

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

Monday, September 21, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met on the above date and time at 514 S. First Street, Conley Hall. The following members were present: Julie Chapman, Dana Davis, Rick Schultz, Kyle Krueger, Brad Clark, and Jennifer Clayton, as well as Ryan Schmidt, Hunter Karnitz, and Andrea Draeger.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:39 p.m.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

Rick Schultz moved to approve the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission minutes from August 17, 2026 and Senior & Community Center Advisory Board minutes from August 18, 2026 as presented, seconded by Brad Clark, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

3. Review and Approval of Financial Reports

Dana Davis moved to approve the financial reports as presented, seconded by Rick Schultz, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

4. Citizens to be Heard

There were no citizens to be heard.

5. Business

A. Review and take action: Riverfest Location 2027

Ryan Schmidt provided background on the proposed 2027 Riverfest location and explained that Aaron Zimmerman had approached City departments to discuss the feasibility of moving the event to Brandt-Quirk Park.

Aaron Zimmerman, a Watertown resident and member of the Watertown Riverfest Committee, provided information regarding the committee's consideration of alternative locations. He discussed concerns with the existing Riverside Park location, including bandshell capabilities, electrical capacity, drainage, future parking lot construction, the island bridge, safety, event logistics, emergency access, stage requirements, fireworks, neighborhood impacts, security, bussing, ADA parking, and the potential to accommodate additional event components and tournaments at Brandt-Quirk Park.

Zimmerman noted that the Riverfest Committee is aware of the potential impact on the Brandt-Quirk fields and indicated that the committee would work to address restoration needs if necessary. Ryan Schmidt also noted that staff would work with neighboring residents if plans for the event continued.

Several members of the public spoke regarding the proposal. Concerns included potential damage to soccer fields, the ability to restore the fields before the fall soccer season, drainage, electrical capacity, parking, traffic, security, neighborhood impacts, garbage, impacts to the disc golf course and trails, and the timing of the event in relation to youth sports programming. Several speakers expressed support for keeping Brandt-Quirk Park a family park and sports complex and Riverfest at Riverside Park and making improvements to that location.

Other speakers, including members of the Riverfest Committee, expressed a desire to work collaboratively with the soccer club and other community groups to address concerns and develop a successful event.

Brad Clark shared his thoughts with the Riverfest Committee regarding the challenges involved in planning the event and noted that Riverfest has developed in part because of its setting at Riverside Park. Clark also stated that he was not aware the Riverside Park bandshell was in as poor a condition as it currently is.

Dana Davis noted that the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission is responsible for making decisions regarding the proposal but acknowledged that funding is limited and improvements cannot always be completed immediately. She questioned whether a decision on the proposed location was necessary at this meeting.

Commission discussion focused on the importance of both Riverfest and the youth sports programs at Brandt-Quirk Park. Kyle Krueger expressed support for Riverfest while noting the need to better understand potential field damage and the importance of finding a solution for Riverside Park. Brad Clark indicated that he would like to see staff work toward a plan that would allow Riverfest to remain at Riverside Park, potentially at a smaller scale, while keeping Brandt-Quirk Park primarily as a sports complex.

Aaron Zimmerman offered to meet with Ryan Schmidt and his planning team to discuss additional options.

Dana Davis expressed the view that the proposal should be denied at this time so that the City Council and Finance Committee could consider potential funding for improvements at Riverside Park during the budget process. Discussion also included potential improvements to the Riverside Park bandshell and electrical infrastructure.

Dana Davis motioned to decline the proposal to move Riverfest to Brandt-Quirk Park, seconded by Kyle Krueger. Rick Schultz abstained. During discussion, Davis proposed amending the motion to include development of a park plan for Riverside Park. The motion was subsequently withdrawn. An amended motion included the original decline of the proposal to move Riverfest to Brandt-Quirk Park and a request for the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry director to obtain a quote for bandshell restoration/removal of bandshell and update for electrical at Riverside Park, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

B. Review and take possible action: Documentary Screening and Partnership Opportunity

Andrea Draeger presented a request regarding a documentary screening for Wine, Women, and Dementia to be held at the Towne Cinema, and sponsored by Rainbow Community Care, and partnership opportunity available in order to serve wine. The Commission reviewed the information provided in the memo.

Rick Schultz moved to approve continued action for the documentary screening plans, seconded by Julie Chapman, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

C. Review and take action: 2027 Fees & Charges Schedule

Ryan Schmidt reviewed the proposed 2027 fees and charges schedule, including potential additions, omissions, and changes. Discussion included parking permits and security deposit updates.

Dana Davis moved to approve the 2027 Fees & Charges Schedule, seconded by Rick Schultz, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

D. Review and take action: 2027 Park Reservation Policies and Reservation Application

Andrea Draeger and Ryan Schmidt reviewed the proposed 2027 park reservation policies and reservation application. Staff discussed changes related to special events and the integration of information for Bentzin Family Town Square rentals into the reservation process.

