

## **PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES**

Monday, April 21, 2025

#### **1. Call to order**

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met in person on April 21, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Kerry Kneser. Members present: Ald. Jonathan Lampe, Julie Chapman, Emily Lessner, Kerry Kneser, Brad Clark, Kyle Krueger. Not present was: Jennifer Clayton. Also present: Kristine Butteris, Andrea Draeger, Stephanie Juhl, Ali Nicholson, Jarrod Folkman, and Ryan Thurow.

#### **2. Review and approval of minutes:**

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the March 17, 2025 Parks Recreation and Forestry minutes as written. Brad Clark seconded. Motion carried.

#### **3. Review and approval of financial reports**

Brad Clark motioned to approve the February financial reports. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

#### **4. Citizens to be heard**

Two representatives from Rock River Rescue came to speak regarding information for installing a pier at Heiden Pond. More information was discussed at the time of the related agenda item (D).

#### **5. Business**

##### **A. Review and take possible action: Outlawz tournament fees**

Wisconsin Outlawz, based in Deerfield, has held two or more softball tournaments per year for the last several years, utilizing both Brandt-Quirk and Riverside Park diamonds. A facility use agreement has been completed for the 2025 season. They are requesting rental fees be waived for their tournaments in May and June camp 2025. These requests do not include any additional field materials, supplies, and concession stand permits which may be utilized and charged accordingly. They may be interested in assisting with upgrades to the Brandt-Quirk restroom facilities, including installing hand dryers, potentially in lieu of rental fees. Hand dryers are not currently part of the facility upgrade list developed by the department and club partners. The potential lost revenue for waiving fees would total about \$1,575. Kyle Krueger motioned to maintain rental fees as stated in the fees and charges policy for 2025. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

##### **B. Review and take possible action: YMCA facility use agreement and fee waiver**

The Watertown YMCA would like to utilize fields, including track & field and football, in the spring 2025 season. A facility use agreement was presented for use of these fields. The Watertown YMCA would like to ask for a waiver of fees, totaling \$2,400, for these fields as programs would not be able to be offered to the community otherwise. An attachment with proposed program descriptions was presented, including football and track and field. Brad Clark motioned to charge fees only for game fields and not practices in 2025. Ald. Jonathan Lampe seconded. Motion carried.

##### **C. Review and take action: Quilters on the Rock classification**

Quilters on the Rock is requesting a reclassification to class two in order to remain a community resource and opportunity for citizens to give back. If so, it is recommended they alter their membership fees to donation-based offerings. Wisconsin and Brandenstein rooms



could be offered, and Watertown or Snack Shop if necessary for a room modification due to a paying rental (these each have capacity limits of 24). Two options may be: reclassify Quilters on the Rock to class two (if have suggested donation instead of fees and security deposit, and room modifications may be needed if there is a paid rental) or remain at class three (full rental fee of \$1440 plus security deposit, and no room modifications would occur). Questions remained regarding membership fees versus donations and if the program should fall under the Senior & Community Center. Brad Clark motioned to table this decision until the May meeting. Ald. Jonathan Lampe seconded. Motion carried.

**D. Review and take possible action: Rock River Rescue request**

Tom Brady, member of The Rock River Rescue Foundation – Heiden Pond Committee, would like to propose placing a pier at Heiden Pond to access the Franklin Street Side of the pond. The foundation has been stocking the fish and maintaining Heiden Pond for many years. Their intent is to provide a safe and accessible fishing area for families in Watertown and surrounding communities. The City of Watertown is currently in the process of updating the Parks and Open Spaces Plan which will highlight what the needs of the area are. We currently have 14 fishing access points and four accessible fishing piers along the river. The foundation would purchase the pier and gift it to the city, which would then be responsible for maintenance. Emily Lessner motioned to table this decision until the parks and open spaces plan is complete. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

**E. Review and take possible action: trees at oak hill cemetery (moved up)**

The forestry department is reviewing ways the city may manage trees which are not on city property (Oak Hill Cemetery) which need to be removed due to dead or dying conditions.. Most of the trees (13 dead ash and an additional 60 trees) are inaccessible with city forestry equipment. Brad Clark motioned to move forward with a letter to the cemetery for tree removal request for the safety of the community. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

**F. Review and take possible action: Tom Schultz memorial bench**

Through the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department, we have a memorial program set for donations such as trees, benches, and picnic tables. If anyone would like to donate a designated item in memory of a loved one, the department has an application process that is followed. Tom Schultz would like to honor his parents by placing a bench at Mary Rose Park as this park was named after his mother, Mary Rose. Julie Chapman motioned to approve the memorial bench. Brad Clark seconded. Motion carried.

