



Board of Park Commissioners

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

Regular Meeting

Final Minutes

Thursday, October 19, 2023

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	Excused	
Ryan Jennings	Board Member	Present	
Jim Kneiszel	Board Member	Excused	
Amy Chandik Kunding	Aldersperson	Present	
Shana Defnet Ledvina	Aldersperson	Present	
Dean Raasch	Aldersperson	Present	
Randy Soquet	Board Member	Present	
Connor Mason	Teen Advisor	Present	
Connor Goodman	Teen Advisor	Present	

Others Present:

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry
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. Items

1. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Board of Park Commissioners Minutes from the September 21, 2023 Meeting.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina moved to approve the minutes for the September 21, 2023 Board of Park Commissioners meeting, seconded by Ryan Jennings. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Shana Defnet Ledvina, Aldersperson
SECONDER:	Ryan Jennings, Board Member
AYES:	Jennings, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Raasch, Soquet
EXCUSED:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel

2. Consideration and Possible Action to Approval of Proposal from Pink Flamingo for Improvements to the Legion Softball Field. *

Aldersperson Raasch moved to approve the proposal from Pink Flamingos for improvements to the Legion Park softball field fence, seconded by Randy Soquet.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that the \$8,000 donation from Pink Flamingos is not the full cost of the improvements. Staff is recommending the remaining ARPA funds from the Legion Park field renovations be used for the project.

Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

3. Consideration and Possible Action to Accept De Pere Baseball Proposal to Improve Gandrud Field. *

Alderperson Raasch moved to accept a donation from De Pere Baseball for improvements to Gandrud Field at Southwest Park valued at around \$2,000, seconded by Alderperson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Dean Raasch, Alderperson
SECONDER:	Shana Defnet Ledvina, Alderperson
AYES:	Jennings, Kundinger, Defnet Ledvina, Raasch, Soquet
EXCUSED:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel

4. Annual Report from Brown County Extension on Community Garden.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that at the last meeting the Park Board requested that an annual report was submitted from the Brown County Extension for review. Attached is the report for the 2023 growing season and will now be submitted annually after the growing season is complete.

Randy Soquet commented that he hopes the problems that occurred this year are avoided next year and that the community gardens are a great asset to the community.

Alderperson Chandik Kundinger requested that, if possible, any type of metrics for donated food would be a great addition to the report.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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5. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve Relocation of the Preserve Trail by Innovation Court and Southbridge Road. *

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that Scott Thoresen, Director of Public Works is present if anyone has any specific questions about the project. Marty explained that the corridor is being redone as part of the DOT Southern Bridge project. There is going to be a round-a-bout added and the trail needs to be adjusted. The proposal is for the trail to come out on Innovation Court and then go down to South Bridge to better fit the corridor project.

Alderperson Raasch questioned why the trail needs to be relocated. In the picture provided it appears that the trail would not be in the construction corridor. Scott Thoresen, Director of Public Works explained with the new South Bridge corridor, Innovation Court will be raised by approximately 15' for the new interchange on 41. The proposed design fits the vertical elevation and the overall corridor plan better.

Aldersperson Raasch moved to approve the relocation of the Preserve Trail, seconded by Aldersperson Chandik Kunding. Upon vote the motion was approved unanimously.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Dean Raasch, Aldersperson
SECONDER:	Amy Chandik Kunding, Aldersperson
AYES:	Jennings, Kunding, Defnet Ledvina, Raasch, Soquet
EXCUSED:	Melissa Thiel Collar, Jim Kneiszel

6. Consideration and Possible Action to Remove the James Street Dock Extension from the 2022 Capital Projects.*

Ryan Jennings moved to remove the James Street dock extension project from the 2022 capital projects, seconded by Randy Soquet. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

7. Review and Discussion on Service analysis from Mead and Hunt.

Mark Sauer from Mead and Hunt was present at the meeting to discuss the draft copy of the Service Analysis that was done in conjunction with the COMP Plan. Mark explained that the analysis was prepared using peer evaluation of neighboring municipalities, national metrics, and the private sector. He explained that the neighboring municipalities were not very responsive to questioning.

The survey findings show that the City of De Pere has a park and forestry inventory that is robust, with a wide range of services provided. The survey respondents love all the street trees and feel that the city should plant more. They also feel that the street trees are well maintained, and the staff is doing a good job. Both the forestry and park departments got a good ranking in terms of services provided.

An analysis was conducted, comparing the departments with the private sector, utilizing eight different private contractors. It was difficult to compare the private sector to the departments because private contractors do not provide all the services that the departments are responsible for. It was noted however that staff salaries do have a lower cost than what the price from the private sector would charge for services.

