



Board of Park Commissioners

Regular Meeting

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

Final Minutes

Thursday, November 21, 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	Present	
Mike Eserkaln	Aldersperson	Present	
Jim Kneiszel	Board Member	Present	
Amy Chandik Kunding	Aldersperson	Present	
Shana Defnet Ledvina	Aldersperson	Present	
Randy Soquet	Board Member	Present	
Connor Mason	Teen Advisor	Present	
James Lyga	Teen Adviser	Present	

Others present:

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry; Chase Kuffel, Assistant City Engineer; Paula Rahn, Recreation Superintendent; Rachel Quintas, Brown County Extension; and 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

None

III. Action Items

1. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Board of Park Commissioners Minutes from the September 19, 2024 Meeting.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the Board of Park Commissioners minutes from the September 19, 2024 meeting, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Shana Defnet Ledvina, Aldersperson
SECONDER:	Amy Chandik Kunding, Aldersperson
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

2. Consideration and Possible Action on Pollinator Gardens at De Pere Parks

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the pollinator gardens, abutting the City's Urban Orchards, in Braisher, Samantha, VFW and Voyageur Parks, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Shana Defnet Ledvina, Alderperson
SECONDER:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Board Member
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

3. Consideration/Possible Action to Accept \$1000 Donation from Greta Johnson for CC Chairs/Tables*

Alderperson Chandik Kunding moved to accept a \$1,000 donation from Greta Johnson for chairs and tables at the Community Center, seconded by James Kneiszel. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Amy Chandik Kunding, Alderperson
SECONDER:	Jim Kneiszel, Board Member
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

4. Consideration and Possible Action to Accept a \$2500 Donation from Wochinske Family Foundation to Recreation Scholarship Fund*

Alderperson Chandik Kunding moved to accept a \$2,500 donation from the Wochinske Family Foundation for the Recreation Scholarship Fund, seconded by Alderperson Eserkaln. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Amy Chandik Kunding, Alderperson
SECONDER:	Mike Eserkaln, Alderperson
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

5. Consideration & Possible Action to Approve Changes to Recreation Scholarship Program*

James Kneiszel moved to approve the recommended changes to the Recreation Scholarship Program, seconded by Randy Soquet.

Paula Rahn, Recreation Superintendent explained that the recommended changes are to increase the allotment allowed for families to \$130, which would cover the increased cost of a family pool membership. Also to change the eligibility to all residents of the City of De Pere, not just youth. Staff is seeing an increase in the financial need from the adult and senior population. The final change is just a clarification because it wasn't listed in the policy and is to add that scholarships are available for sports programs and leagues and player fees for adult leagues.

Upon vote, the above motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jim Kneiszel, Board Member
SECONDER:	Randy Soquet, Board Member
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

6. Consideration/Possible Action to Approve Special Programming for Nelson Pavilion*

Randy Soquet moved to approve special programming options for the Nelson Family Pavilion, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Randy Soquet, Board Member
SECONDER:	Amy Chandik Kunding, Alderperson
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

7. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Changes in the Ash Tree Grant.*

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the recommended changes to the Ash Tree Grant, seconded by Randy Soquet.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that the original ash grant stated that for every two ash trees a resident lost, they would be eligible for one free replacement tree. Currently all residents that lost trees that would be eligible for free trees have been offered this incentive and we still have trees available. With the recommended changes, now all residents that lost an ash tree would be eligible for the free replacement tree and if they already received free trees, they would be eligible for the difference.

James Kneiszel questioned if this would be for any ash trees removed or just terrace trees. Marty Kosobucki clarified that it pertains only to ash trees in the terrace that were lost.

Randy Soquet questioned the number of trees that were remaining. Marty Kosobucki stated that there are approximately 200 free trees remaining with the grant.

Upon vote, the above motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Shana Defnet Ledvina, Alderperson
SECONDER:	Randy Soquet, Board Member
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

8. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the 2023-2024 Year End Financial Statements for the De Pere Ice Arena.

