



Board of Park Commissioners

Regular Meeting

Minutes

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

Thursday, June 19, 2025

6:30 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers 335 S. Broadway

I. Call to Order

Present: Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters, Connor Mason, James Lyga

Absent:

Excused: Amy Kunding

Others: Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, 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 Board of Park Commissioners Minutes from the May 15, 2025 meeting.

Randy Soquet moved to approve the Board of Park Commissioners minutes from the May 15, 2025 meeting, seconded by James Kneiszel. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	(UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Randy Soquet
SECONDER:	Jim Kneiszel
AYES:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters

2. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the 2024-2025 Year End Financial Statements for the De Pere Ice Arena

Melissa Thiel Collar moved to approve the 2024-2025 Year End financial statements for the De Pere Ice Arena, seconded by Alderperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously, with Elizabeth McMasters abstaining.

RESULT:	
MOVER:	Melissa Thiel Collar
SECONDER:	Shana Ledvina
AYES:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	Elizabeth McMasters

3. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve De Pere Youth Hockey Association (DPYH) Donation Proposal of up to \$50,000 for De Pere Ice Center Improvements *

Randy Soquet moved to approve the De Pere Youth Hockey Association donation proposal of up to \$50,000 for De Pere Ice Arena improvements, seconded by Alderperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	(UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Randy Soquet
SECONDER:	Shana Ledvina
AYES:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters

4. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Creation of a De Pere Ice Arena Fundraising Committee *

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the creation of a De Pere Ice Arena Fundraising Committee, seconded by Alderperson Eserkaln.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina questioned what details needed to be worked out and if this would be handled by the legal department. Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that there would need to be an agreement generated between the city and the fundraising committee, so there are rules to follow.

James Kneiszel questioned if the agreement would come back to the park board for approval. Marty Kosobucki stated that the agreement would go directly to Common Council unless it was drastically different from the fundraising effort presented.

James Kneiszel questioned how the fundraising would play into the long-range plans for the facility.

Marty Kosobucki stated currently the mayor and city manager are meeting with each of the user groups of the facility. Ultimately, all long-term plans will go to Common Council for further direction.

James Kneiszel questioned if the user groups are optimistic that the fundraising will lead to proposals for a new building, or just keep this building going year to year. Marty Kosobucki stated that De Pere Youth Hockey is taking the lead of all the user groups and spearheading the fundraising committee. He feels that the intent would be to raise funds for repairs and to improve the facility in a manner the city would like to see occur.

James Kneiszel moved to open the meeting at 6:38 pm, seconded by Alderperson Eserkaln. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Cassandra Brill and Brandon Bergner from De Pere Youth Hockey were in attendance at the meeting to discuss the creation of the De Pere Ice Arena Fundraising Committee. Cassandra stated that their intent is to first utilize all fundraising opportunities that are available at the rink. The participants in De Pere Youth Hockey travel to a lot of different rinks and see the advertising opportunities that occur at these other facilities. DPYH wants to make sure that these advertising opportunities are utilized, with the funds raised being invested back into the Arena. Cassandra commented that currently the goal for the raised funds is to look at short-term improvements and safety issues and to present the community in a good light. The fundraising committee is interested in getting the fundraising started, which could potentially earn up to \$60,000 per year once established. Cassandra stated that the goal of the committee would be to start earning money that could be invested in the rink for short-term improvements, while looking at the long-term picture.

James Kneiszel moved to close the meeting to public comments at 6:41 pm, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The above motion to create the fundraising committee passed unanimously.

RESULT:	(UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Shana Ledvina
SECONDER:	Mike Eserkaln
AYES:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters

5. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Pool Facility Attendant Certification Reimbursement *

James Kneiszel moved to approve the pool facility attendant certification reimbursement, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	(UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Jim Kneiszel
SECONDER:	Elizabeth McMasters
AYES:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters

IV. Discussion Items

1. Discussion on New Park Name in the Waterview Heights Subdivision

James Kneiszel moved to open the meeting to public comment at 6:42 pm, seconded by Alderperson Eserkaln. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Jim Anderson thanked the park board for taking time to look into park names and hopes that the new park will be named after someone that had a historical impact on the city.

Matt Hoffman stated he researches both Green Bay and De Pere local history and has done a lot of research on Henry Cady, the individual that James Kneiszel suggested for the park name last week. Henry Cady was just 15 years old when he volunteered for the Civil War. During this time, a lot of underage boys volunteered for the war, which brought a childhood enthusiasm and eagerness to the De Pere Rifles Company F, which he served in. He was shot in the Battle of Vicksburg and died of complications from his injuries. His family farm is near the park and he is buried in what was known as the Old Cady Cemetery, which is now the Lawrence Cemetery. He would like to add his support for the park to be named after Henry Cady.

James Kneiszel thanked Matt for educating him on Henry Cady.

James Kneiszel moved to close the meeting to public comments at 6:46 pm, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina likes that Rainbow Park was named from the neighborhood residents surrounding it. There are some parks that are named after surrounding streets that could be renamed after doing some serious research and possibly working with the Historical Preservation Committee and the De Pere Historical Society. She feels like names are being thrown out there and there may be others worth considering. She doesn't disagree with naming them after historical figures, but feels there are other options that should be considered.

James Kneiszel thanked Marty for providing the detailed information on the park names. Marty Kosobucki stated that the information provided was gathered by Andy Pantzloff, the Communications and Marketing Manager.

Melissa Thiel Collar disagrees with Alderperson Defnet Ledvina and stated that the name that James Kneiszel proposed, Henry Cady, does have significance to that area. The Lawrence Cemetery is very near the neighborhood. The neighborhood was built on farm land. It was a huge farm and there is a great possibility of that being Cady's farm. If it isn't, the Cady farm is very near the area. If the park is named after a historical figure, Melissa would like to see a plaque explaining the name of the park and why it

was chosen.

