

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MEETING October 24, 2023
MINUTES

The October 24, 2023, meeting of the Parks and Natural Resources Committee was called to order in city hall at 6:30 p.m.

Attendees: Council Member Justin McCarthy, Council Member Kathy Weier, Committee Members Zachary Michalk, Mary Sue Simmons, Jennifer Arsenault, and Alan Mitchell.

Others: Barton Winter and Randy Lafoy

Agenda. The agenda was adopted unanimously.

Minutes. The September 2023 Minutes were adopted unanimously.

Public Forum. The committee decided to hold a Public Forum to allow Barton Winter to speak at the beginning of the meeting. Winter had a number of comments about the hockey rink. He said he had talked to Jim Rydeen (city employee) and learned that a number of boards had been replaced and Winter said “that’s great.” Winter also mentioned that there was a birch tree by the warming house that was in the way and should be cut down or at least cut back. He said that the tree is located in a place where the snow piles up.

Randy Lafoy showed up around 6:40.

Winter then commented about Bloomquist Park and the tennis courts. Winter thought the courts looked okay but he would check out whether the tiles are the same on both sides of the net.

Winter commented that the sign at Curt Feistner Beach was down and he thought that access to the beach was a problem. McCarthy said that access to the beach was difficult and that the city would have to build a staircase to the beach to allow safe access and that there was no money for that at this time. Winter noted that he would like to see a staircase at some time. Winter also pointed out a typo in the August Minutes that the beach was mistakenly called the Craig Feistner Beach, and he went on to add that Curt Feistner was a West Point graduate.

Winter said that he would like to see some improvement in the surface of the pleasure rink, that it was not level and was difficult to flood. Lafoy explained that the city had examined the hockey rink several years ago and learned that the

surface is not really flat. Winter asked if a white surface would be possible at the pleasure skating rink next to the warming house. The committee discussed the fact that the area of the pleasure rink is a wet area and a solid surface is not feasible

Winter left the meeting around 6:50.

Lafoy said he appreciated the fact that the city had installed a railing on Owl Street.

Lafoy said he had come to the meeting at the request of the city council to talk about the Lift Station on Wildwood Ave. by his house. Lafoy said that the generator needs some kind of painting or wrap since it is unsightly, particularly when the leaves have fallen. He commented that a new pit is being installed so no work on the generator is possible at the moment and action should wait until spring. Lafoy said he would talk to his neighbors and solicit ideas and maybe volunteer help and report back in early spring.

Lafoy also informed the committee that there were a couple of areas at Birch Beach that could use some attention to remove some stumps and crud on both sides of the beach near the lakeshore. He said cleanup of these areas would increase the size of the beach that is useable. Lafoy showed some photos he took to demonstrate the areas he was concerned about and a schematic he prepared. (One photo and the schematic are attached to the Minutes.) The committee decided to add this matter to the November agenda.

Lafoy left around 6:55 and the committee returned to its agenda.

Overgrown Arborvitaes. Weier gave a background about the need to consider trimming around the hockey rink. The committee discussed that the trees and brush around the rink provided privacy for the neighbors, perhaps prevented pucks from flying outside the rink area, and shielded the neighbors from the lights at night. The committee decided that Weier should arrange with the city to trim the arborvitaes but not remove them. Arsenault volunteered to trim the birch tree.

Conservation. This discussion was combined with the following item.

Tighe-Schmitz Park. The committee reviewed the schematic of the park prepared by Lori Tella of the Washington Conservation District, showing various options for different parts of the park. (A copy is attached.) Simmons reported that Tella would like to meet with the Parks Committee in an upcoming meeting prior to any public forum next spring, and the committee wholeheartedly agreed. Arsenault

reported that she inspected the Lions Club Park in Hugo and found that it had good playground equipment, including some that were designed for children with handicaps. Weier reminded the committee that there could be grants available for the purchase of playground equipment.

City Code Review. McCarthy reported that the city council passed the amendments to chapter 607 of the code relating to the City Park System that the committee had recommended, with some changes, including the deletion of the prohibition of fishing at Kay Beach. The committee expressed disappointment that the council had struck the fishing prohibition provision.

