



Winnebago County

The Wave of the Future

**PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025**

A. Call to Order

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM.

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

B. Adopt Agenda

Motion by Doug Nelson, seconded by James Ponzer to Approve Adopt Agenda. Yes 6, No 0, Abstained 0

C. Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of the Parks Commission Meeting Minutes from November 11, 2025
Motion by Doug Nelson, seconded by Larry Lautenschlager, to Approve Approval of the Parks Commission Meeting Minutes from November 11, 2025. Yes 6, No 0, Abstained 0

D. Public Comments on Agenda Items

No comments.

E. Business Items

Action may be taken on any business items.

1. Sunnyview Exposition Center - Draft Sign Rendition
Director Breest reviewed the draft design. The sign designer is working on an update to change some colors and add Sunnyview Expo. The sign is as close to the highway as DOT will allow.

The Parks Commission would like to see the dimensions and the new design. Prefer to have Sunnyview Expo on top of the sign and use the county blue color. Jewell Media is too large.

Supervisor Dowling joined the meeting during the discussion.
2. Discuss the Use of the Winnebago County Boat Landings in the Winter Months
Director Breest reviewed estimated expenses and revenues for the boat landings to remain open from November through March. Results showed a projected loss of \$3,500 by charging fees during this time period. Corp Counsel had no issues with opening during the winter months as long as we posted the appropriate signs.

Supervisor Nelson said the numbers do not make it feasible.

Supervisor Binder said we could consider an add-on fee for winter. He noted that boaters already pay their fair share.
3. Discuss the Possibility of Charging a Fee for Parking During Special Events within Community Park

Director Breest reviewed the current special event fees. Parking fees can not be greater than the DNR admission fee to state parks. Parks staff will determine the best fit for each event. A reasonable amount of parking will be kept available during the event for the public. All parking fees collected must be placed in a segregated account to be used only for the Community Park and updates to the park facilities.

Supervisor Binder mentioned that we charged parking for PGI, through approval from the previous county executive. He noted that some events have already been charging for parking. The additional funds will help improve the fields and facilities at the park. Get the money from people using it.

Supervisor Dowling said she put out a survey and received 74 responses, with only six people saying they would be willing to pay a parking fee. Respondents mentioned things like hidden/surprise fees, and being squeezed for more money. Other people said there should be no charge for soccer, but maybe for festivals, and fees should not be more than \$5. Supervisor Dowling also asked how the money will be allocated.

Bob Albright said charging for parking at the gate would be cumbersome. Parking could be a built-in fee when these events pay for the other special event fees. Only charge for parking in advance, and only have the participants pay, not the people/families coming to watch kids play. Remove at time of parking.

Supervisor Nelson said he likes the idea of charging an advanced parking fee, not at the gate.

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
- 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 an overview of his directors report.

The base coat of asphalt was put down at the Expo. The electrician might put up some light poles yet. Most of the construction is on hold until spring. The project may be done by June 1, weather-dependent.

Crews are painting columns at park shelters.

The Butte des Morts boat landing project is going out to bid in early January.

Parks staff is finalizing park signs and design.

The Shelter 1 playground will be installed in spring 2026.

Parks staff is interviewing for the parks caretaker position.

Dave Binner is retiring in January.

Parks staff aerated and over-seeded 15 acres in the soccer complex.

2. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Community Park Pond Fish Survey

Direct Breest reviewed the pond survey. Community Park ponds 1-4 were shocked and are in good shape for fishing. Pond 2 has some big fish eating small fish. Pond 3 had a winter kill and not as many fish as the other ponds. None of the park ponds are aerated.

Supervisor Nelson left the meeting during discussion.

G. Communications Shared by Commission Members

Chair Powers read an email from a citizen. The citizen wants to use county land for falconry purposes. Commission is ok with it. Director Breest will look into some more info and check the county code. Parks staff could set up a permit/notification process, similar to metal detecting.

Supervisor Binder said the trail on Hwy A could use some patching.

H. Next Meeting Date

Tuesday, January 13 at 8 a.m.

Supervisor Dowling said she was running late and tried calling, but the phone number for the Teams meeting didn't work.

I. Items for Next Agenda

Suggestions from committee members for items to be addressed on a future agenda
No comments.

J. Adjourn

Motion by James Ponzer, seconded by Rachael Dowling, to Adjourn. Yes 6, No 0, Abstained 0

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

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