

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER, WISCONSIN

Richland County

Dissolving the Board of Park Commissioners and Establishing a Friends of the Parks Organization

A Code-Specific Guide for City Leadership

Prepared with reference to Chapters 50, 701, 702, 703 and 704 of the City Code

2026

1. Purpose of This Guide

This guide is intended to help the Richland Center Common Council, City Administrator, and City Attorney plan and execute a two-phase transition: first, the orderly dissolution of the Board of Park Commissioners through coordinated ordinance action; and second, the subsequent establishment of a community-led Friends of the Parks nonprofit organization.

These are sequential steps, not simultaneous ones. The Park Board will be dissolved first. After that process is complete and park governance is operating cleanly under the new structure, interested community members — acting independently of city government — may organize a Friends group as a community partner.

This document is grounded in Richland Center's city code. It identifies every cross-chapter ordinance amendment required, explains how park functions will be reassigned within city government, and provides a frank analysis of why the Park Board model no longer serves this city's needs.

Two-Phase Sequence

- Phase 1 (City action): Amend Chapters 50, 701, 702, and 704 to dissolve the Park Board and reassign all of its functions within city government. The Park Board is dissolved. Its functions do not disappear — they are reassigned.
- Phase 2 (Community action): After dissolution is complete, community members independently organize a Friends of the Parks nonprofit. The city is a supportive partner but does not lead or control this effort.
- The phases do not overlap. The Park Board will not be retained as a transitional body.

2. Why the Board of Park Commissioners No Longer Serves Richland Center

The Council is in a strong position to make this change, and the reasons for doing so are grounded in sound governance, not convenience or cost-cutting. The Park Board, as it has operated for many years, has drifted from the role envisioned by state statute and has become, in several meaningful ways, a structural obstacle to effective city management. What follows is an honest accounting of those concerns — offered with appreciation for the individuals who have served and with the goal of building a structure that works better for the parks and the community alike.

2a. The Board Has Operated as an Operational Authority, Not a Policy Body

Wisconsin Statute § 27.08 envisions a park board as a governing and planning body — one that sets direction, acquires and develops park land, and ensures parks serve the long-term public interest. In practice, Richland Center's Park Board has focused primarily on day-to-day operational matters: maintenance schedules, facility use, and routine program decisions that are more appropriately handled at the staff level.

A seven-member appointed board meeting in formal session — subject to the Open Meetings Law, requiring a quorum, generating minutes — to address operational details is a structural mismatch. It adds administrative overhead and process friction without adding governance value. The same decisions made by trained staff under the authority of a professional administrator are faster, more consistent, and more clearly accountable.

2b. A Structural Conflict with Administrator-Form Governance

Under *Chapter 701.01(b)*, the Park Board directly supervises the Parks and Grounds Director. In a mayor-council city without a professional administrator, this arrangement has logic. But Richland Center operates under an administrator form of government, in which operational supervision is properly and intentionally the domain of the City Administrator. Having an appointed citizen board with direct supervisory authority over a department director creates a dual-reporting structure that undermines both the administrator's management authority and the Parks Director's ability to operate with unified, clear direction.

This tension is not hypothetical — it is the kind of structural conflict that has led many similarly situated Wisconsin cities to move away from empowered park boards. The administrator form of government is specifically designed to unify operational management. Maintaining a statutory body with independent supervisory authority over a department runs counter to that design. One of them, inevitably, is operating outside its proper lane.

2c. The City Is Not Seeking Additional Park Land

One of the core statutory purposes of a Board of Park Commissioners under Wis. Stat. § 27.08 is to acquire, develop, and expand the municipal park system. Richland Center already manages an extensive inventory of public recreation land relative to its size: Krouskop Park with

the Community/Senior Center, Strickland Park, West Side Community Park, North Side Park, North Lake Park, North Park West, Wedgewood North and South Parks, Miner Hill Park, North Park East, Summit Park, the Occooch Learning Center, the unnamed park west of the Pine River, trails on both riverbanks, a Frisbee golf area, and additional property at the old Community Center site — all enumerated in Chapter 701.02.

