



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Meeting Minutes - Approved BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

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

The regular meeting of the Madison Board of Park Commissioners was held on Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at Warner Park Community Recreation Center, 1625 Northport Avenue. President Wallner called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. A quorum was present and the meeting was properly noticed.

Parks staff present: Superintendent Kevin Briski, Steve Doniger, Eric Knepp, Kay Rutledge, LaVonne LaFave
City staff present: Katie Crawley

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 6 -

Ald. Mark Clear; Madelyn D. Leopold; Joseph R. Clausius; William W. Barker; David L. Wallner and Betty Chewning

Excused: 1 -

Emanuel Scarbrough

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

In regard to item VII. A. Team Magnus, Commissioners wanted sponsors to thoroughly understand that they really needed to be very active in getting their riders not to ride except during the race and requested that there be some greater emphasis made of that fact in the Minutes. The following sentence was added to the Minutes: Commissioners emphasized the need for sponsors to remind riders that use of the course other than during the race must be restricted.

A motion was made by Clausius/Clear to approve the May 11, 2011 Minutes of the regular meeting of the Park Commission as amended. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Registered speakers:

Michael Barrett, Madison Area Bus Advocates
Parks Parking Lots

Sam Stevensen
Park/concessions & shelter

Opposes more Parking in

James Madison

IV. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

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

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Golf Subcommittee

A motion was made by Barker/Clausius to accept the Minutes of November 23, 2010 meeting of the Golf Subcommittee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Long Range Planning Committee

A motion was made by Barker/Clausius to accept the Minutes of April 25, 2011 meeting of the Long Range Planning Subcommittee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Olbrich Botanical Society

A motion was made by Barker/Clausius to accept the Minutes of April 12, 2011 Meeting of the Olbrich Botanical Society. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Warner Park Community Recreation Center Advisory Committee

A motion was made by Barker/Clausius to accept the Minutes of March 24, 2011 meeting of the Warner Park Community Recreation Center Advisory Committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

E. President of the Park Commission

President Wallner noted there are two openings on Parks Subcommittees due to a change in Alder appointments to the Commission. Clear indicated he would join the Facilities, Programs and Fees Subcommittee. President Wallner indicated he would attend the Warner Park Community Recreation Center Advisory Subcommittee meetings for the balance of this year if no one else expressed interest in that appointment.

He reported that he attended Ride the Drive and he and his wife staffed a booth for Parks. He congratulated Parks staff on a wonderful event that brought out thousands of people. He also attended an event at Blackhawk Middle School sponsored by Fiskars. Their Orange Thumb Program worked with kids and the faculty to create a garden for both the community and the kids. Community Action Coalition is also involved in this project. He is also continuing to attend meetings regarding the Nolen Centennial Drive project.

He has begun visiting various city parks and rediscovered Edna Taylor Conservancy as well as the beautiful trilliums at Heritage Sanctuary.

Finally, he thanked Madelyn Leopold for chairing the May meeting and presented her with a memento of the meeting's main focus.

F. Superintendent of Parks

[22666](#)

Written Report of Supervisor's Activities

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

2. Informational Items

Katie Crawley, the new Mayoral Aide to the Parks Division, Park Commission and its various subcommittees, was introduced.

The weather has gotten so hot that a decision was made to open the Goodman Pool today and it will also be open on Thursday. It was scheduled to be opened on Friday and there will be a recognition ceremony at 2 p.m. to thank John Hayes of Goodman Jewelers for sponsoring the first 500 kids' with free passes at the pool to honor the late Goodman Brothers. Also, due to the hot weather, the Cypress Spray Park opened yesterday. It was originally scheduled to open on Saturday. The guarded beaches will open on Saturday.

The Elver Fireworks will take place on Tuesday, July 5, and is being hosted by Parks with financial sponsorship by Woodman's. The Ride the Drive on June 5, 2011 was very well attended by approximately 30,000 participants. There were many great media sponsors and the event was paid for by sponsorships. Staff is working with the Mayor's office and others for a fall Ride the Drive.

Superintendent Briski then provided an update on the Garver Feed Mill project. Last week Commonwealth announced that they would no longer be pursuing their development plans for an Art Incubator on that property. Mayor Soglin has asked that the Superintendent of Parks and other city staff begin meeting to talk about options that will then be presented to the Mayor for discussion on how he would like to move forward. The Park Commission will be involved in this process because this is Parks Division property and there is a significant amount of interest in the North Platte and that part of the whole Olbrich Master Plan. The Mayor is very cognizant of these concerns. A number of different options will be presented for his consideration. Barker added that he has a lot of energy invested in that issue and he would be happy to reconvene the Task Force to see if anything could be salvaged. The building is a challenge but it would be a pity to use \$1+ million to demolish it. Superintendent Briski did share Barker's name with the Mayor for any group that is put together to look at this issue.

