

CITY OF NEENAH
PUBLIC SERVICES AND SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 27, 2025

Present: Chairman Lendrum, Alderman Borchardt, Linski, Pollnow, and Weber

Excused:

Also Present: Mayor Lang, Public Works Director Kaiser, Parks & Recreation Director Kading, Community Development and Assessment Director Kelly Nieforth, Assistant Police Chief Bernice, City Clerk Nagel, Public Works Office Manager Mroczkowski, Flo Bruno, Brent Bowman, Michelle Dunning, Sara Hanneman, Scott Becher, Jane Bahlman, and Bethanie Gengler

Chairman Lendrum called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 13, 2025

Motion by Pollnow, Seconded by Borchardt to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 13, 2025

Call for vote by Chairman Lendrum

Motion Carried. All voting Aye. 5/0

Public Appearance

Scott Becher, 1061 Green Acres Ln., Neenah – Mr. Becher spoke in regard to the Designated Outdoor Recreation Area (DORA). He stated we have a great downtown, and he would like to see that the DORA not be in effect during certain events like the parades. He stated that he does not want residents to be discouraged to attend those events because of the DORA.

Jane Bahlman, 1516 Kingswood Dr., Neenah - Ms. Bahlman spoke in regard to the Carpenter Nature Preserve and the use of sheep and goats to control vegetation growth. She stated that she lives next to the sidewalk to the preserve. She stated that one of the purposes of bringing in the sheep and goats was to eradicate the buckthorn. Ms. Bahlman stated that the sheep and goats are only eating the leaves on the buckthorn and not the wood which lets the leaves grow back. She stated that she is concerned that this method is not going to work. Ms. Bahlman stated that she has also noticed an odor and flies since the sheep and goats arrived.

Brent Bowman, 135 W Wisconsin Ave., Neenah – Mr. Bowman spoke in regard to the DORA. He thanked the Committee for considering the DORA. He stated that he is hoping that it will increase foot traffic, boost sales at bars, restaurants, and retail and enhance the social vibrancy of Neenah's downtown. He stated that it is not about the alcohol, but creating impact in the downtown.

Chairman Lendrum closed the Public Appearance portion of the meeting.

Doty Park Phase 1 Shoreline Improvements Construction Administrative Agreement

Director Kading reviewed his memo of May 27. He stated that staff has been working towards stabilization and improvements of the Doty Park shoreline since 2023. He stated that permits from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WiDNR) and the Army Corps of Engineers have finally been approved. Director Kading stated that in order to move forward construction administrative services have to be available to the city to monitor the engineering, design and architectural integrity of the park.

Alderman Lendrum asked what the budget is for this project. Director Kading stated it is approximately \$3 million dollars.

Motion by Pollnow, Seconded by Weber to recommend Council approve the Construction Administrative Agreement with Edgewater Resources for the Doty Park Phase 1 Shoreline Improvements project in the amount of \$126,976.00 and for reimbursable expenses in the amount of \$11,222.00 utilizing 2025 CIP Budgeted funds.

Report

Alderman Pollnow stated that the letter from Edgewater Resources referenced a task force for this project and he asked Director Kading if the task force is still place. Director Kading stated that in 2023 a task force was created to review the consultants proposals, select the firms to be interviewed, and then interview those firms. He stated that the task force no longer exists.

Alderman Pollnow asked if there should be payment terms and deadline terms in this contract. Director Kading stated that those types of things are handled with the construction contract.

Alderman Lendrum asked that the map provided in the packet highlight the area that will be under construction before it goes to council.

Called for Vote by Chairman Lendrum

Motion Carried. All voting Aye. 5/0

Resolution 2025-04 Designated Outdoor Recreation Area (DORA)

Alderman Lendrum stated that the idea of the DORA is not being brought to this committee by city staff. She stated that Future Neenah Inc., through Alderman Borchardt is bringing this forward to be considered by this committee. She stated that she would like to get a vote on the DORA at this meeting. She asked City Attorney Rashid to start the discussion.

City Attorney Rashid stated that he wanted to point out and highlight the time frame that Future Neenah is requesting for the DORA. He stated that the DORA time frame is

12:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Wednesday through Saturday. He stated that with these requested hours, there will be a number of other downtown functions that will be within the footprint of the DORA.

Mr. Bowman stated that the memo addresses most of the questions other than the time frame of the DORA. He stated as the DORA was presented in 2024, the time frame was Thursday through Saturday. He stated the DORA before this committee now includes Wednesday to include the two street concerts. He stated that he is aware that there are concerns with starting at 12:00 PM on Wednesday and Thursday and is willing to adjust to 4:00 or 5:00 PM if the committee is not comfortable with that time frame.

