



# Board of Park Commissioners

## Regular Meeting

## Minutes

335 South Broadway  
De Pere, WI 54115  
[www.deperewi.gov](http://www.deperewi.gov)

Thursday, February 20, 2025

6:30 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers 335 S.  
Broadway, De Pere, Wisconsin  
54115

### I. Call to Order

Randy Soquet called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

**Present:** Melissa Thiel Collar, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters, James Lyga

**Remote:** Jim Kneiszel

**Excused:** Connor Mason

Others Present:

Marty Kosobucki, Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Director

Paula Rahn, Recreation Superintendent

Betty Marovich, Administrative Assistant/Recording Secretary

### II. Public Comment on 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. §6-3(f) DPMC

None

### III. Items

#### 1. Welcome to New Board of Park Commissioners Member Elizabeth McMasters

Randy Soquet welcomed the new Board of Park Commissioners Member Elizabeth McMasters.

#### 2. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Board of Park Commissioners Minutes from the January 16, 2025 meeting.

Melissa Thiel Collar moved to approve the Board of Park Commissioners minutes from the January 16, 2025 meeting, seconded by Amy Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Melissa Thiel Collar                                                                                             |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Amy Kunding                                                                                                      |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters |

#### 3. Consideration and Possible Action from the Celebrate De Pere Committee for Using and Waiving the Fees for the Nelson Family Pavilion for Celebrate De Pere \*

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that historically the city has waived all fees for Celebrate De Pere, and normally we would not bring this item to the Park Board for approval. This year, with the addition of the Nelson Family Pavilion, and Celebrate De Pere requesting a fee waiver for the facility, staff felt this request is substantially different from previous waivers and would like the Park Board to review the request.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding moved to approve the request from the Celebrate De Pere Committee to waive the fees for the use of the Nelson Family Pavilion during Celebrate De Pere, seconded by Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to open the meeting at 6:33 pm, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Gerard Ambrosius and Amy Keehan from Celebrate De Pere explained to the Park Board how the Committee planned to use the Nelson Family Pavilion during the event. Amy Keehan explained that they planned on using the pavilion as a VIP Sponsorship Oasis. Event sponsors would be given a ticket to get into the VIP area. This would showcase the building to those who support Celebrate De Pere.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding asked if the bathrooms would still be open to the public. Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that the external bathrooms are closed for the event and Celebrate De Pere brings in portable toilets. The city prefers this to prevent vandalism to the restrooms. Amy Keehan from Celebrate De Pere stated that they would like access to the two restrooms facing the bowl and the Celebrate De Pere Committee would make sure the restrooms are clean and taken care of. Marty Kosobucki stated that this can be discussed as part of the Special Event Permit process.

James Kneiszel stated he is in favor of the waiver, but would ask Celebrate De Pere to consider allowing other attendees into the pavilion. For many people in De Pere, this will be the first opportunity for them to see the building and feels it sends a bad message to close off the building to just VIP members.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to close the meeting to public comment at 6:37 pm, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Upon vote, the motion to approve the fee waiver passed unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Amy Kunding                                                                                                      |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Shana Ledvina                                                                                                    |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters |

4. Consideration & Possible Action to Change Cancellation Policy for Community Center Rentals

Paula Rahn, Recreation Superintendent, outlined the current policy and proposed changes. The current cancellation policy is if the rental is canceled within a two-week period a full refund would be given. With the new software system, rentals cannot be booked online in this two-week window. In order for a renter to book a room during this period, they would need to call the office. Opening up this cancellation period to 30 days would allow a greater opportunity to rent a room that was canceled.

Melissa Thiel Collar questioned if the cancellation does not go into the system. Paula Rahn explained that

with the software system, rentals are blocked off two weeks prior. This allows staff the ability to schedule facility attendants for the rentals. When the rental is canceled in this two-week timeframe, staff can see that the room is now available, but renters would not see it as available online. The only way for a renter to rent a room in the two weeks prior to the date would be to call the office to see if the date is available.