Chewning asked Commissioners to recall that the Olbrich Master Plan was adopted on a close vote by the Park Commission and was based on the assumption that the Commonwealth Arts Incubator was going in there. There was a huge amount of neighborhood concern about that plan. The neighborhood, two alders and the neighborhood association all came out firmly against the plan. She questioned what implications this decision has for that Master Plan.

Superintendent Briski reported that he, together with others in the neighborhood, has provided this information to the Mayor. The Mayor will take that into consideration together with all of the other information he has received. Superintendent Briski will be certain that the Park Commission is involved.

Chewing then interjected that assumptions were also made regarding the configuration because the land where the ball fields are currently located would be given to Olbrich Botanical Society in substitution for the North Platte lands. She questioned what implication the Garver decision will have on that configuration.

Superintendent Briski responded it was part of the master plan process and the decisions of the Park Commission were made with regard to the planning opportunities and planning decisions for the future for Olbrich as a whole property. He cannot respond as to what the thought process was for all of the Park Commission members but they did approve the master plan for a designated expansion across the creek. Barker stated that one of the major driving factors for the decision was, that for the future health of a world class botanical garden, it was better to have a creek running through it than to have an active railroad track running through it. That issue was one of the major factors that drove the decision for the Commission.

Superintendent Briski reported that Charlie Romines, the new Parks Operations Manager, will begin on June 20. He is from Cedar Rapids, Iowa and was the unanimous choice from a very competitive field of candidates.

Tomorrow night Russ Hefty will conduct a conservation tour at Kettle Pond. The list for these monthly tours can be found on our website. They have been very popular and typically have 40 to 50 people in attendance for each tour.

Rutledge reported that the Long Range Planning Subcommittee will be reviewing the Park and Open Space Plan a couple more times before it is brought back to the Park Commission later this year.

Lastly, the new edition of the Parks Magazine was distributed. The Rubber Ducky River Race had a respectable turnout with proceeds going to Goodman Pool Scholarships for the Learn to Swim Program at the Pool. Parks has received a \$50,000 check from the Goodman Brothers Foundation for pool scholarships.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. [22275](#) Rescinding RES-11-00106 and Reauthorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a five-year agreement with Trek Bicycle Corporation for the operation of a City-sponsored bicycle-sharing program in the City of Madison.

This Resolution was Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the BOARD OF ESTIMATES. Due back on 6/13/2011.

A motion was made by Leopold/Clear to approve Resolution ID#22275 Rescinding RES-11-00106 and Reauthorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a five-year agreement with Trek Bicycle Corporation for the operation

of a City-sponsored bicycle-sharing program in the City of Madison. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.** Commissioners expressed gratitude to Trek for renegotiating the terms of the contract that, in essence, became a gift to the city.

- B. [22343](#) Authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to enter into an Agreement between the City and Bartolotta Fireworks Company, Inc. for the fireworks display at Elver Park. (AD 1)

This Resolution was Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the BOARD OF ESTIMATES. Due back on 6/13/2011.

A motion was made by Barker/Clear to approve Resolution ID#22343 Authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to enter into an Agreement between the City and Bartolotta Fireworks Company, Inc. for the fireworks display at Elver Park; amending the 2011 City of Madison Parks Division Budget for costs related to the Independence Day celebration at Elver Park. (AD 1) MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- C. [22385](#) Authorizing the Common Council to accept ownership from Capital City Chapter of Muskies Inc. and the Dane County Environmental Council of an interpretive sign to be located in Vilas Park adjacent to the Wingra Dam, along North Wingra Drive.

This Resolution was RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER

A motion was made by Barker/Clear to approve Resolution ID#22385 Authorizing the Common Council to accept ownership from Capital City Chapter of Muskies Inc. and the Dane County Environmental Council of an interpretive sign to be located in Vilas Park adjacent to the Wingra Dam, along North Wingra Drive. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- D. [22341](#) To authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a three year contract with the MAD-City Ski Team, Inc. for the 2011 through 2013 seasons.

This Resolution was Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the BOARD OF ESTIMATES. Due back on 6/13/2011.

