



# City of Madison

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

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Wednesday, December 14, 2011

6:30 PM 1625 Northport Dr. # (Warner Park Community Recreation  
Center)

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### I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The regular meeting of the Madison Board of Park Commissioners was held on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Avenue. President Wallner called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. A quorum was present and the meeting was properly noticed.

**Parks staff present:** Kevin Briski, Eric Knepp, Kay Rutledge, Roberta Sladky, LaVonne LaFave  
**City staff present:** Katie Crawley, Mayoral Aide; Rebecca Cnare, Bill Fruehling; Dan Rolfs and Amy Scanlon, Planning & Development  
**Alders present:** Ald. Marsha Rummel

**Present:** 6 -

Ald. Mark Clear; Nancy T. Ragland; Madelyn D. Leopold; Joseph R. Clausius; David L. Wallner and Emanuel Scarbrough

**Excused:** 1 -

William W. Barker

### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Leopole/Clausius to approve the Minutes of the November 90, 2011 meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to comment on items not on the Agenda.

### IV. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals by members of the Commission for any item on the agenda.

**V. REPORTS**

**A. Golf Subcommittee**

A motion was made by Scarbrough/Clausius to accept the May 3, 2011 Minutes of the Golf Subcommittee meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**B. Long Range Planning Subcommittee**

A motion was made by Clausius/Scarbrough to accept the October 17, 2011 Minutes of the Long Range Planning Subcommittee meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Request by (Former) County Executive Kathleen Faulk and (Former) Mayor Dave Cieslewicz to dedicate a section of the Cherokee Marsh land in memory of Harold "Bud" Jordahl.

A motion was made by Clausius/Scarbrough to approve the recommendation made at the November 7, 2011 Long Range Planning Subcommittee meeting to place a kiosk in Cherokee Marsh near the Fifth Addition acquisition, with information discussing the Stewardship Program and recognizing Bud Jordahl for his contribution toward the creation of the Stewardship Program, rather than designating a specific geographical location in the Marsh. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**C. Olbrich Botanical Society**

A motion was made by Scarbrough/Clausius to accept the Olbrich Botanical Society Minutes of the October 18, 2011 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**D. Warner Park Community Recreation Center Advisory Subcommittee**

A motion was made by Scarbrough/Clausius to accept the Warner Park Community Recreation Center Advisory Subcommittee Minutes of September 22, 2011 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**E. President of the Park Commission**

President Wallner reported that he attended the annual Craft Fair at Warner Park Community Recreation Center and it was a wonderful event. He also attended two events related to the opening of the Tenney Park Shelter. He complimented Parks staff for their work on the events which were both well attended. Olympic Speed Skater Beth Heiden spoke at both events.

Tomorrow evening Aids. Clausius, Clear and he will attend a James Madison Park Surplus Property Committee meeting regarding the sale of the two

parcels in James Madison Park.

Lastly, President Wallner appointed Nancy Ragland to serve on the Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee in place of Madelyn Leopold. He appointed Leopold to serve on the Committee on Community Gardens in place of Betty Chewning who had been the Park Commission representative on that Committee

**F. Superintendent of Parks**

[24777](#)

Written Report of Supervisor's Activities

A motion was made by Leopold/Clear to accept the written report of Supervisor's Activities. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Informational Items**

Superintendent Briski echoed President Wallner's statement that the grand openings for the John Wall Family Pavilion in Tenney Park were great events. He was pleased to announce receipt of a DNR Stewardship Grant in the sum of \$144,724 for the acquisition of the property adjacent to Esther Beach. Parks had used their development account for the purchase and this will reimburse that account.

He announced new programming for this coming winter with the Madison Parks Learn To series for cross country skiing, snowshoeing and ice skating. Hopefully these sessions will get people outside during the winter to use our facilities. Also in January we will offer ice skating lessons at Elver and Tenney. Parks is currently looking for scholarship funding for the learn to skate program.

Parks is also offering the opportunity to individuals and corporations for after hours ice skating parties at Tenney, Elver and Vilas. Additional event information will be sent out in the December Parks newsletter. The Parks website also provides a matrix showing all the different winter opportunities in parks.

The Goodman Foundation has approved funding the Swim Team for 2012 and if the program expands they will cover those additional members in addition to the learn to swim program.

