the possible issues, and will send the information to O'Brien-Berglund.

Thorpe asked how many feet of frontage the parks contains; no one knew. He asked what the difference is between modifying or adding an ordinance or changing park rules. An ordinance has a penalty behind it, a rule does not. Wolf asked what makes North Hudson attractive to operators from outside the area. Sickman said that it's the beach and its location. PWC are everywhere on the river, but concentrated in certain areas. The Hudson boat launch is in a no-wake zone, so it is not as attractive. Thorpe asked whether private landowners have jurisdiction over water adjacent to owned land. Sickman said they do. Thorpe asked whether the village can have a no-wake zone within 200 feet of shore. Sickman said that the PWCs and associated noise are part of being on the water. Thorpe asked how far out the buoys are at Brown's Beach. Sickman doesn't know for sure, but they aren't very far out. Sickman offered to find out what are the regulations around swimming areas. Borup asked whether there are other areas where boats are allowed to park onshore. Sickman said there are numerous areas along the river. DuRand committed to more water patrols in the area next summer.

There was discussion about using unmarked boats or soft clothes patrols to find violators. Sickman said that uniformed law enforcement is a deterrent in general, so "undercover" law enforcement is not practical.

Thorpe suggested the board design something at the local level that can be enforced. Houston and O'Brien-Berglund acknowledged the residents' frustration with the current situation. Houston stated that the board has to determine what they can legally do and take it from there.

Sickman encouraged the village to keep the launch free of charge. An unimproved boat launch could be approved by the DNR. He reiterated that PWC usage and noise is part of water usage.

2017 Budget

No discussion.

Glen Oaks Park-Sandbox and Digger, discussion and possible recommendation

Will be reviewed for 2017 budget.

Future Agenda Items

Ferry Landing Beach; ice rink; Glen Oak Park digger and sandbox.

Adjournment

Motion (Helgeson/Houston) to adjourn. O'Brien-Berglund declared the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Anne-Marie McDonald
Recording Secretary