



City of Madison

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

Wednesday, July 8, 2009

6:30 PM 625 Northport Dr. # (Warner Park Community Recreation
Center)

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

President Barker called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. A quorum was present and the meeting was properly noticed.

Present: 5 -

Joseph R. Clausius; Paul E. Skidmore; William W. Barker; David L. Wallner and Janet Parker

Excused: 2 -

Betty Chewning and Emanuel Scarbrough

Parks staff present: Superintendent Kevin Briski, Steve Doniger, Roberta Sladky, Jim Weinstock, LaVonne LaFave

City Staff present: Jule Stroick, Andrew Statz, Rick Boll, Brian Grady,

II. EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Superintendent Briski announced that the employee of the month for July is Aaron Wilke who works at Olbrich Botanical Gardens as a lead gardener. He was nominated by several Olbrich staff in recognition of his leadership in coordinating the clean-up of the Garver building. The Garver building had been used as a storage facility for several years and needed to be emptied as the process for development of that building moves forward. It provided a good opportunity for a spring housecleaning project. A lot of people from different agencies came together to complete this project under the leadership of Aaron Wilke. He coordinated the logistics and identified the materials in the building. Roberta Sladky noted that Aaron wanted to stress that the clean-up was a team effort and he only coordinated it. He wanted to make certain that everyone who worked on this project received recognition.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Parker/Wallner to approve the Minutes of the June 10, 2009 meeting of the Park Commission. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

V. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARK COMMISSION

President Barker appointed Paul Skidmore to the Facilities, Programs & Fees Committee and Joe Clausius to the Long Range Planning Committee.

He had a meeting with Commissioner Parker, City Forester Eddy and Landscape Architect Bauer regarding urban agriculture and fruit trees in parks. His father was also present at the meeting and he was amazed at the level of involvement and activism and excellent staff.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS

A. Written Report of Supervisor's Activities

A motion was made by Skidmore/Wallner to approve the written report.
MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

B. Informational Items

The July edition of the Parks newsletter was distributed this evening and also sent out electronically to our partners, friends and neighborhood groups.

Superintendent Briski also highlighted the success of both the Elver Park and Rhythm & Booms fireworks events. There were many compliments regarding the work by staff prior to the events and the clean-up following the events. R&B numbers were down slightly because of the postponement from Saturday to Sunday because of weather conditions. Both of the shows were great events.

Pool numbers for June are up and expenditures are down and the pool is on a course to break even. Blue-green algae issues and fecal matter have caused some intermittent beach closings.

The Common Council approved the alcohol ban at Lake Edge Park last evening pursuant to the Park Commission recommendation. He reminded members that the August meeting is the annual Park Commission tour of park facilities. This year will focus on Isthmus area parks and facilities.

The Shady Wood Neighborhood Development Plan was referred back to the Plan Commission.

He asked that the Madison Parks Branding presentation be deferred to the end of the meeting.

There was an unfortunate incident at Sauk Heights Park early last Sunday morning. A fire started at the playground and completely incinerated the play structures. The city is going through the insurance and deductibles process in order to replace the playground as soon as possible. The Madison Police Department is working on this disastrous vandalism case.

Wallner asked a procedural question on how to bring an issue before the Commission. An issue can be brought up under Public Comment or the President or Superintendent's reports. Several street trees have been damaged during the reconstruction on Few Street and he wanted to know who was responsible if trees were damaged and what are the procedures for dealing with construction firms. Superintendent Briski noted that Parks/Forestry are aware of the issue and are working with Engineering to resolve this. A brief discussion ensued regarding several examples various members have observed.

A motion was made by Skidmore/Clausius to take item VII. B. out of order. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

[15297](#) Letter from Nick Schweitzer dated June 22, 2009 regarding anthropology exhibit in Rennebohm Park

Registered Speaker:
Nick Schweitzer in support

A motion was made by Skidmore/Wallner to approve the anthropology exhibit in Rennebohm Park based upon sponsor's compliance with the recommendations set forth by the Parks Division and endorsed by the Park Commission. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

VII CORRESPONDENCE, RESOLUTIONS, ORDINANCES

A. Letter of support for Olbrich Botanical Society to Association of Fundraising Professions

Superintendent Briski noted the Parks Division is also asking for Park Commission support. Olbrich Botanical Center Director Sladky reported that the Botanical Society has fund raised many millions of dollars for the gardens and this would be a wonderful way to recognize that effort.