A motion was made by Clear/Clausius to approve Resolution ID#22341 To authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a three year contract with the MAD-City Ski Team, Inc. for the 2011 through 2013 seasons. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- E. [22342](#) To authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a three-year contract with the Isthmus Water Ski Club LTD. for the 2011 through 2013 seasons.

This Resolution was Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the BOARD OF ESTIMATES. Due back on 6/13/2011.

A motion was made by Clear/Clausius to approve Resolution ID#22342 To authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a three-year contract with the Isthmus Water Ski Club LTD. for the 2011 through 2013 seasons. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

It was noted that the lease amounts for the two water ski teams have been raised significantly over their previous contracts. The costs to the city were measured based upon the amount of staff time involved in litter pick-up, trash removal, and monitoring the site. We took a more businesslike approach to these new agreements. It was also noted that they are positive community events.

- F. [22663](#) Proclamation to declare the month of July as Parks and Recreation Month and to recognize the benefits that Madison Parks provide for active and passive recreational opportunities.

A motion was made by Barker, seconded by Leopold, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

A motion was made by Barker/Leopold to approve Proclamation ID#22663 to declare the Month of July as Parks and Recreation Month and to recognize the benefits that Madison parks provide for recreational opportunities. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- G. [22686](#) To authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement with Blessed Sacrament Congregation for the planting and maintaining of an edible landscape to be located in Hollister Avenue Triangle Park. (AD 10)

This Resolution was RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO PLACE ON FILE WITHOUT PREJUDICE -REPORT OF OFFICER

Registered Speaker:

NAME

Melissa Tracy in support

A motion was made by Barker/Clausius to approve Resolution ID#22686 To authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an agreement with Blessed Sacrament Congregation for the planting and maintaining of an edible landscape to be located in Hollister Avenue Triangle Park. (AD 10). MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. It was noted this is the second edible landscape agreement on city parkland with no fee but requiring a lease and insurance.

- H. [22679](#) Request of Laura Mael of Regent Records LLC. to host Weststock 2011, a benefit for West High School at Rennebohm Park on August 6, 2011.

Doniger reported that alumni from West High School are interested in helping to support the high school student capital fund. There have been several meetings between the group and Parks staff and the alumni are aware of the established criteria for events. Superintendent Briski noted that staff is not recommending approval because neither the alder nor the Neighborhood Association has responded regarding this proposal. He expressed some concern because this type of event has not previously occurred in this park. Commissioners also questioned whether a beer garden was an appropriate component for an event to benefit high school students.

A motion was made by Chewning/Leopold to recommend approval contingent upon the Superintendent's approval after hearing from the Neighborhood Association and alder and sponsor's compliance with all conditions. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

I. [22681](#)

Request of Brian Condon of Edgewood College Sustainability Leadership Program to host C.A.M.P. Madison for the use of Elver Park for an overnight camp on July 16 and 17, 2011.

Superintendent Briski noted this request is also uncharted ground. The ordinance states that the Superintendent has the authority to permit overnight camping in city parks. He is bringing it to the Park Commission to make certain the Commission is on board. This group has been actively working on fulfilling the conditions for approval. He is comfortable with this request.

A motion was made by Barker/Chewning to recommend approval contingent upon the Superintendent's approval after hearing from the alder and sponsor's compliance with all conditions. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

J. [22753](#)

2012 Capital Budget

Superintendent Briski reported that a 20% General Obligation reduction from previous years has been requested. Rutledge continued that the Mayor has asked all departments, including police and fire, to look at their 2012 requests and reduce them by 20%. The handout identifies the projects that are targeted for the 20% reduction. They include matching fund neighborhood park improvements, park facility improvements, and reducing street tree replacements. The Tenney bridge modification at Marston, the Vilas Parking Lot and roadways construction and the Odana Clubhouse designs will all be pushed out to 2013. These represent a reduction of \$1,450,000.

Superintendent Briski reported that the reductions can still be considered as supplemental requests if funding becomes available as other priorities shift. The Olbrich Botanical Complex request is for replacement of the original roof which has been deteriorating for the past decade. This is the main roof of the building, not the Conservatory.

A motion was made by Clear/Clausius to recess at 7:44 p.m. due to the tornado warning.

The Commission came back into session at 8:05 p.m. with all Commissioners previously noted in attendance.

The column labeled "2012 Other" refers to donated money, trust funds and other funding. The vast majority of the items being cut in 2012 are items that are needed and are just being postponed to future years and potentially increasing the long term costs. Many of our structures and infrastructure have had maintenance deferred for a long time. The Parkways and Open Space category covers land management improvements.

