



Meeting Minutes

Riverwalk Commission

Thursday, April 18, 2024

3:00 PM

Location Change to NEU

Annual AMP Walk (West of Eagle St.)

A. ROLL CALL:

Riverwalk Commission Attendees: Pam Bartlett; John Cuff; Pat Kennedy, Chairman; Tiffani Picco; and Carl Wohlt

Additional Attendees: Tim Ball, GRWA; Grant Cowen, Riverwalk Bicentennial Fund; Rebecca DeLarme, City Staff; Brian Dusak, ERA; Rick Hitchcock, former Riverwalk Commission Chairman; Mary Hamill, ACTF; Stephanie Penick, Riverwalk Foundation; and Carl Peterson, GRWA

B. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Commence Annual Asset Management Plan Walk - Tiffani Picco

Picco guided the group from Farmer's Plaza/Cliff Preston Memorial, along the south side of the river, and continued west to Sindt Woods, returning to Eagle Street on the north side of the river. The following highlights were noted:

1. Farmer's Plaza: Picco advised that Park District staff would be applying wood sealant on the farmer's plow. The handles were replaced a couple of years ago. The plaque was missing and Picco inquired if anyone knew what happened to it. Penick noted it was only missing within the last year and that she has pictures. If it can't be found, it may need to be replaced.
2. Banners and Banner Poles: Picco noted the wear on the banner poles adding they will need to be repainted at some point. She discussed the original design of the poles with the cross arm and how staff would attach the previously used fabric banners at three points, with the fourth point waving in the wind. The fabric banners were fading every year in the summer and were replaced with printed vinyl banners which cost the same and can last up to four or five years. The manufacturer recommended using their banner arms to prevent wind damage so staff is no longer using the cross arm. Picco would like to discuss the possibility of using

a different banner pole, especially if additional banner poles will be added to future sections of the Riverwalk. Peterson asked if the banner holder would break away in high winds. Picco noted it was rigid and didn't move. Wohlt acknowledged the banners with the Riverwalk logo as a historic gateway feature, noting the recent discussions on the South Gateway project.

3. Paddleboat Quarry Overlooks: The overlook area near the Physicians & Dentists Shelter on Eagle Street has been cleared out. Peterson will work with Picco and provide input on landscaping and design.
4. Eagle Street Cantilever: Dusak noted the new steel beam under the bridge that was designed to address the drainage issue that was causing deterioration, and the railing that was redone and repainted, both which were included with the Moser Tower Rehabilitation.
5. Riverwalk Benches: Wohlt inquired how often the Riverwalk benches were refurbished with Picco advising usually once every four years.
6. Retaining Wall near Aurora Avenue: Picco noted Park District staff reset the front section of the retaining wall along Aurora Avenue but that it was leaning more than they are capable of correcting in-house. They removed the top portion of the wall to prevent another layer leaning into the walkway. She noted that some of the blocks further down were crumbling. ERA has monitored the area and Dusak noted in winter when the street is plowed, the snow piles up and the freeze-thaw causes issues. Wohlt inquired about drainage improvements if the existing wall was replaced. Hitchcock inquired about the timing with Dusak noting the idea may be to include repairs when the roadway is scheduled for improvement.
7. Rotary Harmony Park: Picco noted one of the instrument pieces is missing on the Imbarimba and they have a call in to Freenotes on how to repair.
8. Riverwalk Pavers: Hamill inquired about the difference in color of the wavy pavers, noting some were broken and sunken. Picco advised that staff replaces pavers as they are damaged and a safety hazard, not based on appearance, as the paver is no longer made. Some of the changes in color are due to the pavers being installed at a later date such as when Harmony Park was added.

9. Rotary Hill Parking Lot: Picco noted the three new light poles installed by the City last fall. The City plans to patch and crack fill areas of the parking lot and then resurface it in a few years.
10. Netzley Overlook: Picco noted that staff has taken first steps to improve this area, which is part of the Master Plan, by removing declining spruce trees and the overgrown shrubs. The improvements make the area feel safer. Picco mentioned the wildlife in the pond that includes kingfishers, blue herons, cormorants, muskrats, etc.
11. Paddleboat Quarry: Picco discussed the water difference in the Netzley Quarry and Paddleboat Quarry, noting the suspicion is that the paddleboat quarry water is clear due to zebra mussels.
12. Prairie Nature Garden: Picco reviewed the work that began on the Prairie Nature Garden. She noted the signage that was being placed in areas of improvement along the Riverwalk which directs visitors to the Park District's website for more information.
13. Grand Pavilion Parking and Plaza: Kennedy discussed the primary drivers of this Master Plan project, noting that parking improvements could be more environmentally friendly and, as the highest traffic area for events on the Riverwalk, extending pavers to stage events and other improvements could eliminate the maintenance issues with the surrounding lawn area. He noted that everything in the Master Plan is conceptual and the group should continue to think about other elements that would make these projects more consistent with our environmental, capacity, and accessibility goals for the Riverwalk. Picco noted the roof repairs on the pavilion and that the shingles now match. The pillars have been pressure washed and their Trades Department will be working to fill the cracks in the concrete.
14. Riverbank Ecological Restoration: The group discussed the erosion at the river bend near Jefferson Avenue and the fish lunger that was part of a past streambank stabilization project. The City's DPW department was unable to remove the object but bent it back down and filled the area with riprap in 2022. Peterson inquired about placing a rail in the area for safety with Picco noting they could place their traditional bollards with chains.
15. Retaining Walls/Low-flow Walkway near Park District Building: Picco pointed out the condition of the low-flow concrete walkway in Section 3, east of the metal bridge, which she would like to discuss further at an upcoming PDC Committee meeting. The water passes through the berm in certain areas, possibly from a

burrowing animal. The path is becoming narrower and stones have been lost underneath the concrete. There is a trip hazard where the low-flow walkway has shifted to the left of the stairs near the Oliver Hoffman Pavilion.

16. Eagle Street Gateway Project: The group discussed the design improvements to the area and the landscaping improvements for the area underneath the Oliver Hoffman Pavilion.

C. ADJOURNMENT:

The walk ended at 5:02 p.m.