



Board of Park Commissioners

Regular Meeting

Final Minutes

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

Thursday, October 21, 2021

6:30 PM

Council Chambers and Virtual

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Board Member Randy Soquet

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Melissa Thiel Collar	Board Member	Present	
Ryan Jennings	Board Member	Present	
Jim Kneiszel	Board Member	Present	
Amy Chandik Kunding	Aldersperson	Present	
Shana Defnet Ledvina	Aldersperson	Present	
Dean Raasch	Aldersperson	Excused	
Randy Soquet	Board Member	Present	
Hundamo Lovell	Teen Advisor	Present	
Christopher Soquet	Teen Advisor	Present	

Others present:

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry

James Boyd, Mayor

II. Public Comment Period

None

III. Items

1. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Board of Park Commissioners Minutes from the September 16, 2021 Meeting.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the Board of Park Commissioners minutes from September 16, 2021, 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, Jennings, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet
EXCUSED:	Dean Raasch

2. Consideration and Possible Action on Request from St. Norbert College to Acquire Wilson Park Property.*

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry explained that a request from St. Norbert College has been submitted to acquire Wilson Park. Wilson Park is in the downtown area on the west side and was thought to be the first park for the city. After further review the legal department determined that Wells Park was dedicated park land prior to Wilson Park. Wilson Park is a small mini park with green space, a swing set, memorial bench and a memorial tree. Normally, the park department would never be in favor of relinquishing park property, but as the demographics of the area around the park have changed, staff doesn't have issues to part ways with the park if the funds received were returned to the park system. There would need to be accommodations for

the memorial tree and bench that are located in the park. If the Park Board is in favor of parting ways with Wilson Park, the recommendation would go to council to negotiate with St. Norbert College to acquire the park.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding moved to open the meeting at 6:40 pm, seconded by Ryan Jennings. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Dave Nalepka, Director of Risk and Property Management at St. Norbert College stated the college expressed interest to the city in acquiring the property. Recommendations were made for the college to submit a letter to the park board of their interest, which is included along with proposed site drawings. Mr. Nalepka explained that the college master plan shows a significant need to improve the junior and senior housing options at the college and Wilson Park would be a perfect option. The proposed housing option would have 10 rooms, with 2 students per room.

Aldersperson Defnet-Ledvina questioned if the college intends to purchase the properties on Jacobs Court and if the owners are aware of the interest of the college to purchase Wilson Park. Mr. Nalepka stated that the college has attempted to purchase the Jacobs Court properties, but could not come to an agreement with the owner.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding stated she will abstain from voting as she is an employee of the college but expressed the importance of quality housing option to attract incoming students.

Jim Kneiszel moved to close the meeting to public comment at 6:49 pm, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote, the motion was approved.

Discussion followed.

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding commented that she wouldn't think of getting rid of Wilson Park for any other reason. It is such a small piece of property and there is a lot of green space within the college that residents can utilize.

Randy Soquet stated that it is a very small parcel and the college almost completely surrounds the property. With the demographics changing, it makes sense to offer to sell it to St. Norbert.

Jim Kneiszel stated that he has a different perspective on the property. It appears that this park is the only publicly held green space, on the west side, between the railroad tracks and the river. There is a lot being done on the east side and now we are looking at taking away a park on the west side. Mr. Kneiszel said it is the cities responsibility to promote usage at the park. He could see this park being used as a conduit to the student at the college. The city will not be acquiring any additional green space on the west side and feels it is not a good idea to relinquish ownership of any public space. Although demographics have changed in the area, there are still families in the area. However, if council decides to sell the property, Mr. Kneiszel feels the property should be put up for bids, and if the intent for the property is a suitable purpose, it should be sold to the highest bidder.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina questioned if there was a park coverage map and how the loss of the park would affect the area. Mr. Kosobucki explained that Wilson Park is considered a mini park, which has a radius of 1/8 of a mile. Looking at the surrounding properties, St. Norbert probably owns ¾ of the properties, other than the area south of the park.