Randy Soquet moved to approve the staff-recommended changes to the cancellation policy for Community Center rentals, seconded by Alderperson Eserkaln. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Randy Soquet                                                                                                     |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Mike Eserkaln                                                                                                    |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters |

5. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve a Late Fee Policy for Kidz Zone & Summer Camp Programs

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the staff recommended late fee policy for Kidz Zone and Summer Camp Programs, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Randy Soquet questioned if this happens often. Paula Rahn, Recreation Superintendent, stated it does not happen often, but with the old software system, staff could automatically draft from an account. With the new software system, an invoice needs to be sent and paid by the customer and this is causing more delinquencies.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Shana Ledvina                                                                                                    |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Amy Kunding                                                                                                      |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters |

6. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Adding Voyageur Park as a Summer Meal Program Location on the East Side

Randy Soquet moved to approve adding Voyageur Park as a summer meal program location on the east side of De Pere, seconded by Alderperson Defnet Ledvina.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina stated she has received comments from a few district employees that the city might not be in support of this move. Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that he has also received some calls in the last couple of days and has no idea where this indication came from. Staff supports this change, but there will be a significant increase in the allocation of resources that will be needed to support this move. With these additional resources required, Park Board approval is necessary.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina questioned what the significant increase in resources would entail. Marty Kosobucki explained that currently garbage is collected 2-3 times per week at the park. With the addition of the meal program, every day collection will be required.

Upon vote, the motion to approve adding Voyageur Park as a summer meal program location on the east side was approved unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Randy Soquet                                                                                                     |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Shana Ledvina                                                                                                    |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters |

7. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Adopt-a-Launch Program at Perkofski Boat Launch

Alderperson Chandik Kunding moved to approve adding the Adopt-a-Launch program at Perkofski Boat Launch, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar.

Randy Soquet questioned if this program was at any other boat launches. Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that this program is located at both of the other launches in the city.

Upon vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                        |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Amy Kunding                                                                                                      |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Melissa Thiel Collar                                                                                             |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters |

8. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Playground Proposal for Rainbow Park

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, gave a brief explanation of the playground proposals and addressed some of the resident input from the survey. First, there were quite a few resident comments requesting additional swings. The current proposal has a five-swing bay, which is consistent with other playgrounds of this size. To get additional swings, there would need to be an additional swing bay added to the proposal. Although the additional bay would not be that costly, it would require additional playground surfacing, which would cost an additional \$5,000 - \$10,000. There were also comments requesting additional shade structures. Currently, the parks tend to use trees as a shade mechanism and not shade structures, which requires additional maintenance and cost. Additional seating was also requested in the resident input. The proposals required one bench to be included in the design. Typically, the area around the playgrounds is kept open for optional memorial benches. There are also picnic tables that are located in the parks that can be utilized. There were also comments made that some structures had a lot of climbing events, which are not conducive for younger children.

Marty Kosobucki stated that the approved budget for the playground replacement is \$150,000. Although staff will not make a recommendation on what playground to approve, Marty did provide a summary of each proposal. Lee #1 has a projected cost of \$143,000 with 15 play events, 6 elevated and 9 on the ground, with one bench. Lee #2 has a projected cost of \$146,000 with 19 play events, 6 elevated and 13 on the ground, with one bench. MWP #1 has a projected cost of \$142,000 with 19 play events, 10 elevated and 9 on the ground, with 2 benches. MWP #2 has a projected cost of \$149,000 with 18 play events, 10 elevated and 8 on the ground, with one bench. Northland has a projected cost of \$151,000 with 19 play events, 11 elevated and 8 on the ground, with one bench.

Marty Kosobucki explained that Northland Recreation's proposal came in over budget and feels like this one should be eliminated. MWP #2 is under budget, but due to the lack of interest from the community survey, he feels like this one should also be eliminated. The three remaining proposals are all very viable options. Lee #2 does have a lot of climbing features which younger kids cannot effectively use, but received the most points from the public survey. MWP #1 has the lowest survey points from the public, but has the most play events, includes two benches, and is the cheapest.

