



Winnemac Park Advisory Council & Edgewater Castle Football Club Stakeholder Meeting & Plan Overview for 2026

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Alderman's Office, Andre Vasquez, 40th Ward

Participants: Edgewater Castle Football Club Representatives, 40th Ward Alder, Park District Supervisors, Chicago Public Schools

Total Attendance: 19

WPAC Board/Voting Members: Jacob Schuster, Deb Miretzky, Dave Miretzky, Claire Howard, Tessa Groll, Mary O'Connor, Mike Pavilon, Amy Reeder, Ron Rasmussen

Edgewater Castle Football Club was established in 2017. In 2019, they played their first-ever game at Jorndt Stadium, where they hope to call Winnemac Park home in the 2026 season. As it currently stands, it would be the only semi-professional soccer club in Chicago. Our meeting was held in the efforts of gaining additional information about how Edgewater FC intends to use our park; proposed beer sales; community concerns regarding parking, natural areas, minimal bathroom access, and increased foot-traffic; finances, permitting and beyond.

INTRODUCTION: 6:00 PM

Andrew welcomed and thanked the group for meeting to outline their plans for the upcoming 2026 season in Winnemac Park/Jorndt Stadium. As it stands, the current dates are booked starting in May and ending in June.

2026 season: 7 games

1. Saturday, May 16th
2. Saturday, May 23rd
3. Saturday, June 2nd
4. Saturday, June 27th
5. Sunday, June 28th
6. Sunday, July 12th
7. Saturday, July 28th

Expected Attendance: ~220 avg attendance | ~550 most attended game

Stadium Capacity: 4500

Potential Stadium Modifications (after 2026): addition of lights

WPAC COMMUNITY SURVEY ON BEER SALES

When we sent our initial community survey on this topic, it simply underscored beer sales and did *not* ask for feedback about Jorndt as a home stadium for ECFC or touch on potential issues that may arise from this addition to the neighborhood. Therefore, while people are informed on the potential of alcohol being present, there may be greater concerns that have not been addressed or considered at this time that will need to be considered- *point raised by Deb Miretzky.*

PARK DISTRICT COMMENTARY:

PARK DISTRICT & PERMITTING:

Regarding permit application it will be a matter of securing coverage for alcohol sales, capacity, price. Needless to say, alcohol permitting may require multiple steps (*ie: D-case*) shall any activity occur on PARK GROUND. This is important to specify because Jorndt Stadium is part of Chicago Public Schools, who programs this stadium out accordingly with children's summer programs alongside football, soccer and lacrosse. This will be the first time that our stadium has ever been rented out; because they had the dates, they deemed it feasible to book those dates to get revenue for the stadium.

Devin Morales is the point person Executive Director, Sports Administration → partnering with this individual to support revenue stream

Dave Miretzky addressed that most activities for the soccer club would be occurring within the stadium and would likely not need to go through some of these same levels should these activities be confined to CPS grounds.

Dave also addressed that Edgewater FC is playing some of their games at a nearby stadium and asked if facilities were more accommodating to their efforts versus Winnemac. There is a strong preference for Jorndt Stadium, despite its lack of lights, which is also on their radar to install should their presence continue in coming years.

Note: members of the PAC have addressed why other stadiums that have all accommodations are not possible, over ours that require multiple upgrades, in the heart of a neighborhood, and adjacent to thriving natural areas.

FINANCES AND REVENUE:

When it comes to stadium rentals, the money generated goes back to the specific stadiums in which events are held. Therefore, the benefit goes directly to upgrading Jorndt Stadium. In the recent past, these focuses have fallen upon fixing areas of fencing as well as turf-maintenance.

