



Board of Park Commissioners

335 South Broadway
De Pere, WI 54115
<https://www.deperewi.gov/>

Regular Meeting

Final Minutes

Thursday, July 18, 2024

6:30 PM

Council Chambers and Virtual

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Board Member Randy Soquet

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Melissa Thiel Collar	Board Member	Excused	
Mike Eserkaln	Aldersperson	Excused	
Ryan Jennings	Board Member	Present	
Jim Kneiszel	Board Member	Present	
Amy Chandik Kundering	Aldersperson	Present	
Shana Defnet Ledvina	Aldersperson	Present	
Randy Soquet	Board Member	Present	
Connor Mason	Teen Advisor	Present	
Connor Goodman	Teen Advisor	Present	

Others present:

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry

Mike Thompson, De Pere Youth Hockey

Willie Birkholz, De Pere High School Hockey

David Lepp, De Pere Deacons

Carl Black, Greater Green Bay Figure Skating Club

Don Chilson, Brown County Ice Management

Grace Lahtela, Administrative Assistant

II. Public comment upon matters not on the agenda. Comments made during the public comment period shall pertain only to matters under the jurisdiction of the Board of Park Commissioners. Chapter 6-3(f) DPMC

Ryan Jennings informed the Park Board that this is his last Park Board meeting. Ryan Jennings has been a part of the Park Board for 7 years and is proud of what the park board has accomplished in this time. While on the Park Board, there has been numerous urban orchards planted; the implementation of the community garden; many playground refurbishments; the construction of the VFW Aquatic Facility and the new Nelson Family Pavilion, just to name a few projects. But one of the biggest accomplishments is seeing how well the park department takes care of and maintains the parks with such a limited budget and skyrocketing prices. Ryan stated he is proud to have been part of such a thoughtful group of people, working together for the betterment of parks, and is grateful for the public that attends the meetings and the very generous donors that support the parks.

Randy Soquet, on behalf of the Park Board, thanked Ryan Jennings for his 7+ years on the Park Board.

III. Items

1. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Board of Park Commissioners Minutes from the June 20, 2024 Meeting.

James Kneiszel moved to approve the Board of Park Commissioners minutes from the June 20, 2024 meeting, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kundering. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jim Kneiszel, Board Member
SECONDER:	Amy Chandik Kunding, Alderperson
AYES:	Jennings, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet
EXCUSED:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Mike Eserkahn

2. Farewell from Teen Advisor Connor Goodman.

Connor Goodman stated he has served on the Park Board as a Teen Advisor for the west side for the past 2 years. It has been a great experience to see what processes work and what doesn't. He enjoyed all the meetings and looked forward to them every month. He will take these learning experiences to Purdue University, where he will be studying engineering.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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3. Welcome to Teen Advisor James Lyga.

James Lyga, Teen Advisor from the east side, stated he is looking forward to being on the Park Board. He was a student of Mr. Soquet's and had the opportunity to learn how meetings worked and watch some online. He is excited to be part of the Park Board and is looking forward to helping the community.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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4. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the De Pere Ice Arena Facility Condition Analysis Final Draft.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that the final draft presented has very minor changes from the draft plan reviewed at last month's meeting.

James Kneiszel moved to approve the final draft of the De Pere Ice Arena facility condition analysis, seconded by Alderperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jim Kneiszel, Board Member
SECONDER:	Shana Defnet Ledvina, Alderperson
AYES:	Jennings, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet
EXCUSED:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Mike Eserkahn

5. General Discussion of Ice Arena Facility Condition Analysis.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry provided a general background of the facility, providing a snapshot of the general maintenance and cost history of the facility, the current lease agreement, and the stakeholders of the facility. Marty Kosobucki explained that there have been many repairs to the facility over the years and provided details for repairs back to 2006. Marty explained that with the current lease agreement, the city is responsible for repairs or capital projects over \$10,000, and under \$10,000 is the responsibility of the lessor. Marty reviewed the numerous repairs and improvements that were performed by both the City and Brown County Ice Management.

Marty Kosobucki explained the lease agreement for the Ice Center, with the city owning the building and leases out the operations of the facility. Prior to 2012, Ice Time Management was the lessor of the facility. Per the lease, the management fee to be paid to the city is 50% of the net profits and these funds go into a separate Ice Arena Fund for future repairs and improvements to the facility. The city was responsible for maintenance outside the facility. In 2012, the city rebid the lease agreement and Brown County Ice Management received the contract. Since 2012 there have been 3 different lease amendments and two extensions. The management fee of 50% of net profits is still in effect; and in 2018, due to large chiller plant expenses, there was an hourly surcharge implemented to help offset these expenses. There is another lease agreement in relation to the Ice Arena for the two locker rooms attached to the facility. These locker rooms are currently owned and operated by the De Pere Deacons and the De Pere Voyageur Hockey Club but located on city property.

Marty Kosobucki stated that he reached out to the core user groups to speak regarding the rink and the importance of the facility to them. The core user groups include De Pere Youth Hockey, De Pere Voyageur High School, Greater Green Bay Figure Skating Club, De Pere Deacons, and Brown County Ice Management. Marty Kosobucki emphasized that the item on the agenda tonight is just a discussion item and no decisions will be made tonight on the facility.

Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger moved to open the meeting to public comments at 6:52 pm, seconded by Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mike Thompson representing De Pere Youth Hockey gave a detailed report on the importance of the De Pere Ice Arena to the De Pere Youth Hockey program. Mr. Thompson stated that there are over 200 athletes, both boys and girls between the ages of 4-15, that participate in the program each season. A decade ago, there were fewer than 70 kids in the program. The program supports kids from both the De Pere and West De Pere high school. De Pere Youth Hockey supported implementing the ice surcharges to help pay off the chiller system and is committed to partnering with the city to make advances to the facility.

Willie Birkholz, Board President of the De Pere High School Voyageurs Booster Club gave a detailed report on the importance of the De Pere Ice Arena to the De Pere High School Hockey program. Mr. Birkholz stated that there have been over 40 skates in the high school hockey program in each of the past 10 years. The program uses 14.5 hours of ice time weekly during the season, November – March, with these hours being random due to the limited availability of ice time. Outside of the season, when there is ice at the facility, the program uses roughly 3 hours of ice time per week. The De Pere Voyageurs High School Hockey program is dedicated to working with the city to provide long-term sustainability improvements and help with the long-term planning and fulfillment opportunities at the De Pere Ice Arena.

David Lepp, representing the De Pere Deacons Hockey Team provided a detailed report on the importance of the De Pere Ice Arena to the De Pere Deacons program. Mr. Lepp stated that the De Pere Deacons started playing at the facility in 1977, when the Deacons were part of Ice Time Management. Recently De Pere Deacons entered into a 20-year agreement with the City for the locker rooms, which is a big draw for the area youth. The

De Pere Deacons use the rink from October – March, hosting multiple league tournaments in the facility.

Carl Black, President of the Greater Green Bay Figure Skating Club provided a detailed report on the importance of the De Pere Ice Arena to the GGBFS Club. Mr. Black stated that the club currently has between 40-50 full-time members of the program, which includes both skaters and coaches. The program uses between 2 - 10 hours of ice time per week. Currently the program has 16 coaches and the learn to skate program has over 300 skaters per year. There is a strong desire to do things on ice and the learn to skate programs feeds the club. Shutting down the De Pere Ice Center could end the club, and probably other clubs, as there is not enough ice to support the programming. The GGBFSC hopes that the city will see the value of the programs that use the De Pere Ice Arena and the club is willing to be in the process of keeping the De Pere Ice Arena open.

Don Chilson, Brown County Ice Management, manages the ice at both Cornerstone and the De Pere Ice Arena. Mr. Chilson stated the mission of Brown County Ice Management is to provide ice time for all of Brown County. The De Pere Ice Arena is more than a building, it is a Community Center for all the user groups and is a huge draw to the De Pere area. It is an old building, but it has great bones. It has a lot of old equipment, but everything turns on in the morning. There have been upgrades to the chiller system and the floor, so keeping them operating for the next 10 years should not be a problem. Unfortunately, the ADA compliance issues cannot be dealt with easily because of the constraints of the building. Mr. Chilson explained that all the user groups in Brown County need the ice at the De Pere Ice Center to survive. It is a very loved building and very important for all the user groups.

Ryan Jennings moved to return to regular order at 7:26 pm, seconded by James Kneiszel. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

James Kneiszel questioned the 20-year lease agreement that was mentioned. Marty Kosobucki explained that the 20-year lease agreement is regarding the locker room facility, not the Ice Center. James Kneiszel stated he would like to have a detailed report on who pays for what expenses and what is coming out of city funds. He would also like to know the residency of the user groups' current memberships to see if there could be some type of cooperative agreement drafted between other local municipalities.

Connor Mason compared the Ice Center to the two pools and questioned if the City contributes funds to the pools. Marty Kosobucki stated that the value the pools and the Ice Center add to quality of life within the city are comparable; however, the facilities are funded completely differently. The pools and the operating costs to run the pools are completely funded through a referendum that was passed by the city residents. Alderperson Defnet Ledvina stated that prior to the referendum the entire subsidy was completely funded by the city.

Ryan Jennings stated that the current surcharge was a positive addition to the funding of the Ice Center, and it would be helpful for the user groups to help fundraise for improvements to the facility.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina questioned what the next step of this process would be. Marty Kosobucki stated he would look for the Park Board's direction on what they would

like to do. There are a number of directions that the Park Board could decide on: they could elect to do nothing and wait until the next big item breaks; look at closing the facility due to all the necessary repairs; sell the facility; demolish the facility and start over; or rip off the front of the building and rebuild as this will solve 99% of the ADA compliance issues. Ripping off the front of the building is probably the wisest choice, but how to get the funding for the project is a whole different discussion. Ultimately, the Park Board will need to decide what direction to pursue.

Randy Soquet stated that a key piece to this topic is to keep the user groups informed and what they want and what they are willing to do.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunderling stated that all facilities do not need to generate revenue for the City, but it is what type of risk the City wants to take on versus what type of reward and benefit the facility is to the community.

Marty Kosobucki stated that he will do the research requested and probably bring the topic back as a discussion item. This will allow to continue with information gathering until the Park Board is ready to move forward in a direction.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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IV. Future Agenda Items

None

V. Adjournment

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 pm, seconded by Ryan Jennings. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lahtela