Draft Minutes for Park Committee
October 15, 2026
Town Hall, N5589 Commerce Road, Onalaska

1. Meeting was called to order by chair De Boer at 6:15. Present were BD, BB, EM, SC. AK arrived at 6:16
2. Motion to approve agenda by SC/BB, passed 4-0
3. Motion to approve minutes of September 21, 2026 meeting SC/EM, passed 4-0
4. No Public Comment (3-minute time limit)
5. BD Chair Report: BD met with Town Chair Przywojski to discuss the long list of work to be done at the parks this committee visited over the summer. They prioritized items and the chair would give the top priorities to the public works employees to get what they can done this fall. Work would resume in the spring and a list of regular park duties to be checked or done over the year would be added to the Town Manual. A park committee member needs to make a list with structures at each park and of duties by park to make it easier to manage on a daily/seasonal basis for the crew.

6. Chair DeBoer provided a summary on how she and SC met with Dr. Tanner Knorr (TK) and Ms. Clara Rush (CR) then later with just CR on the collaboration with UWL. The current park plan and the results of the 2020 town survey are a starting point for using in focus groups to determine how residents would like to move forward with town parks. TK and CR will hold focus groups with 12 or so residents ranging across different ages and with people using different town parks to find out general info on how parks are being used, what the satisfaction level is with the improvements done since 2020 and to see what next steps residents would like to see. Target audiences may include the ball clubs using fields, parents of pre-school aged children and school aged children, middle aged adults and senior adults. The information from the focus groups would then be used by CR to update the recommended actions in parks plan. The study plan has been approved by the UWL IRB for a survey, so TK and CR will work on getting that amended to change from a survey format to a focus group format. BD will meet regularly with the UWL team and anyone interested in joining is welcome to do so.

7. EM and BD have extensively updated the main body of the park plan at this time and the results of the focus groups will help CR and TK update the recommended actions section, as appropriate. This completed plan will be presented to the town board in December or January.

8. Grant writing may be premature this fall due to a lack of a plan to help guide what monies are needed – but at this time we are also unfamiliar with granting agencies or groups and how to find calls for proposals. SC will check with other UWL faculty to see if they have a list of granting bodies that would help us find potential grants to apply for. If that sort of list does not exist, committee members could look for local philanthropic groups (i.e. La Crosse Foundation) or check with vendors for possible seed monies.

9. The current draft of the tree donation policy was considered in excellent shape. Discussion centered around the donation fee details and whether a set total fee should be listed, or if the total donation should be left to the actual costs of the tree, delivery/pickup, and supplies needed to plant the tree plus a $30 administration fee would comprise the

donation. A form will be developed by BB and AK to complete the policy before recommending this to the town board.
10. Similar to the tree plan, the bench donation fee was discussed, and it was determined that the cost of a cement pad needed to be included in the fee, so further work needs to be done to determine how to include that in the policy. Benches on the bike trail purchased by WI DNR and benches donated through the BPCA come from https://www.belson.com/Park-Benches. The Malibu bench is what we believe is used, and model P660 (6-foot bench with black legs $590.00 listed online, armrests and mounting brackets would be another $181. Shipping is extra. It may be possible to save if we bulk purchase with the BPCA. The benches have weathered well along the bike trail and they are made out of recycled plastic in Naperville IL, and have a 3 year warranty. A form is also needed for this policy. AK and BB will see if they can make one form for both the tree and bench donation policy and bring it to the next meeting.
11. Discussion and possible action making recommendation to Town Board related to work on Memorandum of Understanding with Sports Club. The work recommended by the Park committee and approved at the October Town board meeting as part of the consent agenda was proposed by HYPER (Holmen Youth), but there is no formal written agreement. Chair DeBoer drafted an agreement for this work and will meet with the HYPER president to get it finalized so that both sides have a clear understanding of what work will be done at which parks and proper records will be filed with our town clerk. A more formal MOU for use with HYPER and other ball clubs for 2027 will need to be developed over the winter and account for state statues as well as additional requests from Supervisor Fogel. Fogel and DeBoer discussed the following:

1. All fields need to be covered even if work does not happen every year at all the fields.

2. Would it be possible to have the portable toilets open at all times and cleaned as needed to handle use outside of the ball club practice and games? The town or another donor may need to share the costs of additional portable toilets and cleanings above and beyond ball club use.

3. The MOU needs to have contact names and telephone numbers for ball field and portable toilet concerns raised by residents or town employees.

4. In addition to ball field maintenance, can the clubs help with weed control around the fences and maintenance of the bleachers?

Committee members understand the suggested discussion points but feel that further negotiation with HYPER and other ball clubs may be needed since the ball clubs are using fundraising and volunteers to keep up the fields. As owner of the parks, some committee members felt it was the town's responsibility to maintain fencing and bleachers since some of that may have been paid for by philanthropic groups with the understanding that the town would take over maintenance.
12. Motion by SC/BB to as for $30,000 to potentially add new equipment (as afforded) to Thunderbird Park and Prairie Heights or other parks in need. Passed 5-0. BB mentioned that a resident in Apple Valley wanted to donate this fiscal year to a 501(C)(3) non-profit group to pay for converting the tennis courts to pickleball courts in Apple Valley Park. At this time, the town does not have any affiliation with a 501(C)(3) group, but we could find

out if one in the area would be willing to accept the donation and work with the town to move forward. BD will check with Holmen Area Foundation and with contact the potential donor.

13. November 18, 6pm at town hall

Tentative Dec 2, 6pm at town hall - this is moved to accommodate one more meeting with UWL student CR before finals and the semester break. The default 3rd Tuesday date falls during CR's finals week.

14. Motion to Adjourn SC/BB 7:59 PM.

by Emy Monroe