Finally, members were reminded that the election of officers will occur at the January 2012 meeting and the appointments to committees will occur in February. The January meeting will be held at Goodman Maintenance Facility.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Fees for 2012

A motion was made by Clausius/Leopold to approve the 2012 fees for Forest Hill Cemetery and Golf. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. [24233](#) Adopting the Madison Cultural Plan

A motion was made by Scarbrough/Clear to refer Resolution ID#24233 Adopting the Madison Cultural Plan to the January meeting. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. [24468](#) A Resolution Adopting the Downtown Plan as a Supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan.

This Resolution was Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the PLAN COMMISSION due back on 12/19/2011

Bill Fruehling of the city's Planning Department presented the latest draft of the Downtown Plan that staff have been working on since 2008. There have been more than 125 meetings, attended by over 2200 people. Staff believe they have come up with a balanced plan that will provide the framework for decision making over the next 20 years. It covers employment, economic development, parks and housing. He noted that these are concepts that are to convey an overall vision and not specifics for any one location.

One of the consistent recommendations that was heard is that the Downtown has to get serious about how it engages the lakes and how residents can utilize them. The narrow strip of land along Lake Monona that comprises Law Park, there is a large surface parking lot and bike path but not much else. They believe this area would provide a major opportunity to create a signature downtown park along the lake and their draft incorporated a variation of a plan that was done a few decades ago. It recommends adding about 2 acres of fill to expand the park into the lake. The City got a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers in 1990 to add 4 acres of fill but that permit has expired. This plan includes open space so it can be flexible in the way it is used. The centerpiece is the Frank Lloyd Wright boathouse that would become more of a shelter/pavilion structure. There are not many opportunities for boaters to tie up who want to visit the downtown and this would include temporary boat docking. Additionally, in order to connect the park back into the downtown, staff recommends land bridges to extend the park vertically, thus creating a graceful and inviting way to get from the downtown to the park.

Another area along Lake Monona is the Broom Street gateway. They envision beautifying John Nolen Drive from the Beltline to the downtown along the Causeway. Currently what is seen is a dog park and tennis courts at the Broom Street intersection. It was suggested that features be added to the dog park since it is really well used as well as the adjacent tennis courts which are

the most used in the city.

Brittingham Bay on the other side of the causeway from Lake Monona is less congested than either Lakes Monona or Mendota. There are not a lot of opportunities to use either the park shelter or the bay, and a rental facility for sail boats, kayaks or paddle boats would bring more people to that destination. Efforts are being made to improve the water quality in the bay.

Turning to Lake Mendota, there has been an idea for many years about a lakefront path along the lake. The concept would have the path begin in James Madison Park and then continue through the campus to Picnic Point for a total of approximately three miles. A good portion is already built and the city has easement covering much of the middle segment. Easements are still needed for the last segment. Diagrams of the path were presented and it was noted that it is not meant to be a place to hang out but just a path. There are streets that dead-end and go down to the lake that could enhance the sight lines to the lake.

The map illustrated on page 102 shows the areas that represent a quarter mile radius, about a 5 minute walk, from the downtown's major open spaces. It also shows the area currently underserved by parkland. Most of the recent development on the west end of downtown has been tall student residence buildings. Because they are on parcels that are redeveloped there is no vacant space available for a park. Currently the vacant lot on the corner of Gorham/University is used as parkland but it is not very safe because of all the traffic going past. Planning has proposed that a new park be established that would be a safe, attractive well designed open space that could be used however the users want.

Fruehling noted those were the park related concepts in the plan and the recommendations would require more involved planning. The Plan was introduced to the Common Council on November 15 and then referred to 14 Boards, Commissions and Committees. This document sets the concepts in a broader context and after approval by all of the Boards, Commissions and Committees as well as approval by the Common Council, hopefully soon after the first of the year, the Planning Department will move toward implementation. Additionally, there are other plans that are dependent on this plan's adoption, i.e. the Zoning Code will incorporate recommendations regarding height.

The Law Park proposal will be controversial because of adding fill in the lake and will be politically challenging so they will take it a step at a time. It is envisioned that the really large projects would have steering committees appointed.

Cnare added that they are looking at a connection between the lakes through the University and also want to connect missing sidewalks in the area.

Commission members noted that the John Nolen Centennial Committee is looking at John Nolen Drive from the Beltline to Downtown and asked how that meshed with the Downtown Plan. The two plans will come together on the Causeway but will need time and money to make them happen.

They applauded the land bridges at Law Park. They felt it was a beautiful plan but did express concerns about filling in two acres into Lake Monona to

increase the size of Law Park and asked whether there would need to be some mitigation efforts. Planning indicated that the concept stays within the dock lines that had been previously established and that the new plan calls for less fill than the permit had previously allowed.

