

PARK AND RECREATION BOARD MINUTES
MONDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2026
7:00 PM

Present: Tim Hallquist, Shaunta De Boer, Nick Miller, Kathy Van Thiel, Randy Ferrell, and Rick Conner via phone with arrival at 7:30pm.

Absent: Craig Eisenhut

Others: Sam Blonien, Tom Jenson, Elise Miller, and Jim Muenzenberger.

7:00 PM Call to Order

Public comments for those items not included on this agenda: (Please be advised the Park and The Park & Recreation Board will receive information from the public for a three-minute time period per person with time extensions per the Park and Recreation Chairperson's discretion. Be it further advised that there may be limited discussion on the information received, however, no action will be taken under public comments.)

Call to Order

1. Consideration of a motion to approve the Park and Recreation minutes of the November 3rd, 2025, meeting -

Motion (Conner/de Boer) to approve November 3, 2025, minutes. Motion carried (6-0).

Recreation –

2. Discussion and Consideration of Special Event for Hartland Chamber of Commerce Summer Market at Nixon Park, Elise Miller-

Elise Miller presented the proposal for a Summer Market series to be hosted by the Chamber of Commerce. She began by explaining the background: "We had originally discussed in this fall, sometime maybe November, about bringing the farmer's market over to Nixon Park. That did not work out as we had hoped."

Mrs. Miller proposed four Sunday afternoon dates for the Summer Market series hosted by the Chamber of Commerce: June 14th, July 12th, and September 13th, with an August date to coincide with the street dance. She clarified that the August event would not affect the park but would be part of the marketing for the four-part series.

When asked about the farmer's market, it was confirmed it would continue at its usual location, noting that the farmer's market leader had just received approval at the last board meeting.

Mrs. Miller presented a map showing proposed vendor locations. She explained her primary preference: "My first ask would be to put the vendors in the parking lot area like we had discussed originally with the farmers' market. So, this would be the overflow if I had more than 20 vendors." She indicated that secondary spots would be along the path to the north if needed.

Jenson asked about the specific area between the path and parking lot. Elise clarified it would serve as overflow space, with the parking lot being the primary vendor location.

Tim Hallquist questioned the choice of location, asking if they were trying to stay out of the sun and why they were not using the grassy area behind the bleachers near the band shell. Elise explained she was flexible on location but wanted to offer chamber members the opportunity to park their vehicles in spots as a marketing feature for featured vendors.

Nick Miller, identifying himself as Elise's husband, played devil's advocate, raising several concerns: "With that idea, the vendors will all be facing the opposite way of where they're trying to attract the beer garden. You know, they'll be facing the splash pad." He also expressed concern about taking away parking spaces from park visitors and safety issues with vehicles in the parking lot during the event.

The discussion evolved around vendor placement, with Tim suggesting the grassy area would be safer and would not take away parking. Miller supported this view, emphasizing his consistent position about preserving parking spots for park visitors. Mrs. Miller remained open to adjusting the layout based on registration numbers, stating: "I'm not saying it's set in stone that I'll do one thing or the other. I kind of want to see where my registration lays out and go from there."

A significant discussion arose about solicitor's permits. Mrs. Miller said the Village Clerk had asked her to have vendors fill out solicitor's permits at \$100 per vendor. Hallquist noted this seemed like something new. Elise expressed concern: "I'm not going to get a vendor that has to pay 100 dollars solicitor's permit plus whatever I'm charging them." She offered to have the Chamber pay one \$100 permit for the entire year but would not require individual vendors to pay.

Jenson said they would need to check with Sandee about the specific requirements, as this appeared to be a new policy. The discussion touched on whether this might be related to insurance issues or food vendor requirements, but no one was certain of the reasoning.

Jenson asked about other logistics, including diggers hotline requirements for any stakes in the ground, responsibility for trash cleanup, and the need to cone off parking spots Saturday night to ensure availability for Sunday's event.

During discussion, Elise confirmed the event hours would be 11 AM to 3 PM, with vendor arrival at 9:30 AM and cleanup by 4 PM. The Chamber is responsible for the trash and for coning. Mrs. Miller said that the Beer Garden will do the cones on Saturday night.

Motion (Ferrell/Miller) to recommend approval to the Village Board for the Chamber Summer Market, at Nixon Park on specified days, pending solicitor fees. Motion carried (6-0).