Sidenote: *we have approval to sell merchandise at these games, meaning someone can be present from the WPAC to sell t-shirts/hats and our donation QR code sign while informing folks on the benefits of donating to our park.*

BATHROOM PLAN:

Issue raised by Jacob Schuster aimed to get details around portable bathrooms and how they plan to address having beer with limited bathrooms available currently. As this discussion unfolded, many of us were taken aback (alderman included) that CPS has not driven any generated funds toward fixing

the bathrooms within the stadium, which has been one of the biggest complaints of the community for some time. Instead, funds went to upgrading fencing and the turf-field that was mentioned above. Due to strong concern on that particular topic, the Alderman did request to meet with the individual responsible for allocating stadium funding as bathrooms have been on the radar of the WPAC for years in addition to the alderman's office receiving endless complaints on this topic.

Portable Bathrooms For Edgewater: 2

Location: Inside of the "beer garden" / 21+ area

Stadium Bathrooms: One set of bathrooms is available on the west side of the stadium. These bathrooms will only be available to ticketed guests and remain unavailable to the public during ECFC games.

POTENTIAL ISSUES FROM BEER SALES:

A handful of people addressed the potential for unwelcome behavior that may arise from the presence of these sales; Mike Pavilon addressed insurance concerns and who would be responsible shall a worst-case-scenario occur. Edgewater Castle has insisted that they have never had a problematic occurrence unfold at one of their games. They had police presence at their first-ever game, where it was deemed not necessarily worthy of further patrol in the future.

If beer is sold, there will be a limitation of 2 beers per half with sales to cut off 75 minutes prior to the game ending. This will be monitored by a wristband that will be "punched" with each sale.

CONCERN FOR NATURAL AREAS:

Tessa Groll addressed that attendance is likely to be higher due to the comment that was made that Jorndt Stadium is closer in proximity for their fan-base (which could bring consistent crowds higher than their ~220 avg attendance). And while this team has played in a handful of stadiums around the city, they have never taken up residence in a stadium that is this close to thriving natural areas such as our prairies and incredible habitat we have on our grounds. While it is possible that there will be no disturbance to wildlife or the birds and their migration cycle, there is no guarantee that this activity will NOT impact these areas. Additional concerns shared included a report of a baseball coach (WPPA) who cut down one of our witch hazel trees in 2025 (which was addressed accordingly) and the issue that the baseball season as well as general spring/summer activity could expose our park to potential downfalls to our natural areas.

Andrew addressed they will be partnering with Waste Not & Openlands to execute their plan.

PARKING LOT ACCESS

There is currently an issue around the parking and accessibility of the lots (Damen lot & the lot to the west of Amundsen). The decision regarding use of school parking lots is controlled by the principals of Amundsen High School and Chappell Elementary. Andrew mentioned that they are partnering with local bike shops and encouraging biking to their games in conjunction with using public transit. ECFC suggests that enough attendees will walk, ride bikes, or take public transportation so that parking will not become an issue. Some attendees did note that WPPA baseball games are likely to be happening during soccer games; a specific plan for dealing with parking was not discussed.

FOURTH OF JULY | WINNEMAC FOURTH FOR ALL

Andre (40th ward Alder) proposed having a few folks from Edgewater Castle FC be present on-site to provide “security” to certain spaces in the park, especially when it comes to monitoring certain areas (close to stadium), which was agreed upon by Andrew.

WFFA IDEA *(not addressed in meeting, afterthought only): with ECFC being present on-site for our event, it would be very wise of us to have them host a community soccer game for our Fourth For All Event or some sort of “shoot out” event / on-site lessons.*

NEXT STEPS:

WPAC wants a seat at the table and we want the voice of the community to be heard regarding this move. There is a plan to continually meet with Andrew, who has also expressed attending our WPAC meetings and forming a true partnership as the season unfolds. There are a lot of opportunities and a handful of potential downsides, a handful of which were addressed tonight. Andrew is highly vouched for and individuals who have worked with him speak very well of his efforts, dedication, and passion for the soccer club. WPAC members will provide a vote to Andrew and team within the next week on beer sales as our group takes a beat to decide upon our decisions.

Minutes submitted by Tessa Groll, WPAC Secretary with edits by Deb Miretzky, WPAC Vice President