

CITY OF WISCONSIN RAPIDS
PARKS / RECREATION / BUILDINGS
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Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes

August 12, 2024

The Parks & Recreation Commission met on Monday, August 12, 2024, at 4 p.m. at the Wisconsin Rapids Municipal Zoo, 1911 Gaynor Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids, WI.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Veneman called the meeting to order at 4 p.m.

Commissioners in attendance were Jeff Penzkover, Ron Rasmussen, Lee Thao, Dean Veneman, Rick Wellnitz, Elizabeth Whelan, and Mayor Matt Zacher. Kris Barteck and Tom Rayome were excused. Staff in attendance were Dawn Desorcy, Taylor Hale, and Jake Klingforth. Also in attendance were Alderpersons Jake Cattanach and Dennis Polach.

2. Approve the July 8, 2024, meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rasmussen, seconded Commissioner Thao, to approve the minutes of July 8, 2024. It was noted to include the amount of approval for bills going forward. (For item 5 in the July minutes, the amount of approval of the bills was \$58,975.30.)

3. Discuss Robinson Park referral (attached).

A few of the items noted in the plan have been completed. The playground is older, but sand was added to the area to bring it up to code. The horseshoe pits are gone, and there is a new bike rack and new concrete cornhole pads, the disc golf course was doubled from 9 to 18 holes, and sprinklers were redone last fall. There is also a new concrete approach into the park on 17th Street North. We are slowly making improvements there, but would also like to see updates to the band shell, playground, and bathrooms.

Alderperson Cattanach would like a plan in place to bring Robinson Park back to its potential. Commissioner Penzkover would like his name to be added to this referral. He feels basketball and sand volleyball courts would be good additions. Commissioner Whelan suggested that if the playground is updated that it should be for a larger variety of ages to use.

4. Aquatics update.

In addition to the closures noted, the Aquatics Center was closed all day on August 9 and closed early on August 10 (due to cool temperatures). Even with the challenging weather this summer, attendance and concessions sales are similar to last summer. Staffing has also been challenging. We are staffed for this week, but have already lost staff members who are going back to school and are in sports. It is getting more difficult to find lifeguards; certification cost is a concern. It was suggested that we check with other municipalities for lifeguard pay comparisons.

A motion was made by Commissioner Veneman, seconded by Commissioner Penzkover, to direct staff to look into paying for the lifeguarding class for Aquatics Center employees. Motion carried.

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5. 2025 Budget update.

There was an increase of \$12,000 to the Concessions budget, due to the possibility of purchasing an additional Turbo Chef oven. There was a question on the drop in wages at the bike trail; several new pavement sections were completed last year, so this amount dropped back to normal this year. It was also noted that Christmas decorations are down by 14%. This is possibly due to utilizing LED bulbs which longer, so the amount of time spent changing bulbs is down. The budget will be discussed more in depth during the budget review.

6. Bills.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rasmussen, seconded by Commissioner Thao, to approve the bills in the amount of \$43,252.94. Motion carried.

7. Staff reports.

Dawn and Jake provided reports. Total zoo attendance was over 6,500 for the month of July.

8. Adjourn.

A motion was made by Commissioner Thao, seconded by Commissioner Veneman, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Dawn Desorcy, Recording Secretary