Randy Soquet questioned the total square footage of the current playground at Rainbow Park. Marty Kosobucki stated that it is approximately 3,000 square feet.

Melissa Thiel Collar moved to open the meeting to public comment at 6:57 pm, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Melissa Signoretti stated she lives across from the park. This park is heavily used by a wide range of kids and there are a lot of community and neighborhood events that take place there. She stated that the covered structures lead to vandalism. She has a background in therapy and feels Lee #2 is an awesome option for kids, even younger ones, because kids need a level of risk. There are not just young kids in the neighborhood, there are teenagers around as well. She also stated it would be nice to see a basketball hoop or a gaga ball pit being incorporated into the park at some time.

Melissa Thiel Collar moved to close the meeting to public comment at 7:01 pm, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

James Lyga, Teen Advisor, questioned why the proposals were requested for the 5-12 age range. Marty Kosobucki stated that the industry standard for playgrounds is for ages 5-12, or under 5. The play equipment for kids under 5 is incredibly small and that type of equipment does not suit the majority of the residents. All the play structures in the city are for the 5-12 age range, except at Voyageur Park there is an additional play structure specifically for children under 5.

Elizabeth McMasters stated that she studied all the proposals submitted. Her children are just getting out of toddler range. At first glance, she wasn't sure of Lee #2 with all the climbing structures, but the more she looked at it, many of the structures are low to the ground so young toddlers could reach them. With Lee #1, the structures are up higher, which would require parents to climb up onto the equipment with the younger kids. She feels the kids will be very excited to see something new and different in the parks.

Randy Soquet moved to approve the Lee Option #2 proposal for the Rainbow Park playground, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kunding.

Marty Kosobucki questioned if Randy Soquet wanted to include color options with the motion or for staff to bring back options next month. Randy Soquet requested staff to bring back options next month.

Randy Soquet questioned the timeline for the project to be completed. Marty Kosobucki estimated that the equipment should be ready by the middle to end of September, with the old equipment being removed in July.

Upon vote, the motion to approve Lee Option #2 for the Rainbow Park playground was approved unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b> | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b> |
| <b>MOVER:</b>  | Randy Soquet              |

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| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Amy Kunding                                                                                                         |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina,<br>Amy Kunding, Elizabeth McMasters |

9. Consideration and Possible Action on Approving a Park Naming Policy \*

Randy Soquet moved to open the meeting to public comment at 7:08 PM, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Joe Nicks stated that upon review of the parks, it appears that the Park Board has jurisdiction of 38 parks in the city and none of them are named after women and, up to this point, the naming rights to a park have never been sold. Currently, the parks are all named after service groups or great people of the City of De Pere that have done good things. Mr. Nicks does not like the idea of a park named after a donor, or putting the naming rights of a park up for sale. If the Park Naming Policy gets approved, he would like the renaming of Wilson Park to be considered. James Hughes was a very significant member of the community, who is not well recognized, but deserves recognition. Looking at the criteria in the Park Naming Policy, Woodrow Wilson does not meet the criteria, but James Hughes does. There has been some discussion with the De Pere Historical Society and the Historic Preservation Committee about renaming Wilson Park, which would probably be addressed if it gets to a point where park improvements are made. Mr. Nicks also does not agree with the idea of the naming or renaming of a park needing a unanimous vote. Current policy for the park board and city council is for items to be approved, or denied, with a majority vote.

Aldersperson Hansen agreed with Mr. Nicks regarding the unanimous vote requirement, stated there are very few situations that arise at common council where a 2/3 majority vote is even required. Requiring a unanimous vote would not align with current policy. Aldersperson Hansen also mentioned that there has been some discussion with the Historical Preservation Committee over the renaming of Wilson Park after James Hughes. If Wilson Park is redesigned, hopefully the renaming of the park is considered. Aldersperson Hansen also commented that some of the language in the policy is strong.