The city is not in a financial or strategic position to pursue additional park land acquisition in the foreseeable future. This means the Park Board's most substantive statutory function has, as a practical matter, ceased to exist. What remains is operational management and permitting — functions that belong in the hands of city staff and the Council's committee structure, not in an independent board.

2d. The Park Fund Has Not Been Used for Its Intended Purpose

Chapter 50.10 grants the Park Board independent authority to spend the Park Fund — money received through subscriptions and gifts — at the Board's discretion, without Council approval. (*Ch. 50.10(1)*) This authority was designed to enable a proactive board to attract community donations and supplement the park budget with privately raised funds. That has not happened. The Park Board has not conducted meaningful fundraising. The Park Fund has not become a vehicle for community investment in the parks.

This is not primarily a criticism of individual board members. It reflects a structural reality: governmental boards are poorly positioned to raise private money. Donors give to causes they feel personally connected to, and they give through organizations they can see making a visible difference. A Friends of the Parks nonprofit — nimble, community-driven, and unencumbered by the formalities of public governance — is far better suited to this function. The Park Board holding dormant fundraising authority it does not use is not a reason to preserve that structure; it is a reason to transfer the function to an entity that can actually exercise it effectively.

2e. Stagnation Through Long Tenure

Several current Park Board members have served for a decade or more. Long service can reflect real dedication, and the Council should honor that sincerely. But an appointed body on which the same members serve for ten, fifteen, or twenty years — with five-year renewable terms — is a body that has become self-perpetuating rather than self-renewing. Fresh perspectives may not easily enter the room. New community demographics, new ideas about what parks can and should be, and new community priorities are harder to surface when membership has been stable for a generation.

This is not about any individual. It is about what happens to any institution — in government or anywhere else — when the same people shape its priorities for too long without rotation. A Friends of the Parks organization, structured from the beginning with meaningful term limits and a culture of leadership development, can avoid this entirely. It is an opportunity to build something that stays fresh.

2f. The Right Tool for the Right Job

None of this diminishes the importance of Richland Center's parks or the community's investment in them. The argument is precisely the opposite: because parks matter, they *deserve* governance structures that actually work. The Park Board model made sense when cities needed a semi-autonomous body to actively expand and develop their park systems. That season, for Richland Center, has passed.

What the parks need now is efficient operational management under the City Administrator, clear permit authority vested in an identifiable body, and an energized community organization that can raise funds, recruit volunteers, and advocate for the parks in ways a governmental board never can. Dissolving the Park Board and establishing a Friends organization delivers exactly that combination.

A Note of Respect for Current Members

- This is a structural decision about governance design, not an evaluation of any individual's performance or commitment.
- The Council should acknowledge the service of current board members genuinely and directly. A formal resolution of thanks, adopted at the same meeting as the dissolution ordinance, is appropriate.
- Current Park Board members are among the strongest candidates to become founding leaders of the Friends of the Parks organization. They know the parks, they care about them, and they should be actively encouraged to carry that commitment forward in this new form.

3. What the Board of Park Commissioners Currently Does Under City Code

Before any ordinance action, every legal function the Park Board holds must be identified and affirmatively reassigned. None of these functions disappear with dissolution — they must each be transferred to a new authority within city government.

3a. General Governing Authority — Chapters 50 and 701

Chapter 50.01 (*Ord. 2016-1*) vests the Park Board with general government, management, control, improvement, and care of all city parks, parkways, and pleasure drives. Chapter 701.01(a) extends all powers and duties under Wis. Stat. § 27.08. The Council retains the right to supersede by ordinance or resolution under Wis. Stat. § 62.11(5) — and that is precisely the authority it will exercise here.

3b. Direct Personnel Supervision — Chapter 701.01(b)

The Park Board directly supervises the Parks and Grounds Director (now called Parks & Recreation Director), who in turn oversees all park employees and daily operations. (*Ch. 701.01(b)*) Hiring, firing, and extraordinary discipline are reserved to the Council. After dissolution, this supervisory role reverts cleanly to the City Administrator.