3. Discussion and consideration of Special Event for Bark River Bash, May 2, 2026, at Nixon Park, Kiwanis -

Jim Muenzenberger presented on behalf of the Kiwanis Club for their sixth annual Bark River Bash event. He began by noting a significant change: "We had before cosponsored or co-hosted this with the business improvement district, and they have decided to just let us go on our own now."

Muenzenberger outlined the familiar components of the event, including the kayak and canoe launch from Centennial Park, with helpers assisting participants and parking available there. The main event at Nixon Park would run from 9 AM to 3 PM, with activities from 10 AM to 2 PM. The duck race would launch from the Senor Tomas parking lot area and culminate at Nixon Park. The Kiwanis requested use of the Fine Arts Center and Shelter 4, maintaining the same setup as previous years where food vendors requiring electricity could use the warming shed's power on the pad. Muenzenberger expressed hope to increase vendor participation back to 40-50 vendors, noting they had fewer last year. He emphasized vendor preferences based on feedback: "We've had feedback with our vendors that even though we've put them in the grassy area behind the bleachers as you so called it there, they felt that they were out of the action and got less traffic there, so he would like the vendors along the path.

The discussion turned to the \$100 solicitor's permit issue raised earlier. Jim expressed concern about the financial impact on vendors: "We are charging them 25 a pop... I think they're going to have sticker shock if it becomes 125." He noted that local food vendors like Creo Cafe were already paying the \$75 food vendor fee, but additional charges might create "a ghost town" for vendor participation.

Hallquist asked about the event's beneficiary. Muenzenberger explained: "Kiwanis is always a children's-based organization. This year, again, I think we are targeting the library still." He noted they had funds set aside but were waiting for the library to specify how the funds would be used. Muenzenberger mentioned they might return to supporting local schools in the future.

Hallquist made the connection that since vendors were only being charged \$25 and all profits went to charity; this justified the fee waiver request. Muenzenberger confirmed they had received fee waivers for the first four years but not last year.

The discussion covered logistical details including power requirements. Muenzenberger explained they could draw power from both the Fine Arts Center and Shelter 4, having successfully run four Nescos in the past without issues. Jenson suggested the pavilion behind the Fine Arts Center as an alternative location for food vendors, noting it had adequate power and weather protection. Muenzenberger mentioned that Beer Snobs had expressed interest in running the beer garden, though this would need to be coordinated with the village's contractor arrangements. Regarding the kayak/canoe portion, Muenzenberger requested temporary loading zones on Park Avenue's south side for participants to load their watercraft. He noted people currently had to drag equipment long distances through crowds. Board members discussed various options, with some participants already using the 300 Cottonwood building parking lot for loading. Jim reported minimal issues with the event, noting only about a dozen of the 1,000 ducks typically went unaccounted for, suspecting "light-fingered kids" might snatch some as souvenirs. Tim reminded Jim to coordinate final details with Tom once everything was finalized. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion (Van Thiel/Conner) to recommend approval to the Village Board of Bark River Bash, May 2, 2026, Nixon Park, Kiwanis with the request of the fees waived and pending the cost of for the Vendors. Motion carried (6-0).

4. Discussion and consideration for Baby Goat Yoga, May 31st, 2026, Nixon Park, Wisconsin Athletic Club -

Rec Director Blonien presented this item on behalf of Katie, who was unable to attend due to illness. He explained this event had been successfully held for the past couple of years at Nixon Park using the same area as previously.

The event would take place on May 31st, with staff setting up fencing and handling all cleanup afterward. Jenson confirmed he had no issues with the baby goats, and board members noted the event's growing popularity. Miller commented: "I hear good things about it all the time. It is booked every year. It sells out." He added that the event was always well-organized with no mess left in the park.

Motion (de Boer/Ferrell) to recommend approval to the Village Board for Baby Goat Yoga, May 31st, 2026. Motion carried (6-0).

5. Discussion/update on Hometown Celebration -

Blonien provided a comprehensive update on Hometown Celebration planning. The entertainment lineup was confirmed with Stetson on Thursday, Myles Wangerin on Friday, and Bella Cain on Saturday. She announced a significant change that the fireworks on Friday are going to start a little bit later, so they are going to be starting at 10, not 9:30.

They were still seeking a band to play during the day on Saturday, as Blonien explained: "We had the carnival and everything was running, and we had no music happening until Bella Cain started that night." They discussed using the speakers from the pumpkin party movie night to provide background music.