A motion was made by Skidmore/Parker to approve the letter of support for Olbrich Botanical Society to Association of Fundraising Profession(al)s and to add an endorsement from the Park Commission. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. [12176](#) Creating Section 8.32 of the Madison General Ordinances to create policies and procedures for removal of personal property from public lands.

At request of Mayor this item was rereferred to future meeting.

This Ordinance was Rerefer to the BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS, due back on 9/9/2009

D. [15010](#) Communication from T. Consigny, 8507 Reid Dr., Madison dated 5/27/09 re: maintenance of Junction Ridge Park.

Skidmore indicated he was not making a recommendation on how to deal with this letter other than to initiate discussion. He served on the original Pesticide Committee when a group of people wanted to eliminate any use of pesticides in parks. There were also citizens at that time who said they would not use the parks because they were allergic to pollen and weeds. A constituent approached him with photos showing weeds 10 to 12 inches high in an active use area of the park. Skidmore also observed tall weeds in the same area. Current policy calls for not using pesticides in these areas but that policy also prohibits others from using the area because of pollen sensitivities. The discussion item is whether Parks should revisit the Pesticide Policy or an alternative that is mowing more frequently? Some people don't like how dandelions look and some people are allergic to them.

Superintendent Briski stated we mow that property within our weekly schedule. This is a citywide issue regarding the use of pesticides/herbicides. There is a two to three week cycle of dandelion heavy growth. Even in residential yards they pop right back up immediately after mowing. The Pest/Pesticide Management Policy and Park Meadow Policy were included in Commission packets for informational purposes.

Commission members noted that while some people are allergic to various pollens, we have also seen the effects of the chemicals/herbicides/pesticides used on lawns and do not support the use of broad spectrum herbicides. The underlying question is whether the issue is mowing frequency or herbicide spraying. Skidmore was not in favor of changing the policy but thought that more frequent mowing might resolve the issue.

E. [15260](#)

Adopting the Midvale-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan and recommendations contained therein as a supplement to the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Ald. Districts 11 & 20.

A motion was made by Skidmore, seconded by Clausius, to Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the PLAN COMMISSION. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Registered Speakers: all in Isupport
Jule Stroick, Planning & Dev.
Ald. Chris Schmidt,
Denise Lamb
Judy Skog

The Planning Department provides neighborhood grants to neighborhood associations on an annual basis. Approximately a year and a half ago, two neighborhoods formed a Steering Committee of residents from the Midvale Heights and Westmorland neighborhoods who then worked with consultants to develop a joint neighborhood plan. This area is comprised of primarily single family homes with roughly 30% of the population over age 55 and many young families with children make up much of the balance.

There is development along the edges, such as Westgate Mall and the new Sequoya Commons. The committee also identified several features that could be added to the high quality parkland and open space. Among those amenities are an off leash dog park that was strongly supported, community gardens,

bioswells and rain gardens to help keep sediment out of Lake Wingra, additional play equipment for young children and older children/teenagers that might include a skate park, low maintenance flower gardens that would help maintain the landscaping, similar to the plantings on some of the boulevards, and protection of the bicentennial oaks.

Commission members support additional dog parks but cautioned the neighborhood representatives that it can be a contentious issue between neighbors. The representatives added that at the public meetings there was more support for dog parks than any other proposal in the plan.

President Barker then touched on skate parks, noting his involvement on the Central Park Committee. That park plan includes a skate park. Would residents be willing to allow their kids to go to the Central Park skate park or will Parks have to build them in neighborhoods throughout the city? They are very expensive. Neighborhood representatives indicated this is one of the items on their wish list in the 5- to 10-year plan.

President Barker noted how proud he was that they were advocating for their parks. He and other members of the Commission are not against dog parks or skate parks. Uses change over time and the parks need to evolve to accommodate those uses.

Several bike routes were identified that will include bike lanes along some of the roads but not necessarily running through parks. Parker expressed delight to see the emphasis on community gardens and informed the group that the Community Action Coalition has an annual small grant program to help groups develop new gardens.