In comparison of staffing numbers to national averages, the City of De Pere employs 15 full-time staff. This level of staffing would be in the lower quartile per the national park and recreation association per the size in acreage of the park system. The median number of employees for De Pere's parkland acreage is 32 employees.

The park system contains a total of 485 acres, but of the 485 acres there are 40 acres that the city is not responsible for the operations and maintenance of, the Brown County Fairgrounds and the Fox River Trail, leaving a total of 445 acres. With this adjusted total of 445 acres, this computes to 17.5 acres per 1,000 people, which is approaching the upper quartile of the national average at 17.9. The surrounding communities have an average of 14.5.

Ryan Jennings questioned if South Park in Rockland off Ryan Road is included in part of the acreage. Marty Kosobucki explained that even though there is not a lot of maintenance done to the park, it is included in the total acreage, and we are responsible for the upkeep of the park.

Mark Sauer then discussed the operating expenses and stated that there was a notable increase from last year, but the city still falls below the national median. With a population density of approximately 2,000 residents/square mile, the City of De Pere's operating expenses computes to \$6,156 per acre. The NRPA average, with the same population density, is around \$13,000 per acre. The analysis shows that the City of De Pere employs a significantly lower number of employees per the average with lower expenditures.

Ryan Jennings questioned if the expenditures per acre was just using employee cost, or if it includes the total park budget. Mark Sauer stated that it is based off the city operating budget.

Alderson Raasch questioned if the staffing calculations were just full-time employees or if they also included seasonal employees and what the national average uses. Mark Sauer commented that the national average just compares full-time employees. Marty Kosobucki verified that the number used is just our 15 full-time employees. Alderson Raasch stated that there are discrepancies between the contractor and city staff costs because there are no capital equipment or administrative costs in the city expenses. To be more accurate, these costs should be included. Alderson Raasch commented that the analysis shows that the city does a great job in a cost-effective manner.

Alderson Defnet Ledvina commented that she agrees that the survey shows the park and forestry departments are doing a good job.

Marty Kosobucki commented that a general assumption would be that all national park, recreation, and forestry departments employee seasonal employees in some capacity. The analysis is not to account for every penny, but to get an understanding of what type of job is being done. The analysis is in draft form, and if possible, they will try to include capital costs in the final numbers.

Alderson Raasch stated that it is good to see the analysis and the possibility of having public / private partnerships and the ability to budget for things in the future.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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8. Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Comprehensive Park Plan. *

Mark Sauer from Mead and Hunt reviewed the draft plan of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, explaining that there have been many updates to the plan already. Mark explained the information gathering stage and that they tried many ways to try to reach out and engage the public. From the responses received, the consensus is that the parks are a great system that meets the needs of the community. There were some comments on things residents would like to see improved, like improvements to ADA accessibility in some existing parks, the inclusion of arts in the parks, and to improve and add access to the river.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry stated that staff has reviewed the draft copy and there are clerical corrections that are needed throughout the draft, and priority listings adjusted. Marty questioned the Park Board if they wanted to go through each park separately, or if they wanted a summary of the items staff has addressed. Marty provided a summary of the main items that need to be addressed and corrected on the final document. First, the graphics on the map for Carney Park need to be adjusted. Next, the budget amount for Wilson Park needs to be adjusted to show the cost estimate provided by Graef for the designed improvements to the park of \$150,000 and the priority listing should be a high priority. Next is the development of a community garden at Samantha Park. Samantha Park is the park that was determined a good fit for another community garden, but staff would like to see the location of the garden relocated within the park and placed behind the current urban orchard. Staff is also requesting the addition of two pickleball courts at both Legion Park and VFW Park be listed in the plan. At Optimist Park there is a mini field proposed, but the addition of an ADA path from the concession stand to the lower field needs to be added and the parking lot expansion off Erie Street is shown in the wrong area. There has been a skate park referenced for a while, and now the location of the skate park is identified on the Southwest Park map. Lastly, a kayak/canoe launch is included in the long-range plans at Voyageur Park, but there may be ADA difficulties utilizing it in this area.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina questioned why it is suggested to place additional pickleball courts at the existing courts and not locate them at additional parks. Marty Kosobucki explained that it is more cost effective to add them to existing courts.

Connor Goodman, Teen Advisor questioned the proposed skate park at Southwest Park. Marty Kosobucki explained that there is no design of the skate park yet, the location is just identified in the park, which is by the silo.

Alderperson Raasch questioned the ice center and what is projected with it. Marty Kosobucki stated that it is hard to predict anything until the condition analysis is performed, which is still in the budget for 2024.

