

City of Franklin
Parks Commission Meeting
July 14, 2025
Minutes

Approved
August 11, 2025

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Jesse Valdez called the July 14, 2025, Parks Commission meeting to order at 6:30 pm commencing in the Hearing Room at 9229 W. Loomis Road, Franklin, Wisconsin.

Present was Chair Jesse Valdez, Vice Chair Alderman Jason Craig, Commissioners Amy Serafin, Kristen Stanley, Mary Remington, Susan Lance and non-voting members Ex-Officio Michelle Runte and Leah Voss. Excused was Commissioner Michael Wrench. Also present were Principal Planner Marian Ecks, Department of Public Works Kevin Schlueter, Mayor John Nelson and Planning Associate Nick Fuchs.

II. Citizen Comment Period.

The citizen comment period opened at 6:32 p.m. and closed at 6:41 p.m.

Mayor Nelson commented at the last Parks Commission meeting that panel comments became contentious and loud. He read the 'Rules of a Quorum' that should be followed during City meetings. These rules can be found in the Common Council Chambers. The Mayor left the meeting at 6:41. Citizen Tim Burch (7466 S. 46th St) was present. He commented that he previously had been maintaining the trails at Pleasant View Park for about the last 10 years. He also commented paperwork had been found where he was granted permission to do so. Mr. Burch was present at a previous Parks Commission meeting when he was asked to discontinue this practice and the City would take over maintenance. The City is also doing prescribed burns. Mr. Burch asked the City for follow-up with their promise to maintain the trails. It was commented that there were reasons given at the past meeting as to why he should discontinue use. He was reminded that damage was done to some of the area and that was part of the reason he was asked to discontinue mowing. Trails can disrupt prescribed burns. Add trail maintenance to next month's meeting agenda. Discussion only, no action taken

III. Approval of Minutes

- a. **Parks Commission Meeting Minutes of June 9, 2025 and**
- b. **Environmental Commission meeting minutes of January 8, 2025**

Commissioner Stanley moved and Commissioner Serafin seconded to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2025 meeting with the following amendment under New Business b – election of a new Vice Chairperson should read - to nominate Alderman Jason Craig as 'Vice Chair', and the Environmental Commission meeting minutes of January 8, 2025. On voice vote, motion carried (4ayes, 2 abstain, 1 excused)

III. Unfinished Business

- a. **Update on parks maintenance.**

Department of Public Works, Schlueter provided an update that DPW has been doing general maintenance in the parks along with the recent readiness and take-down of the

July 4th celebration. Ex-Officio Runte reported that the bottlecap art was updated at Kayla's. Discussion only, no action taken.

- b. Community Event Engagement.** Involvement in Arbor Day, National Night Out, Trunk-or-Treat, Bike Rodeo and other City of Franklin community events.
The Parks Commission was asked to begin planning for participation in some of the above events this year. Last year some Commissioners attended the Trunk or Treat event with a Jurassic Park theme. Printed park maps, coloring booklets, crayons and park ranger stickers were distributed. This year the National Night Out is August 4, 2025. The Bike Rodeo was held in June. Principal Planner Ecks will check on the date for Trunk or Treat this year. Vice Chair Jason Craig will bring back information from the Library on their communication regarding next Trunk or Treat event. Add this topic to the next agenda. Discussion only, no action taken.
- c. Friends of Park / Park Watch.** Discussion of creation of park watch or park cleanup group. This topic has come up in the past on how Parks Commission could support community volunteer activities in the parks. Would need someone to take the lead role. It was asked if a Facebook page could be started. Principal Planner Ecks will check if this would be allowed. A web designer would be needed. The Parks Commission does have a website. Some discussion comments: Ex-Officio Runte trains the ambassadors and oversees the program at Kayla's Playground only. Do we start with Common Council and ask if they would have citizens in their district to help at specific parks? Is it necessary to have a park watch/friends? Is there manpower? There are 13 City parks and trails. This topic was brought up in the past to decrease the amount of vandalism in the parks (bathroom stalls, changing tables). Signage helps – See Something, Say Something. Fines are set by the municipal code. It was questioned if the level of vandalism has increased and if there is a trigger. Would a park watch lessen the load of DPW? Can photos of the damage be provided from the last 2 years? Commissioner Stanley recommends to get documentation of the vandalism with photos that could be added to the city newsletter. Add this topic to the next agenda. Discussion only, no action taken.
- d. Franklin Rec Department Pickleball Amenities Requests.** Wind screen and storage box status, paddle holders, etc.
Over the July 4th Civic Celebration, a pickleball tournament was held at Lions Legend Park. During that time, without approval, someone removed a portion of the windscreens on the south side of the courts. Principal Planner Ecks and DPW Schlueter will report this issue to the festival committee as this should not have occurred. The windscreens will not be put back up this year. Commissioner Stanley reported on an email from DPW Schlueter regarding paddle holders that volunteers placed on the west side of the courts. DPW Schlueter stated the holders must be ADA compliant and would need to ensure someone wouldn't injure themselves by bumping into them. Currently, pickleball volunteers are going to Vernon Barg to get supplies from an old bin and must transport them to Lions Legend for recreation play. Per DPW Schlueter, the bin at Vernon Berg cannot be moved. The Recreation department has offered to pay for a new bin for placement at Lions Legend pickleball courts. It was mentioned that volunteers can send a photo of the bin, indicate where they would like it to be placed and send it to Leah Voss who will send to DPW prior to the next meeting so an early decision can be made. This topic has been in discussion since March/April of this year. Sidewalks must be

maintained ADA compliant. DPW Schlueter will look at the information when it is sent to him. The Recreation department had previously stated they would pay for the windscreens. Invoices should be sent to Leah Voss of the Franklin Recreation department for reimbursement to DPW. DPW Schlueter will follow up with DPW Dale Borchardt to see if the invoice has been sent to the Recreation department. Add to the next agenda. Discussion only, no action taken.