A motion was made by Chewning/Leopold to approve the 2012 Capital Budget as presented. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. [22754](#) Request to use Trust Account Funds for specific 2011 Capital Projects

Knepp stated that the Chair and alders requested that this item be brought back in order to provide better information with a description of the various funds and their purposes. The trust fund list identifies all the various funds and the purpose for each fund. The majority of these funds do not have trust documents but are really dedicated donations to help our park system. The Olin Trust is an exception that has a separate trust with a trustee who administers it. In the majority of the remaining funds, the Park Commission is the trustee. Historically, all requests to use funds from any of these accounts have come before the Park Commission for approval. A brief discussion ensued regarding the purpose of the different funds. It was proposed that the remaining funds in the Herfurth and Olbrich accounts be used. Knepp also stated that the percentage realized from the sale of cemetery lots needs to be changed to more adequately fund the perpetual care fund. It is currently inadequate to cover long term maintenance.

Accessible playground surfacing means shredded rubber, which has been used in city playgrounds for the past eight years. The product has been certified by the EPA and there is no evidence of any water infiltration problem. It is very similar to pea gravel for infiltration but wheelchairs are able to navigate over the shredded rubber whereas they cannot navigate over pea gravel.

Leopold echoed Knepp's statement that when people give money to something their intent is that it be used. Corporate Trustees generally charge 1% per year for administrative fees so if funds are not earmarked as endowments we should use them, especially in the financial climate we find ourselves in.

In those cases where there are two numbers listed in the Fund ID, one is for the corpus and one is for earnings. A question was asked as to whether it was possible to transfer any of these funds to the Parks Foundation to provide additional flexibility for investments. Knepp reported he is looking into whether this is possible and hopes to work with the Foundation on this issue. Superintendent Briski indicated the Foundation is going through an evolution and restructuring at the present time. The transfer of funds was offered as a means of growing the Foundation with Park Commission and Council approval. There is interest in hiring a staff person to cultivate development opportunities for giving that would sustain ongoing support and growth for the Foundation. Commissioners indicated they were more interested in the ability to invest funds more aggressively than in hiring a director for the Foundation. President Wallner indicated that he pushed the Foundation to take a different direction when he served on it and suggested that the Library Foundation could serve as a model. Barker noted that the Foundation could operate in one of two ways: either it could be primarily a check cashing 501(c)(3) umbrella or it could be more actively involved in raising money. He hopes the direction it is leaning toward is active development. Superintendent Briski noted that he is meeting with Chad Bartell who put together the first business plan for the Foundation and with Grant Frautschi who is the current president.

A motion was made by Leopold/Clear to approve the request to use Trust Account Funds for specific 2011 Capital Projects. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. [22690](#)

Land Management Plan

Superintendent Briski indicated that Si Widstrand put together a plan that he would like to present to the Park Commission for discussion.

Registered Speakers:

NAME

Si Widstrand	support	
Gary Werner	support	
Dan Kerkman	support	
Trish O'Kane – left before speaking		Neutral

The original goal of the Park and Pleasure Drive Association was to preserve land for future generations. There are now over 6000 acres in the park system and probably at least 4000 acres are in some form of natural landscaping. Widstrand is concerned we don't have a handle on it nor is there an inventory or assessment or plan for maintaining that acreage. There are some high quality areas with valuable landscaping which are very valuable to the neighborhoods even though they may be small areas. He is advocating that a better system for dealing with these areas be developed. He would like Parks to go through an inventory assessment, develop a plan, figure out what it will take to do basic management, and to adopt a standard for that basic management for all of our lands. He has been doing volunteer work with numerous groups throughout the city for the past two years and he is optimistic about this concept because there are some things that can be done quickly and inexpensively. There could be some real benefits from basic land management activities.

He is also concerned about the conservation parks. Staff does a great job on the restorations that they put a lot of work into but they are at the absolute limit on the acreage they can handle. They cannot deal with all the land in the conservation parks. He suggests evaluating the conservation parkland using the same basic management approach. Conservation land management can be at a higher scientific level of restoration when there is time and funding available.

In response to a question about why there wasn't more inter-agency cooperation between city, county and state agencies regarding land management and the sharing of equipment. Widstrand noted that part of it may be territorial. City and county parks do work together cooperatively on many projects, but we are all stretching the limits of our resources so we focus on our own lands.