Mr. Bowman stated that he is also aware of the concerns that approving the DORA will create a "drunk fest". He stated that he has had conversations with the Police Chief Olson and Assistant Police Chief Bernice after other events with the Temporary DORA and they shared that there have been no issues.

Mr. Bowman stated that the driving force behind the DORA is the economic impact it will have in Neenah. He stated that it creates a social environment that invites people downtown to shop and explore.

Alderman Lendrum asked City Attorney Rashid to explain why a resolution was created instead of an ordinance. Attorney Rashid stated that a resolution is typically done when something is less formal and temporary. He stated that the City of Oshkosh chose to do their DORA this way and it made sense for Neenah to do it this way as well. Attorney Rashid stated that the DORA is new, and we want to take small steps and have the ability to review it more easily and frequently.

Alderman Borchardt stated that he likes the vision that Future Neenah has with DORA. He stated that he is supporting it because it is another way to bring life into Neenah as a destination city. He stated that the DORA will provide a casual environment promoting businesses. Alderman Borchardt stated that he is comfortable with the time frame that Future Neenah is proposing.

Alderman Weber stated that the City of Neenah is not the only family friendly city in the nation that has events in their downtown, we are not unique in that way. He asked Mr. Bowman what communication he was aware of for those residents who don't feel the need for a DORA during parades or other events like this. Mr. Bowman stated he could only speak to the ones he is aware of in Ohio where people would be walking with a beer or wine or maybe nothing enjoying their afternoon.

Director Nieforth stated that the City of Oshkosh carved out events that they felt were more family oriented and did not want alcohol involved such as the farmers market and pub crawls. She stated that there were never any issues with the DORA used during events.

Alderman Pollnow stated that he supports the DORA and is confident that the City of Neenah residents will act responsibly. He stated that he is comfortable with the time frame as presented by Future Neenah.

Alderman Lendrum stated that she has concerns with the future Alta Alley and it becoming an area that people are just going to hang out and drink. She stated that she wants residents to be comfortable using the space and not being surrounded with people drinking.

Mr. Bowman stated that project is still developing. He stated that there are planned kid's games and other family activities that they hope to include. Mr. Bowman stated that they want to make it accessible to all.

Alderman Lendrum asked City Clerk Nagel if there are any concerns from the retail side regarding the DORA. She stated that when this was presented in 2024, there were several retail shops that opposed it. Their concern was that people will enter their shop with alcohol which is not permitted by law, and the shop owner will have to deal with it. She stated that they feel that is not fair to them and they should not be put in that situation.

Alderman Lendrum asked for the DORA footprint map be corrected by the next council meeting.

Alderman Lendrum read an email from Lee Hillstrom, 1021 Sterling Ave., Neenah

"Customers or bars or restaurants are already able to drink outside of those establishments.

How does more alcohol in our downtown help? Will visitors be impressed that they can walk three blocks of our downtown with alcohol in their hands?

Businesses downtown already think that the Alta Alley gives people a place to smoke which makes that area unfriendly to those visiting our downtown. Alcohol will now add to that.

Parents just wanting a place to sit and enjoy an ice cream cone with their children will be helped by this in what way?

Oshkosh limits their DORA to 24 hours a week yet 40 hours are being proposed in Neenah. Why?

With a downtown with many types of businesses, how many will benefit from this proposal? How many aldermen have talked to the owners of businesses who don't sell alcohol to get their honest opinions on this proposal? I talked with one of the owners of a downtown business when this was proposed last year, and he was against it but was afraid to say anything. He thought putting a sign on his door saying you could not bring alcohol into his business would have a negative look.

We are already short on police officers and paying too much overtime. Where will the officers be taken away from to patrol the downtown during DORA hours?

I would hope any extra costs for garbage would in the future be charged to the businesses downtown and not paid for by our citizens.

How will a DORA affect other bars and restaurants in our city outside the DORA? Are they being unfairly treated? “

The Committee discussed how underage drinking will be handled with the DORA and clean up after the events.

Attorney Rashid stated that he wanted to follow up on Alderman Weber's earlier comment. He stated that the reason Clerk Nagel included the events at the end of the memo, for example the Homecoming parade and Very Merry Christmas, was to make the committee aware and stop and think. He stated that Neenah is unique in that it is a small community geographically and has a small downtown area. He stated that with that in mind, most of the events happen within a small footprint and you can't separate the two as naturally as other communities.

Attorney Rashid stated that it is also important to keep in mind that the Temporary DORA is still available for the two Wednesday concerts that Future Neenah sponsors.

Attorney Rashid stated that by state statute, a drink purchased in one of the establishments must be sealed until it crosses the threshold of the establishment.

The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding this topic.

Alderman Lendrum stated that she would like the time frame to be from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Wednesday through Saturday.

