



Board of Park Commissioners

Regular Meeting

Minutes

335 South Broadway
De Pere, WI 54115
www.deperewi.gov

Thursday, May 15, 2025

6:30 PM

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

I. Call to Order

Present: Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding, James Lyga

Absent: Mike Eserkalm

Excused: Randy Soquet, Connor Mason

Others Present: Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry; Brian Christnovic, Park Superintendent; Kyle Rouce, Forestry Supervisor; Grace Lahtela, Administrative Assistant

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. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Chairperson of the Board of Park Commissioners

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding moved to elect Randy Soquet as Chairperson of the Board of Park Commissioners, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Amy Kunding |
| SECONDER: | Melissa Thiel Collar |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding |

2. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Vice Chairperson of the Board of Park Commissioners

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to elect James Kneiszel as Vice Chairperson of the Board of Park Commissioners, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Shana Ledvina |
| SECONDER: | Amy Kunding |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy |

Kunding

3. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Board of Park Commissioners Minutes from the March 27, 2025 meeting.

Melissa Thiel Collar moved to approve the Board of Park Commissioners minutes from the March 27, 2025 meeting, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Melissa Thiel Collar |
| SECONDER: | Elizabeth McMasters |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding |

4. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve \$7,500 from an Anonymous Donor for Chairs for Community Center Meeting Rooms *

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding moved to accept a \$7,500 donation from an anonymous donor for chairs for the Community Center meeting rooms, seconded by Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina.

James Kneiszel questioned if there were earlier donations for this project. Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that Paula Rahn, Recreation Superintendent, has been working on donations to purchase the chairs for a while.

Upon vote, the above motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Amy Kunding |
| SECONDER: | Shana Ledvina |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding |

5. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve a Fee Waiver Request from the De Pere Area Chamber of Commerce for the Nelson Family Pavilion for Art in the Park on June 28, 2025 *

This item was referred back to staff at the March 20, 2025 Board of Park Commissioners meeting.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that staff spoke to the Legal Department regarding the fee waiver. Eric Erdman, Assistant City Attorney, provided the attached email regarding the fee waiver request. The recommendation from legal is not changing the fee waiver policy, but if the Park Board is interested in changing the fee, or waiving the fee, the suggestion would be to see how the city can become a sponsor of the event. Marty Kosobucki also stated that there is one difference between this event and other special events. With this event, a rain date is being provided free of charge.

If the Park Board is interested, staff could reach out to the Chamber to see about possibly becoming a sponsor of the event, but then staff would recommend removing the free rain date. If the Chamber wants to keep the free rain date, then staff would recommend charging for the park rental.

James Kneiszel questioned if this is a popular weekend. Marty Kosobucki stated that in June and July there are only four dates that the Nelson Family Pavilion is not rented or programmed.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to leave the fee waiver policy as is and to deny the fee waiver request for Art in the Park, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar.

Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger moved to open the meeting at 6:37 pm, seconded by Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Logan Brecklin of the De Pere Area Chamber of Commerce, lead for Art in the Park, stated that the Foundation is an arm of the Chamber of Commerce and is putting on the event. The Foundation is a non-profit organization and any fees that are paid will be taken away from funds that are reinvested into the community or businesses. He stated that the sponsorship could work out as there is still some sponsorship opportunities available.

Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger moved to close the meeting at 6:40 pm, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Upon vote, the above motion to leave the fee waiver policy as is and to deny the fee waiver request for Art in the Park passed unanimously. Marty Kosobucki clarified that the rain date should be provided at no charge.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Shana Ledvina |
| SECONDER: | Melissa Thiel Collar |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kundinger |

6. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Third Quarter Financial Statements for the De Pere Ice Arena

Melissa Thiel Collar moved to approve the third quarter financial statements for the De Pere Ice Arena, seconded by James Kneiszel. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously, with Elizabeth McMasters abstaining.

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| RESULT: | Passed |
| MOVER: | Melissa Thiel Collar |
| SECONDER: | Jim Kneiszel |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Amy Kundinger |
| NAYS: | None |
| ABSTAIN: | Elizabeth McMasters |

7. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Bid from Bluemels, for \$57,460.00 for Project 25-12 Rainbow Park Playground Surfacing *

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that Bluemels has received the playground surfacing bids for the last 10–15 years. They are a very good contractor and good to work with. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of businesses that compete with them.

Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger moved to approve the bid from Bluemels for the Rainbow Park playground surfacing project, seconded by Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
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| MOVER: | Amy Kunding |
| SECONDER: | Shana Ledvina |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding |

8. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Name of the New Park in Waterview Heights Subdivision

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that staff is not aware of any outside reasons to name the park anything other than Waterview Heights Park, but if the Park Board has any suggestions about someone or something that has value that falls into policy, it could be recommended.

James Kneiszel feels a better effort needs to be made to find unique park names. He is not in favor of naming a park after what the developer has named the subdivision, therefore naming the park. With the southern bridge being constructed and further development going on, the naming of parks will likely happen a few additional times and feels it requires further discussion. James Kneiszel verified that there was no reason for the naming to be done immediately, and that it could wait. Marty Kosobucki stated that improvements are being made to the designated park land but agreed that there is time to discuss the naming of the park.

James Kneiszel gave a recommendation for a park name. He stated that prior to the meeting he did a little research and found an individual named Henry J Cady who left his family farm at the age of 15 to fight in the war. This family farm was about half a mile from the new park. He is currently buried in the cemetery close to the park. After he was killed, there was a story that surfaced about him, and it was discovered that about 20% of the soldiers that went to fight the war were under the legal age of 18. He was a member of the De Pere Rifles company. This is an individual that lived very near the park, it is historical in nature, and there shouldn't be anyone offended by it. The naming of a new park gives us the opportunity to work with the Historical Society to see if there is a person that should be honored, and feels the naming of the park should be given more thought.

Marty Kosobucki stated it is up to the Park Board how they want to determine the park name. Marty Kosobucki cautioned going out to the public for suggestions because you will get many responses, and there may be ones suggested that the Park Board does not agree with. Marty Kosobucki stated that he likes the idea of naming the park after the subdivision, partly because it is easier for people to know where the park is located.

Melissa Thiel Collar stated she did not think of a different name for the park, but she lives near the subdivision and Waterview Heights Park made sense. She stated that she recently went through the naming of a new school and there is a lot of thought and reason that goes into naming a facility. Given Jim's recommendation, she suggested that staff look into this individual and do some vetting to see if it would be an appropriate name and bring this information back to the next Park Board meeting.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding questioned how many parks there are and how many are named after women. Marty Kosobucki stated there are 27 different parks, and he is not sure how all the parks got their names or the history of the parks. Aldersperson Chandik Kunding feels that there are probably some women in De Pere that have done some great things and that a park should be named after a woman.

Elizabeth McMasters questioned if any other parks were named after subdivisions. She stated that she isn't aware of any that are named after subdivisions in De Pere and that most have been named something

different in some way. Elizabeth stated she is aware of how developer contracts happen, which are great for the community, but their families are not the ones that are playing in the parks.

Marty Kosobucki stated that staff could go back and do some research on the current park names, but he would also suggest that the Park Board bring back suggestions to the next meeting.

Elizabeth McMasters moved to refer this item back to staff for further research, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | Referred Back to Staff |
| MOVER: | Elizabeth McMasters |
| SECONDER: | Amy Kunding |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding |
| NAYS: | None |

9. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Southwest Park Master Plan

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that most of Southwest Park is already developed, but previously the Park Board requested staff to review the park and put together a master plan to develop the area that is left. Staff looked at past survey results of what residents were interested in and current trends to form the attached plan. Staff suggestions are for a miniature disc golf course to be developed around the Gandrud Field. There is not enough room for a full nine-hole course, but 6 holes would probably fit. Staff would also suggest looking at adding a pickleball court, along with a universal basketball court, just south of the main parking lot and adding another auxiliary parking lot. There is also interest in making the soccer fields into game fields, which would require ADA access. Marty Kosobucki explained that there is a black line on the map that goes into the ravine, which represents a future trail. The addition of this trail would allow another small subdivision in De Pere, that does not have a park, easier access to Southwest Park.

James Kneiszel commented that the Parks Department has done a very good job utilizing the area at Southwest Park.

James Lyga, Teen Advisor, questioned if the practice disc golf course would be limited in holes, or would it be a shorter par 2 course. Marty Kosobucki stated the thought would be for it to be similar to Legion Parks but maybe only have 6 or 7 holes.

