

# TOWN OF SHELBY

County of La Crosse

State of Wisconsin



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## APPROVED

### Park and Vacant Land Committee Draft Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, January 3, 2022

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Location: 2800 Ward Ave, La Crosse, WI 54601

**Commissioners Present:** Co-Chairperson Renee Knutson, Co-Chairperson Tim Ehler, Commissioners Jeffrey Butler, Josh Blum, Jean Wiggert, Brad Reinhart, Monica Redmond and Meredith Tomesh, Public Works Supervisor Terry Wright, Administrator Christina Peterson, and Town Clerk Fortune Weaver.

**Commissioners Excused:** None.

**Attendance List:** None.

1. Meeting called to order by Knutson at 5:31 p.m.
2. Minutes from 12/6/2021. Motion by Butler to approve minutes from 12/6/2021, second by Ehler. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Citizens' Concerns.
4. Frisbee Golf Signage – Follow Up with Jason Keeny. Wright will reach out to Keeny when he returns from vacation. Wright hopes to have more information at the next meeting.
5. Battlestone Station Park. Knutson noted that Battlestone Station Park really came together because of an Eagle Scout Project, it's a great example of a lovely greenspace, which residents have been asking for. Knutson quoted Blum stating that not all parks need play equipment and reminded the committee that residents want an open space to relax and enjoy. Butler commented that the park is nice and has a lot of space that allows for endless uses. Butler noted that part of the space belongs to Shelby and part belongs to the Battlestone Station Condo Association, so if the residents nearby desired play equipment, they could put it in. Wright added that there was originally supposed to be a gazebo in the park, but because of price increases for materials during Covid, the project has been postponed. Wright noted that when prices return to normal, a gazebo will be reconsidered. Ehler reminded the committee that the condo association was asked to give feedback on what the use of the land should look like. Knutson and Redmond agreed that there should continue to be a joint effort to make the area cohesive despite being owned by two different parties. Wright commented the mounds in the park were supposed to have flowers and trees. Because it was not completed by the first scout, this project will be reserved for a future eagle scout project that Shelby facilitates. The crew has eradicated most of the problem with weeds and any remaining will be taken care of when the park is mowed. Wright added that the next project should also include a plan for fundraising for the plants and trees to eliminate any financial burden to the town. Wright clarified that the benches that are in Battlestone Station Park were approved at the time; however, they do not match the style recently decided on by this committee. Wright noted that the crew will replace gravel as necessary and explained the parking lot is being used frequently. Wright reminded the committee that a sewer line runs right through the park and the mounds right behind the park are sewer mounds, so any additions that break ground need to be reviewed by public works to ensure the project will not disrupt the sewer system.
6. Boulder Ridge Park. Redmond asked about the perimeter trail in Boulder Ridge Park. Knutson explained that there was conversation about doing a perimeter trail instead of an actual park, but it was met with criticism by the residents. Ehler commented that when the park was developed, trails in need of maintenance were discovered in the area that don't belong to Shelby. Ehler clarified that the trails are not the old logging roads, but old logging roads are also present. Discussion on a drop

off around the backside of the park. Redmond recommended viewing platform to create a barrier for safety, while framing up the natural beauty that exists around the park, Wiggert and Knutson agreed. Redmond wants to remind the committee to be proactive or aggressive to make sure the park dedicated with a development is not just the leftover unwanted or unbuildable space. Shelby should be provided a desirable, useable park that can be accessible and user friendly. Ehler noted the equipment was almost removed, but recently it has seen more traffic and the park has come back to life in the last 5 years. Knutson reiterated our parks need accessibility. Reinhart noted that the committee needs to get creative with those spaces and that creativity needs should work hand in hand with accessibility needs.

7. Park Signage. Knutson reiterated signage that currently exists in Shelby is outdated and inconsistent in most parks and trails. Wright confirmed the road crew used to make signage for neighborhoods. Knutson asked for more information and input from the committee so that there can be a decision made on signage to create the consistency. Peterson asked if the committee is considering signage by the Blufflands Coalition knowing there is a potential for funding assistance if their logo is added. Knutson will send additional information. Knutson noted that the committee should be looking for something that compliments the Blufflands Coalition signs but is unique enough to identify a Shelby trail or park. Peterson touched on grants that might be available. Knutson mentioned a logo specific to parks, but this could also trigger the process to update the Town Logos as a whole, Ehler agreed. Peterson clarified that there could be directional signs for a park on the development signs. Reinhart confirmed he has seen signs for a development with a township logo and directional arrows or signs for parks and trails in the area. Ehler noted that some developments and roads have multiple parks and questioned how that situation should be handled. Redmond reiterated that signs should be consistent and should coordinate with benches and trash cans. Knutson agreed and noted that the benches going forward will be green, trash cans can be black or green and that leaves some options for the color palette for the signage. Knutson reiterated the Town Board would have to look at updating logos for all the signage, including the website, sanitary district, etc. Redmond noted that there are park rules on some of the signage, if that would continue, there needs to be consistency in the rules as well. Ehler agreed that getting the logo redone would be great. Knutson commented that the Blufflands Coalition logo can be reworked to fit Shelby. Butler noted he has connections with a graphic designer that can likely get some samples drawn up. Knutson noted any advice would be helpful regarding what holds up better as far as materials for signage, Blum, Reinhart, and Wright will be consulted.
8. Parks Related Comprehensive Plan Information. Knutson noted that this won't be solved this meeting, but it should be a topic of discussion. Knutson reviewed corrections to the existing plan that should be changed going forward. Asked for thoughts, ideas, suggestions for the comprehensive plan. Redmond questioned organization of the list of what the parks committee is in control of and what it's not in control of. Redmond stated the plan needs to have information on vacant land, but it should be separate from parks and trails. Knutson commented on connected trails and a small section has signage, but more is needed. Noted there is no information about trails in existing section. Blum asked if there should be a section on trails specifically and the differences and locations of trails. Blum and Knutson agree that trout streams need to be highlighted as well. Redmond highlighted the importance of private and separate entities should be a separate list but should still be included (i.e., Mt. La Crosse and Goose Island). Blum noted that cross country skiing hasn't been at Mt. La Crosse for 30+ years, and the plan should be updated to reflect current standing of all facilities public and private. Peterson gave a brief overview of potential trails that can be connected to Goose Island and how that can be incorporated. Weaver commented on goals, objectives and action items that should appear in the plan to guide decisions and planning for parks, trails, vacant lands, and other community facilities. Discussion on inventory of the parks, trails and

