

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, July 21, 2025

1. Call to order

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met in person on July 21, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Kerry Kneser at 4:37pm. Members present:, Kerry Kneser, Julie Chapman, Emily Lessner, Jennifer Clayton. Ald. Jonathan Lampe joined at 4:50pm. Not present was: Kyle Krueger, Brad Clark. Also present: Kristine Butteris, Andrea Draeger, Jarrod Folkman, Jeff Doyle.

2. Review and approval of minutes:

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the June 16, 2025 Parks Recreation and Forestry minutes as written. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

Jennifer Clayton motioned to approve the June 17, 2025 Senior Center Advisory Board minutes as written. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

3. Review and approval of financial reports

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the May financial reports. Kerry Kneser seconded. Motion carried.

4. Citizens to be heard

There were none.

5. Business

Review and take action: Jacobson memorial tree or bench

A. A request for a bench and tree at Deer Trail Park was reviewed. The bench will be consistent with the department standard with a custom plaque. The tree will be chosen from an approved list. Emily Lessner motioned to approve the Jacobson memorial bench and tree. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

B. Review and take action: Windmill condition of facility use agreement

Steve Schroeder was present to request hosting the Windmill league and upcoming tournament under the Thunder condition of facility use agreement. He also requested a waiver of fees of \$750 or \$600 for the amount of fees for the unprepped weekend fields. Thunder will operate the concession stand and complete all other field preparation. The restrooms at Brandt-Quirk are currently closed, though portable toilets are offered. Additional portable toilets will need to be ordered at the expense of the organization/tournament. Ald. Jonathan Lampe motioned to reduce the fees by \$600 for the 2025 Windmill tournament and approve the condition of facility use agreement. Emily Lessner seconded. Kerry Kneser opposed. Motion carried.

C. Review and take action: 2026 general and club facility use agreements

Several updates and additions were made to the general and club facility use agreements for 2026 based on previous situations in which information should be clarified, including use and cleaning of restrooms, scoreboards and lights, etc. Jennifer Clayton motioned to approve the 2026 general and club facility use agreements. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

D. Review and discuss: Riverside restrooms during Riverfest

Common Council approved the Riverside Park restrooms to remain open during Riverfest. The department is determining a schedule for staff shifts over the four day festival to monitor and maintain the restrooms. An amount of \$2,300 was given as the maximum charge (over time for full-time staff), though are hoping to reduce the cost with seasonal and exempt staff. Auxiliary officers will be making rounds as well.

E. Review and discuss: Fees for federal holiday event park rentals and additional fees

Several conversations within the city have occurred regarding charging park reservation and equipment rental fees for federal holiday events within parks. An ordinance shows that our park rental fees to not apply to special event exemptions, and can still be incurred, including equipment and damage charges.

F. Review and take possible action: Town Square Commission

With the addition of the Bentzin Family Town Square in 2023, the city created a commission to assist with programming of the facility as well as provide ideas and through discussion on the needs of the community and this space. For the last three years, this commission has assisted with a number of programming ideas as well as fundraising ventures to continue events at the Bentzin Family Town Square. Due to the amazing work that was done in the first two years of the Bentzin Family Town Square by this commission, we now have a wonderful space filled with events of all sizes for everyone. This commission was set to sunset at the end of April 2026. It is requested that the commission will now sunset effective August 1, 2025 or as determined by the next Common Council meeting. The "10/31" list will still exist and approvals will come to this commission before public safety. Ald. Jonathan Lampe made a positive recommendation to City Council to repeal Ord. 24-25 to sunset the Town Square Programming Commission. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

6. Director's Report:

A. VEG 5K update

A 5k for veterinarians was requested to run through Brandt-Quirk park and adjacent roads. The department will finalize the park application, with the condition that all dogs are leashed for the entire event and all refuse is cleaned up and taken with.

B. Project updates: parks

The pump at Brandt-Quirk park is currently not working and will be replaced. The department is continuing to work with the YMCA regarding the details of the facility use agreement, and will be brought to the August meeting.

C. Update on programming: recreation

Summer programs are going well and will be wrapping up by next meeting (Day Camp, baseball leagues) despite weather challenges. We are ramping up for fall programming and plan to hire soccer and other positions posted to city website. The tree planting program signs have been well received and there are places to take pictures to continue to boost participation.

D. Update on programming: senior and enrichment

Currently planning fall and early winter family nights and school break activities. The Senior Center will begin a cribbage league, hold a social isolation focus group, and has the potential for a dementia film screening as well as staff training. The patio furniture was delivered and a party/dedication will be planned. The next Senior Center quarterly birthday party will be held on August 19. National Senior Citizen Day will be celebrated on August 20. The annual rummage sale will not be held this year due to the extensive time and labor needed by volunteers to operate. Additional and new fundraisers will be planned.



E. Update on programming: town square

The first Sunday concert was well attended. We have had food trucks reaching out due to success they have had and will continue to add. Thursday markets are going well despite weather. Glo-motion is race coming up on 8/2, registration extended this week. Cranfest is in September and need about double the participants to run.

7. Adjournment – Next meeting date August 18, 2025

Emily Lessner motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:42pm. Julie Chapment seconded. Motion carried.