Alderperson Chandik Kunding moved to approve the Southwest Park Master Plan, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Amy Kunding |
| SECONDER: | Elizabeth McMasters |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding |

10. Consideration and Possible Action to Redirect Voyageur Dumpster Funds to Purchase a Garbage Picking Unit *

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that in the 2025 budget there is \$75,000 allocated for installing a dumpster at Voyageur Park. Instead of installing the dumpster, staff

would like to purchase a garbage picking unit that would get installed in the box of a pick-up truck. This unit is half the cost of the dumpster project and if it works as stated, the dumpster would not be needed. Staff is requesting to have the funds allocated to the dumpster project redirected to the purchase of this unit, so it could be purchased now instead of waiting until next year. If this unit does not work as stated, then staff would need to request funding again for the dumpster.

James Lyga, Teen Advisor, questioned if this truck would need to go to the landfill to dump. Marty Kosobucki stated that it would either need to go to the dump or it would need to be dumped at the Municipal Service Center in the rubbish bin and brought to the dump when the rubbish bin is emptied. Current plans would be for it to go directly to the dump.

James Kneiszel moved to redirect the Voyageur Park dumpster funds to purchase a garbage picking unit, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Jim Kneiszel |
| SECONDER: | Melissa Thiel Collar |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kundinger |

11. Consideration and Possible Action to Construct a Turnaround on Washington Street at Braisher Park *

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the project to construct a turnaround on Washington Street at Braisher Park, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Shana Ledvina |
| SECONDER: | Amy Kundinger |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kundinger |

12. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve WisDOT Temporary Limited Easement at Wells Park for the STH 32 / STH 57 repavement project *

James Kneiszel moved to approve the WisDOT Temporary Limited Easement at Wells Park for the STH 32 / STH 57 re-pavement project, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Jim Kneiszel |
| SECONDER: | Elizabeth McMasters |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kundinger |

13. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Nature Center Park Pocket Forest Revitalization Project

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that there is a representative from the school online and Kyle Rouce, Forestry Supervisor, is at the meeting if you have any questions.

Kyle Rouce, Forestry Supervisor, explained that 2–3 years ago, staff cleared out the buckthorn, honeysuckle and invasives from the area. At that time, the area was very open and looked good. Currently, there is some grow back occurring, which is common for invasive species. This project includes working with a Certified Chemical Applicator, to apply a herbicide to help with the invasives, as well as planting native plants to help minimize invasive growth.

James Kneiszel questioned if chemicals would be used to treat the area. Kyle Rouce explained that the chemical being used is a cut stump herbicide and there will be a certified chemical applicator there that will do the application. James Kneiszel questioned if there would still be a walking path. Kyle Rouce stated that yes, there will still be a walking path.

Elizabeth McMaster moved to approve the Nature Center Park Forest Revitalization Project, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kundinger. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Elizabeth McMasters |
| SECONDER: | Amy Kundinger |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kundinger |

14. Consideration and Possible Action on Continuation of Memorial Bench Swing Option

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that we have had a memorial bench program for quite a while, and recently we added the option of a swinging memorial bench. Staff had a request for another swinging bench, and found out the vendor is no longer making the style of swinging bench we have. Staff did find another option; however, it does not look as nice as the previous one. Staff is looking for a recommendation if we should discontinue offering the swinging bench option, or offer the less aesthetically pleasing bench.

Elizabeth McMasters questioned where the plaque would go. Marty Kosobucki explained that on the new bench it would be located on the back of the bench like the other memorial benches, but the old style is located on the top in the frame.

Elizabeth McMasters questioned what the cost difference is between the benches. Brian Christnovich, Park Superintendent, stated that we offer two different stationary memorial benches that are between \$1,300 - \$1,800 depending on the style and the swinging bench is around \$2,100.

James Kneiszel questioned if there is interest in the swinging benches. Brian Christnovich stated yes, we currently have a couple of people interested in one.

Melissa Thiel Collar questioned if staff has a recommendation and if they like the new look. Brian Christnovich stated that he really doesn't like the look of the new bench. He feels that there is not the cosmetic value that was offered on the previous bench. Melisa Thiel Collar questioned if the staff were OK with the new-style bench being in the park. Brian Christnovich stated he could go either way, but nothing available looks like what we currently offer.

