



Board of Park Commissioners

Regular Meeting

Minutes

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

Thursday, January 15, 2026

6:30 PM

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

I. Call to Order

Present: Randy Soquet, Jim Kneiszel, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding

Absent:

Excused: Mike Eserkaln, Shana Ledvina, Connor Mason

Others Present: Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry; and 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 November 20, 2025 meeting.

Randy Soquet moved to approve the Board of Park Commissioners minutes from the November 20, 2025, meeting, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Randy Soquet
SECONDER:	Amy Kunding
AYES:	Randy Soquet, Jim Kneiszel, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding

2. Consideration and possible action to approve Amerilux as the main sponsor for the 2026 Beer Gardens. *

Alderperson Chandik Kunding moved to approve Amerilux as the main sponsor for the 2026 Beer Gardens, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Amy Kunding
SECONDER:	Elizabeth McMasters
AYES:	Randy Soquet, Jim Kneiszel, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding

3. Consideration and possible action to approve a donation proposal from De Pere Baseball, in the amount of \$5,000, to purchase robotic mowers to be used at Kelly Danen and Southwest Park baseball fields. *

Randy Soquet moved to approve the donation proposal from De Pere Baseball, in the amount of \$5,000, to purchase robotic mowers to be used at Kelly Danen and Southwest Park baseball fields, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters.

James Kneiszel questioned if the mowers would actually run from 11 pm - 9 am as stated in the memo, and would they run every day. Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, confirmed that the plan would be for the mowers to operate those hours Monday–Friday for sure, but staff is still looking into running on the weekends. Marty explained that the mowers are designed to go out frequently and cut only a small amount of grass off at a time. The mowers are programmed to where they can and cannot go, as well as when they go out to mow. Staff will have a program on their phone, so if something goes wrong they will get notified. The mowers are also equipped with an alarm and a geo fence with GPS tracking, so if they are taken out of their programmed area, an alarm will sound and the units can be easily tracked with the GPS system.

Aldersperson Chandik Kundingner questioned if there will be signage at the fields, so residents know what the mowers are. Marty Kosobucki explained that along with signage, there will be posts on social media, educating residents on the new mowers.

Upon vote, the above motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Randy Soquet
SECONDER:	Elizabeth McMasters
AYES:	Randy Soquet, Jim Kneiszel, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kundingner

4. Consideration and possible action to approve the first and second quarter financial statements for the De Pere Ice Arena.

James Kneiszel moved to approve the first and second quarter financial statements for the De Pere Ice Arena, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously, with Elizabeth McMasters abstaining.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Jim Kneiszel
SECONDER:	Randy Soquet
AYES:	Randy Soquet, Jim Kneiszel, Amy Kundingner
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	Elizabeth McMasters

5. Consideration and possible action to approve a park name for the new park in the Waterview Heights Subdivision. *

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that he was able to connect with the Historical Society and McKim Boyd. They recommended the name Volunteer Park, in honor of the Volunteer group from the Civil War. The information gathered is provided in the packet.

Randy Soquet moved to open the meeting at 6:40 pm, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kundingner.

Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Joe Nicks stated he feels the name Volunteer Park is a good idea. The name pays tribute to the soldiers from Company F and the De Pere Rifles that went to the Civil War from the area. It would also be a nice tie-in with Legion, VFW, and Bicentennial Park, which honor veterans. There could be some confusion with the name in reference to the Volunteers from Company F in the Civil War, with volunteers in general, but it is not a bad thing to honor volunteers in general.

Randy Soquet moved to return to regular order at 6:42 pm, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

James Kneiszel stated he feels that making a decision on a park name should be done when the full board is present. Alderperson Defnet Ledvina had some recommendations on a park name and feels that there should be a full vote on this topic.

James Kneiszel moved to table the item, seconded by Alderperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion to table the item passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS) Table
MOVER:	Jim Kneiszel
SECONDER:	Amy Kunding
AYES:	Randy Soquet, Jim Kneiszel, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding

6. Discussion on Wilson Park Improvements

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, explained that a Request for Proposals (RFP) was advertised for the technical design and construction oversight for Wilson Park. Included in the RFP is for the consultant to review the approved conceptual design to see if it is still what the park board feels is the most appropriate for the area. The reason to possibly reconsider the design is that the current design considerably integrated St. Norbert College and there are currently significant changes going on at the college.

James Kneiszel questioned what changes are happening at St. Norbert that could potentially impact the park design. Marty Kosobucki stated that there are significant changes in the number of majors being offered, with many professors being let go and attendance has gone down substantially. James Kneiszel questioned if the student houses around the college are going to be sold and go back to neighborhood houses.

James Kneiszel stated that he reviewed the survey and found some of the comments interesting and wondered if any would be feasible without making major changes. One comment was regarding implementing pollinator gardens. Marty Kosobucki stated that although pollinator gardens are good for the environment, he does not feel that they would be a good fit for Wilson Park with many people being allergic to bees. James Kneiszel also mentioned the concept of an urban dog park. Marty Kosobucki again likes the idea of an urban dog park, but Wilson Park does not offer any parking, so all parking would need to be along the road, which could create congestion. Mr. Kneiszel mentioned that Wilson Park might not be the ideal location for an urban dog park, but hopes that these dog parks could be located within other parks. James Kneiszel also mentioned the concept of fitness centers, futsal court and pickleball courts. These might not be appropriate for Wilson Park, but could be considered in future parks.