Skidmore spoke about the looming issue of the ATC line that will have to be dealt with. ATC will have the ability to cut down trees to a 15 foot height and may in fact clear cut the golf course. Their construction will have a huge impact on how that area, including the Arboretum, looks in the future.

A motion was made by Skidmore/Clausius to approve Resolution ID#15260 adopting the Midvale-Westmorland Neighborhood Plan and recommendations contained therein as a supplement to the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. [15062](#)

Adopting the Northeast Neighborhoods Development Plan as a supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and authorizing the City's applications to amend the Central Urban Service Area as required to implement the development staging recommendations in the Northeast Neighborhoods Development Plan.

Registered Speakers: in support
Rick Roll, Planning Dept.
Brian Grady, Planning Dept.

The planning process for the Northeast Neighborhoods Development Plan has been going on for about three years. This is a neighborhood and mixed use development plan with sustainability goals to reduce auto use and water use, and increase stormwater infiltration. A draft of the Plan was previously

presented to the Park Commission.

This real estate is located in the far northeast corner of the city as well as in the Towns of Blooming Grove and Burke that will become part of the city as lands are developed. It includes existing open space, wetland areas, streams and parks. There is a platted area but it has not been developed. The plan has tried to create connections between the parks and open spaces to schools in the area, as well as providing off street bike and pedestrian paths to the neighborhood. There are two natural gas pipelines running through the site that also provide opportunities for added green space.

The plan also proposes centering neighborhoods on either a park or a school site. The parks would range in size from one acre to twenty acres and would have areas to accommodate soccer fields and other types of active recreation. It also incorporates formal parks with urban features, such as Orton Park.

The densities that are proposed include a mix of non-residential uses and single family homes on small lots to multi-family to condominium type developments that focus on reducing reliance on automobile usage by providing bike and pedestrian paths. It will also include bus service through the area with local connections throughout the neighborhoods. The density of the first phase is estimated at 19,000 people and is projected for completion about 20 years into the future.

The sustainability features are incorporated under the principles of The Natural Step process and the goal for further development is to follow those concepts. Community gardens will play a role in attaining the sustainability goals. The new zoning code has an Urban Agricultural Zoning District and is different from community gardens. This new code will allow things such as growing vegetables and fish in greenhouses on properties in the city.

There was a brief discussion regarding accessibility to major roads.

Parker stated it had all the trappings of sprawl to her and she could not endorse it even though this plan is looking far into the future. She did appreciate all of the sustainability pieces.

A motion was made by Skidmore/Clausius to approve Resolution ID#15062 adopting the Northeast Neighborhoods Development Plan as a supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and authorizing the City's applications to amend the Central Urban Service Area as required to implement the development staging recommendations in the Northeast Neighborhoods Development Plan. MOTION CARRIED with Parker voting Nay.

A motion was made by Skidmore, seconded by Clausius, to Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval. The motion passed by the following vote:

Excused: 2 -

Betty Chewning and Emanuel Scarbrough

Ayes: 4 -

Joseph R. Clausius; Paul E. Skidmore; David L. Wallner and William W. Barker

Noes: 1 -
Janet Parker

- G. [15064](#) Amending Section 23.40 of the Madison General Ordinances to declare ash trees infected with Emerald Ash Borer to be a public nuisance and to facilitate proper removal and disposal of any infected trees declared to be a public nuisance.

Superintendent Briski advised that Madison does not have an EAB infestation yet but it is just a matter of time. It has been found in three Wisconsin communities. Forestry is currently conducting an inventory of all city trees, both on streets and in parks. There are multiple threats to the urban forest on the horizon that include Oak Wilt and Asian Longhorn beetles.

A motion was made by Clausius/Wallner to approve Ordinance ID#15064 Amending Section 23.40 of the Madison General Ordinances to declare ash trees infected with Emerald Ash Borer to be a public nuisance and to facilitate proper removal and disposal of any infected trees declared to be a public nuisance. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. [15300](#) Memo regarding Born Learning Trail

**Registered Speakers: in support
Kathy Hubbard of United Way
Tom Kuplic of United Way**

The Born Learning Trails objective is to provide ways to promote activities between parents and children. The information is not to be just read but to encourage conversations about and interact with the information on the signs. The United Way is seeking sponsorships for the materials in the trails that would be acknowledged on the signs. They will be installed as permanent trails on the annual United Way Day of Caring. Volunteers will maintain and repair the trails. The plan is to place the learning sites in areas that have been identified as high need areas. Commissioners suggested adding Penn Park as an additional site. Superintendent Briski commented that this is a great example of corporate philanthropy and Madison Parks is proud to be asked to be involved in this endeavor. We are excited to work with United Way of Dane County on this project.

