

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, May 19, 2025

1. Call to order

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met in person on May 19, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Kerry Kneser. Members present: Ald. Jonathan Lampe, Julie Chapman, Emily Lessner, Kerry Kneser, Brad Clark, Jennifer Clayton. Not present was: Kyle Krueger. Also present: Kristine Butteris, Andrea Draeger, Stephanie Juhl, Jarrod Folkman.

2. Review and approval of minutes:

Brad Clark, motioned to approve the April 21, 2025 Parks Recreation and Forestry minutes as written. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

3. Review and approval of financial reports

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the March financial reports. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

4. Citizens to be heard

Barb Winkleman was present, who lives on Lake Victoria, to inquire about city assistance to spray for weeds at the lake, or potential to cost share. They also proposed a correction to the April 21 minutes that the inlet described is a storm sewer and concerns over excess weeds and prevention of erosion with the isthmus.

5. Business

A. 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). The representative will bring back the option of class 2 to their group and will contact the department to confirm. Brad Clark motioned to reclassify Quilters on the Rock from class 3 to 2. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

B. Review and take action: Lake Victoria

Director Kristine Butteris discussed the land encompassing Lake Victoria with the city engineer/public works director, including maintenance and next steps. As a group, they will create a vegetation management policy, which will be reviewed by Common Council. If accepted, it will then be determined if it will be included in next year's budget. Kristine indicated the lake itself is not city owned, but owned by the state. There may be an option to establish a lake district as a special assessment, and could potentially assist with cost management. Brad Clark motioned to table any decision until the policy is created, reviewed, and approved by public works. Ald. Jonathan Lampe seconded. Motion carried.

B. Director's Report:

A. Park Updates

The Parks and Open Spaces Plan is nearing completion; last week there was a meeting with local stakeholders to discuss, and there will be a special Parks, Recreation, and Forestry meeting on June 2 to present the plan and then approved by this commission on June 16.

B. Project updates: parks

With only one out of five tennis courts being covered by insurance, the department is working internally to determine how to fund, with estimated costs around \$150,000. The Riverside Park restrooms are currently open, though will be periodically closed throughout the season to complete repairs. Riverfest will not be utilizing the restrooms due to lack of patrol and cleaning staff.

C. Project updates: aquatics

The new sand filtration system is installed and running, and will have training next week. The playground was removed at the end of last year and grass planted.

D. Project updates: town square

The water feature was not working after a recent power outage and this has been determined to be an issue. The company which originally installed the feature is no longer in business, so now will need to budget for maintenance assistance. There has been approval to utilize funds for meridian barriers for city-wide use. The history wall is also up and barricades will come down soon.

E. Project updates: senior & community center

The generator has been installed and training and testing complete, so the center is now considered a warming/cooling center/shelter.

F. Update on programming: recreation

An update was given regarding the facility use contract, stating that the weekday and weekend rental language in the contract is now consistent with the rental rates, with weekday and weekend rates separate. The YMCA has reached out and asked for additional park space, though will evaluate any potential program overlap before approval. Soccer wrapped up last week. Currently there is adult softball league and coming up there will be youth baseball leagues; parent coaches are still needed. Kart Park and day camp will be starting up in the summer.

G. Update on programming: town square

The birthday bash will occur on May 31 with the new art history wall presentation. The schedules for food truck Mondays and concerts have been filled.

H. Update on programming: senior and enrichment

Summer sandwiches in the park will happen again this year Tuesdays-Fridays at three different parks. Several other family nights are being planned throughout the year; Ties & Tiaras on May 9 had several families in attendance. The Senior Center held its annual volunteer award celebration in April and was well attended. They also held its annual Senior Care Fair, with over 50 vendors.

I. Update on programming: aquatics

Opening day for the aquatic center will be June 7, with limited hours the first week before graduation and closed graduation weekend. Limited hours will also occur the weekend of Riverfest. There will be a training this month with at least three potential new lifeguards, and registration is open for another training in July. There will be themed weeks advertised on social media.

C. Adjournment – Next meeting date June 16, 2025

Jennifer Clayton motioned to adjourn the meeting. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.