

City of Franklin  
Parks Commission Meeting  
December 9, 2024  
Minutes

Approved  
January 13, 2025

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Michael Wrench called the December 9, 2024, Parks Commission meeting to order at 6:30 pm commencing in the Council Chambers at Franklin City Hall at 9229 W. Loomis Road, Franklin, Wisconsin.

Present was Chair Michael Wrench, Vice Chair Kristen Stanley, Commissioners Mary Remington, Karen Malecki, Cathrine Kosler and Susan Lance, Alderwoman Courtney Day, non-voting member Ex-Officio Michelle Runte, Principal Planner Marian Ecks, Department of Public Works Kevin Schlueter and Dale Borchardt and Mayor John Nelson. Excused was Ex-Officio Leah Voss.

**II. Citizen Comment Period.**

Several people were in attendance to discuss topic (h), under unfinished business. Tim Burch's comments can be found under (h). Joseph Allen, 3651 S. 14<sup>th</sup> St., Milwaukee, brought a photo he uses in trail training. Mr. Allen is an arborist and horticulturalist and spends much of his time helping to maintain trails, as well as clearing downed trees. It's important to have trails for dog sledding and is vital property for same. Trails are being used for dogs, snow shoeing and jogging. Howard Smith, 7953 W. Coventry, Franklin, takes his dog to the area and rides his bike on the trail. He would like the trail to remain open. Theresa Lusinecki, 5025 Spruce Ct., Greendale, commented she has been utilizing the trails with her dogs for running and exercise. Apologetic for damage. Trenches were placed and was told by Police not to fix them. Rob Bernie, 8553 S. 68th St., Franklin, walks the Victory Creek trail 5 times per week. Rob urges the City not to eliminate the trail. LeRoy Lewandowski, 8030 W. Winston Way, Franklin, commented on new flooring placed at Kayla's playground. He believes there are issues with children. Woodchips in the park do not last and would like to see pads added which wouldn't be as hard as the ground. He believes trees are in the wrong location in the park. Trail sidewalks should be above the level of the ground, and they are 2" below. John Nelson, 7778 S. North Cape Rd., commented to Mr. Lewandowski that if he has an issue with a vendor, it will be handled by the City. He also commented that fees for pavilion park rentals are too low. Franklin residents should be afforded the lowest rate to use the facilities. This will be discussed later in the agenda. An appropriate fee structure is needed. The Parks Commission should also look into the use of bounce houses.

**III. Approval of Minutes – Regular meeting of November 11, 2024**

Vice Chair Stanley moved and Commissioner Lance seconded to approve the minutes of the November 11, 2024 meeting with the following change: II Citizen comment period... add the word 'by'... misuse of ATVs by youth in the neighborhood. With the noted change, on voice vote, all voted 'aye'; motion carried (7-0-0).

**IV. Unfinished Business**

**a. Update on parks maintenance.**

Dale Borchardt, DPW, reported restrooms in the parks have been winterized. One restroom is open at Pleasant View and one remains open at Franklin Woods. The leaves have been cleaned up and windscreens taken down from tennis and pickleball courts. Trail markers are up for plowing purposes. Discussion only, no action taken.

- b. Budget.** Parks Commission requests for information on park finances. Principal Planner Ecks reported there is no update. She will add this to the agenda if the Commission wants discussion at the next meeting. She reported the request for software was not put into the Mayor's budget. Discussion only, no action taken.
- c. Park Facilities Reservation and Permitting Policies.** Discussion of reservation policies for league sports and other groups, fees, rules and policies for parks. The Clerk's office is proposing an update to current permits for all park areas and asking why the City is not charging for league reservations. The Recreation Department runs the leagues and charges a fee. The Clerk's office does not have a software program to handle reservations. The proposal for software did not pass the 2025 budget and who would operate the software. This could be taken back for further review in the Clerk's office budget. Cannot have a negative impact on taxpayers. Can a surcharge be added for league play and bring some funds back to the City as there is a cost to the City for courts? Mayor Nelson will start discussions with the school board and with the recreation department on offsetting costs of courts. Discussion only, no action taken.

  - i.** 2025 League Reservation policy. Fees and qualifying organizations. Same as above. Discussion only, no action taken.
  - ii.** Update to 2025 Parks permits. Kevin Schlueter, DPW, asked for a \$50.00 increase across the board for pavilion rentals in Franklin (residents and non-residents). There will be no change in the security deposit. Tents and bounce houses should be eliminated. The rental time is 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.. Kevin reported there is a very short timeframe period of rental of baseball fields and fees collected are low. He would like to eliminate rentals of baseball diamonds and make this a first come first serve basis.

Commissioner Remington moved and Commissioner Kosler seconded a motion to increase pavilion fees by \$50.00, double the non-resident reservation fee and eliminate the use of bounce houses and tents. No change to security deposits. On voice all voted 'aye', motion carried (7-0-0).

Commissioner Lance moved and Commissioner Kosler seconded a motion to eliminate reservations of baseball diamonds and make the use of ball diamonds a first come first serve basis. On voice vote, all voted 'aye', motion carried (7-0-0)
- d. Parks Marketing Materials.** Park amenities donation policy and Parks marketing materials including maps, pamphlets, etc..

