



# City of Madison

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

## Meeting Minutes - Draft BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

*Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?  
Who does not have a voice at the table?  
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?*

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Wednesday, October 14, 2020

6:30 PM

Via Virtual Meeting

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

A meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners was held virtually at 6:30 PM on Wednesday, October 14, 2020. President Gnam called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. A quorum was present and the meeting was properly noticed.  
Members Present: Emily Gnam; Moira Harrington; Ald. Zachary Henak; Madelyn Leopold; Al Martin; Ald. Paul Skidmore; and Venus Washington.  
Alders Present: Samba Baldeh.  
Parks Staff Present: Eric Knepp; Lisa Laschinger; Joanne Austin; Ann Freiwald; Ann Shea; and Roberta Sladky.  
City Staff Present: Katie Crawley, Mayor's Office; Jim O'Keefe and Linette Rodes, Community Development.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Motion made by Washington, seconded by Martin, to Approve the Minutes of the September 2, 2020 Board of Park Commissioners meeting. Motion passed by voice vote/other.

[62538](#)

Public Comment

There were no registrants for Public Comment.

### DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None.

### REPORTS

President of the Park Commission

President Emily Gnam stated the Democracy in Parks events went well. She provided an update of the Parks Long Range Planning Subcommittee. She congratulated Harrington on her work with Art in the Parks and stated that they have been discussing requests for putting other items in parks as well. She and Parks Planning and Development Manager Ann Freiwald are working on neighborhood association and special area plans and making them more affective.

[62534](#)

Park Commission President's Recommendation of Moira Harrington to the Olbrich Botanical Society.

**Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the recommendation. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

[62546](#)

Park Commission President Board Member and Citizen Appointments to Subcommittee of the Board of Park Commissioners.

**Motion made by Leopold, seconded by Martin, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO CONFIRM UNDER SUSPENSION OF RULES 2.04, 2.05, 2.24, & 2.25. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

Superintendent of Parks

Superintendent Eric Knepp stated that work is being done with the IPM Task Force, but COVID-19 has slowed things down. Agreements and fee modifications are being reviewed to see how this year will affect future agreements. The Law Park master plan is continuing and an update is expected to be presented to the commission at the December meeting. The Vilas Park master plan is progressing. Information about the plan can be found on the Parks website under Projects. The Final Draft isn't actually final as we will still be working with other groups and getting more public input. The Annie Stewart fountain will be reviewed, no decisions have been made. During the budget meeting, the hiring of the Community Service Manager position was discussed and may be delayed longer than expected. Large issues in Parks have been delayed due to COVID-19 and are behind the expected schedule.

The Democracy in Parks events weren't brought to the Park Commission for approval as City agencies doing City work in parks generally don't need permits. This process is something that can be reviewed. Leopold recommended that a process be created. Skidmore stated he got several correspondences from the public regarding the event and the fact that it wasn't brought to Park Commission for public discussion. Some saw this as a partisan issue and could be viewed as such. He wasn't aware of the event until being contacted by constituents. He would like this reviewed at the Park Commission and have the City Attorney involved. Gnam stated that the event was brought up in a prior Superintendent report and stated that there were no disruptive issues with the event. Knepp reminded the commission that these events not coming to the Commission is not new. Elections have been held in parks for some time without Park Commission approval. Leopold stated that the Parks Long Range Planning Subcommittee should create this process and present it to the Commission. Martin stated this policy should be created proactively and reviewed regularly. Knepp stated a Park Use Ordinance has been created and is in the process, which may aid in this issue. Martin questioned the Public Comment procedure and stated that items that come in late via email should still be reviewed.