Members also commented about scale in the artist's rendering throughout the plan and hoped that the infrastructure was more along the scale of the new Tenney Pavilion so the emphasis is on the lakes and not the buildings. It was noted that a different portion of the Plan discussed canopy and streetscapes and that different streets have different functions. When street construction/reconstruction is planned the urban tree canopy is taken into consideration.

The Plan's timeframes contain short-, mid- and long term recommendations. The short term recommendations are immediate, the mid-term recommendations are two to five years out and the long term recommendations cover the time beyond that. The mid-term portion covers the next planning phase of the plan.

They were impressed with the concept of a lakefront path along Lake Mendota. It was suggested that people would want to bike from the Union to Picnic Point or come back through James Madison Park, they hoped that the path would be wide enough to accommodate walkers and bikers.

In response to questions about the proposed new park off of Gorham, it would be approximately 1.5 to 2 acres, near the Doubletree Hotel.

Members indicated that they were glad to see the focus on the lakes and asked that planners keep scale in mind when approving development to allow people to enjoy the lakes. Ald. Clear interjected that a way to mitigate expenses for the expansion of Law Park and the path along Lake Mendota would be through development, which in turn could generate money for park improvements.

Superintendent Briski then reported that staff recommends approval with the comments noted above.

A motion was made by Ragland/Leopold to approve Resolution ID#24468 Resolution Adopting the Downtown Plan as a Supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan incorporating the items discussed tonight.  
**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**D. Breese Stevens Field Deed Restriction**

Superintendent Briski reported that there are deed restrictions on Breese Stevens Field that limit use to only athletic activities. Last month there was a request to use Breese Stevens for a Shakespeare production and unfortunately the approval had to be rescinded. Parks staff have been in contact with the sponsor who understands that the restrictions won't allow that activity. Parks staff then followed up by attempting to locate any heirs to the Stevens family to see if they would be agreeable to changing the restrictions. They have determined there are no heirs. He suggested that if the Park Commission agrees, staff will review and provide rationale to modify the deed restrictions. A Resolution detailing that information would be introduced at the Common

Council, then referred to the Park Commission for approval. It would then be returned to the Council where it would require a 2/3 vote to approve the appeal and to then forward it to the Courts to petition a change of the restrictions. Parks is working with ACA Anne Zellhoefer to provide the rationale for the request and to come up with a plan. Parks will need supporters on the Council when it reaches that level.

Parks feels that there could be a variety of programming for this facility if the change is approved by the courts. The Capital Improvement Budget in 2014 provides for the installation of synthetic turf and that would open up opportunities for more than just soccer. It could incorporate football, concerts, performances, and festivals that would all need Park Commission approval following the change in the deed restrictions. Superintendent Briski noted that any time there is a new activity or program it is discussed with the neighborhood. The neighborhood does support diversification of activities in the facility.

Scarborough asked whether this might influence other people from leaving land to city for a particular use if, in the future, the restrictions could be changed.

A motion was made by Clear/Clausius to recess the meeting at 7:43 p.m. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. A motion was made by Clear/Clausius to come back into session at 7:54 p.m. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

## VII. OLD BUSINESS

### A. ID# 24070 Garver Feed Mill Status Report

President Wallner indicated that this issue would be brought back to the Commission in either January or February 2012. A representative of Olbrich Botanical Society then made a presentation.

#### Registered Speakers:

Dick Wagner, Olbrich Botanical Society, in support  
Dan Rolfs, Neutral

The Botanical Society was created in 1979 at the request of then Parks Superintendent, Dan Stapay. The partnership raises \$1.4 million annually to help fund operations at the Gardens. The Society has been looking at educational and visitor needs when conducting long range planning and hadn't really looked at storage needs since Commonwealth was going to provide that. The Society spoke with Olbrich staff and Society members to determine space needs. Society Board members also viewed other facilities and looked at key operations, exhibit space, educational classrooms, the library, etc. to get a sense of what future needs might be. Those space needs are detailed in the document entitled Olbrich Botanical Gardens in the 21st Century. The results have been reviewed by the Executive Committee and were shared with the full Botanical Society Board to provide the basis for discussions on how to proceed. It gets very crowded in their two buildings. When it became evident that Commonwealth was not going to be able to move forward, the Society felt it had to start to think about storage, as well as other

issues the Gardens will face in the future, e in terms of visitors, education and exhibition facilities instead of focusing a discussion just on Garver.