James Lyga, Teen Advisor, stated he was looking through the park name list and was disappointed that Wilcox Park was named just after the street it is located on when an individual donated 18 lots to the city for the park. This park might be a good one to look at if there is going to be any renaming.

Elizabeth McMasters questioned if everyone offered suggestions regarding the name. Marty Kosobucki stated that he only received suggestions from Mr. Nix and Randy Soquet, which are part of the park board agenda, and the suggestion from Mr. Kneiszel of Henry Cady. Elizabeth McMasters stated she did a little research. She is not originally from De Pere, so she does not have any historical suggestions, but recently we have been hearing way too often of children in the De Pere school districts losing their lives to a number of different circumstances. Her suggestion would be to have a park in memory of these children. Not a sad place, but a happy place, where families have the opportunity to place some type of memorial at the park. A possible name would be Everbright Park and there could be a plaque installed that states "The park is in memory of children who have lost their lives way too soon. May their lives stay everbright."

Connor Mason, Teen Advisor, stated he really likes the idea. It's applicable to multiple families, and it is a good balance between being historical and a community-driven name.

Randy Soquet commented that it is a really thoughtful concept and likes the concept and questioned if there are other municipalities that have similar parks. Alderperson Defnet Ledvina mentioned that the memorial doesn't have to be benches, it could be a fence similar to what was installed at Southwest Park, or memorial trees, so it is affordable for all families.

Marty Kosobucki questioned the park board and how they would like to move forward. Alderperson Defnet Ledvina likes the idea of naming parks after historical figures, but we don't have a history of doing it. Historically, a park has been named after an individual that has significantly contributed to the Park and Recreation Department. Right now, there is just one historical name that has been suggested, and she feels there should be other names that should be considered and that female historical figures should be considered. She feels that more research and more options should be made available to decide from. She stated that Alderperson Chandik Kundinger brought up a valid point about a park being named after women and currently De Pere doesn't have any. It would be nice to have a woman's name among the options. There are currently other generic named parks that are named after streets that could be renamed after historical figures too.

Melissa Thiel Collar stated she likes the idea of a memorial park, but questioned if the park is large enough to support the concept. She also likes the idea of naming it after a historical figure, whether it is Henry Cady or someone different.

Elizabeth McMasters questioned how many lots are in the subdivision and if there are enough developed to even do a survey of the residents. Marty Kosobucki stated there are a lot and many are still being developed. There are probably around 1/3 to 1/2 of the lots developed. Marty Kosobucki stated that the old city administrator cautioned asking residents to name parks, because it is not their park, it is a city park. Marty stated that he did reach out to the mayor and asked him to reach out to McKim Boyd and the Historical Society to see if they had any thoughts, and he hadn't received any information before the meeting. Marty Kosobucki stated that he could reach out to McKim Boyd and the Historical Society again to see his thoughts and to provide some ideas. Marty Kosobucki also stated that presently it has not been protocol to name a new city park after a random historical figure.

James Kneiszel questioned if it would be beneficial to reach out to the Historic Preservation Committee for their thoughts. Marty Kosobucki stated that the naming of a park should be up to the park board, but if you want to go the historical route, they could provide ideas. James Kneiszel mentioned he reached out to the executive director of the Historical Society, and it would be hard currently to research any information with the office being closed. Marty Kosobucki stated he could reach out to the Historical Society with a formal request. James Kneiszel stated he would like to see if McKim Boyd and the Historical Society had any ideas. He was struck by the location of the park and the Henry Cady story, but is open to hearing additional suggestions.

Marty Kosobucki stated that he would like to get some direction by the end of the summer. The parks department is receiving calls regarding what is going to be developed at the park.

Elizabeth McMasters commented that the park board needs to make sure the story is right behind naming a park after the individual. She would like to see some female names within the options. Marty Kosobucki commented that he will request the story behind any individual that is recommended for the list.

Melissa Thiel Collar stated that the park board needs to make sure to get the naming right. There are not many times that you get to name a new park, and it needs to be right.

V. Staff Updates

1. Staff Update on \$500 Tree Donation from American Transmission Company (ATC)

Marty Kosobucki stated that we received a \$500 donation from ATC for Arbor Day tree plantings.

2. Thank You and Good Luck to Teen Advisor James Lyga

Randy Soquet stated that James Lyga has graduated from high school and is finishing up his term on the park board.

James Lyga thanked the park board for the opportunity. James stated that it has been very interesting and appreciates Mr. Soquet and the park board for the opportunity. He appreciates Marty and all his hard work and commitment to the park system. He has been part of the park board for 9 meetings, and it is crazy to see how much goes into running the parks. James stated he will be attending NWTC in the fall, studying criminal justice, with the hopes of becoming a City of De Pere Police Officer.

VI. Future Agenda Items

James Kneiszel commented that on his way to the meeting he had to drive by Legion Park. There are always so many people using every square foot of the park, so he feels there is some appreciation for what we do here. He also stated that on his morning walk, both pickleball courts at Legion Park were being used. During his walk, three cars pulled up to use the courts. He feels there is a need to add more pickleball courts to city parks. Marty Kosobucki stated that he agrees and additional courts are listed in the CIP; however, the request needs to make it through the budget process.

Connor Mason, Teen Advisor, agreed regarding the pickleball courts. There are many times he drives past Legion Park at 10:00 pm and there are still people playing pickleball.

VII. Adjournment

Alderson Defnet Ledvina moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 pm, seconded by James Kneiszel. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Shana Ledvina
SECONDER:	Jim Kneiszel
AYES:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel, Randy Soquet, Mike Eserkahn, Shana Ledvina, Elizabeth McMasters

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lahtela