3c. Independent Financial Authority — Chapter 50.10

The Park Board may spend Park Fund money (gifts and subscriptions) without Council approval (Ch. 50.10(1)) and must submit a budget estimate to the Council by September 1 and a full annual financial and inventory report by the end of March each year. (Ch. 50.09)

3d. Permit-Issuing Authority — Chapter 701

This is the most operationally critical function and the most consequential gap that dissolution will create without amendment. Chapter 701 names the Board of Park Commissioners — also referred to in that chapter as the 'Parks and Grounds Commission' — as the permit-issuing authority for the following activities. No fallback authority currently exists in the code:

Permitted Activity	Current Authorizing Body in Ch. 701
Advertising / signage in parks	Board of Park Commissioners — Ch. 701.03(1)(a)
Sound amplification in parks	Board of Park Commissioners — Ch. 701.03(1)(b)
Vehicles on park walkways / non-road areas	Board of Park Commissioners — Ch. 701.03(9)(a)
Snowmobile trail designation	Parks Board — Ch. 701.03(9)(b)
Parking in non-standard areas	Parks and Grounds Commission — Ch. 701.03(10)
Sale of merchandise or services in parks	Parks and Grounds Commission — Ch. 701.03(6)
Camping in parks	Parks and Grounds Commission — Ch. 701.03(7)
Swimming facility use and fees	Parks and Grounds Commission — Ch. 701.03(11)
Alcohol in parks (picnic license)	Common Council or Parks and Grounds Commission — Ch. 701.04(2)

3e. Cemetery Coordination — Chapter 702

Under Chapter 702.02(2), the Public Works Committee of the Common Council oversees the city cemeteries in coordination with the Board of Park Commissioners. Burial fees are set jointly. (Ch. 702.03(2)) After dissolution, Chapter 702 must be amended to remove the Park Board’s role and vest the cemetery coordination function entirely in the Public Works Committee or the City Administrator.

3f. Intergovernmental Appointment — Chapter 50.02(2)

One Park Board seat belongs to a Richland County Board member, appointed by the County Board Chair for a two-year term. (Ch. 50.02(2)) Dissolution terminates this intergovernmental appointment. The County Board Chair should receive written notice before action is taken.

3g. Chapter 704 Boundary Definition

Chapter 704 defines the Public Works Committee's jurisdiction as all city properties "other than those properties assigned to the Park Board under chap. 701." (Ch. 704.01(2)) Dissolving the Park Board without amending Chapter 704 would cause parks to silently fall under the Public Works Committee's catch-all at Ch. 704.02(p). The Council must decide whether that is the intended structure and amend the chapter explicitly.

4. Functions That Must Stay in City Government

A Friends of the Parks organization is a private nonprofit. It has no governmental authority. The following functions currently held by the Park Board must be reassigned to a city body — not to the Friends group under any circumstances:

Cannot Be Delegated to a Friends Group

- Issuing park permits (advertising, sound amplification, vehicles, merchandise, camping, swimming fees, and alcohol licenses)
- Supervising the Parks and Grounds Director and park employees
- Setting burial fees for city cemeteries
- Receiving, holding, or expending the Park Fund — this is public money held by the City Clerk/Treasurer
- Submitting the annual park budget estimate and annual financial/inventory report to the Common Council
- Any exercise of authority under Wis. Stat. Ch. 27.08

5. Reassigning Park Board Functions After Dissolution

The Council may reassign Park Board functions to the Public Works Committee as significant overlap already exists.

Recommended Reassignment: Public Works Committee Absorbs Park Oversight

Amend Chapters 701, 702, and 704 to extend the Public Works Committee's authority to include parks. Chapter 704's catch-all at Ch. 704.02(p) would naturally absorb parks under this approach, but should be made explicit.