Mr. Kosobucki explained that usually a park director will not entertain a motion to get rid of a park. The only reason would be if selling the property could benefit the park system better in another area and staff feels this could happen.

Melissa Thiel Collar stated that she drives by the park twice a day and from personal observation she never sees anyone using the park. Melissa questioned if there were any improvements scheduled for Wilson Park. Mr. Kosobucki explained that with the seven

year capital plan there are no improvements scheduled for Wilson Park and it is not logical to put any amenities there and parking is also an issue.

Randy Soquet feels that if the land is sold the funds should be used to make a park in a new neighborhood on the west side. Many new neighborhoods do not have any public green space areas.

Ryan Jennings stated that St. Norbert has unlimited options in the area. If the land is sold, Mr. Jennings would be in favor of the funding to go to purchase additional land on the west side for park use and would be in favor of tabling the item pending further discussion.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry explained that common council would not have to follow any contingencies that the park board would recommend. He stated that the item could be tabled for additional ideas for the park board to discuss. Mr. Kosobucki did not think that council would act on the item without park board recommendations.

Jim Kneiszel questioned if the park is sold, is the city adequately serving the residents on the west side past Third Street. The city could work with St. Norbert College to see what would work best for the college and the students to welcome them to become involved in the city. Mr. Kneiszel asked for the possibility of the park department to communicate with other municipalities with parks next to colleges and universities to see if anything special is done. Mr. Kneiszel stated he has troubles with the thought of giving up any park land.

Alderperson Chandik Kunding stated that Wilson Park has not been prioritized in the budget and asked what needs to be done regarding the budget.

Ryan Jennings moved to refer the item back to staff for further research, seconded by Jim Kneiszel. Upon vote the motion was approved unanimously.

RESULT:	REFERRED BACK TO STAFF [5 TO 0]
MOVER:	Ryan Jennings, Board Member
SECONDER:	Jim Kneiszel, Board Member
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Jennings, Kneiszel, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet
ABSTAIN:	Amy Chandik Kunding
EXCUSED:	Dean Raasch

3. Consideration and Possible Action to Request additional funding for Fox Point Furnace Project.*

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry explained that staff did get estimates on the installation of the furnace at Fox Point; however WPS does not give a written final estimate until the actual work order is prepared. The estimate came in much higher than anticipated and is good through November 15th. If the work order is approved after November 15th, the cost could go up due to frost charges. Mr. Kosobucki explained that the park board could do nothing, and use the electric heat again this year; however the furnace has already been installed. Staff would recommend requesting the additional funding.

Randy Soquet moved to approve requesting an additional \$4,735 from unassigned reserves to complete the Fox Point furnace project, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Randy Soquet, Board Member
SECONDER:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Board Member
AYES:	Thiel Collar, Jennings, Kneiszel, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Soquet
EXCUSED:	Dean Raasch

4. Discussion of 2021 Beer Gardens and Allocation of Revenue.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry explained that people have been asking what is going to be done with the profits from the beer gardens. Since there was little profit in 2019, the funds were just rolled over to the following year. Now, with the 2021 profits, there is a little over \$20,000 to allocate to park projects. Seeing the beer gardens will eventually be held at the Nelson Family Pavilion at Voyageur Park, staff would recommend the funds be allocated to this project.

Melissa Thiel Collar questioned if anything was cut back from the original plans that could possibly put back in with the funding. Mr. Kosobucki explained that no amenities were cut from the original plan.

Alderman Defnet Ledvina commented that she would still like a band shell.

Alderman Chandik Kunding questioned if it had to be one project or could it be allocated to park maintenance or poured in place surfacing at an existing playground.

Mr. Kosobucki explained that it could be multiple projects; it just needs to be allocated to the park system.

Alderman Chandik Kunding questioned how long the fund can be rolled over. Mr. Kosobucki explained that the finance director would make that decision, but the ultimate goal would be to use within a year or two, or have a definite plan in place that the funds are being allocated for.

Ryan Jennings questioned what budget projects were cut. Mr. Kosobucki commented that the funds should be used on a project that the city will get good publicity on.