Additionally the Society was attempting to determine how to proceed in terms of the continuing partnership between it and the city. A copy of a draft Resolution that was presented to the Board was then distributed to the Commissioners. It states that in the spirit of that partnership the Society believes that a design consultant should be hired to develop a conceptual plan for how visitor orientation and education facilities could be improved in the gardens. A garden support facility should also be located and designed. This support facility could be the core of the Garver building. They are not looking at a restored facility but rather a facility that is stabilized with a new roof, new parapet and tuck pointing. It could still be used for storage. The Society felt that a garden consultant should look at those issues as well as other needs the gardens may have for expansion in the future. With those goals in mind, the Society is looking at conducting a capital campaign in partnership with the City of Madison..

The Board anticipates acting on the Resolution at their January Olbrich Botanical Society meeting. Ragland interjected that she would like to see the word "architectural" added before the words design consultants in the 7th paragraph of the draft Resolution.

President Wallner asked about the possibility of a new facility as opposed to stabilizing or restoring the Garver building. Wagner indicated that building a new facility might cost between  $\frac{3}{4}$  and \$1 million. If you look at \$1 million to tear down Garver and \$1 million to build a new building, you're at about \$2 million. The numbers suggest that the building could be stabilized for roughly \$2 million so for now there seems to be a practical use for the building. Members added that preservationists want to save the old structures in the city if it is economically feasible. If the building was torn down we would need to find some place to store the items that are currently inside while the demolition occurred. Also, where would the new structure be built? . It was felt that it is worth stabilizing the building, preserving the core, and having options for the building. The storage needs for both Olbrich and the Parks Division should be taken into consideration. Stabilizing the core would provide that.

There was some skepticism about the integrity of the building after the tour and the Commission needs to be sure about it before recommending the commitment of major dollars for it. The Landmarks Commission felt the building was in good condition and would not greatly deteriorate in the next few months. This statement was echoed by the city's Preservation Planner, Scanlon, who stated a stop gap measure is not what is needed. What is needed is a permanent solution. The core is in the best condition and is the best section for stabilization. Stabilization would include a totally new roof, rebuilding the parapets and tuck pointing approximately 20% of the walls. The windows would not be replaced. There was some talk of adding a small garage for vehicles and some minimal heating. The parts that aren't worth saving and are dangerous would be demolished. The cost for all of these items is approximately \$1.7 million. It was felt that the Capital campaign could be done in two phases that look at the future growth of the Gardens and that the Garver building stabilization would be part of the first phase.

There was also concern about the land behind the building that was purchased



for public use and is now used as an illegal dog park. As long as Garver is not resolved, that project can't go forward. If Garver is resolved it will help the neighborhood open up use of that land.

The Society does not have an opinion on the Ruins Garden idea for the remaining parts of the building that would otherwise be demolished. That idea had been proposed by the neighborhood group.

Ald. Rummel felt that the partnership between the Botanical Society and the City was a good idea.

It was questioned whether there were some stop gap measures to keep out rain and snow that could be taken. Rolfs felt that any stop gap measure would turn into a huge project and would involve much more work and money than was originally planned. For instance, putting plywood on the holes in the roof would require work on the beams to support the plywood. It was also pointed out that access to those upper areas is dangerous and difficult.. If that is the directive of the Park Commission, tarps could be put over the walls to stop water from seeping in but once you start it becomes bigger and at what point do you stop? Fencing would be a \$40,000 to \$60,000 expenditure and would not stop trespassing. There are signs posted regarding trespassing. The city does have immunity if someone is hurt while trespassing.

Superintendent Briski stated that the scope will have to be defined and the proposal will go through the city procurement process. The Commission made a statement that they supported the direction in which the Botanical Society is going. Members felt that Parks should move forward with the facilities plan for the Gardens that will look at its future needs. They do not want to delay until the building is too far gone and would have to be torn down, unless the study concluded that it was hopeless or that it would cost much more money than the initial estimates.

A motion was made by Clear/Clausius that the Park Commission endorses partnering with the Olbrich Botanical Society to pursue a facility study with respect to space needs, including preserving the Garver core and the East and West wings to be used as a garden support facility and to prepare facilities, plans and concepts for Olbrich Gardens to address space needs. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

It was noted that members are not saying to tear it down and not saying to turn it into a Ruins Garden but don't want to rule those options out unless it becomes impracticable and cost prohibitive.

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Clear/Leopold the meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.