Public Signs on Public Beaches. Arsenault handed out some diagrams of proposed signs for the public beaches and Bloomquist and Tighe-Schmitz parks. (These are attached to the Minutes.) The committee discussed that the County Sheriff has expressed a desire to cite the city code provision on the sign. Simmons volunteered to follow up on how much it will cost to get the signs made. The committee is hoping to finalize the sign language at its November meeting and to have the signs ready for posting in the spring. The committee indicated that it was uncertain about the sign for Kay Beach because the committee preferred that it indicate that fishing was prohibited. Arsenault made a motion that the committee express its disagreement with the council's action to delete this prohibition from the chapter 607 amendments the committee had recommended and to ask the council at its November meeting to adopt language in chapter 607 prohibiting fishing at Kay Beach. The motion passed unanimously. Simmons volunteered to appear at the November council meeting and advise the council of the committee's action.

General Maintenance. Weier suggested that it might be a good idea to solicit volunteers to adopt a park, similar to the adopt-a-highway program. The city could put up signs indicating who the people are who have volunteered to be responsible for particular parks or areas. The committee discussed the importance of relying on volunteers.

The committee discussed the schedule for flooding the hockey rink. The committee determined that it would be good if there were written guidelines regarding how frequently to flood the rink, taking into account best practices and budgetary impacts from water use. Michalk volunteered to look into the matter of best practices and report back in November.

McCarthy reported that Jim Rydeen's schedule calls for addressing maintenance issues at Tighe-Schmitz and then at Bloomquist.

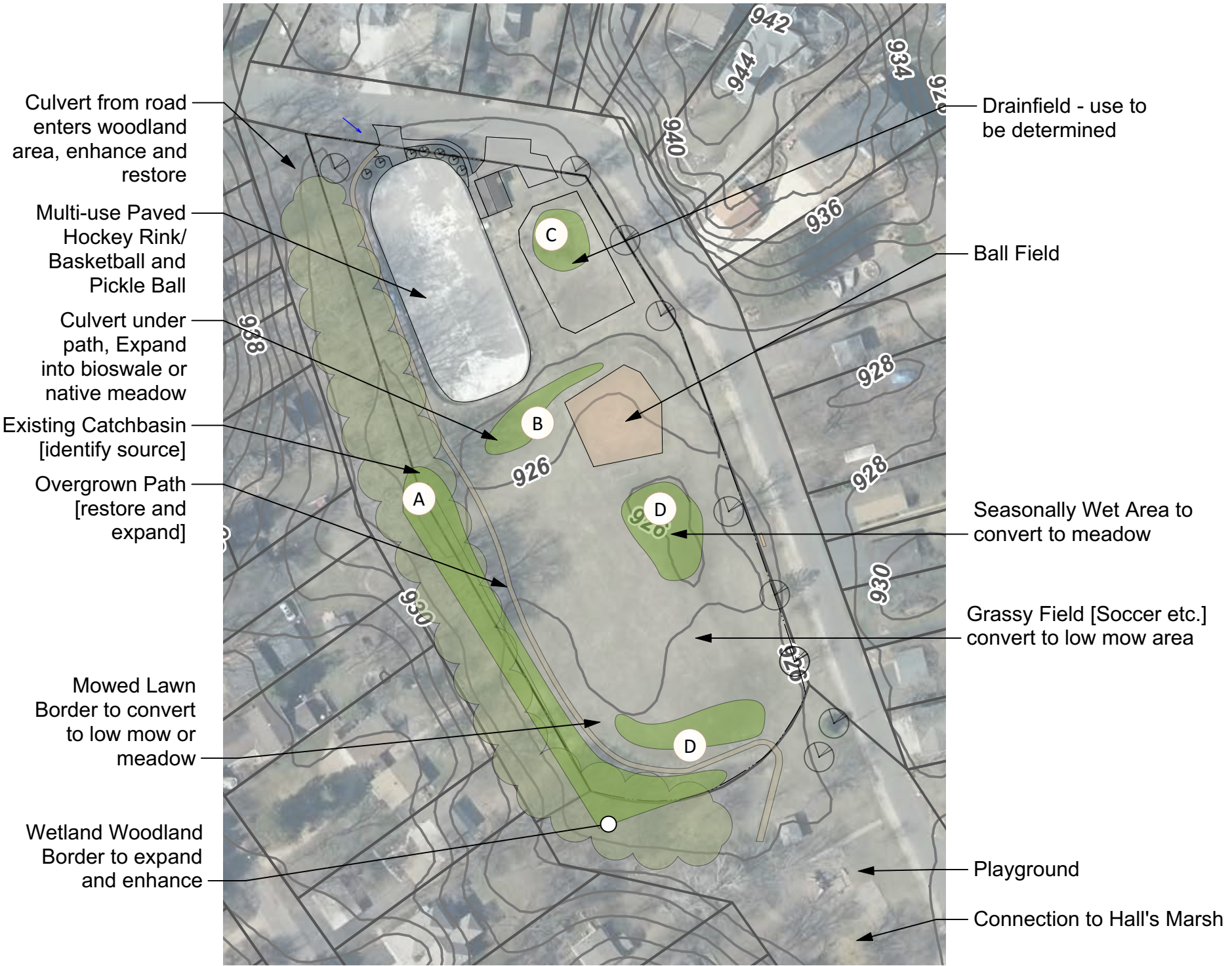
Hall's March MOA. McCarthy and Weier reported that the city is still negotiating with the Rice Creek Watershed District over the MOA involving draining of Preibe Lake.

Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Parks Committee will be November 16. Simmons asked that we include on the November agenda a discussion of the Special Revenue Fund and a discussion about how to communicate with the public.

Adjourn. 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mitchell
Secretary



Culvert from road enters woodland area, enhance and restore

Multi-use Paved Hockey Rink/ Basketball and Pickle Ball

Culvert under path, Expand into bioswale or native meadow

Existing Catchbasin [identify source]

Overgrown Path [restore and expand]

Mowed Lawn Border to convert to low mow or meadow

Wetland Woodland Border to expand and enhance

Drainfield - use to be determined

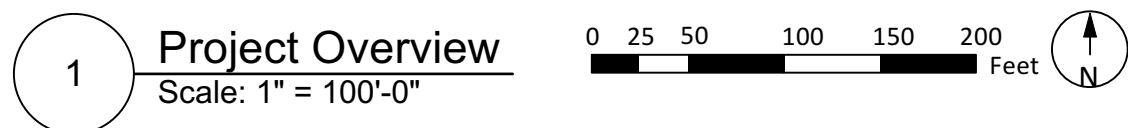
Ball Field

Seasonally Wet Area to convert to meadow

Grassy Field [Soccer etc.] convert to low mow area

Playground

Connection to Hall's Marsh



1 **Project Overview**
Scale: 1" = 100'-0"

PROJECT OVERVIEW:
Goals for this project include reducing maintenance, provide native habitat, filter stormwater runoff, and increase public enjoyment of the space. Challenges to this park are the tendency for saturated soils, uneven establishment of grass, underutilized park features. This project proposal intends to convert areas that tend to hold water to native plantings and propose additional amenities that may enhance use.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Washington Conservation District
455 Hayward Ave N
Oakdale, MN 55128
(651) 330-8220
www.mnwcd.org

plan created by:

Project Address 410 Lake Avenue, Birchwood, MN	Drawn	Reviewed	Revision
Project Manager Lori Tella	Washington Conservation District		

RCWD
RICE CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT
4325 Pheasant Ridge Drive, Suite 611 - Blaine, MN 55449
(763) 398-3070
www.ricecreek.org