Elizabeth McMasters questioned how many customers currently want the swinging bench. Brian Christnovich stated that there are currently two individuals interested in a swinging bench, but prior to this year the most recent one was installed in 2021.

James Kneiszel questioned if staff would continue to look for a different bench that is more comparable

to the existing one. Brian Christnovich stated that he contacted the manufacturer, and they stopped making that style of bench due to COVID and lack of demand. There is a slight possibility that they could offer the bench again.

James Kneiszel questioned what staff is looking for tonight. Marty Kosobuck stated that the Park Board can elect to stay with the current swinging memorial bench design and not offer any until this design, or a similar one, can be located, or decide to change the design of the swinging memorial bench.

Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger questioned if it would be worth the time to see if we ordered a number of the benches if the manufacturer would produce them. Brian Christnovich stated that he has a call into the manufacturer already to see if this is an option. Currently, we have not been able to get an answer from the company. Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger mentioned it might be good to just pause the swinging memorial bench option until we can verify if the current style bench can be purchased.

Marty Kosobucki verified that it appears that the Park Board is interested in staying with the current design swinging bench until we know for certain there is no option of getting that style of bench.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to continue with the current style of swinging memorial bench and to not offer a different design, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kundinger. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Shana Ledvina |
| SECONDER: | Amy Kundinger |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kundinger |

IV. Discussion Items

1. 2024 Forestry Report

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that there have been some significant changes within the Forestry Department. Kyle Rouce was hired as the Forestry Supervisor and Brian Christnovich was hired as the Park Superintendent and both were previously arborists with the city. Staff wanted to bring the Forestry Report to the meeting to show the progress that is being made. Over the past 15+ years, there has been a 5-year backlog of pruning within the department. With the change in the department structure, and the addition of another arborist to the Forestry Department, this backlog has almost been eliminated. The city is very fortunate to have these two individuals on staff.

Melissa Thiel Collar stated that the Forestry Department pruned her entire neighborhood, and it looks fantastic. She stated that American Boulevard always looks terrible and questioned if there was a plan to remove everything from that median and start over. Brian Christnovich stated that currently there are no plans to do anything on American Boulevard. Staff did go through that area two times last year to prune the trees and remove sucker growth. Brian Christnovich stated that another area of concern is Ridgeway Boulevard. Kyle Rouce stated that he isn't sure who designed or planted American and Ridgeway Boulevard, but it is a poor planting design. The trees should have been a center line planting. The way the trees are offset makes it difficult to maintain. Marty Kosobucki added that both American and Ridgeway Boulevard fall within the Parks Department to maintain; however, if anything is to be done, it would fall within the jurisdiction of the Board of Public Works because it is in the right-of-way.

V. Staff Updates

1. Staff Update on the Fitter and Faster Swim Tour Contract

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that approval for the program was on the April Park Board Agenda, which was canceled due to lack of quorum. Due to timing constraints, the item needed to go to Common Council prior to this meeting. The implementation of this program was already approved by Common Council, but staff wanted to make the Park Board aware of the availability of this new program.

2. Staff Update on Beer Gardens / Commemorative Cup

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that staff is excited to offer new commemorative cups at the 2025 Beer Garden. This is just another small thing to make the beer gardens better. The cups will be advertised on social media and will be sold starting at the first beer garden of the season.

3. Staff Update on the Brown County Tourism Grant

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that staff has been working with Definitely De Pere for quite some time, trying to secure a Brown County Tourism Grant. Staff is happy to report that Definitely De Pere has been awarded a \$50,000 grant that is to be directed to improvements to the Nelson Family Pavilion. The projects that the grant will be used for is to install fiber to the pavilion; have a set of stairs from the patio to the lower level bowl area; have additional railing sections made out of aluminum, so they can be more easily removed for special events; and install 8-10 acoustical panels in the multipurpose room. All of these projects have started, and will hopefully be done by the end of summer.

VI. Future Agenda Items

None

VII. Adjournment

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 pm, seconded by James Kneiszel. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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| RESULT: | APPROVED [UNANIMOUS] |
| MOVER: | Shana Ledvina |
| SECONDER: | Jim Kneiszel |
| AYES: | Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding |

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lahtela