Blonien also said that the community band has declined to play this year. The band cited two issues: the carnival was too loud last year, and they did not have the grassy area available for their fans. Hallquist questioned whether the carnival's music would suffice, but Blonien explained they wanted music by the beer tent to draw people during the day.

A cornhole tournament was recommended for Saturday.

Blonien confirmed the carnival booking with Lake Enterprises, a new company since last year's carnival was unavailable. He shared positive details: "He's done rib fest, so he's done, like, bigger productions and everything. So, he is really excited. He just got bumper cars."

Blonien said the carnival would now extend through Sunday with daily wristband deals. The carnival company was based in Eagle and most staff would not stay overnight in the park, reducing potential issues.

Blonien reported the sponsorship support at \$26,000, with Culver's confirmed as presenting sponsor and Bank Five Nine sponsoring the concert series again.

No formal motion was required for this informational update.

Public Works -

6. Discussion on Memorial Plaque at Nixon Park to honor people that have given time or worked for Hartland -

Jenson introduced this item, explaining it originated from the last Village Board meeting when Jeff requested a Park Board discussion. The conversation began with the recent naming of Castle Park as Lamerand Park, approved at the last village board meeting.

Jenson showed proof designs for new signage at Castle Lamerand Park, with a tentative ribbon-cutting ceremony planned for June 20th. Miller added interesting context: "The coolest part about that because he definitely deserves it is that's his backyard... I lived right next to him when we first moved here, so it's literally his backyard."

Jenson explained they were transitioning to new composite signs throughout the village, costing about \$1,200 for two signs plus \$80 per post, noting these would "last forever" compared to current signs requiring regular maintenance.

The discussion turned to a broader memorial concept. Hallquist recalled previous board discussions about creating a memorial wall, originally considering the location "out in that wall right out there." The main challenge identified was establishing criteria for who deserves a plaque.

Miller, identifying himself as being from Watertown, shared how his hometown handled memorials. He showed photos of Watertown's Riverside Park memorial system: "That little tower with the black plaques is dedicated to people that served Watertown." The four-sided tower provided ample space, with plaques that could be easily removed for engraving and replaced.

Hallquist considered Nixon Park as the obvious location for such a memorial, emphasizing the need for a spot that would not be moved or interfere with activities. He proposed two possibilities: incorporating it into a future Fine Arts Center rebuild or creating a standalone memorial near the recently rebuilt flagpole area with arrowhead benches.

Various board members suggested locations. Someone proposed hanging plaques on the pickleball fence, while Jenson suggested incorporating them into existing structures like benches or the Hartland sign. Jenson emphasized he does not want it as a stand-alone completely, like, just sit in the middle of the grass here... someone could knock it over.

Miller advocated for placing the memorial where it would get maximum visibility, contrasting with Hallquist's suggestion of the quieter memorial area. Miller said the uniqueness of Watertown's approach was that parents sitting at the park would look at and discuss the plaques, creating more engagement than a location requiring people to go out of their way.

The board agreed the concept was worth pursuing but recognized establishing criteria would be challenging. Hallquist noted this was a work in progress for discussion, comparing the difficulty to Pro Football Hall of Fame selection controversies.

No motion was made as this was a discussion item only.

Other Items for Consideration –

7. Announcements -

* Conner reported his business would be opening within 3-4 weeks.

* Public Works Director Jenson provided several public works updates. He discussed the Ice Age Trail Alliance and Waukesha County Land Conservancy's proposal for a new trail route. Using a map, he showed the existing white trail, the unofficial yellow path, and the current red route that required walkers to use sidewalks along Cottonwood.

* Jenson explained most of the proposed route was on Waukesha County Conservancy land, with only a small portion touching Village of Hartland property. When asked about the wetness, he confirmed it was not wet at all, with a nice existing trail and parking area. He had walked it with both organizations and received preliminary approval.

* Jenson reported on a successful buckthorn removal event the previous Friday and Saturday, with 60-80 volunteer's chainsaw cutting invasive species. He showed before and after photos demonstrating dramatic improvement, noting praise for the village's prior clearing work that allowed continuity.

* Rec Director Blonien provided recreation updates. T-ball registration had opened two weeks prior with 153 kids already signed up. Summer camp information would go out the next day with registration opening March 11th. They have received three applications for one open position, indicating strong staff retention. Bionien noted they would soon be recruiting for summer help. She will be attending the state recreation conference the rest of the week.

8. Adjourn -

Motion (Conner/de Boer) to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted By Recording Secretary,
Deidre Bushey - Deputy Clerk