

Winnemac Park Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, September 10, 2025
(6:15pm at Amundsen High School Library)

Voting members in attendance (10 total): Jeff Borden, Chelsea Brown, Tessa Groll, Sarah Harpring, Dave Miretzky, Deb Miretzky, Mike Pavilon, Jacob Schuster, Anne Sylvan, Amy Williamson

Other meeting attendees (9 total): Courtney Cook, Joan Elias, Andy Huffman, Catherine Kahle, Lisa Ragucci, Pam Rahe, Amy Reeder, Patrick Rovito, Nina Wilfred

OPENING

Introduction and Call to Order

- agreed that a quorum was present
- all those in attendance introduced themselves, including some first-time attendees
- call to order

Approval of Minutes

- 8/13/2025 minutes unanimously approved

Approval of Agenda

- 9/10/2025 agenda unanimously approved

Park Supervisor Report (Lisa Ragucci and _____)

- Upcoming bonfire on September 30th, 5-7pm
 - There will be pelts, skulls, and bones on display as a part of the event
 - This is a contained fire pit with trained staff and protective equipment
 - Exact location TBD, those putting on the event have done many of these, and will pick a location based on what is safest that day (taking weather/wind into account)
 - No s'mores provided as a part of the event, so it was recommended that WPAC provide marshmallows and encourage the public to bring their own additional s'mores-related items
- **There was a motion to use WPAC funds to purchase 7-10 bags of marshmallows to add to the fun of the 9/30/2025 bonfire event**
 - **the motion was seconded and passed with a majority vote**
- 2 new porta potties are scheduled to arrive at the park this Friday (9/12), and will be in the park until the last weekend of October

→Will be placed strategically, keeping in mind the ability for vehicles to enter/exit for delivery, pick-up, and cleaning, while also making sure there is easy access to a porta potty from both the playground and the baseball fields

→ADA porta potties are required to face a path/paved walk

→The two porta potties will be cleaned twice per week

→Welles Park Parent Association (WPPA) is paying for them

→The porta potty service going forward will be Service Sanitation

→In future years, the porta potties will be in the park ranging from Mid-April to October (approximately), and Welles Park Baseball Association will provide funds towards the porta potties in addition to their regular fees. The funds will be given to the Parks/Lisa, so they will be in charge of ordering and placement of the porta potties going forward.

- It was asked if the stadium bathrooms could be an option
 - context was provided that this has been a long-term discussion and is mostly a staffing issue
 - Parks District jobs for bathroom attendants are typically for parks with their own fieldhouse
- There is a 3rd porta potty that is provided by CPS, so they should be consulted about any issues with that particular unit

Public Comment

- Concern was expressed about how many hours each weekend that the WPPA uses the park, especially during the summer

OLD BUSINESS

Natural Areas Mow

- On the 23rd there was a large mow of the natural areas
- A boiler plate email was sent 2 days before mentioning a mow
- In the past these mows have usually been selective, this time the mow was major and planned for all 3 natural areas
- This was a shock, and hugely upsetting for so many
 - After much public concern with the mowing of the first natural area, it was agreed to stop mowing for the day
- Everyone agreed the Park District had a communication issue
 - On the 29th Andre spoke with the Parks Superintendent
- It has been agreed going forward that the Park District will give a quarterly report of what is happening and why, this was previously only shared once a year

- Matt says that this will not happen again without thorough warning
- There has been a report created through a lot of work by Tessa, that tracks what is in the natural areas, what is thriving and what is not.

Winnemac Surveys

- Deb shared an overview and update about the survey
- There are signs throughout the park encouraging visitors to fill out the survey
- So far there have been 186 responses
- Some meeting attendees came to the meeting due to the survey
- Some highlights so far include:
 - Natural Areas are overwhelmingly the main attraction to many
 - Bathrooms are a concern
 - There have been some who have suggested additional cameras to be placed in the park
 - Suggestions for features like water fountains, more pickleball courts, and other equipment
 - Suggestions for activities like more movies in the park, collaborations with the student garden, music events, and more events that are not specifically directed towards families
- Many people who filled out the survey expressed a willingness to volunteer at events, and to help with advocacy of the park

NEW BUSINESS

WFFA

- **There was a motion to reauthorize the Winnemac Fourth For All event in 2026**
→ the motion was seconded and passed with a majority vote
- Please volunteer!!

Birding

- It was discussed to possibly promote birding opportunities to younger audiences
 → Possibly coordinated directly with Chappell?
- September 20th there will be back-to-back walks that are almost at capacity in terms of participants who have signed up, though sign up is still open
 → There is not a lot of programming funding, but we are trying to grow more opportunities and programming

Natural Areas

- There was a Natural Areas workday on the 30th, worked on invasive species
- Next work day is Saturday, September 27th

Yoga in the Park

- Bloom Yoga will be available in the park this Saturday from 10-11am

Clarification of Committees

- Natural Areas: Amy is lead
→ other members include Tessa, Sarah, and Chelsea?
- WFFA: Jacob is lead
→ other members include Amy Reader, Tessa, Jeff, and Andy
- Movement: Jacob is lead
→ other members include Chelsea
- Performing Arts: David is lead
→ other members include Jacob
- Admin: Jacob is lead
→ other members include Jeff and Deb
- Bathroom: Jacob is lead
→ other members include Deb and Amy

CLOSING

Closing Comments

- Mike and Jacob met with Wintrust Bank who might consider making a contribution or sponsorship in the future
- Dave mentioned considering selling concessions from the fieldhouse window that faces the park
→ has been done in the past
→ this would require paying both CPS and park rent

Adjournment

- meeting adjourned

Next Meeting: October 8, 2025 at 6:15pm in the Amundsen High School Library

Minutes submitted by Sarah Harpring