

YOUTH AND RECREATION

Tuesday, November 4, 2025 – 6:25 p.m.

Council Chambers – Olean Municipal Building

Present: Members: Chairman Forney, Vice Chairman McCall, Alderman Robinson, and Alderman Anastasia. Others: Alderman Bennion; Alderman Keary; Mayor William Aiello; Frank Caputo, City Clerk; Lens Martial, City Auditor; James Sprague, Director of Public Works, and Tiffany Taylor, Managerial Confidential Administrative Secretary.

1. Roll Call

Alderman Forney called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. and asked that the record show that all committee members were present except Alderman Crawford, who was excused.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Committee Meeting (Tuesday, May 6, 2025)

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2025 meeting was made by Alderman Forney, seconded by Alderman McCall. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried.

3. Unfinished Business

None

4. New Referrals for Consideration

a. Trees in Oak Hill Park

Alderman McCall explained it has been said a few times that we do not have a forester, and if someone in DPW has experience they should go through and have a look at the trees in the park. She explained she has put through information in the iWorQ system with some photos, and there are trees that you can tell are dead while other are dropping large branches that need to be trimmed. She explained we need to see what we need to do to get them trimmed and taken down. She explained we have invested in Oak Hill Park and we also need to invest to put some new trees in the park that will have some longevity. She explained we are probably looking into the spring now, but we do have funds available in the Capital Fund. She explained if someone can at least do a tree assessment and give us some feedback what recommendations are, it would be helpful.

Director Sprague explained he can have that for the Council, and explained it already probably exists. He explained we will have the tree removal contractor on the next Finance Committee agenda so then we will have a contractor to do tree work. He explained if we do get into the winter and don't have too much snow, it is not a bad time to cut trees. Alderman McCall

explained we can talk about this after we approve the tree removal contractor. Alderman Robinson explained once we find a contractor, he would like to get a PL done before Christmas so that way we can take a tree list and over the winter months get those trees down. He explained then we can focus in the spring on other issues we have had to be addressed in Oak Hill and Franchot Parks.

Alderman Bennion asked if some of the trees in these parks are ash trees that would be able to be taken care of from that fund, and Director Sprague explained there may be a couple in Franchot Park, but there are none in Oak Hill Park.

b. Capital Fund #203 – Franchot Park Beautification Project

Alderman Forney explained she has emailed everyone the proposal that was done in September 2024 for Franchot Park. She explained we have talked about this a few times over the year and have highlighted little things that we would like to be taken care of, and some of that didn't happen. She explained she would like to bring this back to the table now that Director Sprague is here because there are funds in the Capital Fund that can be used. She explained she understands we are getting into winter, but she would like to see what we can do to get the park ready for spring. She explained she worked on this proposal with Alderman McCall after meeting with residents and the Mayor at the park. She explained they walked through and looked at the big picture as well as some little things that can be done. She explained the trail, the dead trees, the basketball court, and the lack of lighting are all issues that prevent the park from being utilized in a way that it could be. She explained the drinking fountain has been installed, so that is a big plus.

Director Sprague explained we will be addressing dead trees in the park when we have a contractor. Alderman McCall explained parks are important to our residents and children, and they are a reason why people move to communities. She explained we have a beautiful park there and we need to think about making it nicer and adding more lighting to make it safe for residents, children and those wanting to visit. She explained she and Alderman Forney share frustration that we have this plan and it was stalled. She explained if we can get this plan in place and do most of the things listed in it, it will make a huge difference. She explained the horseshoe pit could be reutilized into a dog park without spending hundreds of thousands of dollars. She explained signage is needed, and noted signage should be consistent through all the parks. She explained blacktop patching could help the trail where kids are riding bikes and people use walkers and wheelchairs. She explained there are a lot of reasons to move this forward and get things done prior to next summer. She explained it would be nice to add signage on South Union Street similar to that up and down Union Street for cohesiveness.

