



ROCK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Highways & Parks

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Public Works Committee Meeting – Parks
Tuesday, May 13, 2025 – 8:00 a.m.
Public Works Department – Committee Room
3715 Newville Road
Janesville, WI 53545

Call to Order: Chair Mawhinney called the meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 8:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Supervisors Homan, Mawhinney, Pennycook, Sutter, and Woodman

Committee Members Absent: None

<u>Staff Members:</u>	John Traynor	Park Services Supervisor
	Amy Friend	Parks Community Coordinator
	Amanda McElroy	Administrative Professional III

<u>Others Present:</u>	Chuck Flynn	Citizen (Zoom)
	Lupe Begovatz	Department of Public Works
	Jim Hessenauer	Department of Public Works
	Andy Kleeberger	Department of Public Works
	Tom Moon	Department of Public Works
	Joe Soergel	Department of Public Works
	Carl Lange	Friends of Rock County Parks
	Carolyn Brandeen	League of Women Voters
	Floyd Finney	Parks Advisory Board
	Dean Paynter	Parks Advisory Board
	Cathy Schneider	Rock River Heritage Park Friends

Approval of Agenda: Supervisor Pennycook moved approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Supervisor Woodman. ADOPTED.

Approval of Minutes Dated March 11, 2025: Supervisor Woodman moved approval of the minutes from March 11, 2025, as presented, seconded by Supervisor Pennycook. ADOPTED.

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Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements: Mr. Traynor introduced the fully staffed Parks Crew of Jim Hessenauer, Andy Kleeberger, Tom Moon, Joe Soergel, and Lupe Begovatz to the Committee.

Mr. Traynor added that Mr. Finney and Mr. Presny are stepping down after over 20 years of service on the Parks Advisory Committee. Anyone interested in serving on the Parks Advisory Committee can complete the online application by June 18, 2025, at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Traynor explained that the Janesville Fire Department was called to Rock River Heritage Park after an anonymous report of kids starting fires in the park. The Evansville School District had a “Survival Skills Day”, and the fires were started on provided metal signs with adult supervision. It is possible the Department will receive a bill for the fire call, despite requesting it be cancelled.

Parks Advisory Board Communications: None

REVIEW, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION

Discussion and Possible Action – Rock River Heritage Park Pond: Mr. Traynor shared that after pumping 4.5 feet of water into the pond, it has lost approximately 3.5 feet of water. Mr. Traynor added that there have been no noticeable issues to attribute to the leakage out of the dam, like discoloration, seepage, or any other obvious issues. After investing money into the purchase of a pump, manpower, and the permitting process, Mr. Traynor asked the Committee for their input on the next step. Options include hiring an engineering firm to figure out the cause of the water loss and cost to repair it, leaving it as it is, or even draining it. Mr. Traynor did reach out to a couple of engineering firms to obtain estimates for a survey but has not heard back yet. Supervisor Pennycook made a motion to obtain estimates from engineering firms to potentially identify the cause of the water loss, seconded by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Parks Report – See Attached: Mr. Traynor and Ms. Friend shared a PowerPoint presentation highlighting items in their report and answered questions from the Committee.

Parks General

- Staffing Update – FTE and Seasonals- four seasonal employees start on May 27
- Maintenance Update – Burning Events, Storm Clean Up, Mowing, Park Prep- burned a lot of natural areas, including Lee Park, Alms Farm, Miller Farm, Turtle Creek Parkway, and Beckman Mill
- Parks Signage – QR Code- sign with QR code to park ordinances will be posted at every park entrance, park users are ultimately responsible for knowing the rules
- Trail Maintenance – Cleaning, Spraying- using growth inhibitor to control wild parsnip on some park trails
- Trail School – Joe and Lupe- May 18-21, 2025, sponsored by the Wisconsin Horse Council and the Rock County Multi-Use Trail Group

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- Horse Trails are Open- opened April 28, 2025
- Happy Hollow and Royce Dallman Piers Installed- Gibbs Lake pier is in year round
- Boat Launch Fees in Effect - April 15-October 31- fees have not changed
- 4-10 Schedule – May 12- new hours are Monday-Thursday, 6am-4pm daily, parks will have one employee rotate and work Tuesday-Friday to prep weekend rentals
- Job Fair – April 16- promoted Rock County at Milton High School
- 2026 Budget – CIP Due May 2- asking for Sportsman’s Park shelter
- Maintenance/Repairs on StoryWalk® Signs- signs need to be repaired before the next StoryWalk® can be put up

