

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, January 20, 2025

1. Call to order

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met in person on January 20, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Kyle Krueger. Members present: Ald. Jonathan Lampe, Brad Clark, Kyle Krueger, Julie Chapman, Jennifer Clayton, Emily Lessner. Also present: Kristine Butteris, Andrea Draeger, Stephanie Juhl, Jeff Doyle, and Jarrod Folkman.

2. Review and approval of minutes:

Jennifer Clayton motioned to approve the December 16, 2024 Parks Recreation and Forestry and December 10, 2024 Senior Center Advisory Board minutes as written. Brad Clark seconded. Motion carried.

3. Review and approval of financial reports

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the November 2024 financial reports. Brad Clark seconded. Motion carried.

4. Citizens to be heard

Leslie Krueger and Jean Osterhaus, Caring Crafters, stated that the Caring Crafters group has been at the Watertown Senior & Community Center for 14 years. They make items to donate to local non-profit organizations, hospitals, etc.

5. Business

A. Review and take action: Caring Crafters Classification

A facility use agreement was drafted and presented to Caring Crafters, new for rentals in 2025. This facility use change does include a \$50 administrative fee and security deposit as Caring Crafters was deemed a class 2 organization by this commission previously. Caring Crafters create handmade items and all are donated to non-profit organizations, hospitals, etc. Caring Crafters is requesting a reclassification to class 1 in order to remain a community resource and opportunity for citizens to give back. Brad Clark motioned to reclassify Caring Crafters as class 1. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

B. Review and take action: Event Fee Adjustment

For the past two years, the 4th of July Committee has come before the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission to ask for a reduction in rental fees for their special event. Their rental consist of Riverside Park Shelters (seven), 10 additional picnic tables, 24 orange boards, Amplified Music Permit, Screens for Upper Pavilion, 12 additional trash cans, and one row of snow fence and standards totaling \$1,042.00. They have asked for an adjustment from \$1,042.00 to \$500.00. It was recommended to reduce fees by 50 percent each year instead a flat \$500 fee. Brad Clark motioned to reduce fees for the 4th of July event by 50%. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried. Ald. Jonathan Lampe abstained.

C. Review and take action: discount for Thursday night market vendors

In 2024, we held four Thursday Night Markets at the Bentzin Family Town Square with a vendor fee of \$25/market. There was no incentive for a vendor to register for all four markets. The proposed \$15 discount per vendor is a minimal expense compared to the potential increase in registrations and operational efficiencies gained from early commitments. Our goal is to encourage vendor participation across all events, creating a consistent and engaging experience for attendees while fostering stronger relationships with our vendors. To incentivize full-series



participation, we propose offering a \$15 discount to vendors who commit to registering for all five events upfront. The fee would be \$25/event or \$110 if a vendor registers for all five (includes a \$15 discount). Emily Lessner motioned to table the discount for Thursday Night Market vendors until the next meeting. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

D. Review and take action: Thursday Night Market fee waiver

In 2024, we held Thursday Night Markets at Bentzin Family Town Square. Last year, we asked if we could waive booth fees for produce farmers. Our recommendation is to waive all fees for produce farmers for the next three years through the 2027 summer season. Julie Chapman motioned to waive booth fees for produce farmers through the 2027 summer season. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

E. Review and approve: 2023 annual report

The 2023 annual report was emailed to the commission members. Brad Clark motioned to approve the 2023 annual report. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

F. Review and discuss: park, recreation, and forestry commission member

The department is currently seeking a new commission member to serve as chair of the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Commission. This position has served on the Plan commission as well. The department would like the commission's input on the concept to review and update the responsibilities of the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Commission Chair's role and responsibilities. Removing the responsibility to sit on the Plan Commission would open the position to more candidates. The general recommendation was to offer the option to split the two roles.

6. Director's Report:

A. Project updates: parks

The Parks & Open Spaces Plan contract as been approved and the company is currently reviewing information through GIS. The parks crew is currently work on chipping trails. An update on Lake Victoria included discussion at a public works meeting and may be recommended to return to this commission for further discussion or approval.

B. Project updates: forestry – urban forestry budget modification

Every year the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department applies for a DNR Urban Forestry Grant to fund a portion of Ash treatments, tree removal and plantings, safety training courses for staff, forestry equipment and our tree programs, as well as tree planting and care educational opportunities for the community and staff time. This grant is a 50/50 matching grant up to \$50,000. We did not receive the DNR Urban Forestry Grant for the year 2025. We would need \$14,160 to continue our Ash treatments, safety training, and tree purchases for our Right Tree, Right Spot program, and will be looking for Finance Committee approval of \$14,160 to be moved from Contingency Funds to Urban Forestry Expenses.

C. Project updates: aquatics

All projects are currently complete for the filtration system.

D. Project updates: town square

E. Project updates: senior & community center

The generator will likely not be installed until spring, though the gas line hookup has been moved. The paging system should be complete. New partitions are being installed in the restrooms.

F. Update on programming: recreation

Winter programming has begun – open gym, ice skating at Silver Creek. In February we will add time to open gym for people with special needs and sponsored through local businesses. The Afterschool Adventure Arena is starting again, and we are getting ready for spring with spring break programming and into spring sport programming. We are looking to add some additional programming based on feedback, such as a soccer refresher or extension of the session.

G. Update on programming: town square

Thursday Night Market prep, summer event prep, and other seasonal activities are being planned.

H. Update on programming: senior and enrichment

The December holiday party was sold out with a successful lunch through Glenn's Catering. Our soup sale was successful and generated about \$450 in donations. We will continue to include seasonal/holiday event and programming ideas when possible.

I. Update on programming: aquatics

7. Adjournment – Next meeting date February 17, 2024

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