



Park Board Agenda Item

Meeting Date:	October 21, 2026
Agenda Item:	Discussion and Possible Action to Recommend Funding for a Detailed Inspection of the Historic Birge Fountain.
Staff Contact (name, email, phone):	Kevin Boehm, kboehm@whitewater-wi.gov , 262-473-0122

BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The historic Birge Fountain, located in Flat Iron Park, has experienced deterioration over the years. A professional assessment is needed to determine its current condition, identify necessary repairs, and establish estimated restoration costs.

Staff contacted 17 companies nationwide specializing in historic statue and fountain restoration. Only one company, EverGreene Architectural Arts, submitted a proposal.

EverGreene has proposed a conditions assessment for **\$38,450**, which includes an onsite inspection, documentation of deterioration, recommended restoration methods, and estimated costs for future repairs.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

In May 2017, the City of Whitewater commissioned McKay Lodge Fine Arts Conservation Laboratory, Inc. to conduct a condition assessment of the historic Birge Fountain. The assessment identified deterioration of the fountain's cast iron components, particularly internal corrosion, and recommended ongoing preventive maintenance to extend its useful life. The report also determined that a complete restoration would eventually be necessary, including disassembly, repairs, stabilization, and protective coatings. At that time, the consultant estimated that proper maintenance could extend the fountain's existing condition for approximately 10 years, allowing the City time to plan and secure funding for restoration. McKay Lodge Fine Arts Conservation Laboratory is no longer in business, and the City has since sought a qualified preservation specialist to reassess the fountain's current condition and provide updated restoration recommendations and cost estimates.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

The City currently has \$3,460 available in the Birge Fountain Fund, leaving an additional funding need of \$34,990.

Staff has identified three potential funding options:

Option 1 – 2026 Funding: Review current CIP projects for remaining funds from projects completed under budget that could be reallocated, or consider using available City cash reserves.

Option 2 – 2027 CIP: Include the assessment in the 2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

Option 3 – City-Funded Assessment with Future Community Fundraising: The City would fund the initial assessment through available funds or the 2027 CIP. Once the assessment is completed and restoration costs are identified, the City would pursue a larger community fundraising campaign involving local businesses, organizations, and residents to help fund the actual restoration of the Birge Fountain.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board forward a favorable recommendation to the Finance Committee to identify funding for the Birge Fountain Conditions Assessment through one of the options presented.

Completing the assessment is an important first step in determining the fountain's restoration needs and developing a long-term preservation plan. The assessment would also provide the information necessary to establish a fundraising goal for future restoration efforts.

No restoration work is being requested or authorized at this time.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

EverGreene Architectural Arts – Birge Fountain Conditions Assessment Proposal, September 25, 2026.