Randy Soquet moved to close the meeting to public comment at 7:17 PM, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Melissa Thiel Collar stated that she was the one that requested a Park Naming Policy be established to give the Park Board some guidance when naming a park. Without guidance, there is nothing to help guide the park board when it comes time to name a new park. Melissa feels that section c of the renaming policy that requires a unanimous decision should be removed from the policy. When it comes to naming a park, budgets are tight and donors arise. She feels it needs to be addressed in the policy when a donor should be considered for park naming rights. She feels the language in the policy is very good and that only under dire circumstances should a park ever be considered to be renamed. Renaming parks should be a last resort because there were historical reasons and significance at the time when the park was named and changing what predecessors had decided can lead to issues.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina agrees that section c under renaming of parks should be removed.

James Kneiszel stated he feels renaming of parks as an option should be removed entirely from the Park Naming Policy. He feels our predecessors named a park for a reason and there should be no real mechanism to rename it unless something very serious happened, and this could be addressed on an individual basis. He appreciates the rest of the policy and the guidance it will provide, but recommends striking the last section of the policy entirely.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunderinger feels the renaming portion of the policy should remain, but would recommend section c under the renaming policy, requiring unanimous approval, be removed.

Melissa Thiel Collar moved to approve the Park Naming Policy, with removing subsection c, under item B of the park renaming section of the policy, seconded by Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed, with James Kneiszel voting no.

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|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed</b>                                                                                          |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Melissa Thiel Collar                                                                                   |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Shana Ledvina                                                                                          |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunderinger, Elizabeth McMasters |
| <b>NAYS:</b>     | Jim Kneiszel                                                                                           |

10. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve 3-Yr. Agreement with MultiMedia Channels LLC for Brochure Advertising, Design & Distribution \*

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the 3-year agreement with MulitMedial Channels LLC for brochure advertising, design, and distribution, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                            |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Shana Ledvina                                                                                                        |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Randy Soquet                                                                                                         |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunderinger, Elizabeth McMasters |

11. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Kay Distributing as Beer Distributor for 2025 Beer Gardens \*

Aldersperson Chandik Kunderinger moved to approve Kay Distributing as the beer distributor for the 2025 Beer Gardens, seconded by Aldersperson Eserkaln. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| <b>RESULT:</b>   | <b>Passed (UNANIMOUS)</b>                                                                                            |
| <b>MOVER:</b>    | Amy Kunderinger                                                                                                      |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> | Mike Eserkaln                                                                                                        |
| <b>AYES:</b>     | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kunderinger, Elizabeth McMasters |

IV. Staff Updates

1. Staff Update on Individual Sponsorship of \$750 from Immel Construction Inc. for June 10, 2025 Beer Garden event

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated Immel Construction has agreed to sponsor the June 10, 2025 beer garden event for \$750.

2. Staff Update on Individual Sponsorship of \$750 from IEI General Contractors, Inc. for June 24, 2025 Beer Gardens

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry stated that IEI General Contractors agreed

to sponsor the June 24, 2025 beer garden for \$750.

3. Staff Update on an Individual Sponsorship of \$750 from GRAEF for August 5, 2025 Beer Gardens

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry stated that GRAEF has agreed to sponsor the August 5, 2025 beer garden event for \$750.

4. Recommendation from Board of Public Works to Subsidize Street Tree Costs

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that Alderperson Hansen requested a proposal for the city to start subsidizing the cost of planting terrace trees. The Board of Public Works approved the proposal for the city to cover any additional cost of street trees planting in excess of \$100 per tree. This will need to be incorporated into the Forestry budget for 2025 and, if approved during the budget process, the policy will be activated.

5. Staff Update on Holiday Light Show.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that the Holiday Light Show was a wonderful event again this year. There were over 3,600 cars that went through the show, and over 300 people participated in the walking event this year. Even though the traffic authorities declared a tow ban and the horse-drawn carriage rides could not happen, the new walking event was still a success. The agreement with Fox Community Credit Union for the event is now complete and staff is working with them to try to incorporate additional activities for future events.

#### V. Future Agenda Items

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry stated that the 7-year CIP will be presented at the March Park Board meeting.

#### VI. Adjournment

Elizabeth McMasters moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM, seconded by Alderperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Grace Lahtela, Administrative Assistant