Alderperson Chandik Kunding stated that it is interesting to look through the survey results and feels

the survey results confirm what is in the current design and uses the space wisely.

Randy Soquet questioned the concept of an urban dog park and what size they are. James Kneiszel stated that he has seen them as small as 10'x30', but 50'x100' seems to be a popular size. It just needs to be a fenced-in area that dogs can be left off leash.

James Kneiszel stated that he likes the current design but thinks we should look at the other items listed in the survey for other parks.

Elizabeth McMasters questioned what the current design is. Marty Kosobucki brought up the current design from Graef and reviewed the design. Elizabeth McMasters stated that looking at the design and the options listed, she really likes the design and feels that the survey data supports the design, especially where the park is located. Marty Kosobucki stated that there are no other parks in the area that kids can walk to. The current neighboring area is about 60% owned by St. Norbert College, but if St. Norbert begins to release some of these rental homes, the number could shift to more residential housing.

Randy Soquet questioned is there is an area where a small playground could be located. Marty Kosobucki stated that there is a large green space area in the current park design, but feels that kids can generate a lot more play options in a green space than a playground.

Randy Soquet moved to open the meeting to public comment at 7:05 pm, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Joe Nicks stated that when the design consultant was hired they tried to think of how the park could be best utilized. At that time, the neighborhood was dominated by St. Norbert College students. There has been significant change at the college that has taken place and the change is very dramatic in the number of students around the area. This change could turn into a positive and the neighborhood could be revived and be restored. Mr. Nicks stated the importance of the Gettysburg memorial that is located in the park and hopes that the memorial should be valued and preserved properly. Mr. Nicks feels that some thought needs to be given to what can be done to get more people to enjoy the park and feels the park would be a great place for a small performance area. He agrees that there isn't a need for a playground there right now, but possibly in the future. He also stated the importance of the memorial tree for Jessica Martin that is located in the park. Jessica was a student of St. Norbert who died of natural causes in 2004. Mr. Nicks ran into her parents at the park last Spring. He stated that her parents, who live in Chicago, come every spring to work on the landscaping around the tree.

Jim Anderson stated that there have been homes sold in the neighborhood, but they are still rental properties, but there are a lot of residents that are 55+ that live within a couple of blocks of the park. This would be a great place for these older people to walk to the park and have lunch. The one suggestion he would recommend is to replace the crushed gravel pathway with concrete and that lighting is super important in the design.

Randy Soquet moved to return to regular order at 7:18 pm, seconded by James Kneiszel. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

James Kneiszel questioned if there was anything in the survey that should be considered. Marty Kosobucki stated that from the survey, there are things that residents would like to see, but some are not a good fit for this location and park. It is clear that they want a passive park and the approved design is what they are looking for.

Randy Soquet questioned with the donors if there are any parameters that we need to continue with. Marty Kosobucki stated they approved the donation based on the plan submitted. If anything is changed substantially, we would need to submit the changes for approval.

IV. Staff Updates

1. Staff update on the Holiday Light Show.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that the summary of the event is attached, and that staff is extremely proud of what the Holiday Light Event has become.

Randy Soquet questioned if the event could be kept open longer. He has been getting a lot of comments that with school ending December 23rd, it would be nice if the event could run the week between Christmas and the New Year. Marty Kosobucki stated that ice fishing starts heavily after Christmas and the ice fishing and the holiday decorations do not work well together. The ice fishermen walk through the holiday decorations and pull up the electrical cords, leading to a lot of repairs that need to be done daily.

James Kneiszel questioned why the day was postponed because of weather and the possibility of it being automatically turned on. Marty Kosobucki stated that the infrastructure in the park does not allow for the automatic turning on of all the lights, and the parking lot lights need to be turned off. Also, staff needs to be present to help put up the large inflatable Santa, as well as making sure everything is working properly. Staff is looking into the possibility of opening the event the week between the two weekends that the event runs, meaning it would run from the walking event through Christmas Eve.

James Kneiszel mentioned that there needs to be additional signage for the musical light show. Marty Kosobucki agreed that more signage is needed and staff has been talking internally about what the best way is to get people around to the musical light show.

Olivia Alberson, Teen Advisor, questioned if there was any way to direct the ice fishermen a different way during the event. Marty Kosobucki stated that staff could try, but it would probably be unsuccessful.

2. Staff update on playground Request for Proposals for Carney Park and the Waterview Heights Subdivision Park.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry, stated that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for both Carney Park and the park at the Waterview Heights Subdivision are out, and the proposals for both should be coming to the February meeting.

V. Future Agenda Items

James Kneiszel would like the topic of urban dog parks discussed.

VI. Adjournment

James Kneiszel moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm, seconded by Elizabeth McMasters. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	Passed (UNANIMOUS)
MOVER:	Jim Kneiszel
SECONDER:	Elizabeth McMasters
AYES:	Randy Soquet, Jim Kneiszel, Elizabeth McMasters, Amy Kunding

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lahtela