- **Pros:** Consolidates all city property oversight in one committee; significant overlap currently exists; minimal new structure; straightforward to implement
- **Cons:** Parks are a distinct public-facing civic function from utility and infrastructure management; combining them risks parks becoming secondary in a committee focused on heavier operational concerns; no dedicated park voice or community focus at the committee level

Recommended Approach: Staff Permit Delegation

The most important operational change is to delegate routine permitting authority to the City Administrator or Parks & Recreation Director by ordinance. The vast majority of park permit requests involve predictable, low-stakes decisions: events, signage, temporary vehicle access, alcohol licenses, and similar matters. These should not require a committee meeting. Staff-level permit authority with defined parameters is standard practice in Wisconsin cities of Richland Center’s size and is fully consistent with the administrator form of governance.

Significant policy-level decisions like permanent infrastructure, fee schedules, and major commercial events would come to the full Council and/or the Public Works Committee. But the routine work of keeping parks open and active should be handled at the administrative level, efficiently and without delay.

6. Ordinance Amendments Required for Dissolution

The following chapters must be amended as a coordinated package. The City Attorney should prepare all of them together and present them for a single vote to avoid creating internal code inconsistencies.

Chapter	Current Park Board Reference	Required Amendment
Ch. 50	Establishes the Board of Park Commissioners in its entirety: composition, terms, officers, quorum, powers, budget process, and finance authority	Repeal Chapter 50 in full; assign all residual functions (budget reporting, Park Fund oversight) to the City Administrator and Common Council by ordinance
Ch. 701	Vests Park management in the Park Board (Ch. 701.01); names the Board and 'Parks and Grounds Commission' as permit authority throughout Ch. 701.03 and Ch. 701.04; provides for direct Park Board supervision of the Parks Director	Amend Ch. 701.01 to vest management in the Council and operations in the City Administrator; amend all permit provisions to name the City Administrator, Parks & Recreation Director, or Public Works Committee; standardize terminology throughout
Ch. 702	Public Works Committee coordinates cemetery operations with the Park Board (Ch. 702.02(2)); both jointly set burial fees (Ch. 702.03(2))	Remove all Park Board references; vest cemetery coordination and fee-setting in the Public Works Committee alone or in the City Administrator under Public Works Committee oversight
Ch. 704	Public Works Committee jurisdiction defined as all city properties other than those assigned to the Park Board (Ch. 704.01(2)); parks are currently excluded from the Public Works Committee domain	Amend Ch. 704.01(2) to reflect the new park governance model; do not rely on the catch-all at Ch. 704.02(p) — make the assignment explicit

Note on 'Parks and Grounds Commission' Language in Chapter 701

- Chapter 701 inconsistently uses both 'Board of Park Commissioners' and 'Parks and Grounds Commission' as the permit-issuing authority. These appear to be the same entity referred to by different names within the same chapter.
- The amendment to Chapter 701 should eliminate both names and replace them throughout with the single successor authority — whether that is the City Administrator, Parks & Recreation Director, or Public Works Committee.
- The City Attorney should confirm there is no separately established 'Parks and Grounds Commission' distinct from the Park Board.

7. The Park Fund — Disposition Before Dissolution

Under *Chapter 50.10(1)*, the City Clerk/Treasurer holds the Park Fund — money received through subscriptions and gifts — in a separate account under the Park Board's authority. Before dissolution, the Council must formally address what happens to any balance in this fund.

Appropriate options include:

- Transfer the balance to the city's general park operations budget
- Establish a new city-held parks capital fund under Council or Administrator oversight, preserving donor intent
- A combination: retain a parks-designated city account with spending authority vested in the City Administrator subject to Council approval under normal appropriations rules

Park Fund Is Public Money

- The Park Fund balance belongs to the city. Any transfer to a future Friends group would be a public expenditure requiring Council authorization.
- If the Council wishes to provide the Friends group with seed funding as a gesture of support, it may do so by separate resolution — but this should be a deliberate, documented decision, not an automatic transfer.
- Going forward, private donations intended for city parks should be directed to a city-held account for proper public accounting.

8. Phase 1 Dissolution Timeline

This timeline covers Phase 1 only. The Friends group formation is Phase 2, a separate and subsequent community process.