Randy Soquet questioned the timing of the financials. Grace Lahtela stated that we had them in the office for a little while, but we were waiting on the narrative was missing, which was recently received.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the 2023-2024 Year End Financial Statements for the De Pere Ice Arena, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Shana Defnet Ledvina, Alderperson
SECONDER:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Board Member
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Eserkaln, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet

IV. Discussion Items

1. Update from Brown County on the Community Garden at Lions Trailside Park for 2024
Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that Rachel Quintas from Brown County Extension put together a report which is in the board packet, but she is also available here tonight if you have any questions.

Rachel Quintas for Brown County Extension commented that the season was much quieter than last season. The biggest issues this season were weather. It was a very wet spring, which led to flooding and three plots being unusable due to standing water. Gardeners reported that there was less produce this season, but there were still alright with the produce and production. The flooding issues made the staff and gardeners question the best land management practices to help with drainage so crops do not suffer and to make the best soils for planting. They are looking at doing some cover cropping and putting in crops to help with the soil. Although the weather produced soil issues, it brought a lot of learning experiences and land management practices that will positively affect the gardeners in the future.

Randy Soquet questioned if there were any issues brought forward from the nearby residents. Rachel Quintas stated that she heard one issue and immediately went to check out the gardens and from her perspective they looked good.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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2. Discussion Regarding Future Planning of Southwest Park.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that a while back there was a request for a sandpit volleyball court at Southwest Park. At that time, the park board wanted to look to develop a park improvement plan, instead of just putting amenities out there. In the packet, there is an outline of the park. The park is extremely large, but there is not a lot of programmable open space for new things to be added. There is a large, wooded area that is unprogrammed, but there is a creek that runs through the wooded area that would make it difficult to develop. There is also the area near the parking lot, which is where the old homestead was located, but it contains a silo and a well, which may lead to some development issues. Staff is looking for some guidance in how the park board would like to approach any additional park programming. Staff could reach out to residents to see what they would like to see added to the park, or staff could internally put together some suggestions and bring it back to park board for recommendations.

James Kneiszel questioned what is in the upper area of the park. Marty Kosobucki explained that there is a retention pond in that area and the other area is low and wooded. He also stated that the city is only one property lying between the park and Creamery Road.

James Kneiszel questioned the area on the drawing that is allotted for a disc golf course and if this area would allow a course similar to the one at Legion Park. Marty Kosobucki explained that the area allotted at Southwest Park is much smaller than the area at Legion Park. This one would be considered a pocket course, more like a beginner course with training holes, not a competition course. There have been many requests for a disc golf course on the west side since the one at Legion went in.

Connor Mason, Teen Advisor, questioned how often all the soccer fields are used. He played soccer at the park, at most four of the fields were being used at a time. Marty Kosobucki explained that there are restrictions when it comes to the soccer fields at Southwest Park. The large six fields are under an agreement with De Pere Select and Rec soccer, and the fields are rotated so they do not get destroyed and there is an ability to rest the fields. The practice soccer field was established with a donation, so that area needs to stay as a practice field. The only field that is not tied to some type of agreement is field 7, which is located by the parking lot. Both soccer groups use this field as well.

James Lyga, Teen Advisor, commented on the parking issues during special events and if the spectators can park on the main street by the park. Marty Kosobucki stated that there is no parking allowed along Lawrence Drive because there is no curb along the street. Per city policy, if a road does not have a curb, there is no parking allowed along the street. The participants park in the neighborhood streets and cross Lawrence Drive which is not ideal. This is why he is proposing some type of parking in the old homestead area.

Marty Kosobucki stated he included a pickleball court because that is the hottest activity right now and there would be room for a pickleball court and some additional parking in the allotted area.

Alderperson Chandik Kunding stated that she prefers to ask the community for comments on projects, but due to the limited space it might be best for staff to make recommendations. Marty Kosobucki stated that community input can still be requested after staff drawings are done.

James Kneiszel questioned if there is any potential for another disc golf course in the city. Marty Kosobucki stated that the west side is very limited. The only park that would have room would be VFW and due to the activity levels at that park there would be concerns to locate one there. Randy Soquet questioned if Patriot Park would be an option. Marty Kosobucki explained that rec soccer uses Patriot Park for soccer. If this ever changed, then Patriot would be a great area for a disc golf course.

Randy Soquet stated that he agrees with Alderperson Chandik Kunding in the fact that if there was more programable space to develop to get community input first, but due to the limited space he feels that it would be best for staff to develop ideas and then get opinions from the community on those ideas.