The Committee had a discussion on this topic.

Report

Motion by Pollnow, seconded by Borchardt to recommend Council approve Resolution 2025-04, Designated Outdoor Recreation Area with the time frame being 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM, Wednesday through Saturday.

Alderman Lendrum stated again that she would like to see a compromise and have the DORA start at 4:00 PM.

Alderman Borchardt stated that he has attended events that take place throughout the day. He stated the DORA gives flexibility and he is not seeing causation if we have an event start at noon with alcohol that everyone will be acting crazy. Alderman Borchardt stated that may be someone's perception. He stated that he believes in the people of Neenah that they are going to be respectful. He stated that we have the clauses in the resolution to bring it back for review.

Called for Vote by Chairman Lendrum

Motion Carried. 4/1 (Lendrum voting No)

Public Works General Construction and Department Activity Report

- 1) S. Commercial Street:
 - Intersection and gap paving along the west side of the road is being done.
 - Grading for sidewalk is ongoing along the west side along with planter box excavation and backfilling.
 - Sidewalk paving was scheduled to begin about 5/22.
 - Traffic signal bases and pull boxes are being installed.
- 2) Contract 7-21 (Harrison Pond): Work under the contract is complete. A final pay request is being prepared.
- 3) Contract 7-23 (High, River Utility and Street Construction): Work is complete. A punchlist was provided to the contractor. Concrete repairs and associated restoration are done. Parking lot asphalt repair remains. Final quantities have been prepared.
- 4) Contract 4-24 (S. Park Avenue Easement – Utilities): Piping work is complete. Softscape restoration is complete. Hardscape restoration is either being done under our concrete/asphalt repair contracts or by city crews.
- 5) Contract 6-24 (Jewelers Park Drive): Work on the original contract is complete. Curb/gutter, flume and trail installation are complete. Fine grading and asphalt paving will be done in the next two weeks.
- 6) Contract 7-24 (Misc Concrete Pavement/Sidewalk Repair): The majority of the work is complete. The sidewalk on the west side of the north end of Baldwin will be done when arrangements have been finalized with the abutting property owner.
- 7) Contract 11-24 (Douglas Park Pond): Pond excavation and storm pipe installation are complete. Final grading and landscaping remain to be completed.
- 8) Contract 13-24 (S. Commercial St Turn Lane at Winneconne Av): The contract was awarded to Vinton Construction. The work has not been scheduled. We are working through the property acquisition.
- 9) Contract 1-25 (Alexander, Lexington, Forest Manor Ct, Bruce, Southfield Plat Utilities and Street): Water main installation is complete on Lexington, Alexander and Bruce. Work on Forest Manor Ct will start the week of 5/27.
- 10) Contract 2-25 (Elm, Douglas Utilities and Street):
 - a) Elm: Utility work is complete. The street is in the rest period until June.
 - b) Douglas: Utility work is complete. Concrete curb and sidewalk repairs will start the week of 5/27.
- 11) Contract 3-25 (Caroline, Hickory Utility and Street Construction): Service line pipebursting is complete. Mainline sewer and water installation are scheduled to start in June.
- 12) Contract 8-25 (Tullar Garage Roof Repair): The contract was awarded to JT Rams, LLC. A schedule has not been set.

- 13) Contract 10-25 (City Hall Window Replacement): The RFP for this work has been posted. Proposals are due on June 18.
- 14) Contract 11-25 (Church/Wisconsin intersection): Work is nearly complete on the northwest quadrant and the north half of the east crosswalk. The contractor plans to switch work to the south side of the intersection the week of 5/27
- 15) Fiber Installation Project: Work started 4/30. All underground construction is complete, restoration 90% complete. Fiber will be installed week of 5/26. On track for project completion by mid-June.
- 16) Compliance Maintenance Annual Report: Our annual report to WDNR about our sanitary sewer system has been completed. It will be brought to our June 10 meeting for review.
- 17) Bridge Repairs: Several of our bridge inspection reports for 2024 highlighted deficiencies that need attention. Staff met with Pfeifer Brothers Construction to review repair options for items on the Jewelers Park Drive box culvert over Neenah Creek, the Cecil Street overpass and the Main Street overpass. Repairs or temporary measures will be done the week of 5/27.

Alderman Pollnow asked if the Jewelers Park Drive bridge work is part of TIF 12. Director Kaiser stated that he will need to ask Director Rasmussen.

The committee had a general discussion on bridge conditions.

Announcements/Future Agenda Items

None

Adjournment

Motion by Pollnow, seconded by Borchardt to adjourn at 6:10 PM.

Call for vote by Chairman Lendrum

Motion Carried. All voting Aye. 5/0

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Mroczkowski
Public Works Office Manager