Months 1-2

Legal audit and Council decision

City Attorney audits all Park Board references across Chapters 50, 701, 702, and 704. Council votes to proceed with dissolution. City Administrator documents the

Months 2-3	<p>current Park Fund balance. County Board Chair notified in writing of intended dissolution of the intergovernmental seat.</p> <p>Draft ordinance package</p> <p>City Attorney prepares coordinated amendments to Chapters 50, 701, 702, and 704. Council selects governance model. Scope of staff-level permit delegation determined. Draft reviewed internally.</p>
Month 3	<p>Public process</p> <p>Ordinance package introduced at a Council meeting. Public notice issued. Formal public hearing conducted. Current Park Board members individually notified by Mayor or Council President before the public announcement.</p>
Month 4	<p>Passage and notification</p> <p>Council votes on ordinance package. Resolution of thanks for Park Board members adopted at the same meeting. City code updated and published. City Administrator assumes operational authority over park staff. Parks & Recreation Director assumes delegated permit authority under new Ch. 701 provisions.</p>
Month 4+	<p>Dissolution complete</p> <p>All park functions operating under new governance structure. Park Fund disposition completed by Council resolution. Cemetery ordinance operating without Park Board reference. New committee or Public Works Committee schedules first park review session.</p>

9. Phase 2: Establishing a Friends of the Parks Organization

After the Park Board is dissolved and park governance is operating cleanly under the new structure, interested community members may organize a nonprofit Friends of the Parks. This is a community initiative, not a city project. The founding energy and leadership must come from private citizens, not from city hall.

The city’s role in Phase 2 is to be an informed, communicative partner: sharing information about park needs and priorities, providing a designated city liaison, and formalizing the relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding once the group is established. City officials should not hold officer positions in the Friends group, fund its startup operations, or direct its activities.

What the Friends Group Can and Cannot Do

Friends Group CAN Do	Friends Group CANNOT Do
Raise private funds through donations, events, memberships, and grants	Issue park permits of any kind
Apply for grants not available to municipal governments (e.g., DNR Stewardship)	Supervise city employees

Organize volunteers for park maintenance and beautification (with city approval)	Hold or administer the Park Fund or any city account
Advocate publicly for the parks budget at Council budget sessions	Make binding decisions about park use, access, or programming
Propose capital improvements to the Council or City Administrator	Act as a formal city advisory board without a separate Council ordinance
Host events in parks (with a city permit, same as any other organization)	Represent the city or county in any governmental capacity
Build a donor base and durable civic investment in the parks	Spend public money or bind the city to any obligation

Formation Steps

Step 1	<p>Recruit founding members</p> <p>Identify 5-10 committed community volunteers. Former Park Board members are strong candidates and should be actively encouraged to lead this effort. Also consider parents active in park programs, local business owners, and civic group members. City officials may participate as private citizens but should not dominate early leadership.</p>
Step 2	<p>Name and bylaws</p> <p>Choose a name (e.g., 'Friends of Richland Center Parks'). Draft bylaws with term limits, succession provisions, officer roles, voting procedures, and meeting requirements. Build renewal mechanisms in from the beginning. Templates at wnonprofit.org.</p>
Step 3	<p>Incorporate in Wisconsin</p> <p>File Articles of Incorporation with the Wisconsin DFI (wdfi.org). Fee: \$35 online. Creates the legal entity.</p>
Step 4	<p>Federal EIN</p> <p>Obtain an Employer Identification Number at irs.gov. Free. Required to open a bank account.</p>
Step 5	<p>IRS 501(c)(3) status</p> <p>File Form 1023-EZ (for groups with projected revenue under \$50,000/year; fee: \$275; typically 2-4 weeks to approval). This enables tax-deductible donations and access to most grant programs.</p>
Step 6	<p>Bank account</p> <p>Open at a local bank. Require dual signatures on checks above a set threshold. Elect a treasurer with relevant financial background.</p>
Step 7	<p>DATCP registration</p> <p>Register with Wisconsin DATCP as a charitable organization soliciting public donations (datcp.wi.gov). Annual renewal required.</p>

Step 8	<p>MOU with the city</p> <p>Work with the City Administrator to draft a Memorandum of Understanding defining volunteer access, project approval, permit requirements, insurance, and the city liaison relationship. Present to the Common Council for approval.</p>
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10. Memorandum of Understanding: City and Friends Group

Once the Friends group has been organized and has obtained 501(c)(3) status, the city and the Friends group should execute a formal MOU approved by the Common Council. This document protects both parties and establishes clear mutual expectations.

