



Dane County

Minutes - Final Unless Amended by Committee

Park Commission

Consider:

Who benefits? Who is burdened?

Who does not have a voice at the table?

How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

5:30 PM

Halfway Prairie Schoolhouse
9770 State Highway 19, Cross Plains

A. Call To Order

Chair Thoresen called the Park Commission meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Staff Present: Joleen Stinson, Chris James.

Youth Governance Member Steve Hoang present.

Others Present: Dan Behringer, Jody Morey, Roger & Marie Kahl, Mike Weber.

Present: 4 - STEFANIE BROUWER, DAVE RIPP, TOM THORESEN and KRISTIE GOFORTH

Excused: 3 - NANCY BOGUE, ANALIESE EICHER and GRACE MORAN

B. Consideration of Minutes

1. [2023](#) Minutes of the Wednesday, September 6, 2023 Park Commission
[MIN-271](#)

Attachments: [2023 MIN-271 PC MINUTES 9-6-23](#)

A motion was made by BROUWER, seconded by GOFORTH, that the Minutes be approved. The motion carried by a voice vote 4-0, YGP 1-0.

C. Referrals (Resolutions & Ordinance Amendments)

1. [2023](#) AUTHORIZING A STATEMENT OF WILLINGNESS AND INTERIM TRAIL
[RES-178](#) USE / RAIL BANKING AGREEMENT FROM THE WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE GREAT SAUK AND
WALKING IRON TRAILS

Sponsors: CHAWLA, DOOLAN, ROSE, RIPP, ENGELBERGER and EICHER

Attachments: [2023 RES-178](#)
[2023 RES-178 FISCAL NOTE](#)
[2023 RES-178 MAP](#)

A motion was made by BROUWER, seconded by RIPP, that the Resolution be recommended for approval. The motion carried by a voice vote 4-0, YGP 1-0.

D. Items Requiring Committee Action

1. Set 2024 Park and Permit Fees

[2023](#) 2024 Proposed Fee Changes
[ACT-182](#)

Attachments: [2024 Proposed Fee Changes](#)

Dane County Parks held a public hearing on proposed 2024 park fees on September 6, 2023. Meeting notifications included a press release, facebook event, event on the website calendar, website posting and inclusion in the bi-weekly emailed newsletter. There were no written comments received leading up to the public hearing and no attendees at the public hearing. Dane County Parks received one email since the public hearing, in support of the proposed new veteran/military discounts.

A motion was made by BROUWER, seconded by GOFORTH, that the 2024 park fees be approved as presented. The motion carried by a voice vote 4-0, YGP 1-0.

E. Presentations

1. Friends of Old Halfway Prairie School

The Friends open up the school on holidays and Sunday afternoons 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM from Memorial Day through Labor Day so that visitors can view the inside of the school in its authentically restored condition. The tours are free but donations are accepted. The Friends also work closely with area school districts to accommodate field trips. Those who visit the site get to experience how schooling was implemented when all grades were in one room. The building holds student desks, a teacher's desk, chalkboards, a wood stove and a piano. There are pictures of different classes that attended the school along with books and historic documents. Park staff noted that the Parks Collaborative Friends Grant Program is currently accepting applications and Commissioner noted the group may be eligible for tourism grants from Travel Wisconsin.

2. History of Halfway Prairie School

The one-room building is Dane County's oldest existing rural elementary schoolhouse. The school operated from 1844 to 1961 until consolidated with other area schools. The current exterior construction conceals the original framework of logs. The land was donated for school purposes in 1844 by Mary Fowler, a widow and member of the British Temperance Immigration Society. When the school closed in 1961, it was left abandoned for three years until the Dane County Park Commission purchased it for one dollar to open a wayside park and historical site. In early 2020, Dane County purchased approximately 74 acres of land surrounding Halfway Prairie School.

F. Reports to Committee

1. Indian Lake County Park and Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area Draft Master Plan Update

Dane County Parks has completed a draft master plan that provides recommendations for future management, recreation use and park facility development at Indian Lake County Park and the adjacent Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area. The planning process evaluated existing cultural, natural and historical features in the planning area and incorporated public, stakeholder, and staff input to create the recommendations found within the report. The process included an interactive website and series of public information, local unit of government, and stakeholder meetings from March of 2022 through summer of 2023. In addition, a survey was distributed to park patrons during the summer of 2022 to solicit comments on existing park facilities, future management and park development ideas. Some of the proposed draft improvements to existing park and wildlife area facilities that are recommended include upgrades to all parking lot areas, a new picnic shelter, additional hiking and cross country ski trails, dog park improvements and improved access to the group camp. Dane County Parks staff presented the draft plan recommendations to the Town of Berry Board on Monday, September 18, 2023. A hybrid public information meeting was held on Tuesday, September 26, 2023. Forty-nine people registered to participate virtually and about 15 people attended in person. Public feedback will continue to be solicited until the end of October 2023.

2. Pheasant Branch Conservancy Land Use Agreement with WDNR

In 1994, Dane County acquired 160 acres for the Pheasant Branch Conservancy and then sold the southern 60 acres to the DNR to help fund the acquisition. Since then, Dane County Parks has been managing the DNR's property. This land use agreement formalizes Dane County's ability to continue the management of the DNR's portion of the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. The agreement was approved at last night's Public Works & Transportation Committee meeting.

[2023](#) 15 YEAR LAND USE AGREEMENT - PHEASANT BRANCH
[ACT-161](#) CONSERVANCY

Attachments: [LandUseAgreement_PheasantBranch.pdf](#)

G. Future Meeting Items and Dates

- 1. Wednesday, October 11, 2023 - Hybrid Meeting
Heritage Center lower level
3101 Lake Farm Rd, Madison
- 2. Wednesday, October 25, 2023
Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area East Trailhead
5720 River Rd, Waunakee

H. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

Dan Behringer asked about the status of reopening the DNR's Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Mazomanie Unit on the Wisconsin River.

Roger Kahl requested that school bus turn-around space needs be considered when planning new or expanding parking lots on Dane County Park properties.

I. Such Other Business as Allowed by Law

J. Adjourn

A motion was made by BROUWER, seconded by RIPP, that the Meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by a voice vote 4-0, YGP 1-0.

Meeting adjourned 6:34 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Joleen Stinson, pending Park Commission approval.