Melissa Thiel Collar questioned the time frame on the Nelson Family Pavilion. Mr. Kosobucki stated that the fundraising committee was just put together. In a perfect scenario ground breaking could happen in the fall of 2022, but more likely the spring of 2023. It is all dependent on the fundraising committee acquiring the funds.

Alderman Chandik Kunding questioned the possibility of bringing the question to a public vote. Mr. Kosobucki commented that the preference would be for the park board to use their network and make a decision. If the park board decides to go in the direction of a public vote, the list of projects should be very limited.

Ryan Jennings commented that if the park board decides to retain Wilson Park, these funds could allow for an upgrade to the park.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry explained that this is just a discussion item, so no vote is needed at this time. Staff will put together a list of potential projects for the next park board meeting.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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5. Discussion of Various Pool Policies, Fees, and Procedures.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry explained that staff is still doing research on the topics, but would like the input of the park board on each item. The item is a discussion item, but each potential policy change will be brought back individually for vote next month.

Mr. Kosobucki stated the first policy is for an age requirement to enter the aquatic facility and pool alone. Currently there is nothing in place, and staff feels there needs to be

something in place to protect the little kids. Staff is requesting input not only on a policy, but also parameters. Melissa Thiel Collar asked what the major problems have been during the summer. Mr. Kosobucki stated the most shocking complaint was that a 6 year old was coming to the pool alone and unsupervised. There needs to be some standards for employees to enforce. Ms. Thiel Collar asked if the liability carrier was contacted and if they provided any recommendations. Angela George, Recreation Supervisor explained that the most common or typical age restrictions is anyone 8 and under be accompanied by someone 16 and over. The age requirement is not just a concern in the swimming area, but also in the locker room and facility.

Mr. Kosobucki stated the second policy that needs to be addressed is if there should be any rainchecks or refunds given out. The current policy is that there are no refunds or rainchecks give due to weather or incidental staff closings. Mr. Kosobucki explained why the pool might be closed for instances other than weather and stated that most facilities will give refunds for instances other than weather. Discussion followed and park board recommended that there should be rainchecks given for incidental closings, but not weather.

The third policy that Mr. Kosobucki addressed is the problem with resident and non-resident session passes. To purchase a session pass, proof of residency is required to get the discounted resident rate. This process really slows down the entrance line. Staff checked with other municipalities and only one other checks residency. If the charge for resident and non-resident session passes were the same, the line would go much faster and staff would not have to argue with patrons on residency. It is extremely difficult to find seasonal pool staff now and when you have people verbally abusing staff it will be even harder. If this was done, park board would have to decide on what rate you would like to charge. Residents would not be happy, but the season resident rates could be lowered to get residents to purchase a season pass. A detailed discussion followed and the park board feels that there needs to be a discount for residents. If the daily pass rate is the same for residents and non-residents, the season rate should be lowered for residents to be an incentive for residents to purchase the season pass.

Staffing is the fourth policy Mr. Kosobucki addressed. It is becoming more difficult to find seasonal staff for the pool and there are restrictions that do not allow the 15 year olds to work the entire day. With the current pool schedule the way it is, staff might work in the morning and then have to come back in the evening for a rental. To help alleviate this problem staff is suggesting changing the weekday schedule to having one continual block of open swim time. The number of hours will not decrease; it would be one block instead of two.

The final policy is regarding staff recruitment. Mr. Kosobucki explained with the difficulty trying to get and retain staff, there needs to be more incentives for kids to come work for us. The city administrator made a suggestion to possibly make a scholarship fund for employees. Suggestions were made for the scholarship fund or bonus be contingent for the staff to work throughout the summer and full time hours were worked.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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IV. Staff Updates

1. Update on Shelter Repair Project for 2021.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry reviewed the shelter repairs that were completed for the year and explained that metal roofing was put on some of the

shelters. He also commented that the VFW enclosed shelter had the siding replaced to match the aquatic facility.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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V. Future Agenda Items

None

VI. Adjournment

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm, seconded by Melissa Thiel Collar. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lahtela