MOU Topic	What to Address
Volunteer access to parks	When and how volunteers may enter park facilities; who supervises them on-site; signed liability waivers required before any volunteer work begins
Project approval	How the Friends group proposes physical improvements; who approves before work begins; whether city procurement rules apply to donated labor or materials on city property
Donated funds and capital improvements	How donations reach the city (direct gift vs. Friends paying contractors); whether Council must formally accept donated capital improvements; documentation requirements
City in-kind support	What the city may provide (equipment loans, waste disposal, meeting space); what it will not provide; no expectation of cash subsidy
Permit requirements	Confirmation that the Friends group must obtain city permits for events and activities in parks, the same as any other organization — no exemptions
City liaison	Named city contact (Parks & Recreation Director); liaison attends Friends meetings as a resource, not a voting member; defined channel for project requests and questions
Insurance	Whether city liability insurance covers Friends volunteer activities; if not, the Friends group must carry its own general liability policy
Financial reporting	Friends group provides an annual financial summary to the city liaison; transparency as a foundation for the relationship
Term and exit	Duration of MOU (typically 1-3 years, renewable); how either party may exit with notice; what happens if the Friends group becomes inactive or dissolves

11. Risk Management

Risk	Why It Is Specific to Richland Center	Mitigation
Permit-issuing vacuum	Ch. 701 names the Park Board as the permit authority for 9+ activity types with no fallback provision in the current code	Do not dissolve the Park Board until Ch. 701 is amended and the new permit authority is designated and operational; this is the single most important sequencing requirement
Cemetery fee-setting gap	Ch. 702 requires joint Park Board and Public Works Committee involvement in setting burial fees	Amend Ch. 702 before dissolution; vest fee-setting in the Public Works Committee alone or in the City Administrator under Public Works Committee oversight
County relationship disruption	The County Board Chair holds a formal appointment to the Park Board; dissolution terminates this without County input	Notify County Board Chair in writing at least 60 days before the dissolution vote; acknowledge the County's historical role; invite the County to informally support the future Friends group
Park Fund disposition	The Park Fund is public money whose governance authority disappears with the Park Board; its status after dissolution is undefined without Council action	Council must pass a resolution addressing the Park Fund before or concurrent with dissolution; document the disposition clearly
Ch. 704 catch-all ambiguity	Dissolving the Park Board without amending Ch. 704 causes parks to silently fall under the Public Works Committee via the catch-all at Ch. 704.02(p)	Amend Ch. 704 explicitly with the intended park oversight structure; do not rely on implied jurisdiction for a deliberate governance decision
Community perception	The Park Board has a long history and visible presence; residents may misread dissolution as the city abandoning its parks	Lead with strong public messaging; maintain or increase the parks operational budget; be clear that oversight and permit authority remain in city government; recognize outgoing members publicly
Friends group sustainability	Small volunteer nonprofits are vulnerable to founder departure; organizations built around one champion often stall when that person steps back	Require succession planning in bylaws from day one; city liaison should actively support leadership development; Friends group should broaden its board and donor base in its first year

12. Communicating the Transition to the Public

This transition will attract attention. The parks are visible, the Park Board has a long history, and any change to park governance will prompt questions. A clear, proactive, and honest communication plan is essential — not to manage the narrative, but to give residents the full picture.

Core Messages

- The city's commitment to its parks is unchanged. City staff will continue to operate and maintain all park facilities at the same level of service.
- The Park Board's governmental functions are not disappearing — they are being reassigned within city government to bodies that are better aligned with how the city is structured.
- The Park Board structure, while well-intentioned, no longer fits how the city is governed or what the parks actually need right now.
- A Friends of the Parks nonprofit can do things for the parks that a governmental board simply cannot: raise private funds, attract grants, recruit volunteers, and build genuine civic energy around the parks.
- The parks budget is not being reduced. The Friends group supplements city investment; it is not a substitute for it.

