Winnemac Park
Advisory Council

Winnemac Park Advisory Council, October Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2026
Time: 6:15pm
Location: Amundsen HS (Rm 112)
Board Members: Jacob Schuster, Deb Miretzky, Claire Howard, Tessa Groll, Sarah Harpring

Approval of September Minutes? Yes.
All meeting minutes available at:
www.winnemacpac.org/WPAC-meetings

Approval of October Agenda? Yes
Members in Attendance: 19
Total voting members: 17

Jacob Schuster, Deb Miretzky, Claire Howard, Dave Miretzky, Tessa Groll, Chelsea Brown, Sarah Harpring, Lisa Ragucci, Mike Pavilon, Diana Diaz, Danielle Neergheen, Anne Sylvan, Robert Lau, Rick Marron, Mary O'Connor, Margaret O'Conor, Amy Reeder

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Park Supervisor Report: Lisa Ragucci

Update on flooding between Seeley paths south of Winnemac: Assessed by Park District and Chicago Water Department. Chicago Water Department was looking for any type of chlorine and if there was no chlorine there was likely to be some leak in a sewer.

Tessa elaborated further (ran into work crew on their last visit) → Chicago Water Department was doing a test and determined that the leak was *not* coming from the park and likely to be caused by a leak elsewhere and causing run-off to occur in Winnemac. "*If it wasn't pooling up here, it could have pooled up in someone's basement*". They were going to test local sources to assess the culprit further. At this time, no update has been relayed.

→ **Where we are now:** Chicago Park District plumbers and Chicago Water Department to work it through further. There is potential digging that may be required to assess remediation plans.

→ **UPDATE AS OF 11/9/2026:** (Tessa talked to the crew present on this date) the sewers next to the water build up were recently cleared in case there is a decision to pump that water into that source. They have created a small outlet for the water to make its way back to the sewer naturally. They believe

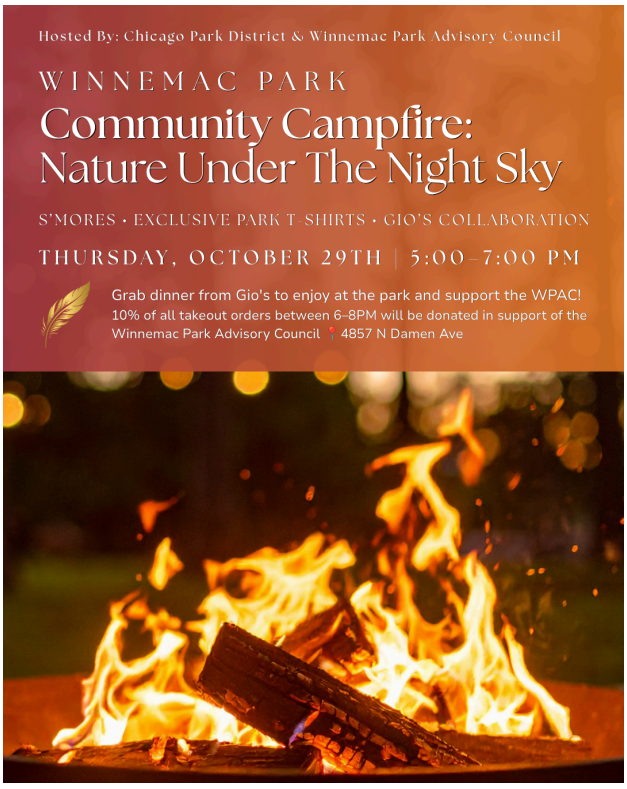
it is clean drinking water; no chlorine or other treated elements have been found within. The Chicago Park District also ruled out any of their infrastructure; their purview is only in the playground area when it comes to water/plumbing.

Fallen elm on West Side of Winnemac (completed in November)
This was assessed shortly by Chicago Park District after a storm brought the tree down, however, it is on Chicago Public School property. The loss of a large limb has caused fence damage. Because removing the tree would require the fence to be repaired, there is reluctance to remove it; the tree wreckage is likely to remain until repairs could be carried out completely.

Update on the Elm: 11/9/2026: Tessa talked to the crew that was working on the elm as they were removing the fallen limb. There is no intention to remove the tree. The elm has been trimmed up to remediate the split and no further work should be required at this time.

UPCOMING EVENTS & HAPPENINGS IN WINNEMAC PARK:

COMMUNITY CAMPFIRE: NATURE UNDER THE NIGHT SKY
Hosted by: Chicago Park District & The Winnemac Park Advisory Council
Date & Time: October 29, 2026 @ 5:00–7:00pm



What the event will entail: l PAC members will be there with s'mores fixings while Chicago Park District takes responsibility for the bonfire. Come on by, throw a mallow on a graham, and enjoy an evening in Winnemac among friends, family, and community.

Gio's Takeout Promotion: between 6–8PM on Thursday, October 29th, 10% of all takeout orders will be donated back to the WPAC.

Council Vote: voted "YES" for **$120** for s'mores materials for the campfire.

