



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2025**

A. Call to Order

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

In attendance: Karen Powers, Steve Binder, Doug Nelson, Rachael Dowling, Bob Albright, Larry Lautenschlager, James Ponzer, Adam Breest, Justin DeJaer, Rick Helms, Kyle Vergin, Gordon Hintz

B. Adopt Agenda

Motion by Steve Binder, seconded by Larry Lautenschlager, to Approve Adopt Agenda. Yes 7, No 0, Abstained 0

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the Parks Commission Meeting Minutes from October 14, 2025
Motion by Steve Binder, seconded by Doug Nelson, to Approve Approval of the Parks Commission Meeting Minutes from October 14, 2025. Yes 7, No 0, Abstained 0

D. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Executive Hintz said he had a good discussion with Director Breest about the parks department recently. He was impressed with the work done at Waukau Dam Park and the ribbon-cutting event. Chair Powers wished Supervisor Nelson a Happy Veterans Day. Supervisor Nelson asked about putting a fence around the tree at Waukau Dam Park.

E. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. Amend the 2023 Sunnyview Exposition Center Monument Sign Commercial Land Lease Agreement
Director Breest said the staff created a land lease in 2023. There were some delays working through DOT permitting and setting up the park district, but everything is good to go now. More investors are interested, and they want a 20-year commitment for the sign. Staff extended pricing, and there will be percentage increases throughout the term of the contract.
Supervisor Binder wants to make sure the 10% of advertising time is distributed evenly for parks/expo advertisements.
Supervisor Dowling would like to see a rendering of the sign when it's ready.
Motion by Karen Powers, seconded by Larry Lautenschlager, to amend item 8B(a) within the lease to state that the tenant shall provide 10% of the advertising time, throughout the day, on a rotating basis to the landlord. Yes 7, No 0, Abstained 0
Motion by Steve Binder, seconded by Larry Lautenschlager, to Approve the 2023 Sunnyview

Exposition Center Monument Sign Commercial Land Lease Agreement as amended. Yes 7, No 0, Abstained 0

2. Proposal to Increase the Shelter Rental Fees for Shelters #1 and #2 within the Community Park

Improvements were made to Shelters 1 and 2 this year. Director Breest shared a comparison of how much surrounding communities charge for shelter rentals. Staff is recommending an increase from \$65 to \$75 for Shelter 1 and 2 rentals.

Motion by Doug Nelson, seconded by Steve Binder, to Approve Proposal to Increase the Shelter Rental Fees for Shelters #1 and #2 within the Community Park. Yes 7, No 0, Abstained 0

3. Discuss the Use of the Winnebago County Boat Landings in the Winter Months

Director Breest gave an overview about what would need to be addressed in order to charge for boat landing use in the winter. The county code states that you need a boat launch use permit for launching watercraft, and does not allow charging for vehicles driving off the landing. Needs that would need to be addressed include: Park Ranger at about \$9000, portable restrooms at about \$5000, additional plowing at about \$300-\$400 per plow (right now, staff only plows so emergency vehicles can access the lake), salt, changing signs, with a total estimated cost of around \$30,000. Staff estimates revenue during the winter months would be around \$22,500.

Currently, no surrounding counties charge a winter fee. The County would also have to take into consideration additional liability.

Supervisor Dowling expressed that she did not request this to be on the agenda. She would like to hear what Corporation Counsel has to say about liability.

Supervisor Binder said that if we're not breaking even, why do it? If we raise prices for the boat launch fee, then we might need to consider charging for winter use.

Supervisor Nelson said there are private landings on Lake Poygan that charge. Liability should be similar to what it is now with boaters. He wants to see some more solid numbers for a cost comparison.

Bob Albright said the boaters' impact on the landing is much greater than people using it to park in the winter.

Chair Powers wants to revisit this issue next month after staff speaks with Corporation Counsel.

4. Discuss the Possibility of Charging a Fee for Parking During Special Events within Community Park

Director Breest said he has received numerous requests from soccer and rugby clubs about charging a parking fee at their tournaments/special events. If a fee is charged, it cannot be more than \$13 per day to meet DNR standards, and all the fees collected have to go directly back into the park. Staff would work with each event individually to make it work for both parties, which could be a pay-in-person or team fee. Ultimately, it would be up to the staff to determine how each event could be charged. Parking fees from these tournaments/special events would bring in significant and much-needed revenue to help with the upkeep of the park.

Supervisor Binder said it would help offset maintenance costs. If people don't want to park in the park, they park at other places around the park and walk in.

Bob Albright said it's a good idea and would be easy to add to the current contracts.

Supervisor Nelson said it's not much more for families already paying a fee to play in these tournaments/special events.

Supervisor Dowling said she does not see a need for it and doesn't want to charge to park at the park for events. People already pay taxes that go toward the park.

Chair Powers doesn't like the idea of charging more.

Supervisor Ponzer said the organizer of the tournament/special event should pay for everything, not the participants/attendees.

Larry Lautenschlager likes leaving part of the park open for free parking during these tournaments/special events.

*Rick Helms joined the meeting during the discussion.
Supervisor Nelson left the meeting at 9 a.m.*

F. Director's Report

1. Department Updates from Director Adam Breest

- Sunnyview Exposition Center West Campus Improvement Project
- Community Park Shelter 1 and 2 Project
- Waukau Dam Restoration and Improvement Project
- Covered Arena Painting and Insulation Project
- Butte des Mort Boat Landing Improvement Project
- Parks Spirit Fund Project Update
- Sunnyview Exposition Center Sign Update
- Community Park Entrance Sign Project
- Shelter 1 Playground Replacement
- Other General Maintenance Updates

Director Breest gave some brief updates.

Long-time Parks Caretaker, Dave Binner, is retiring. He has been an asset to the department and will be hard to replace.

The playground at Shelter 1 will be installed in the spring. The weather did not allow for installation this fall.

The contract for the Community Park entrance signs has been signed.

Supervisor Binder would like staff to put concrete pads under the memorial benches at the park.

G. Communications Shared by Commission Members

Supervisor Binder wants staff to do something with the arch in the park. He'd like to see flowers or anything over the top of the arch. Staff have tried different approaches and vegetation. Waiting to see how the current vegetation will grow back next spring/summer before trying something else.

H. Next Meeting Date

Tuesday, December 9 at 8 a.m.

I. Items for Next Agenda

Suggestions from committee members for items to be addressed on a future agenda

Bob Albright asked about prices for the Wiouwash Trail project and what staff was doing with the flagpole on the trail.

J. Adjourn

Motion by Steve Binder, seconded by Rachael Dowling, to Adjourn. Yes 6, No 0, Abstained 0

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 a.m.

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