**G. Review and take possible action: Vicki Bartz memorial bench**

Vicki Bartz would like to honor her mother by placing a bench at Washington Park as there is another bench at this location in memory of her father. Emily Lessner motioned to approve the memorial bench. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

**H. Review and take action: concession in parks fees**

The department has put together recommended changes to the fee schedule, allowing Watertown to stay competitive when booking concession stands and food trucks within the park system. This includes a \$75/event or \$300/year building/concession stand fee and \$35/event or \$300/year food truck fee, effective immediately. Julie Chapman motioned to approve the reduced fees and make the proposed changes to the fee schedule. Brad Clark seconded. Motion carried.

**I. Review and take action: 2024 annual report**

The 2024 Parks, Recreation, and Forestry annual report was presented. Kristine requested notification for commissioners seeking additional information to be added to the 2025 report. Brad Clark motioned to approve the 2024 annual report. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.



**J. Review and take action: town square available position**

Brad Clark nominated commissioner Kerry Kneser for the available position on the Bentzin Family Town Square board. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

**6. Director's Report:**

**A. Lake Victoria Findings**

The City owns more than half of the frontage adjacent to Heiden Pond and owns less than a quarter of the frontage of Lake Victoria which is the isthmus and the South 3<sup>rd</sup> St. right of way. The culvert connecting Heiden Pond to Lake Victoria is not a major contributor to the weed problems in Lake Victoria. The nutrients that are causing the weed issues in the lake are likely from the yards of the homes. With the history of this property, all of the questions as to who maintains the body of water are very clearly stated that it is not the responsibility of the City of Watertown to maintain.

**B. Project updates: parks**

Wind damage – the Washington Park fence was repaired last week, and insurance did cover the expense. Only one tennis court at Brandt-Quirk park was able to be repaired under insurance, though were asked to review all five again. The budget will need to be evaluated to consider repair for the remaining four courts.

All park restrooms are open. The Riverside Park restrooms are currently open, though will be periodically closed throughout the season to complete repairs.

Update on vandalism – the windows at the Aquatic Center as well as the lower pavilion did not meet the insurance deductible, and will need to evaluate funds in order to repair. The vandals were caught, though restitution fees will not be enough to cover the expenses.

The Parks and Open Spaces Plan open house occurred last week. There was a small attendance, though good feedback from citizens. There may be an opportunity for another open house.

**C. Project updates: forestry**

The downed tree policy is being created and will be brought back to this body for approval when available.

**D. Project updates: aquatics**

The Aquatic Center opening date is June 7. Preparations are being made for opening.

**E. Project updates: senior & community center**

The generator has been installed and are waiting for training and testing. The front doors have been temporarily fixed and are hoping to add a replacement of the doors, or move the closing mechanism, to the 2026 budget.

**F. Update on programming: recreation**

The spring soccer season has kicked off and is going well. Baseball programming is gearing up for mid-May with clinics and leagues. Day Camp is coming up this summer – all staff are returning except the director and have hired for that position last week. We are working on ideas to improve the Kart Park program this year. We are working on a schedule to send additional advertising through school folders, create yard signs, etc. Other programs will be coming late summer, including kickball and gymnastics.

**G. Update on programming: town square**

We are looking for vendors for the Thursday night markets. All concerts have been lined up for the season and food truck Mondays are finalized. The art history wall will be installed with a ribbon cutting at the birthday bash on May 31.

**H. Update on programming: senior and enrichment**

Spring break enrichment activities went well, including family bingo, a park scavenger hunt, and a bright light, neon night family party. There will be a community park clean-up day this Friday to celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day this week. Students will also be planting the annual Arbor Day tree at Riverside Park. Several other family nights are being planned throughout the year, including Ties & Tiaras on May 9.

Senior Center Advisory Board elections took place, with results announced at the Spring Fling volunteer celebration and members meeting on April 23. The third annual Senior Care Fair is scheduled for May 14. The patio furniture has been ordered after Senior Center members reached their fundraising goal.

**I. Update on programming: aquatics**

Registration for summer swim lessons began April 7 and most are full. The indoor pool will be closed April 14-May16 for annual maintenance. There will be a lifeguard class in May and another in July; many staff are returning from last year. Lifeguards are being recruited for early morning shifts. Carrico donated \$2,000 towards the final splash bash this year on August 17.

**7. Adjournment – Next meeting date May 19, 2025**

Emily Lessner motioned to adjourn the meeting. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.