**62549** October 2020 Superintendent's Report

**Assistant Superintendent Lisa Laschinger presented the Community Services quarterly report and answered questions from the commissioners.**

**Olbrich Botanical Gardens Director Roberta Sladky presented the OBG quarterly report.**

**Motion made by Martin, seconded by Harrington, to Accept the Report. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

**62531** Report of the August 18, 2020 Olbrich Botanical Society.

**Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold to Accept the Minutes.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve by Consent Agenda No. 14, Legislative File No. 62519; No. 15, Legislative File No. 62523; No. 16, Legislative File No. 62527; No. 17, Legislative File No. 62517; No. 18, Legislative File No. 62518; No. 19, Legislative File No. 62522; No. 20, Legislative File No. 62521; No. 21, Legislative File No. 62525; No. 22, Legislative File No. 62526; and No. 23, Legislative File No. 62516. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

**62506** Request from Sonya Sankaran to donate a "bench mural" to the Nature Nook at Brittingham Park

**Registered speaker Sonya Sankaran spoke in support.**

**Motion made by Washington, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the request. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

**62108** Authorizing the execution of a Purchase and Sale Agreement between the City of Madison and Brian David Janssen and Kayley Hope Janssen for the City's acquisition of the property located at 3457 Milwaukee Street for the expansion of O.B. Sherry Park. (15th AD)

**Superintendent Eric Knepp provided an overview of the purchase. It is consistent with our Special Area Plan and Park and Open Space Plan (POSP) and was purchased with funds from the Park Impact Fee Acquisition Account.**

**Motion made by Martin, seconded by Harrington, to Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the FINANCE COMMITTEE. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

**62519** 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Athletic Fields

**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**

- [62523](#) 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Goodman Pool  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62527](#) 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Recreation Services  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62517](#) 2021 and 2022 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Shelters  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62518](#) 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Mooring; Watercraft Storage; Violation Ranges; Disc Golf, Dog Park, Lake Access, and Cross Country Ski Permits  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62522](#) 2021 and 2022 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Olbrich Botanical Gardens  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62521](#) 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Forest Hill Cemetery  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62525](#) 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Special Events, Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Resource Team and Inter-Agency Reservations  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62526](#) 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC)  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**
- [62516](#) 2021 Proposed Parks Division Fees - Golf  
**Laschinger explained the fees. Motion made by Martin, seconded by Leopold, to Approve the fees.**

[62533](#)

Proposal to provide an application process for small, park events (without a shelter reservation) to allow events that comply with Public Health of Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) Orders in regard to gathering restrictions and guidelines during COVID-19. If successful, the program may be extended when guidelines are no longer required.

**Motion made by Washington, seconded by Martin, to Approve with the contingency that the process be re-evaluated after September 30, 2021. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

[62532](#)

Golf Program Update

**Knepp presented the update.**

[62350](#)

Creating Subdivision 8.24(1)(ii) of the Madison General Ordinances to Ban Alcohol at Allied Park

**Registered speaker Pema Antoniotti registered to speak in support but left the meeting before speaking.**

**The meeting recessed at 8:53 PM.**

**Members Present: 7 - Emily Gnam; Moira Harrington; Ald. Zachary Henak; Madelyn Leopold; Al Martin; Ald. Paul Skidmore; and Venus Washington.**

**The meeting reconvened at 8:59 PM.**

**Members Present: 7 - Emily Gnam; Moira Harrington; Ald. Zachary Henak; Madelyn Leopold; Al Martin; Ald. Paul Skidmore; and Venus Washington.**

**Registered speaker Angela Jackson spoke in support.**

**Henak discussed the history of issues in the park and the impact of the temporary alcohol ban which was positive.**

**Motion made by Martin, seconded by Washington, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. Motion passed by voice vote/other.**

[62393](#)

Rescinding Emergency Order #2 and Directing City Staff to Enforce Ordinances Against Encampments in the City Parks and to Investigate Other Temporary Housing Options for the Unsheltered Homeless Population

Knepp explained the resolution and stated that Reindahl Park and Starkweather Park are the only parks designated as Temporary Permissible Encampments (TPE), all others are not authorized as a TPE and are illegal encampments under Emergency Order #2.