- e. **Discussion of combined Parks and Environmental Commission.** Scope and purpose of combined commissions, including areas of policy oversight, role in park administration, land conservation, and natural resource protection.

- i. **Overview of City of Franklin Parks.**

- DPW, Borchardt will have a slide show presentation of the City parks at an upcoming meeting and will answer any questions. Principal Planner Ecks will discuss the CORP. Discussion only, no action taken

- ii. **Overview of Natural Resource Special Exception procedures and standards of review.**

- Principal Planner Ecks provided hand-outs at the last meeting and included in tonight's packet – Natural Resource Compensation requirements. There previously was no comparable compensation guide for use by Environmental Commission. Applicants must respond to questions when asking for an exception. Discussion only, no action taken.

- iii. **Review of Commission Recommendation Form for NRSEs.**

- Principal Planner Ecks provided a hand-out 'DRAFT' compensation guide for Natural Resource Special Exceptions. It has not yet been adopted and is subject to edits and is used as a guide only. A NRSE is a type of variance. Need a recommendation for the template to approve or deny it. Will also need a new recommendation on the Natural Resource Special Exception (NRSE). The form is available on line and filled out by the applicant. It is requested that the City Planner evaluate the responses and send them back to the applicant if they are not complete or if there are questions. Parks Commissioners will lean on City staff for their expertise for thorough responses to evaluate requests. It was asked that individual comments be sent to Principal Planner Ecks. She will not be present at the next Parks Commission meeting. The end goal is that Parks Commissioners arrive with a recommendation on the form. Discussion only, no action taken.

- f. **Franklin High School/Franklin School District #5 NRSE.** Natural Resource Special Exception (NRSE) for proposed impacts and disturbance of approximately 0.65 acres of wetland, 2.11 acres of wetland buffer, 1.41 acres of wetland setback, and 8.18 acres of woodland to allow for the construction of a building addition, a concession building, parking lot and drive additions, tennis courts, and soccer field at Franklin High School located at 8222 South 51st Street (Tax Key No. 807 9999 001).

- Planning Associate Fuchs provided an update. The school district resubmitted their application under the current UDO. More detailed project narrative and rationale for request. The wetland mitigation was moved offsite to Hilltop property. School district is waiting to hear back on wetland mitigations. Applicant Jim Lundberg noted that 'Evergreen' evaluated for endangered species. One species was listed as a potential endangered species but was not found. Commissioner Serafin noted a past self-imposed conservation agreement to maintain the land as a wetland. Why shouldn't this agreement be honored? It was commented that the

City has had population growth and new needs with the high school. A second high school was not recommended due to the high cost. Principal Planner Ecks commented that there are other areas in the City along Ryan Road that could be considered mitigation areas. Communication regarding the new referendum items was sent to neighbors within 500 feet of the expansion areas. Open meetings also were held. Franklin's Assistant Superintendent Anthony Chromy was present at the meeting.

Chair Valdez moved and Commissioner Serafin seconded a motion to recommend to Plan Commission denial of a NRSE due to the existence of a previous agreed upon Conservation Easement on the land. However, allow for mitigation on wetland area 1 and 2 to allow for the building addition. On voice vote, 3 voted aye, 2 voted nay and 1 abstained; motion carried. This item will go to the next Plan Commission meeting.

- g. Appointment of a Secretary by the Chairperson**
Commissioner Lance appointed as Secretary.
- h. Conservation Easements.** Discussion of conservation area boundary markers.
This item is tabled. Parks Commissioners should review the Conservation Easement template which was included in the meeting packet. Discussion only, no action taken.
- i. Littering Fines.** Discussion of recommendation to Common Council to increase fines or enforcement for littering from commercial and waste removal trucks.
Commercial vehicles are noted to be responsible for much of the littering on Loomis Road. Parks Commission needs to know what the actual fines are today. Fines are set by the municipal code. Principal Planner Ecks will obtain this information and bring it back. It was asked if the Commission could draft a letter to send to Waste Management and John's Disposal regarding their vehicles that use Loomis Road. Discussion only, no action taken.
- j. Invasive Species Management.** Information about Buckthorn and invasive species work done by the Environmental Commission.
Suggest that perhaps another article could be placed in the City newsletter regarding Buckthorn. History of how Environmental Commission addressed this issue in the past. Add to the next agenda and send any questions to Principal Planner Ecks. Discussion only, no action taken.

IV. New Business

- a. None.**

VI. Adjournment.

Commissioner Remington moved and Commissioner Stanley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 pm. On voice vote, all voted 'aye', motion carried (6-0-1).

The next meeting will be held on Monday, August 11, 2025.