vacant land in Shelby. Peterson commented on decisions that can be made to combine two parks or if there is vacant land that will not be used and can be sold or repurposed. Inventory list exists in the Park's Binder and that will be included in the plan and priorities and goals for each area can be determined by this committee. Redmond noted vacant land is a limited resource and determining what the value is and what it means for the town will be an important part of moving forward. Peterson would like to know what is the goal for Shelby in relation to parks and trails and what is typical for other municipalities similar to the size of Shelby. Ehler and Redmond agree that Shelby likely has more parks than is typically seen in other communities, but that is part of Shelby's "brand". Ehler gave additional information on previous plans for parks that have not been accomplished. Discussion on what potential parcels and vacant land exist. Wright noted that there are a lot of open lots that are needed for utility services and are not able to be built on as they contain sewer drainage, etc. Knutson will connect with Wright and compile a list of parcels that are easements to discuss options. Blum added in other municipalities utility easements have made great areas for linear, natural surface trails especially connector trails, great opportunity if applicable. Blum noted previous discussion on using the Wedgewood Valley easement to connect to Arbor Hills. Redmond stated the potential for each parcel should be investigated. Knutson noted that the La Crosse County GIS system will be the easiest way to check out these parcels. This will be an action item for February.

9. Administrator Report.

- a. Peterson discussed big trail efforts that are being worked on. Meeting with the WisDOT coming soon for trails that will be incorporated into their Highway 35 plan. The potential trail is to be located on the west side of Highway 35, north of Goose Island. Shelby must pave and finish the trail after WisDOT grates it. Blum asked if the City of La Crosse or La Crosse County would want to work together on that project. Peterson noted that the City of La Crosse is contributing to the small section that is located within the city. Blum asked about grants for the cost of the project. Peterson noted that this would be the same group that the town would work with on the Mormon Creek Trail that has been talked about but never acted on that would lead from Highway 35 to Mormon Coulee Park. Peterson noted the roundabout by the Southern Bluffs School would be the way to get across to the trail. Ehler would need to reach out to the School District to see if they would like to partner with the town for the project to increase the chance of receiving a grant. Blum and Ehler agreed that grants would be easier to obtain if the School District or La Crosse County are partners on the project. Ehler provided clarification on school's involvement for Tomesh. Peterson noted that the town would need to be the applicant, but other entities can be partners. Tomesh asked if anyone representing the school is going to attend the meeting with WisDOT. Peterson does not believe so but thinks that they should. Peterson noted that the deadline for the grant application is the end of January. Peterson asked for the name of the person she should contact to get them on board, Tomesh noted that recent events at the school would likely push this project to the bottom of anyone's to do list. This will be investigated further at a later time.
- b. Bluffland Coalition toured the Schmitz property recently. Peterson explained that some acreage is being sold for development and some may be sold to conservancy, Blufflands Coalition, or town to preserve greenspace on some of the steeper slopes.
- c. Knutson asked about the fish and wildlife grant. Peterson explained the grant application process and cost share with the fish and wildlife.

10. Public Works Report

- a. Wright noted that the rain gutters will be added to the Enclosed Shelter at Mormon Coulee Park as soon as the lights from the Lion's Club Light Up the Park event are removed.
- b. Wright hopes to have more pricing information for the patio in February.

11. Co-Chairperson/Commissioner Reports.

- a. Ehler will make attempts to contact La Crosse School District and provide them with an overview of projects for trail and Breidel Coulee Park Learning Center. Knutson will be briefed as soon as Ehler has more information.

12. Action Items for February.

- a. Visit both Gazebo and Skyline Parks.
- b. Comprehensive Plan - Parks Section

13. Future Agenda Items. None.

14. Adjournment. Motion by Ehler, second by Butler to adjourn at 6:32 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting on February 7, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall (2800 Ward Ave, La Crosse, WI 54601)

Respectfully Submitted, Fortune M. Weaver