August 9, 2012

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AUG 13 2012
MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mayor Don Merkes
Brian Tungate
City of Menasha
140 Main Street
Menasha, WI 54952

HECKRODT WETLAND RESERVE
your nature center for all seasons

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Subject: An update (from HWR's perspective) regarding HWR seeking City of Menasha cooperation in resolving multi-year, worsening problems on the west side of the Reserve with vandalism, HWR rule violations, habitat destruction and people intruding into the (relatively remote) wildlife sanctuary area of the Reserve.

Note: Agreement was not reached about this issue at a June 29, 2012 meeting. No conclusions were reached during a site visit involving B. Tungate, R. Sturm and J. Bartz on August 6, 2012, prior to a City Park Board Meeting scheduled for August 13, 2012, at which time the issue will be discussed.

Dear Mayor Merkes and Brian Tungate:

Please convey the information in this letter to members of your Park Board during a discussion of this subject on August 13, 2012.

The subject problems are very serious, and HWR's Site Committee will soon make recommendations to the HWR Board to proceed with construction of a fence along the entire west side of the Reserve. A trial situation involving posting No Trespassing signs and increased City of Menasha police patrols failed to solve the problems.

No one, including City officials involved to date, can propose an alternative way to solve the problems that HWR is experiencing. A City proposed compromise possibility to build segments of fence at the main problem areas and then add fence segments as needed over the next 5-10 years does not provide a solution to the problems. HWR's experience in dealing with unauthorized entry problems (i.e. barricading such entry places) hasn't worked - Intruders simply relocate their entry locations.

Significant problems along the west line began after the City constructed the bike trail (over 5 years ago). As more and more of the dense underbrush originally in the area was removed (that originally formed a barrier to people), the subject problems have increased. The remoteness of the bike trail loop near the southern portion of the west line attracts law and rule breakers because it is a difficult area for the City Police Department and HWR to police and control. The HWR staff spends dozens of hours annually dealing with the frustrating subject problems.

After the bike trail was installed, the City built an 8'-high chain link fence with barbed wire on top along the west side of the bike trail to protect its assets. Why is it not reasonable for HWR to build a 6'-foot high chain link fence (similar to the City's fence near the bike trail railroad crossing but without barbed wire on top) along the east side of the bike trail to protect HWR's assets from the same problems that the City apparently had or they wouldn't have built their fence ?

HWR is **NOT** a park. It is a reserve. One third of HWR's mission is to preserve the Reserve, which includes maintaining the vegetation (plants - trees, shrubs, grasses, etc.) and maintaining the natural habitat for wildlife. Recent reports of fewer sightings of wildlife in the subject area may well be attributed to constant intrusion by people and by people unleashing their dogs and letting them run free unto the Reserve. With fewer wild animals around, the attraction value for Reserve visitors is diminished, and HWR's nature-oriented programs are compromised (i.e. HWR's winter animal tracking programs need animals to make tracks).

Old correspondence indicates that a condition of the Lopas property acquisition was that the property be used for reserve purposes (versus it being a park).

*****Specifically, HWR is seeking to get City approval for HWR to extend the City's fence from the bike trail railroad crossing area around the bike trail loop to the first yellow property line marker.** The end of the City's fence is about 4' from the edge of the bike trail. The proposed new fence would taper out to be about 15'-18' from the edge of the trail around the loop (about where the existing No Trespassing signs are). This segment of the fence would be constructed on City controlled property, just as the long segment of the bike trail on the north end of the west side is constructed on HWR controlled property.

HWR will continue the fence from the above mentioned yellow post on HWR controlled property, paralleling the east-west portion of the bike trail and along the west side to tie-in with the existing split rail fence near the northwest corner of the Reserve.

*****Please respond to the following:** If the City will provide HWR with about 10-12 used, cedar utility poles for splitting, HWR will extend the existing split-rail fence about even with the northeast corner of the City's chain link fence on the opposite side.

HWR needs the fence (costly as it will be) to protect HWR's assets from a very small segment of the (local) population that choose to disregard laws and rules. Thousands of City of Menasha residents think highly of HWR, its family orientation and its value to the community. The vast majority of HWR's visitors come from the Fox Cities Region and beyond, and they appreciate and respect HWR's rules regarding no bikes, no pets. no smoking, no drugs, no alcohol, etc. Note: HWR draws most of its visitors from beyond Menasha, and many of them patronize local merchants while they are in the area.

HWR has high expectations that the City of Menasha cares about thwarting vandalism, drinking parties, drug dealing, and gang activities wherever they occur in the City of Menasha. **HWR needs the fence.**

Chain link fences do not stop anyone from seeing what's on the other side of it. From the bike trail, one can see the City's operations through the fence, just as anyone on the bike trail will be able to see through the fence that HWR needs on the east side of the trail. Another example: If you sit behind home plate at a baseball game, it is likely that you look through a chain link fence to watch the game, without your thinking about the fence being there for your own protection.

With the proposed HWR fence set back 15'-18' around the bike trail loop, the City could let the grass grow long or plant shrubs in front of the fence (not recommended for safety reasons) if they so chose.

HWR's schedule is to complete the fence before the onset of winter, which is about November 15, 2012. The fence issue will be discussed/acted upon at HWR Board Meetings on August 22 and September 26, 2012, which allows for at least 6 weeks to implement the Board's directives. Hopefully, Brian Tungate (an HWR Director) will be available to attend those important meetings.

In closing, HWR will appreciate the City's cooperation in helping HWR solve the serious subject problems by approving the proposed HWR fence in a timely manner. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Jim Bartz

James E. Bartz, Chairman, Heckrodt Wetland Reserve

Cc: Tracey Koenig, Executive Director
HWR Board Members and F. Heckrodt