Commissioner **Malecki** commented she can have fees updated on the City website and send this information to Lisa Huening for posting. Commissioner **Malecki** will also add a note to the booklets as an insert on fee increases. Discussion only, no action taken.

- e. **Community Event Engagement.** Future involvement in National Night Out, Trunk-or-Treat, Bike Rodeo and other City of Franklin community events.  
Commissioner Malecki discussed ‘see something, say something’ initiative sign. Gary Wallace of the Franklin Police department is Community Engagement Liaison with the City’s parks. Commissioner Kosler will contact Mr. Wallace to verify the police is in agreement. A phone number should be added to the sign of who should be called if something is seen. Ex-Officio Michelle Runte reported that Sargento Cheese donated \$50,000 to Kayla’s Playground for the legacy program and the money was used for new flooring. Commissioner Malecki previously wrote a plan on how to get donations. She asked if that plan ever went to Common Council for consideration. She will resend the information to Principal Planner Ecks and this should be brought back to our next meeting. Discussion only, no action taken.
- f. **Friends of Park / Park Watch.** Discussion of the creation of park watch or park cleanup group.  
Chair Wrench commented that this type of program would only be as good as who started it. The City often handles what is left behind if they move on. A ‘Watch’ would be for people currently in the park and only make a report if something is seen. Perhaps start a program, Volunteer Days. Discussion only, no action taken.
- g. **Park Signage.** Maintenance and updates to park signage and kiosks in Lion Legend Park, Franklin Woods and Kayla’s Playground; “no motor vehicles’ signs.  
Discussion about ‘no motorized vehicles’ in the parks. Could a permanent sign board be used in a concrete plexiglass enclosure vs a kiosk? Commissioner Malecki brought sample sign boards and showed how they could be used. The inserts could be used to change information as needed. Research can be done on costs. Could a high school student or MATC student make a metal frame for a sign? Ex-Officio Runte has a contact at the high school and will reach out. Discussion only, no action taken.
- h. **Victory Creek Trail Mowing and Natural Resources.** Discussion of volunteer mowing of Victory Creek Trails by Timothy Burch and related impacts to resources.  
Mr. Burch attended the meeting. He states he was given approval by past Alderwoman Wilhelm when the high school was being remodeled. The trail was and is being used for the cross-country high school team. Mr. Burch has been caring for trails since 2017 on approval from Alderwoman Wilhelm, a City Planner and from the Department of Public Works. He does not have a copy of the signed document of the agreement but this past summer changes were made to the wetland and trail and he apologizes and feels badly for any damage that occurred during his efforts. He asks for continued endorsement for use of the trails and would like to continue to mow them. DPW, Kevin Schlueter, reported that he could not locate an agreement with the City for citizen mowing maintenance. Most recently, DPW and MMSD found trenching had been done in the area. The City would like to take over maintenance and perform controlled burns, however, that cannot be done if trails are adjusted or being mowed a certain way. Culverts and piping were

also found on the trail. This is a natural wetland and it shouldn't be adjusted in any manner. In the spring, there is the possibility of 2-3 staged controlled burns. The City should be the only one responsible for paved trails. DPW states that the City needs to control City parks and mowing for consistency and liability. Burns help to decrease maintenance of mowing. What happens in the future after a burn? DPW may be open to mowing some trails but perhaps not as much. Everything seems to have been done with good intentions. Currently, DPW is in the early stages of planning how to manage the trails going forward. There are some plans conceptually to have the trail go up to 35<sup>th</sup> Street. Environmental Commission needs to review. DPW, Dale Borchardt, shared photos of the changes made by citizens in the park. MMSD wants no mowing on their property. Commissioner Remington asked if controlled burns can be done and then regroup on the plan for next steps. Can a subcommittee be put in place to help decide? Principal Planner Ecks will review the process. Per Keven Schlueter, 'controlled burns and 'liability' are top concerns. Mayor Nelson also commented that there may be liability concerns. It may be reasonable to have some people make rough cuts with a liability waiver. The City will take over City of Franklin areas as a temporary plan. Residents want to help. Bring this topic back to the February meeting when a plan is in place. DPW will repair the trail issues when the freeze is over to fill in holes. Discussion only, no action taken.

## **V. New Business**

- a. 2025 Concerts in the Park.** Request by Douglas Scherrer, on behalf of Franklin Park Concerts, Inc., for the use of Lions Legend Park band shell for a free summer concert series, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., on the following dates: June 29, 2025; July 13, 2025; July 27, 2025; August 10, 2025 and August 24, 2025. DPW is okay with the dates.

Vice Chair Stanley moved and Commissioner Remington seconded to approve dates for the Concerts in the Park as noted above. On voice vote, 6 voted 'aye' and 1 voted 'nay'. Motion carried (6-1-0).

- b. 2025 meeting schedule.** February meeting date: change to Feb 17; Spring tour of parks. All Commission members agreed to February 17, 2025 for the meeting. A tour of the parks will be held in April.

## **VI. Adjournment.**

Vice-Chair Stanley moved and Commissioner Remington seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. On voice vote, all voted 'aye'. Motion carried (7-0-0).

The next meeting will be held on January 13, 2025.