Project Title
Tighe-Schmitz Park

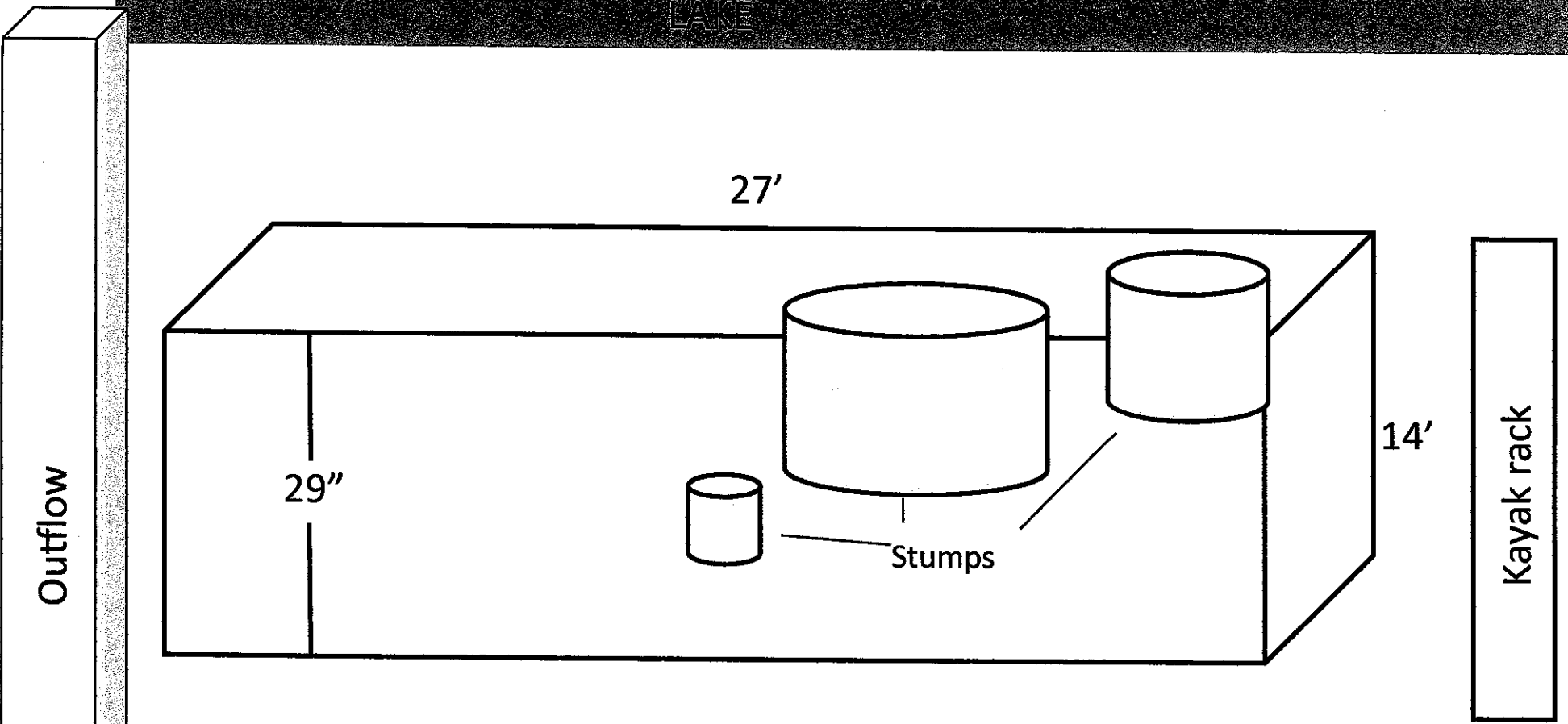
Sheet Title
Project Overview

CAO File Name: P:\A\Tighe-Schmitz WIP.mxd

Date
9/25/23

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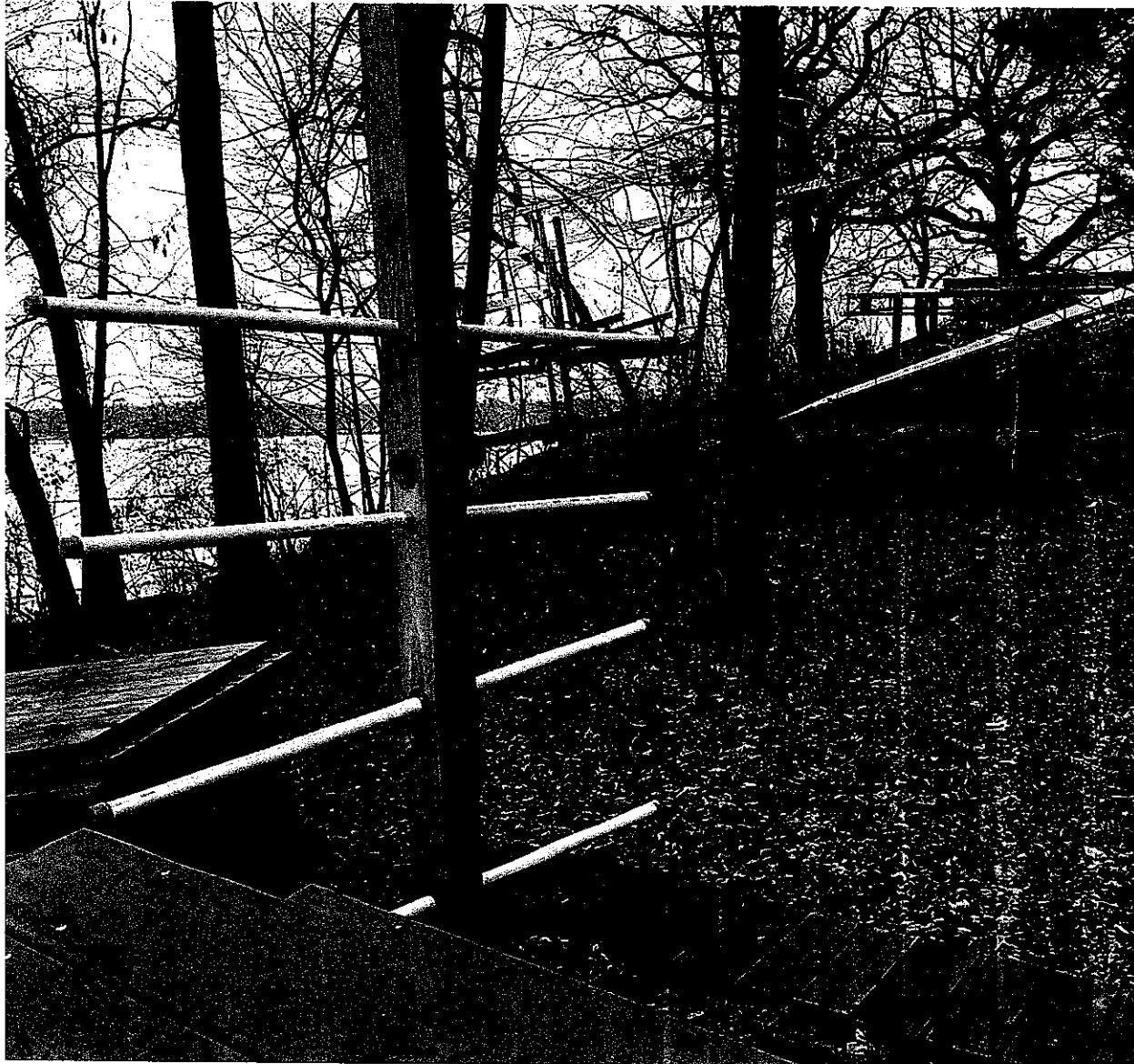


The Village should remove the stumps and dirt buildup on the lake-side/west edge of Birch Beach. The raised portion is about 29" high. If the Village were to remove it, the easement and beach would be opened up for additional use.

Randy LaFoy

10/24/23

The Village might want to look at managing the east edge of the property as well (see picture). If the Village consistently removed the buckthorn and scrub growth, we would add additional swimming/beach area. This area would not need a backhoe. It would just need a clear plan on what the Village wanted. I could help with this east portion.





All Other Beaches
Per Birchwood City Code:

Park Hours 6:00 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

- Swim at your own risk. No lifeguard on duty
- Dogs must be on a leash
- No motorized vehicles on the beach
- Alcohol, smoking, littering, fires, and camping are prohibited

Violations: Call Washington County Sheriff- 651-439-9381



Bloomquist and Tighe-Schmitz
Per Birchwood City Code:

Park Hours 6:00 a.m.- 9:30 p.m.

- Dogs must be on a leash
- Alcohol, littering, fires and camping are prohibited

Violations: Call Washington County Sheriff- 651-439-9381



Kay Beach
Per Birchwood City Code:

Park Hours 6:00 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

- Kay Beach is a swimming only beach
- No dogs allowed
- No motorized vehicles on the beach
- No motorized boats inside buoyed area
- Fishing, alcohol, smoking, littering, fires, and camping are prohibited

Be considerate of neighbors and beach users

Violations: Call Washington County Sheriff- 651-439-9381