The proposed changes generally maintain the existing policies while requesting additional information for events with unique features. Brad Clark raised concerns regarding how requests to waive fees, such as Meridian barrier fees, would be addressed. Dana Davis discussed the possibility of establishing criteria or triggers for future road closures and potential ordinance changes.

Ryan Schmidt will continue working on rental classifications for the October meeting. Dana Davis indicated that she was comfortable with the current language while acknowledging that additional work remains.

Dana Davis moved to approve the 2027 Park Reservation Policies and Reservation Application, seconded by Kyle Krueger, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

E. Review and take action: 2027 Park Permits

Ryan Schmidt reviewed the proposed 2027 park permits. Changes discussed included a concession permit checkbox, limitations on driving permits to five permits with only one free permit, and a banner application specifying tennis courts.

Brad Clark moved to approve the 2027 park permits, seconded by Rick Schultz and carried by unanimous voice vote.

F. Review and take action: 2027 Facility Use Contract and Condition of Facility Use Agreement

Andrea Draeger and Ryan Schmidt reviewed the proposed 2027 Facility Use Contract and Condition of Facility Use Agreement and explained the changes. Discussion included the future requirement of monetary donations rather than in-kind donations to be designated towards field improvements.

Rick Schultz moved to approve the 2027 facility use contract and condition of facility use agreement, seconded by Julie Chapman and carried by unanimous voice vote.

G. Review and take action: 2027 Senior & Community Center Policies, Room Rental Application, and Membership Application

Andrea Draeger reviewed the proposed 2027 Senior & Community Center policies, room rental application, and membership application with the Commission.

Dana Davis moved to approve the 2027 Senior & Community Center Policies, Room Rental Application, and Membership Application seconded by Brad Clark and carried by unanimous voice vote.

H. Review and take action: 2027 Aquatic Pass Application

Ryan Schmidt reviewed the proposed 2027 Aquatic Pass Application.

Julie Chapman moved to approve the 2027 aquatic pass application, seconded by Kyle Krueger and carried by unanimous voice vote.

I. Donations

Andrea Draeger reported a \$250 quarterly birthday party sponsorship from The Heritage for the second half of the year.

Ryan Schmidt reported a \$1,500 donation from Ixonia Bank for Boo Bash.

Andrea Draeger reported that Kwik Trip donated food valued at \$50 toward the Senior & Community Center cookout, Glenn's Market provided food at cost and waived the cooking fee, and individuals donated approximately \$200 toward meat, cheese, and other food items.

6. Director's Report

A. 2026 Aquatic Center Annual Report

Ryan Schmidt reviewed the 2026 Watertown Aquatic Center season and recommendations for the upcoming year. The Aquatic Center had approximately 21,000 attendees and sold 330 passes during the season.

Recommendations for 2027 were included in the report, including the possibility of opening the Aquatic Center earlier in the season.

B. Parks and Forestry Project and Program Updates

Staff provided the following parks and forestry updates:

- The bucket truck is undergoing its 10-year inspection, with approximately \$10,000 in repairs anticipated this year as the leveling inspection and upper boom life cylinder failed the drift test.
- Tree inspections are currently underway.
- The Rooted in Watertown tree planting program registration deadline is October 1.
- Staff submitted a DNR urban forestry grant application.
- Staff completed seeding the area from the Chamberland pillars and install of swale to the drains at BQ softball.
- Union Park Diamond will be removed and the area reseeded.
- Tennis court bulb replacement is anticipated to cost approximately \$3,500–\$5,000 and anticipated repair at the end of September.
- End-of-season pool shutdown and repairs are underway.
- Brandt-Quirk tennis court work has been completed.
- Pickleball court plans are expected to go to the City Council in the coming weeks.

C. Recreation Programming and Program Updates

Fall recreation programming is underway. Current programs include men's softball, flag football, youth soccer, and youth gymnastics. Youth gymnastics had 93 of 96 spots filled, and wrestling registration was already full. Dance and ballet began the previous week.

Fitness programming, including yoga, senior fitness, aquatic fitness, Zumba, and barre, is scheduled to begin or continue in the coming month. Adult volleyball is also scheduled to begin in the coming weeks.

D. Senior & Community Center and Program Updates

Staff reported that the Senior & Community Center front entrance door project is scheduled to begin the following week. No new updates for the elevator modernization timeline.

The Grill & Chill Cookout on September 18th raised \$1,200 for the Center.

7. Adjournment

Rick Schultz moved to adjourn, seconded by Jennifer Clayton, and carried by unanimous voice vote at 6:39pm.

Next meeting date: October 19, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Draeger

Senior Center, Enrichment, and Office Manager

Note: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.