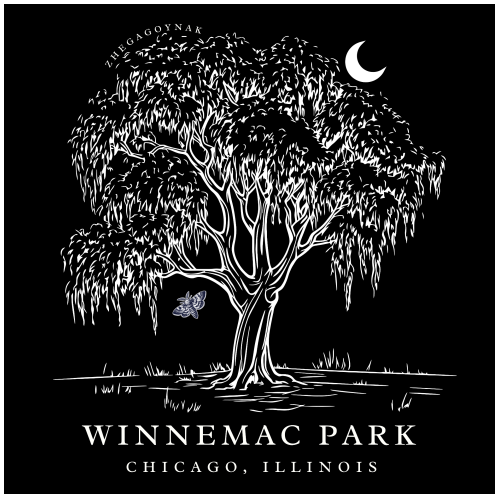
Exclusive Winnemac Park T-shirts

Our new Fall/Winter collection is here → Black t-shirts (50 total)

Many of you have requested the sale of Winnemac Park/PAC branded merchandise and we have listened! We are proud to present our first public sale of WPAC t-shirts to the general public. Attached to this email, please find the design for the shirt we will be offering, which is in basic black and in four sizes: small, medium, large, and extra-large. Prices for the shirt are **$30 in cash, and $35 via credit card;** as a reminder, 100% of your purchase will go back into programming or services for the park we all love.

We will be selling the t-shirts for the first time during the the **Community Campfire**, which takes place on Thursday, October 29, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Winnemac Park (as an aside, please come visit us we will have a table and be providing free smores to anyone who wants them!)

Shirts will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis and supplies are limited!
Designed By: Tessa G.



Running Club 🪽 Winnemac Wings

Started & Lead By: Chelsea Brown
We have the support of Brandy Freeman Kuhl from the Chicago Park Foundation who helped us to run a pilot program this summer for 5k training.

When it begins: Saturday mornings starting on October 24, 2026 @ 7:00am
Experience Level: open to all runners
Distance: will depend on group consensus (3-6 miles/meeting)



Public Comment

Donors & Fundraising: Mike Pavilon expressed concerns that businesses that donated, regardless of the amount donated, were not getting enough reward from the WPAC. In particular, he felt we should be including sponsors in more of our materials with greater frequency (ie; including logos in all newsletters). While some of these points are worth further discussion, it was widely felt that we needed to be consistent in providing what was initially promised in the fundraising overview for this year's donors. Additionally, it was agreed that WPAC members should not deviate from the agreed upon rewards for donors of varied levels that are provided to those donors while fundraising.

Treasurer's Report, Presented by Claire Howard
Current financial standing as of October 14, 2026

→ We currently have **~$8,396** in our account.

We are planning on fundraising on **Giving Tuesday** (potential match for donations) in anticipation of raising money for our 4th Annual Winnemac Fourth For All sooner rather than later.

The council is ending this year in a much better position than we did last year but must be conscious of various expenditures as well as the reality that services/products are more expensive than in prior years. We do anticipate that we will make money at the upcoming bonfire due to t-shirt sales and possible on-site donations.

New Business

Diana Diaz covered the 40th Ward People's Budget update: There is a nature playspace project in Winnemac Park on the ballot. The Chicago Park District determined that the cost for this project would be roughly $50,000, which is considerably less than other projects being included. Members were encouraged to vote for the nature area option, and there will be further efforts to promote this project via social media and other communication channels.

Tessa gave an update on the **Chicago Park District Participatory Budget.** The **Nature & Beautification** category won in a round of ranked-choice voting by Chicago citizens. From the Chicago Park District website:

"**The results of the Citywide Participatory Budget are in!**
Nearly 12,000 votes were cast by Chicagoans who participated in the process to help shape how $500,000 in Chicago Park District funds will be invested in parks across the city.

The winning category is Nature and Beautification!

What happens next?
Now through November, the Park District will review and prioritize the feasible projects included in the Nature and Beautification category and make recommendations for The Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee. The Committee will review the project recommendations and endorse them. The Park District will fund at least nine projects, with three in each of its three regions. Based on the cost of projects, additional projects could be funded. The first week of December, the Park District will host an event to announce the winning projects to be funded in the participatory budget.

To learn more, please visit: www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/pb

Bathrooms In Winnemac Park | Petition & Updates
Update given by: Deb Miretzky

Petition: ~1000 signatures collected at this time
QR Code Handouts: small printed flyers with a QR code to the petition have been created by Deb and will be handed out at our upcoming Community Campfire on October 29th.

Council Vote: voted "YES" to put money toward signs for the park that highlight the petition and QR code for park-goers to participate in | Amount: $75 for ~8 signs.

Background: WPAC will explore various options for providing a more permanent bathroom solution to what we currently have–which is limited, intermittent access to stadium bathrooms and port-o-potties that are not guaranteed for the future. Alder Vasquez is supportive of this effort but indicated that there needed to be more concrete information regarding possible options and their costs before looking into funding.

Vote on 4th Annual Winnemac Fourth For All - YES

Notes: the WPAC knows our areas of weakness for this event as well as our strengths; the goal is to build upon our efforts each year, learn from any shortcomings, and continue to find ways to make it as diverse and engaging as possible for folks of all ages.

While we put on a successful event (weather permitting), we definitely have improvements that need to be made when it comes to offerings, fundraising, and beyond.

Two Items For WFFA (Tessa):

1. The need for additional help in preparations—last year involved a relatively small number of volunteers, both in terms of planning and execution on the day of the event.
2. More robust and efficient means of communication need to be developed, both for event organization and for communication with event volunteers.

There is agreement on both items; we will be assessing what changes need to be made in sub-committee meetings in the next few months. The goal here is to ensure we stay as organized as possible as the event grows and do not miss any information landing in already very busy inboxes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm
Minutes submitted by Tessa Groll, WPAC Secretary with edits and inclusions from Deb Miretzky (WPAC Vice President)