Recommended Communication Steps

1. Notify current Park Board members individually and directly before any public announcement. They should not hear about this from Rants and Chats.
2. Notify the Richland County Board Chair in writing about the dissolution of the intergovernmental seat.
3. Announce the Council's intent at a public meeting before ordinances are introduced. Explain the reasoning plainly and invite questions from the public.
4. Publish a clear explanation in the Richland Observer and through city social media channels.
5. At the meeting where the dissolution ordinance passes, adopt a concurrent resolution thanking each Park Board member by name.
6. Issue a follow-up public statement after dissolution identifying which city body holds park permitting and oversight, so residents know where to go.
7. When the community organizes a Friends group, recognize them at a Council meeting as a positive civic development.

13. Final Checklist

Phase 1: City Government — Before and During Dissolution

- City Attorney has audited Chapters 50, 701, 702, and 704 for all Park Board and Parks and Grounds Commission references
- Council has selected governance model (Parks Committee of the Council vs. Public Works Committee extension)
- Scope of staff-level permit delegation determined and documented for Ch. 701 amendments
- Ordinance package amending Chapters 50, 701, 702, and 704 drafted, reviewed, and introduced
- Park Fund balance documented; Council resolution on disposition drafted
- County Board Chair notified in writing (minimum 60 days before Council vote)
- Current Park Board members individually notified before public announcement

- Public hearing on ordinance package conducted
- Resolution of thanks for Park Board members prepared
- Ordinance package passed and resolution of thanks adopted at the same meeting
- City code updated and published
- City Administrator assumes park personnel supervision; Parks Director assumes delegated permit authority
- Park Fund disposition completed by separate Council resolution

Phase 2: Friends Group Formation (Community-Led, Post-Dissolution)

- Founding members recruited from community (minimum 5-7; majority not city employees or elected officials)
- Name chosen and checked for conflicts
- Bylaws drafted and adopted — must include term limits and succession provisions
- Articles of Incorporation filed with Wisconsin DFI (\$35 online at wdfi.org)
- Federal EIN obtained from IRS (free, at irs.gov)
- IRS Form 1023-EZ filed for 501(c)(3) status (\$275 fee)
- Bank account opened; dual-signature requirement on checks above set threshold
- Wisconsin DATCP charitable organization registration completed
- MOU with city negotiated and approved by Common Council
- Annual compliance calendar established (990-N filing, DATCP renewal, DFI annual report, MOU review)

14. Key Resources

Resource	Contact / Use
Wisconsin Nonprofit Association	wnonprofit.org — bylaws templates, board governance guides, nonprofit startup resources
Wisconsin DFI (Incorporation)	wdfi.org — Articles of Incorporation online, \$35; annual report requirement (\$10/year)
IRS Form 1023-EZ	pay.gov — 501(c)(3) application for groups projecting revenue under \$50,000/year; \$275 fee
Wisconsin DATCP	datcp.wi.gov — charitable organization registration; required for any group soliciting public donations
Wisconsin DNR Stewardship Grants	dnr.wi.gov/topic/Stewardship — outdoor recreation capital grants; city is typically the applicant with Friends as community partner
Southwest Wisconsin Community Foundation	swwcf.org — serves Crawford, Iowa, Richland, and Vernon counties; well-suited to local park improvement projects

USDA Rural Development — Wisconsin	rd.usda.gov/wi — Community Facilities grants for smaller municipalities
Wis. Stat. Ch. 27.08	Full statutory text governing municipal park board authority; governs scope of Park Board powers and dissolution implications
Wis. Stat. Ch. 62.11(5)	Council’s plenary authority to supersede the Park Board by ordinance or resolution — the direct legal basis for dissolution

City of Richland Center, Wisconsin

This guide is a working document prepared to inform Council deliberations.

DRAFT