Connor Mason, Teen Advisor, questioned the timing of the skate park. Marty Kosobucki explained with a large project, it is hard to get any momentum unless a group drives fundraising efforts, or if donations are received.

Connor Mason also commented on the tennis and pickleball courts. He stated that even with the popularity of pickleball, he hopes that at least two tennis courts are kept at the parks. With the number of people that play tennis regularly at Legion Park, one court would not be enough to accommodate all the people that play. Marty Kosobucki explained that the plan would be to keep two tennis courts at each location and add additional pickleball courts, not eliminate any tennis courts.

Randy Soquet stated that the tennis courts at the schools are open for public use as well, as long as there is not any school programming being held at them.

Alderperson Defnet Ledvina stated that from the survey results, 75 % of the responses state that street trees are very important and 81% say there should be more trees. She feels street trees should be prioritized more in the COMP plan. The way that the street

tree replacement program is currently, the city will never accomplish the goals they are trying to achieve. Marty Kosobucki stated that street tree replacement is something that warrants a larger discussion other than the COMP Plan, but maybe it would be appropriate to be listed as an objective in the plan.

Ryan Jennings agreed that the street tree replacement program needs to be discussed. Ryan feels that if a street tree is removed for some reason, then the homeowner should automatically get another tree unless they reject the planting.

Ryan Jennings questioned if the Bomier Boat Launch kayak rental program is not taking place. Marty Kosobucki explained that there was some cost sharing that the mayor did not put into the 2023 budget, so Definitely De Pere did not go through with the project. Marty also stated that with the boat traffic and parking issues, he is not confident that Bomier is the best location for this type of facility. Ryan explained that the more the river is used, the more accessible and lively the community looks. If the kayak rental cannot go at Bomier, Ryan feels that it should be considered at a different location in the city.

Alderson Raasch moved to open the meeting to public comment at 7:45 pm, seconded by Alderson Defnet Ledvina. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

James Anderson commented that boat traffic is a concern for all residents that live on the river. Also, Mr. Anderson stated that the COMP plan doesn't do any good unless something is done with the information. There is a lot of data collected and information provided, but the way the COMP Plan is now, there is too much information provided. There needs to be a 1–2-page summary that shows what the plan is for each park. A summary that the community can easily see what is planned in the next few years at the parks and provide some influence.

Alderson Raasch moved to return to regular order at 7:47 pm, seconded by Ryan Jennings. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Marty Kosobucki questioned if the Park Board would like the survey to be part of the final draft of the COMP plan, or if it should be a separate document. The survey results are over 100 pages, so if it is removed the final plan would be much shorter. Park Board recommended the summary to be a separate document.

Alderson Raasch stated that he likes the survey but feels it should be left out of the COMP plan. He also explained that the Planning Commission tracks projects online so residents can see the status of city projects at any time. This might be a good idea to implement for future park projects.

Marty Kosobucki explained that process of approving the COMP Plan and stated the recommended updates will be completed to the plan and then it is forwarded to the Planning Commission for review. Once it meets Planning Commission approval, then it will go to Common Council for final approval.

Randy Soquet moved to approve the Comprehensive Outdoor Plan with the recommended changes, seconded by Alderson Chandik Kundering.

Aldersperson Defnet Ledvina questioned if an updated copy is forwarded to the Park Board before it goes on for approval. Marty Kosobucki stated that he will forward a copy to all Park Board members once the updates are completed for a final review.

Upon vote, the above motion passed unanimously.

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

IV. Staff Updates

1. Staff Update on Southwest Park Shelter Repairs.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry stated that the RFP for the Southwest Park shelter repair was advertised for bids this week, with the second advertisement to be run next week.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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2. Staff Update on Nelson Pavilion.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that the Nelson Family Pavilion project is almost ready to get started. There are some issues that are being addressed with WPS, but the utilities should be disconnected to the old building next week and then the building will be demolished. Construction equipment will be mobilized the following week.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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3. Staff Update on Budget Workshop.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that there was nothing major to report from the budget workshop. As of now, there hasn't been anything major cut from the Parks budget.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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4. Staff Update on Playground Installations.

Marty Kosobucki, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry explained that the first layer of the poured in place surfacing at Legion and Kelly Danen should be poured tomorrow, with the final layer to be poured the week of October 23rd. Lawton Park is waiting for the sidewalk to be poured before the wood fiber can be placed. With the Kelly Danen playground being funded by a donation, staff would like to have an official ribbon cutting ceremony once the poured in place surfacing is finished.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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V. Future Agenda Items

None

VI. Adjournment

Aldersperson Chandik Kunding moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 pm, seconded by Aldersperson Raasch. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Grace Lahtela