Marty Kosobucki stated he will move forward with staff developing a conceptual design and then seek community input and bring it back to the park board for recommendations.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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3. Discussion on Naming of New Park in Waterview Heights Subdivision.

Marty Kosobucki stated that in his time with the city he has never been through the naming of a park and wants to get an idea of how the park board would like to pursue the naming of the park in the Waterview Heights Subdivision. Options include reaching out to the community for their input, the park board could come up with ideas, or the park board could defer the naming to council.

Melissa Thiel Collar questioned if there is any policy or guiding principles for naming a park. Marty Kosobucki stated he questioned city administration and the legal department and found out there is no existing policy, and the naming would be up to the park board.

Melissa Thiel Collar questioned the timeline and if there was time to reach out to other municipalities to see if they have any naming policies or renaming of parks. Marty Kosobucki stated that we could reach out to the other communities, but this doesn't happen very often.

James Kneiszel stated there may be some significance to the original land or questioned the ability to sell the naming rights. Melissa Thiel Collar commented if there is a possibility of selling the naming rights then a policy is definitely needed.

Marty Kosobucki stated that staff will check into the historical significance of the property and reach out to other municipalities to see if any have an existing park naming policy.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina questioned how the southern bridge was named. Marty Kosobucki stated that the Mayor and Administrator asked the council members for ideas.

James Lyga, Teen Advisor, questioned how the streets are named. Marty Kosobucki explained that the streets are named from the developer of the subdivision.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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4. Discussion Regarding Waterview Heights Park Development and Master Plan.

Marty Kosobucki explained that last year money was requested to develop a new park in the Waterview Heights Subdivision, which was denied. At the current pace the subdivision is being developed, over half of the lots in the subdivision will be developed by the end of summer. Staff is requesting input on how the park board would like to get a design for the park. Would the park board like to develop a conceptual idea, reach out to the community for their input, or wait until the neighborhood is developed and then reach out to the neighborhood residents for input.

Randy Soquet stated that the city has several existing neighborhood parks and has a good idea of what works the best. He feels that staff should develop a concept and bring it back to park board for review.

Melissa Thiel Collar questioned with Kiwanis Park being in the same vicinity of this park, would this change what the new park would look like. Marty Kosobucki stated that the two parks would be servicing different populations so he doesn't think they would impact each other. Also, there are limitations on what could go into the park because there will not be any parking available.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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V. Staff Updates

1. Staff Update on Donation from De Pere Baseball to Improve Kelly Danen and Southwest Park Baseball Diamonds.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that De Pere Baseball gave a sizable donation for improvements to the baseball fields at Kelly Danen Park. Due to the timing of the work that was to be done, the donation already was approved by Common Council.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

2. Staff Update on Holiday Light Show.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that the Holiday Light Show will begin this year on December 12th with the Mayor taking part in a ceremonial plugging in of the lights at 5:00 pm, followed by a walking only event. During the walking event, the Nelson Family Pavilion will be open, with Santa making an appearance from 5-9 pm. There will also be hot chocolate and other activities, depending on the weather. There are also a few surprises coming out, with a marketing ploy of "It's Coming!"

RESULT: DISCUSSED

3. Staff Update On 2025 Budget.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry stated that the budget has been approved and staff is moving forward with the new projects.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

4. Staff Update on Willems Playground Project.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that Willems Park playground and fall surfacing is complete and operational.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

5. Staff Update on Dog Ordinance.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that the new dog ordinance is now in place and there are people in the parks with dogs. Staff has already received complaints about people in the parks with dogs that are not on a leash.

Jim Kneiszel questioned if there is enough signage at the parks alerting people to the change. Marty Kosobucki explained that there is new signage in the same location as the previous signs were and they are put in key locations where people enter the park. The signs try to hit the main corridors into the parks.

Jim Kneiszel questioned the number of complaints that have been received. Marty Kosobucki stated that there have only been about a half dozen complaints that he is aware of.

Jim Kneiszel questioned if dogs were allowed on the disc golf course at Legion Park. Marty Kosobucki stated that he did not view the disc golf course as an athletic field, so he feels that dogs would be allowed in the disc golf course area.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

VI. Future Agenda Items

None

VII. Adjournment

James Kneiszel moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar.
Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lahtela