Alderman Forney explained she had been drafting a five year improvement plan for all of the parks in the City. She explained Marcus Park is being updated and renewed and the Splash Park is going in at War Vets Park, but she is looking at other little parks and how we can refresh things throughout the community. Alderman Anastasia explained some of these things on the list have costs attached so we need to get price tags attached to add to budget discussions. Alderman Forney explained the original plan in 2024 was to have the DPW Director get costs for some of these things to see how far the funding we already have will go. Alderman McCall explained there is already \$50,000 allocated. She explained we need to do what we can at Oak Hill Park with that capital fund and then we can use what is leftover in Franchot Park to supplement the \$50,000 we already have appropriated for the park.

Alderman Bennion explained Forness Park is in bad need of an update and explained the playground equipment is very old. Alderman Keary asked if we have looked at funding through the Ralph Wilson Foundation and Alderman Forney explained she can connect with Ms. Kerper to see if there are options for that. She noted there is a match required for this type of funding. Alderman Robinson explained funding from the Ralph Wilson Foundation would be great and explained we have already done quite a few things with their help in the area. He explained some of these things seem to be simple fixes and a lot could have been done with a community event similar to the one held last year. He explained the Council could present some kind of a timeline to break this up into achievable and see what things we can do quickly versus what we need an RFP for.

Alderman Bennion asked if the heads from the North Union Street lighting could be used in the park when they are removed, and Director Sprague explained they could be if they work with the pole. Alderman Forney asked if milling and paving leftovers could be reused. Alderman Robinson explained there are roots in the way when it comes to the path, and we would have to go over them but then we risk the path becoming bad again over time. He explained if we list achievable, we should see about an RFP for the basketball court and the path to replace them. He explained there are also some issues with water along the path.

Alderman Forney asked if a PL should be created with a timeline of achievable. Alderman Robinson explained he thinks that would work, and a planning phase can be done now and early in the winter. He explained he feels we have communicated about this a lot, and if we want to move this forward we have to do something to get this moving forward. Alderman Bennion explained Director Sprague has been clearly very responsive when it comes to everything the Council has asked him for. He explained he has asked for very reasonable timelines and he feels comfortable with him coming up with this information without a PL. Alderman Forney explained she can work with Director Sprague on this.

Alderman Robinson explained we can do the same thing with other parks so we create a plan to move forward with all the parks. Alderman Forney explained the five year plan should include both bigger and smaller parks. Alderman Robinson explained the City would like to stay uniform with signs, and we should see what company is available to match what we are using so we can keep all signs uniform in the parks. He explained we don't need them all over the park but at least one in the opening where people enter. Alderman McCall asked this be put back on the agenda for January.

Alderman McCall explained there is some lighting to finish up at Forness Park. Mayor Aiello explained we had a plan for Forness Park to overhaul the entire park and were going to submit for grants for assistance, but the Council decided to put that off until later. He explained that was almost eight years ago. Alderman McCall explained it would be good to bring that back forward.

Alderman Anastasia explained he has had some requests for a gate in the one section that is not fenced in at the Homer Street Park to prevent animals from getting out of the park and chasing a dog when dogs walk by, as people take their dogs to the park and let them off their leashes. Mayor Aiello explained we talked about turning that into a dog park when we first talked about dog parks as almost the entire park is fenced in. He explained there is a hotel close by so that would give people a place to go with their animals. Alderman McCall explained the reality is, dogs should not be running loose in the park, and explained people are not following the City ordinance if they allow them to. Alderman Anastasia explained there are also concerns about kids running into the road. Alderman Bennion explained you can't gate dogs into a park with kids. He explained taking a portion of the park and turning it into a dog park would be good, to have separate areas for dogs and kids. Mayor Aiello explained he suggests everyone looks at the park, as it is not a very big park. He explained there is an area towards Buffalo Street that could be fenced across to be used as a dog park.

5. Committee Reports

None

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Forney, seconded by Alderman McCall. Voice vote, ayes all. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.