



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

6:00 PM

Warner Park Community Recreation Center
1625 Northport Drive

Joint Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners, Landmarks Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

A meeting of the Madison Board of Park Commissioners was held at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, January 30, 2018 at Warner Park Community Recreation Center. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM. A quorum was present and the meeting was properly noticed.

Members Present: Ald. Samba Baldeh; Ald. Maurice S. Cheeks; Emily R. Gnam; David L. Wallner; Nancy T. Ragland and Madelyn D. Leopold.

Members Excused: Venus D. Washington.

Parks Staff Present: Eric Knepp; Lisa Laschinger; Laura Bauer; Ann Shea; Darin Hall; and Joanne Austin.

City Staff Present: Mayor Paul Soglin; Katie Crawley, Mayor's Office; Amy Scanlon, Planning; William Fruhling, Planning; Norm Davis, Department of Civil Rights; and Josue Peralta, Department of Civil Rights.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were 31 registrations with 24 speakers (please see attached PDF of the registration forms).

Registered Speakers Tom Garver, Benjamin Nickel, Paul Sherman, Margaret Kaufman, Curtis Meffert, Alice Drake, Lesleigh Luttrell, James Mand, Ken Kalinowski, Gerhard Pechmann, John Fons, Paul Kaufman, Kathy Walsh, Kevin Walsh, George Dreckmaun, Frances Wiedenhoeff, Carl Endres, Ari Carmi, Sandra Witkauskas, Karl Bethke, David Blaska, Daniel Einstein, Julia Sherman, and Gary Von Kauwenburgs spoke.

Registrants Kerman Eckes, Donna Kirschenmann, Michelle Hornung, Darin Hall, Ruth Ann Whitehorse-Burns, Andrea Vitanieni, and Brittany Gilles did not speak.

Many of the approximately 24 registrants who spoke requested the city keep the 1906 monument at the Forest Hill cemetery. Several people asked us to respect the dead, regardless of the side they chose. Many people thought an interpretive sign would add historic context now that the c.1981 plaque was removed which named the Confederate Rest. Only a few people supported reinstalling the plaque that is currently in storage.

Several people spoke about the legacy of slavery and how it is still part of our living history and recommended removing the monument and adding a new sign to explain how the Confederate soldiers ended up at Camp Randall and Forest Hill Cemetery as POWs. One of the speakers clarified that the city was not responsible for the deplorable condition experienced by the POWs, they suffered in cold and wet conditions and many were quite ill when they arrived and some died within days of arrival. The commission members heard from two native speakers who want the city to honor all the dead buried in our region and reminded us not to glorify war or forget genocide.

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals from the members present.

REFERRAL FROM THE COMMON COUNCIL

[48643](#)

Establishing a Plan for the Confederate Monuments in Forest Hill Cemetery.

Mayor Soglin presented an historical overview and his recommendations for the monuments. Mayor Soglin commented about the "vicious" history of Jim Crow which institutionalized slavery and the treason of the secessionist insurrection. The Mayor recommends keeping the monument and adding a new sign with some of the words of New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu's speech last May: <http://nyti.ms/2q9ASgb> that would be a 'living monument to the lies and betrayal' of the UDC and Lost Cause movement to whitewash slavery. (Ald. Samba Baldeh left the meeting at 6:09 p.m.)

Eric Knepp and Lisa Laschinger presented a summary of the history of the monuments, as well as the operational procedures and challenges within the cemetery. Even though the monument is composed of three sections, Parks Superintendent Eric Knepp reported that taking apart the monument in order to remove the section with the language about the United Daughters of the Confederacy would not likely be possible. The legislative file has photos of the site, close-ups of the monuments, newspaper articles, public comment etc. Parks Operations Manager Lisa Laschinger provided a brief summary of the history of the monuments at the meeting. Knepp pointed out that the insignia on the plaque is a representation of the Confederate battle flag which is not permitted to be in the park per ordinance. The Parks Commission changed the policies on flags last year. The city is not planning to remove the individual stone grave markers which identify the soldiers by name. The stones are eroding and may require replacement if we intend to use them to name the individuals who are buried in the cemetery. The markers do not denote the actual location of the 140 soldiers. According to Knepp, there is no record of specific platting, many of the soldiers are in a mass grave. Ms. Waterman's grave marker does represent where she is buried. (Ald. Samba Baldeh returned to the meeting at 6:30 p.m.)

There was general consensus that the resolution and the prescribed actions would be referred to the respective commissions for further discussion and formal action. To formalize the consensus of the commissions, a motion to re-refer was submitted by Madden (Equal Opportunities Commission), seconded by Rummel (Landmarks Commission).

A motion was made to re-refer to the BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote/other. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.