

City of Franklin
Parks Commission Meeting
January 12, 2026
Minutes

Approved
February 9, 2026

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Jesse Valdez called the January 12, 2026, Parks Commission meeting to order at 6:30 pm commencing in the Hearing Room at 9229 W. Loomis Road, Franklin, Wisconsin.

Present were Chair Jesse Valdez, Vice Chair Alderman Jason Craig, Commissioners Amy Serafin, Mary Remington and Susan Lance. Also present was Department of Public Works Kevin Schlueter and Principal Planner Marion Ecks. Excused was Commissioner Kristen Stanley, non-voting members ex-officio Leah Voss and Michelle Runte. Commissioner Michael Wrench has resigned his position.

II. Citizen Comment Period.

The citizen comment period opened at 6:32 pm and closed at 6:32 pm. No citizen comments.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. Parks Commission Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2025.

Commissioner Remington moved and Chair Valdez seconded to approve the meeting minutes of December 8, 2025. On voice vote, all voted 'aye'; motion carried (5-0-1).

IV. Unfinished Business

a. Update on parks maintenance.

Department of Public Works, Schlueter, reported that general winter maintenance is being completed. The roof at Ken Windl Park is leaking. Discussion only, no action taken.

b. Community Event Engagement. Involvement in City of Franklin community events.

i. Arbor day – Proposed event date, selection of trees, discussion of partner organizations.

City Forester Tom Riha present. Arbor Day will be held on May 2, 2026, in conjunction with a city wide clean up, rain or shine. Trees will be handed out. City Forester Riha reviewed what was distributed last year. It was discussed by the Commission to distribute the following trees this year: Black Cherry, White Cedar, Snowberry, Pagoda Dogwood, False Indigo and River Birch. Other organizations will join the Parks Commission to host a table; MALC, Wild Ones. Commissioner Serafin may be contacted through Principal Planner Ecks should anyone like to host a table. Parks Commission will focus on Buckthorn weed and will have a sample for exhibition. Franklin Library, as well as Wehr Nature Center, has a tool which can be borrowed to remove Buckthorn. City Forester Riha will add some information to the

City Newsletter. Last year the City spent over 400 hours removing Buckthorn. It was also commented that the City Newsletter will be going digital. Citizens can opt out if they want to continue to receive paper copies. Discussion only, no action taken.

- c. **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. **Review of Commission Recommendations Form for NRSEs.**

- See draft recommendation on Natural Resource Special Exception. This document will be required to be completed for new developments. NRPP should be spelled out (Natural Resource Protection Plan). Below Existing Conditions: existing Natural Resource Features – add from the table in the NRPP. Below Applicants Request add to the second and third bullet: See table in the NRPP. Below Criteria for Approval below applicant response add City Findings / Staff Analysis. Principal Planner Ecks reported that self-imposed definition can be found in the Variance Guidance handout in Chapter 15, page 98, bullet 2, when the applicant is claiming a hardship. The City Regulator has a role in evaluating land variance requests, and the Parks Commission is delegated to offer their comments on the recommendations made by Planning and Engineering departments. Principal Planner Ecks will make edits and will bring back 3 slides on scope, purpose and powers and duties of Parks Commission.

- Commissioner Serafin moved and Chair Valdez seconded a motion to table further discussion until the February meeting. On voice vote, all voted ‘aye’; motion carried (5-0-1).

- d. **Natural Resource Impact Compensation Guide** – Introduction of draft Guide for adoption and administration by the Commission.
Commissioner Serafin sent comments to Principal Planner Ecks for updates to the guide.

- Chair Valdez moved and Vice Chair Craig seconded a motion to table discussion until the February meeting when there’s an updated version of the ‘City of Franklin Natural Resource Protection Plan Guidance’ to review. On voice vote, all voted ‘aye’; motion carried (5-0-1).

- e. **Littering Fines.** Discussion of recommendation to Common Council to increase fines of enforcement for littering from commercial and waste removal trucks.

- There are currently no littering fines in the City of Franklin. Chair Valdez created a draft about littering for possible use in the future. This document was in the meeting packet and begins with ‘To Whom It May Concern’. Chair Valdez will do some research on fines and enforcement and will research comparable fines from other cities. Once a proposal is drafted Vice Chair Craig will find a second Alderperson to support the proposal and take it to Common Council. Discussion only, no action taken.

- f. **Proposal to rename Ernie Lake Park** as “Tony Megna Park home of Lake Ernie” in honor of Parks Commission Chair Emeritus Anthony (Tony) Megna.

This proposal was approved at the December 2025 Parks Commission meeting and will be presented at the January 20, 2026, Common Council meeting. Discussion only, no action taken

- g. Park Facilities Reservation and Permitting Policies.** Discussion of reservation policies for league sports and other groups, fees, rules and policies for parks. Chair Valdes left the room at 7:35 pm and returned a few minutes later prior to the end of the discussion. Principal Planner Ecks provided documentation of decisions made previously by the Parks Commission and park rentals and reported there is a ‘no’ sales rule in the parks. If you rent a pavilion at one of the parks you may reserve the pickleball courts if permission is received from Parks Commission. Commissioner Lance will follow up with Muskego, New Berlin and Milwaukee County on their policies and practices with regards to local tournaments. Does Milwaukee County rent courts, are tournaments allowed to accept money and do you need to show certificates of insurance? Discussion only, no action taken.

V. New Business

- a. Materials for Newsletter including** buckthorn information, Arbor Day information, other articles about environmental topics and events, the next Newsletter is tentatively scheduled to go out sometime the week of February 23, 2026. Materials for this next newsletter must be submitted by Wednesday, January 14th. Information on Buckthorn and Arbor Day to be included in the newsletter. Update to the draft to denote this is the City’s 25th Annual Arbor Day celebration. Remove Environmental Commission and replace it with Parks Commission (see email from Lisa Huening). The library is in favor of allowing food vendors. Principal Planner Ecks will check with the City’s Health Department. Discussion only, no action taken.
- b. Communications – City of Franklin Website –** Discussion on city park webpages content and cover summary. Chair Valdez added this topic to the agenda. He would like to see Park’s webpage updated for a better experience. Currently you must go to the Parks Commission page. Parks and Rec have their own page. DPW and Clerk’s office would need to be contacted to make any updates. Discussion only, no action taken.

- i. Parks Commission:**

- <https://www.franklinwi.gov/Departments/ElectedOfficials/Boards-Commiaaions/Parks-Commission.htm>

- For reference only

- ii. Parks general information and reservations:**

- <https://www.franklinwi.gov/Departments/Parks-Recreation.htm>

- For reference only

VI. Adjournment.

Vice Chair Craig moved and Commissioner Remington seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm. On voice vote, all voted 'aye', motion carried (5-0-1).

The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026.