



Dane County

Minutes

Board of Adjustment

Consider:

Who benefits? Who is burdened?

Who does not have a voice at the table?

How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?

Thursday, March 26, 2026

6:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting: Attend in person at the City County
Building, Room 357.

See below for additional instructions on how to attend the meeting and provide public testimony.

A. Call To Order

Present 4 - ARLAN KAY, GEORGE CORRIGAN, Vice Chair TRAVIS LEESER, and Chair AL LONG

B. Public Comment for any Item not listed on the Agenda

No public comments were made.

C. Consideration of Minutes

1. Minutes of the January 22, 2026 Public Hearing

LEESER to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Ayes: 4 - KAY, CORRIGAN, LEESER and LONG

2. Minutes of the March 12, 2026 Site Inspection Meeting

CORRIGAN to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Ayes: 3 - KAY, CORRIGAN and LONG

Abstain: 1 - LEESER

D. Public Hearing for Appeals

1. Appeal 3740. Appeal by Dane County Parks for a variance from shoreland zoning standards required by Chapter 11, Dane County Code of Ordinances, to permit redevelopment of Babcock County Park boat launch and public fishing facilities at 2909 US Highway 51, being a tract of land in Section 4, Town of Dunn.

VARIANCES REQUESTED:

Maximum allowed exempt structure width for purpose of access to water:

Required: 60"

Proposed: 72-96"

Variance Needed: 12-36"

Minimum required setback to ordinary high water mark and boundary of a wetland:

Required: 75 feet

Proposed: 0 feet

Variance Needed: 75 feet

Acceptance of design concept as an alternative viewing and access corridor:

Required: 1

Proposed: Alternative design

Variance needed: Approval

Assistant Zoning Administrator (AZA) Hilbert presented a Staff Report reporting facts of the case.

IN FAVOR: Lindsay Koehnke and Alex DeSmidt (Dane County Parks) spoke in favor of the appeal and answered question of the Board.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS: The Zoning Administrator had no comments.

OPPOSED: [None. The Chair stated no rebuttal was needed.]

Finding of Fact:

Existing:

Babcock County Park is a Dane County Parks recreation park on the east side of Lake Waubesa, at the outflow of the Yahara River, on the southern boundary of the Village of McFarland. It is approximately 37 acres in size in addition to camping and day use activities, it is a popular park for public water access including angling and boat launching.

Proposed

- Dane County Parks recently acquired additional lands adjacent to the existing park and seeking to modernize the park and amenities to enhance the value of the park to the public and provide a higher level of accessibility to park users.
- Dane County Parks staff have developed a proposed plan that does not easily fall within the required regulations of shoreland and wetland ordinances, but is intended to satisfy the purpose and intent of the

protections the chapter instills.

Zoning Notes:

- Dane County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 11 which provides shoreland and wetland regulations was developed in a way that interpretation and enforcement of the various regulations are best easiest applied to traditional lot designs and development patterns. This presents a challenge when the chapter is applied to non-traditional properties typical of those used for providing public services and open space.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Town of Dunn: 1/2/26 Acknowledgement; Action: Town Board recommends approval.

Conclusions:

- 1) Unnecessary Hardship: The ordinance as written is easily applied to uniform residential and single use properties but does not easily accommodate public land uses such as parks, especially those designed to provide access to water resources. It would be unnecessarily burdensome to require Dane County parks to strictly comply with the ordinance when their mission is very well aligned with the purpose and intent of the shoreland regulations. The Village of McFarland and Town of Dunn recently approved an intergovernmental agreement establishing that the Babcock Park property will remain in the Town and therefore subject to County zoning regulations.
- 2) Unique Limitations of the Property: The property is situated between Lake Waubesa and US Highway 51 with the Yahara River flowing through it. It contains wetlands and floodplain and is located between the Village of McFarland municipal boundary and existing residential development within the Town.
- 3) No Harm to Public Interests: The proposed park development is a public interest as opposed to a private interest that may pose harm to other public interests. Moreover the proposal is supported by the Town and the plan was developed in concert with both the Town of Dunn and Village of Mcfarland to continue to provide and enhance public access to Lake Waubesa and the Yahara Chain.

LEESER to approve variance as proposed. Motion carried.

Ayes: 4 - KAY, CORRIGAN, LEESER and LONG

E. Appeals from Previous Meetings

F. Reports to Committee

Hilbert updated the Board on future business and meetings.

G. Other Business Authorized by Law

CORRIGAN/LESSER to thank Zoning Administrator Roger Lane for this 19 years of service, his leadership, dedication and all the help provided to the Board of Adjustment and to the property owners of Dane County. Motion Carried.

Ayes: 4 - KAY, CORRIGAN, LEESER and LONG

H. Adjournment

LESSER to adjourn at 7:23 pm. Motion carried.