Laschinger explained that Parks, City Engineering, and the Community Development Division began working on solutions in accordance with CDC guidelines to avoid disturbing encampments of people experiencing homelessness to aid in reducing or eliminate community spread of COVID-19 in late March or early April 2020. The TPE program was developed. There are encampments that are not permitted that haven't been disturbed unless there was a need to do so. An example is the fire at the James Madison Park shelter. Those people were asked to move so that a contractor could come in to examine the damage. At Demetral Park someone was asked to move as it was disruptive to use of the park by the community. People in designated TPE's are being provided with outreach such as portable toilets, washing stations, and sharps disposal containers.

Registered speaker Michael Horowitz registered to speak in opposition, but had left the meeting.

Registered speaker Karen Andro spoke in opposition.

Registrant Olivia Williams was in opposition.

Registrant Philippa Bergmann was in opposition.

Registrant Marilyn Feil was in opposition.

Alder Samba Baldeh asked Laschinger if Parks was aware of the homicide at Reindahl Park and if those people were removed from the site. Laschinger stated that they were not removed as there was a concern as to where they could be moved to. Baldeh asked registered speaker Andro about what agencies she was working with to aid in the homeless situation and whether they would be aiding the homeless community in the winter. She named several agencies she works with and stated that the homeless community often finds other options as to relocation, but if removed may have no other option. Locations for families is an issue. Baldeh stated that the intention of this resolution is to come up with options for the homeless community. Baldeh asked Linette Rhodes from the City Community Development Division their plans. She stated that there is a weekly meeting with agencies to discuss it. Baldeh discussed reasons for homelessness and the difference with how the City reacts to things like the disruptions on State Street towards business verses the homeless community. He disagrees with any police involvement in disruption of the encampments. If there are other options for relocation, he believes that TPE's should be removed. Martin stated that people outside of the TPE's, but still camping in parks need to be given outreach as well so everyone is safe. Leopold stated that turning people out of parks should only be done if other housing is provided. Washington stated the increase happened because of COVID-19 so there are less places to go. Martin stated that there are alternate City owned properties being unused and should be. Henak asked Jim O'Keefe and Linette Rhodes of the City Community Development Division several questions. O'Keefe answered. Henak asked if the counts of unhoused people in Madison has gone down in the last year.

O'Keefe stated it has, but is misleading as some are in temporary housing, the Salvation Army Facility, the Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC) or other shelters. The federal CARES Act is carrying a lot of the funding and was to expire December 31, 2020. Dane County has found a way to extend funding through June 2021. 135 men can be housed at the WPCRC at one time. The amount of people using it fluctuates, but has been up to 90-100. WPCRC needs to be a solution until other locations can be found which will most likely take over a year. Part of the issue with authorized TPE locations is that they cannot be within 500 feet of a residential area. To do so, locations would need to be in more remote locations which are far from resources. Henak asked what the impact has been on the Parks Division. Knepp responded that budget-wise, the WPCRC is being affected as far as funding from the Parks budget for such things as utilities, some supplies, and a full time mechanical staff for upkeep. The estimated cost for year-to-date is between \$250,000 and \$300,000. Operational staff cost had been increased around TPE's and other encampments due to such things like extra restroom cleaning. There have been safety concerns to staff due to threats made and concerns relayed to us from the Madison Police Department. Because of this staff members cannot be present in those areas alone. As far as cleaning and cost, Reindahl and McPike Parks have required an especially higher cost than usual. Starkweather Park is now requiring cleaning and up-keep in a park that usually requires little maintenance. These operational costs are estimated to be about \$30,000 higher than usual at this time. Close to 50% of Park Ranger time is now dedicated to encampments. Places where encampments are create less use by the public and has been shown to decrease usage long term as well. Henak asked if Emergency Order #2 has caused difficulty to staff as to what is enforced. Knepp stated that it has.

Motion made by Martin, seconded by Henak, to refer to the next Board of Park Commissioners meeting on November 4, 2020 with a request that Common Council and the Plan Commission deal with the policies and report back to give more information. Motion passed by voice vote/other.

Martin requested that an item of this magnitude not be at the end of the agenda.

## ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Martin, seconded by Washington, to Adjourn at 10:31 PM. Motion passed by voice vote/other.