A motion was made by Parker/Skidmore to approve the installation of the Born Learning Trails in Aldo Leopold, High Point, Huegel, Marlborough, Northland Manor and Worthington Parks in the City of Madison. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. Elizabeth (Lisa) Link Peace Park

Registered Speakers: in support
Michael Sturm of Ken Saiki Design, Inc.
Ken Saiki of Ken Saiki Design, Inc.

The presentation provided an update on the construction and design/drawings for the re-development and associated Visitors Center as approved in the previous concept plans first presented in 2004. The Peace Park Committee was formed in 2000 to discuss renovation of Elizabeth (Lisa) Link Peace Park that would include a welcome center, public restrooms, stage, amphitheatre/performance space, lawn area, fountain, tables and chairs. The Welcome Center design is in compliance with the requirement that State Street buildings must be at least two stories in height. The BID District will provide staffing for the Welcome Center. There will also be a desk for police inside the Center to provide visibility on the street. The entire project has tried to address the issues that have been occurring in the park and the changing social dynamic. The park in its current configuration has become a place for drugs and prostitution. The objective is to have positive activities for people there on a regular basis. The fountain will encourage families with kids to come to the park. Events will be planned in the park such as movies and musical performances to encourage other people to use the park.

President Barker stated he spends a fair amount of time on State Street and this park is the face of city parks that most visitors see. He is delighted to see this level of transformation. Alder Verveer is also very excited about this project. Ken Saiki Design has worked on this pro bono for more than two years. There are still some tweaks for the building and they hope to incorporate some public art into the design. Groundbreaking is scheduled for this fall. Fundraising is required for the building because it is not TIF eligible. Susan Schmitz, President of Downtown Madison, Inc. is a strong proponent of this project.

Public restrooms will be open and available when the Welcome Center is staffed. State Street Ambassadors have indicated that the availability of restrooms for visitors was one of the questions they were frequently asked about. State Street merchants have also indicated the need for restrooms that can be locked when Welcome Center staff is not available. In order to use the restrooms, patrons will have to walk past the Welcome Center staff and it is believed that will discourage unwanted behaviors.

A motion was made by Parker/Skidmore to approve the updated construction design/drawings for the redevelopment and associated Welcome Center in Elizabeth (Lisa) Link Peace Park that had been previously approved in concept.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ald. Skidmore left after this item.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Final Capital Budget for 2010

Superintendent Briski reported that the 2010 capital budget as presented to the Park Commission in June was submitted to the Mayor.

Madison Parks Branding presentation

Superintendent Briski reported this was one of his initiatives that involved many people. The pictures show what Madison parks does. They provide connectivity to our residents in the community, from winter activities to playground activities to community gardens and golf courses. They provide well rounded opportunities as a park system, from conservation parks to dog parks to the spray park and foster volunteerism and community commitment. People use our facilities to celebrate their special occasions. This branding opportunity shows that we golf, we swim, we hike, we celebrate, we bike, we conserve, we grow, we invest with our Foundation, but most of all we play. We recognize the special sections and interests and want to identify them.

Tonight is the launch and it will be formally announced on July 15, 2009 between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at the first ever Parks Open House in the 100 Block of Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. There will be demonstrations of all parks sections from forestry to construction to dog parks and the foundation will also be present. From there it will be announced to the community. Staff is also creating a Parks magazine that will be done annually to highlight all of who we are and promote to our community what we do with and for them. The last page is about our volunteer program and the Parks Foundation. The draft of the magazine was presented to the Parks Foundation and they matched the Division's donation for printing costs. Staff is looking at various circulation opportunities so we can get it to all citizens in Madison. It will also be available in electronic form. There will also be an opportunity for sponsorships. Again, it says here we are and here's what we do.

Commissioners were very pleased with the video and magazine.

X. ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Parker/Wallner the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.