



PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING – December 21, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT

	Jim Wise	X	Kate Hancock - Cooke	X	Gary Lawell
X	Peter Kelly	X	Eric Maggio	X	Ted Galloway
X	Lee Hillstrom		Ashley Ondresky	X	Scott Weber

STAFF PRESENT

X Michael T. Kading, Director of Parks & Recreation
X Jim Kluge, Superintendent of Recreation
X Trevor Fink, Superintendent of Parks
Stephanie Schott, Recreation Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT: Bob Borszich, Dave Mix, Gail Minks, Mui Liu, Frank Cuthbert, Duke Behnke, Gerry Andrews, Mike Jones, Rocky Schafer, Mayor Lang, Steve Shelley

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY Commissioner Kelly at 4:30 P.M.

CORRESPONDENCE

Problocki letter regarding fixing the Doty Park courts was accepted.

APPEARANCES

Andrews complimented the Commission on achieving the adoption of the Conceptual Master for Carpenter Preserve. He further stated that he has established a fund at Fox Cities Greenways in the amount of \$70,000 entitled the Friends of Carpenter Preserve. His hopes are that 2 bridges on the south side can be built and mowed trails established. Commission President Kelly thanked Mr. Andrews for his time and donation.

MINUTES

MSC Hillstrom / Hancock-Cooke to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2023 meeting. All voting aye.

BILL VOUCHERS

Commissioner Kelly reviewed the vouchers for November and found them to be in order.

FINANCIAL REPORT

MISSION ACTION REPORT

The report was distributed earlier. The following items were discussed:

- Commissioner Hancock-Cooke inquired about the need for volunteers for Winterfest. Superintendent Kluge indicated yes, there is a need.
 - Commissioner Kelly asked if there was going to be a Riverside Players straight show. Kluge responded that there would be no straight show. Was the budgeted adjusted? No, the budget was met last year with a single musical show.
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BUSINESS FOR CONSIDERATION

BUSINESS ITEM #1: Shattuck Flag Memorial – Memorandum of Understanding

Commissioner Lawell requested that the Commission reconsider and clarify the MOU that was previously approved at the November meeting. He felt that we needed to clearly address who is responsible for replacing which flags. Commissioners Kelly and Lawell met with Veterans representatives to confirm intent.

Commissioner Hillstrom questioned the need to keep the monument if the six flags would represent the branches of military service. Director Kading indicated this would be addressed and that the Commission had final design approval.

ACTION: MSC Lawell / Hillstrom to accept and approve the revised MOU between the Parks & Recreation Department and the American Legion Neenah. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ITEM # 2: Neenah Soccer Request – Memorial Park

Mike Jones, Neenah Soccer Club representative, thanked the Commission for considering the possibility of using the Great Lawn at Memorial Park for organized soccer. A typical schedule would be April – June (T/Th), May – July (M/W), and then mid-August – September (T/TH) and August – October (M). Jones further indicated that the soccer club would adjust programming for Parks & Rec needs and would work with parents to diversify parking so that the neighborhood to the south would not be negatively impacted.

Superintendent Fink indicated that the club would be responsible for painting the fields. The current agreement would need to be revised.

Commissioner Kelly asked about the club leaving Mahler Park. Jones responded that the club would like to work with one organization.

Commissioner Hancock-Cooke asked about the parking. Fink indicated not with the current layout, but once again, the club will request that parents park in the north lot.

Commissioner Lawell asked with the decline of baseball/softball, would that allow for additional soccer field space? Fink responded Neenah Baseball usage has increased, we still have church league, and we are able to rent to traveling leagues.

Commissioner Galloway expressed concern about sacrificing the open area that is unprogrammed and free to use as an individual wishes and overconcentrating singular uses within the park system.

Lawell asked if the club has reached out to the school district. Jones indicated that they have, and there is a possibility that one field would be available.

President Kelly asked if anyone from the audience had input or questions.

Behnke is pleased and encouraged that the Commission seems to preserve and protect the Great Lawn. There are athletic fields to the north and passive activities in the Great Lawn. He is concerned about the loss of open space.

Jones question lacrosse's use of the Great Lawn. Fink indicated that they have taken liberties with the limited permission that has been granted. It is difficult to monitor every public activity that takes place in the park system.

Mayor Lang indicated that this is part of her regular walk and rarely sees people using the space.

Galloway stated that when designed, the north area of the park was for active recreation, and the south would be for passive non-programmed use.

Maggio questioned the condition of the turf. Fink indicated that it has been difficult to establish good turf.

Behnke agreed with this observation.

Andrews questioned the use of the school property on Pendelton Drive. Jones responded that the school district intends to keep it, and it cannot be used.

Weber asked what is driving the need for additional fields. Jones indicated the desire to work with one organization.

Weber would like to see the proposal in writing.

Lawell stated the concept is that spaces in parks need to be flexible.

Kelly indicated that there seems to be a consensus regarding the possible use of the Great Lawn.

ACTION: MSC Maggio / Galloway to deny the request from Neenah Soccer Club to use the Great Lawn at Memorial Park. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ITEM # 3: Douglas Park – Stormwater Utility Request for Land Use

The Commission reviewed the request from the Stormwater Utility to use 2.04 acres of the parkland at Douglas Park.

The Commission had concerns about saving as many trees as possible, depth of the pond, overall aesthetics and safety, and could we move the swing set or purchase/install a new one. The Commission directed staff to present this information at the January meeting.

BUSINESS ITEM # 4: 2024 CIP Update

President Kelly requested that Commissioners walk the Doty Park Shoreline prior to the next Commission meeting, as he would like to consider moving it up in the CIP schedule.

BUSINESS ITEM # 5: Commission Retreat – Date and Topics

Need to find a date in the future that will work.

BUSINESS ITEM # 6: Announcements and Future Agenda Items

Elections have been moved to the March meeting.

LIAISON REPORTS

Arrowhead Development: Continue to work on the final plan. There will be work completed at the park in 2024.

Plans Commission: Hancock-Cooke reported that nothing related to parks.

Harbor Committee: Galloway asked if a contractor has been hired to place and remove buoys. Kading indicated not at this time.

MSC Hillstrom / Lawell to adjourn at 5:50p

Recorded for the Commission by Michael T. Kading, CPRP