Each agency has a volunteer coordinator and a volunteer program. Russ Hefty is a great resource person and so are the Parks Planning staff, but everyone is at their limit. If we are going to expand these programs with the use of volunteers and get quicker answers to people on questions about landscape plans or how to solve a particular problem, communication will need to be

streamlined to provide answer to volunteers. He isn't sure whether the answer is more staff, more funding, better organization, or better communication between different sections of staff. There is also a need to do more internal education. Many of these things are operational problems not policy issues. The reason this was brought before the Commission is to receive approval for the concept so citizens know it was vetted and has received the Commission's support to move ahead. It is very helpful to have that support when you are dealing with the one citizen who is opposed to a particular project.

Speakers indicated that it was important not to start on a project with volunteers until there is a plan for follow through on all of the steps to an identified end result. Get citizens involved as volunteers and they will become stewards of our parks. Get them involved in the planning process for projects. Build a constituency for your programs so that at budget time these folks can help contact alders to put money back into the budget for those programs.

This proposal does contain significant changes regarding volunteer involvement. A decision needs to be made on what volunteers can be allowed to do. Volunteer groups could be doing more mechanical removals of invasives with chainsaws; however, if they aren't allowed to use chainsaws, then money is needed in the budget to hire contractors to do the work. This would involve a change for the city in letting go of some of their restrictions on what work volunteers can perform.

Another big change is institutional because employees need to know more about plant identification and natural area management, not just running equipment and cutting everything. As new people are hired, staff can make sure they are well qualified. Resources are limited and will probably be more limited in the future, in light of tighter budgets, not through any failure of staff. Staff also need to be willing to learn from citizens who have that particular knowledge and experience.

Widstrand indicated that he has no idea how many new staff would be needed to implement this land management proposal. It could simply be a matter of reassigning different types of work to different people after looking at what staff, volunteers and contractors each do.

It will be critical to have a relationship between staff in different sections and the various volunteer groups. It was suggested that there be volunteer land managers who are knowledgeable and would work as liaisons covering areas that encompass more than one park. It will require a specific recruitment process by staff to find volunteers who fit that criteria and want to learn about long term management of the parks. Having a liaison between staff and volunteers allows a single contact person to prevent communication being slowed down while trying to track down the different staff who may or may not be involved in that project.

Widstrand also noted he presented this proposal to the Engineering Division and Board of Public Works. They adopted a plan for ten of their greenways/ponds for 2011 and are going through the process with their staff.

Superintendent Briski loves the concept of educating staff on plant identification and natural area management. He wants staff to work effectively but Parks resources haven't been aligned to deal with those aspects. He

suggested that Parks could also pick out a number of properties as a pilot, much like Engineering is doing, and work through the specifics of the plan with Conservation staff, Planning staff and the new Park Operations Manager. He had staff review the draft plan and they had some concerns. The logistics need to be worked out and Parks has a good solid team of people that can work together to bring a plan forward and to cross train staff. The heart of this plan is organizational effectiveness and efficiencies in putting people in the right place at the right time. He asked the Park Commission to consider supporting the concept of the plan, but because there are still items to be worked out, that the Commission not necessarily adopt the plan in its present form. Finally, there are two vacancies in the conservation section and he is supporting classification upgrades to incorporate these qualifications. He has not yet spoken with the Mayor about this issue.

A motion was made by Chewning/Barker that the Park Commission supports the concept of providing basic management of all natural and undeveloped city-owned land as outlined in the proposal reviewed by the Park Commission on June 8, 2011 and that the Parks staff work with other City departments, volunteers and neighborhoods to develop and implement a plan for basic management of all city natural areas.

A discussion ensued regarding whether the plan needs to return to the Park Commission following review and possible changes by Parks staff. Members discussed whether to remove the words "and implement" from the motion because this plan is for basic management of all city natural areas and is a change in policy. Superintendent Briski stated he was comfortable if the plan did not come back before the Commission because Parks staff make these kinds of organizational maintenance decisions on a daily basis without seeking Commission approval. He understands that this current version of the plan is really a concept. It was suggested that the words "as the concept is outlined" be inserted following the words "undeveloped city-owned land". Members also felt the words "after review by the Park Commission" should be added to the end of the motion.

The motion was re-read: A motion was made by Chewning/Barker that the Park Commission supports the concept of providing basic management of all natural and undeveloped city-owned land as the concept is outlined in the proposal reviewed by the Park Commission on June 8, 2011 and that the Parks staff work with other City departments, volunteers and neighborhoods to develop and implement a plan for basic management of all city natural areas after review by the Park Commission. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Clear/Clausius the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.