

# **PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES**

Monday, March 17, 2025

### **1. Call to order**

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission met in person on March 17, 2025. The meeting was called to order by Kerry Kneser. Members present: Ald. Jonathan Lampe, Julie Chapman, Jennifer Clayton, Emily Lessner, Kerry Kneser. Not present was: Brad Clark, Kyle Krueger. Also present: Kristine Butteris, Andrea Draeger, Stephanie Juhl, Ali Nicholson, and Jarrod Folkman.

### **2. Review and approval of minutes:**

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the February 17, 2025 Parks Recreation and Forestry minutes as written. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

Julie Chapman motioned to approve the February 18, 2025 Senior Center Advisory Board minutes as written. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

### **3. Review and approval of financial reports**

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

### **4. Citizens to be heard**

There were none.

### **5. Business**

#### **A. Review and take action: Quilters on the Rock classification**

The facility use change in our policies in 2025 deemed Quilters on the Rock a class 3 organization as a private group which charges their members fees. They are requesting a reclassification to class 2 based on their mission to preserve, promote, teach, and learn the art of quilting as well as their donation of quilts to organizations. Quilters on the Rock is requesting a reclassification to class 2 in order to remain a community resource and opportunity for citizens to give back. They meet on Saturdays to accommodate quilters of all ages. Julie Chapman motioned to table this request to April to allow staff time to evaluate room availability and potential lost revenue. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

#### **B. Review and take action: downed trees process**

During Forestry's busy season, we are responsible for the removal of 100 plus trees within the community for various reasons including dead, dying or disease. We also remove undesirable trees in undesirable locations as well as homeowner request with a suitable reason. When trees come down in the terrace area, we ask the property owner if they would like the logs. If they do not, we chip up branches and smaller logs and then take the rest of the 20" or larger pieces to the yard waste site for public to use. This size log is too big for the chipper and often too large for homeowners to manage. When we remove trees on public property we do the same as with the terrace trees. The department is looking to create a process for selling 20" or larger logs of desirable trees only as they would otherwise go to yard waste and rot. This comes as a potential revenue source for the forestry department and the City. Jennifer Clayton motioned to approve the creation of a downed trees policy. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

**C. Review and discuss: Earth and Arbor Day city and school involvement**

Several parks are in need of clean up and the department is looking for the commission's feedback in pursuing city and school involvement in a community service effort near the end of April. There would be potential for schools and/or businesses to adopt a park to clean. The commission generally accepted the idea and gave encouragement to reach out to the school district.

**D. Review and take action: Town Square available commission position**

Stephanie Juhl reviewed the position, which requires a representative from this commission to also hold a position on the town square commission. This position may involve programming, fundraising, reviewing ordinances, etc. Julie Chapman motioned to table this decision until the April meeting. Jennifer Clayton seconded. Motion carried.

**6. Director's Report:**

**A. Project updates: parks**

The Brandt-Quirk tennis courts were damaged with recent high winds, and it was determined the insurance company will only fix one out of the five damaged. This will be added to the five-year capital budget. The Washington Park outfield fence also experienced wind damage last weekend. The police were able to apprehend the subjects related to the vandalism at Riverside Park. Restitution may be required if the department requests.

The parks department will be landscaping the new fire department property, planting biofilters, and opening park restrooms this spring. Kristine will be working with contractors for quotes to rebid and hope to receive within the next week to finalize the Riverside restroom work.

**B. Project updates: forestry**

**C. Project updates: aquatics**

**D. Project updates: town square**

During the fundraising for the Bentzin Family Town Square, there were pledges made over a certain number of years. The last year of all pledged amounts was 2024. In the budgeting process for 2025, the \$50,000 that was in contributions was an error and was received in 2024. We recommend adding \$28,000 in non-taxable revenue to 26-44-62-10 and \$2,000 in taxable revenue to 26-44-62-11 and removing \$50,000 in future fund contributions in 26-44-62-66.

**E. Project updates: senior & community center**

Kristine presented several options for repair or replacement of the front doors, including the most feasible to move the closure to the west door. Due to the high cost, this will be added to the 2026 budget. The generator should be installed later this week.

**F. Update on programming: recreation**

Summer programs (baseball, day camp, etc.) will be live on the 24<sup>th</sup> and fall programs will be visible soon after. The kickstart soccer program began yesterday as a way to extend the spring soccer season. We are looking for additional coaches for leagues.

**G. Update on programming: town square**

Food truck spots are currently being filled as well as entertainment and vendors for markets. The list of city-sponsored events and other rentals is being created for the season. Work is still underway for ordinances changes regarding alcohol. The fire department open house will be June 8.

**H. Update on programming: senior and enrichment**

Spring break will include several activities for families, including family bingo, a park scavenger hunt, and a bright light-neon night dance party. Several other family nights are being planned throughout the year, including Ties & Tiaras on May 9.

Senior Center Advisory Board elections are taking place, with results announced at the Spring Fling volunteer celebration and members meeting on April 23. The third annual Senior Care Fair is scheduled for May 14.

**I. Update on programming: aquatics**

Registration for summer swim lessons will begin April 7. The opening date for the aquatic center is June 7. The indoor pool will be closed April 14-May16 for annual maintenance. There is a high school career fair this week we will be attending to encourage more seasonal employees – we are looking for at least seven more lifeguards for summer.

**7. Adjournment – Next meeting date April 21, 2025**

Julie Chapman motioned to adjourn the meeting. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.