



Winnemac Park Advisory Council, August Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Time: 6:15pm

Location: Stadium Room/Fieldhouse

Board Members: Jacob Schuster, Deb Miretzky, Claire Howard, Tessa Groll, Sarah Harpring

Approval of June Minutes? Yes.

All meeting minutes available at:

www.winnemacpac.org/WPAC-meetings

Approval of August Agenda? Yes

Members in Attendance: 16

15 total voting members

Jacob Schuster, Deb Miretzky, Dave Miretzky, Tessa Groll, Sarah Harpring, Chelsea Brown, Jeff Borden, Mike Pavilon, Diana Diaz, Lise-Helene, Mary O'Connor, Claire Howard, Lisa Ragucci, Danielle Neergheen, Tony Correa, Anne Sylvan

PARK SUPERVISOR'S REPORT, Provided by Lisa Ragucci

- Bench by Chappell was unable to be fixed, therefore was temporarily removed
- Baseball lights are nearly operative; Com-Ed came out on August 13, 2025 to assess
- No updates on repairs to central tennis court (crack on its north side)

UPCOMING EVENTS IN WINNEMAC PARK:

→ [Fiesta Mexicana](#) (click to read more)

Thursday, September 3, 2026 @ 6:30pm

→ [Wender Collective: Remnants](#) (click to read more)

Night Out In The Parks: August 21st & 22nd @ 6:00pm

→ [Movies in The Park - Wicked: For Good](#) (click to read more)

Chicago Park District, Saturday, September 12, 2026 @ 8:30pm

→ **Nature Under The Night Sky: Campfire, S'mores & more!**

Chicago Park District + Winnemac Park Advisory Council October 29, 2026 @ 6:00pm

WPAC will be there with s'mores fixings while Chicago Park District brings the materials to make it happen! Come on by, throw a mallow on a graham, and enjoy an evening in Winnemac among friends, family, and community.

TREASURER'S REPORT, Provided by Claire Howard

CURRENT FINANCIAL STANDING AS OF JULY, 2026

We currently have ~\$9,405 in our account; this is after WFFA expenses and payout. We are not asking WFFA food trucks for any contributions as the day's weather did not allow them to meet their expectations, therefore, we eliminated this request as business was not as projected.

We are in a much better spot financially than we were at this time last year & fundraising will continue at events and through outreach.

→ **VOTING MEASURE INVOLVING FINANCES:**

- \$800 will be going to the natural areas committee
- \$500 to be set aside for merchandise to be sold at various events (t-shirts)

NEW BUSINESS

→ **WFFA OVERVIEW**

The biggest challenge came down to weather. It was recommended that we also consider another option for donations at events rather than Swipe Simple which did not work effectively with some payment apps; more communication with volunteers at events would also be helpful. However, fundraising efforts were quite successful and put us in a stronger financial position; we will plan to revisit the donation tiers /benefits for WFFA regardless.

- Claire highlighted how successful this event was despite afternoon and evening rain. We learned a lot during our efforts, had a lot of community support, and still have room to improve in future years. We hope to continue to deepen our vendor relationships to have continued presence at upcoming WFFA events.
- Raffle prize announcement and pick-up was successful.
- Expanding upon selling of merchandise: very successful
- We want to expand our offerings but have to be reasonable in our approach. Greater WFFA attendance standpoint requires additional permitting and potentially security.
- We can consider alternative platforms banking partners to ensure we aren't losing too much revenue to service fees. Chicago Parks Foundation does not require the PAC to bank with 5/3 and also is offering information about the "Give Butter" donation platform for fundraising.

→ **Implications for future event presence:** Capitalize on the interest in WPAC merchandise to establish a greater presence as well as offering items for sale at upcoming events (campfire, etc.). This could be t-shirts, soda, free popcorn, etc.

→ **Annual Banner to be placed as soon as possible;** Year-round banners for donor recognition are available. Because our time-limited WFFA banners were ripped down and last fall's survey yard signs were vandalized, we will be placing these banners in locations that are on taller fencing in an effort to discourage tampering.

→ **Jacob Schuster , WPAC president, was selected to be a part of the Park Advisory Council Governance Committee.** This committee helps provide oversight and applies codes of conduct to Park Advisory Councils across the city. A great honor that another member of our WPAC was selected to serve on an outside committee!

→ **Wender Collective:** WPAC is planning to have a table/presence at their upcoming event/performance for fundraising and outreach. **REMNANTS 2026:** an eco-mythic public spectacle. Giant spirits walk the paths of restored native ecosystems in Chicago's parklands, inviting us to reawaken the wild within. REMNANTS weaves together ecology, history, futurity and collective awe in a site-specific movement performance.

→ **State of Lincoln Square from Heart of Lincoln Square @ Dank House, August 25th**
Jacob and Tessa will be attending and speaking at the event.

→ **Bathroom Update,** Provided by Deb Miretzky

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.

At this time, Deb has spoken with a rep from JCDecaux, which can provide a free self-cleaning toilet which the company will maintain at no charge, but installation must be funded by raising money via public and/or private sources. The cost of installation could be as high as half a million dollars but we do not know for sure until research by the Park District occurs. Sewer, water, and electricity connections would be necessary for a Decaux toilet.

There is also a need to research other companies that manufacture free-standing public toilets. Deb will reach out to those who indicated on the fall 2025 survey that they were interested in advocating for the park. These toilets may or may not need hookups. It would be helpful to speak with public works officials in cities where these have been installed to have an idea of how they have worked out.

Another possibility are the regular port-o-potties that Winnemac has during the baseball season, but 1) increasing the number so more of the park is covered year round and 2)

negotiating maintenance responsibilities. Right now the Park District pays for the toilets that are in the park out of fees Welles Park Parents Association (WPPA) pays for the use of the ballfields and so their availability is directly related to the baseball season.

Stacey Anti, the Director of the North Region of CPkD, will be contacted to find out how to proceed in terms of understanding what makes sense for Winnemac and next steps.

Finally, a new bathroom survey will be constructed to provide hard data we can share with Alder Vasquez and other officials involved in this process, and as a valuable way to collect important feedback from the community. We are aware that while there is significant public sentiment for clean bathrooms in the park, there are also concerns related to providing them, and we hope to have a productive conversation leading to some resolution of this decades-long problem.

NATURAL AREAS REPORT, Provided by Tessa Groll on behalf of Amy Williamson

We have two endangered plants currently in bloom and thriving within our prairies; they are the **Kankakee Mallow** (*Iliamna remota*) and **Large-flowered Fame Flower** (*Phemeranthus calycinus*). Our goal of amplifying the presence of imperiled and endangered species is gaining traction. With additional budgeting, thanks to the support of the community and our donors, we are able to keep an eye on our beneficial species that will only continue to amplify the conservation coefficient of our prairies.

In July, we added in our first-ever weekday volunteer night! Here, the biggest focus fell upon removing bindweed, as this is, unfortunately, its time to thrive. We had ~8 volunteers join us and had another good showing for our Saturday work-day, held that same week.

In recent storms, we had three trees impacted: A Weeping Willow on the east end, an American Elm on the stadium edgeline and a Kentucky Coffee Tree. The good news is that the Willow was the first to be tended to and it seems to be doing just fine. We did unfortunately (and unexpectedly) lose the newer Kentucky Coffee Tree that was added on the east end. The American Elm still lies with a giant part of its trunk in the stadium. We are uncertain as to how this will be handled as it was already assessed by Chicago Park District, where it is seemingly out of their purview and upon the shoulders of Chicago Public Schools.