Beckman Mill Park

- Stocking Fish in Pond- over 1,000 fish added to the pond on April 30
- Fishing Pole Lending Program- sponsored by the Forever 34 Foundation
- Opening Day- May 3, kicked off the mill tour season (Saturdays/Sundays from May-October, 1pm-4pm)
- Boardwalk Ramp Addition- almost complete, Friends of Beckman Mill and Friends of Rock County Parks donated the funds to add the ramp
- Wednesday Walk – May 14- starting at 10am, led by Parks Crew Leader, Jim Hessenauer

Carver-Roehl Park

- Egg Hunt & Eggs-ercise- April 7-21, sponsored by the Friends of Carver-Roehl
- Earth Day Guided Nature Hike – April 22- fun event despite the rain, led by Parks Crew Leader Jim Hessenauer
- Wednesday Walk – May 7- led by Dave Bendlin, over 30 species of wildflowers were identified

Gibbs Lake Park

- FORCP Annual Bike Ride – May 17- 7am-2pm, different routes are available, can sign up the day of the event
- MUTG Workday – May 18- looking to trim low laying branches and rehab obstacles

Ice Age Trail – Milton to Janesville

- The Solar System Trail – April 3-May 4- developed by Dean Paynter

Lee Park

- Hwy 140 Project – Lee Park Open- park entrance off USH 67 is currently open despite the construction

Magnolia Bluff Park

- Upper Bluff is Open- includes bathrooms and horse lot, need to regrade horse lot
- Trail Work- crew has been working on down trees, also have washouts to repair

Miller Farm Wetland Conservancy

- Tile Project Update- field has been planted, will be waiting until fall
- Parking Lot Addition- built a driveway with turnaround
- Park Sign Relocation- need to relocate the sign and expand trail system

Rock River Heritage Park

- Playground Border Project- completed
- Trail Work – Culvert Project- completed, repurposed used culverts
- Repairs and Additions- doors put in leading to kitchen, trim work is completed, locks are being replaced after the vandalism, fireplace is blocked off
- Tornado Siren Addition- will be installed in the main parking lot and a light will be added to the pole
- Memorial Shelter Update- will be completed in-house with new staff this summer
- Master Plan – RRHPF- will cost about \$27,000, looking into if any unused funds from the POROS Plan could possibly be used towards this
- Eagle Scout Project Update- Jadon Upham completed his project rehabbing the picnic shelter concrete and Jacob Jorgenson is working on his project rehabbing the fire ring area behind Heritage Hall
- Volunteer Workday – April 5- Rock River Heritage Parks Friends cleaned up the perimeter trail of brush and debris
- The Solar System Trail – May 6-20, one mile loop with planet related facts
- Green-Rock Audubon Society Birding Field Trip – May 31- 8am-10am, free event open to any bird enthusiasts

Sportsman Park

- Bathrooms Open- open for the season
- Deer Shelter Replacement Update- tearing down the old shelter today for Country Barns to build the new shelter on Wednesday and/or Thursday

POROS Plan Update

- Focus Groups – April 15- four focus groups included Parks Advisory Committee/FORCP, Friends Groups, Trail Users/Groups, and Park Users
- Meeting – Park Tour – April 22- toured most of the county parks
- What's Next?- hoping to review the initial concept in the next couple months and at the August Public Works Committee Highway Meeting (August 26)

Events

- Leprechauns on the Loose – March 7-21- held at six parks, received over 300 submissions, and awarded five prize baskets that were sponsored by the Friends of Carver-Roehl
- Rock County Parks March Madness- Magnolia Bluff was crowned the Champion

Minutes of the Rock County Public Works Committee – Parks

May 13, 2025

- Earth Day Trash Pick-Up Challenge – April 9-23- Kwik Trip donated gift cards for the two prize winners
- Stateline Family YMCA Senior Health & Fitness Day – May 28- event cancelled

Next Meeting Date and Time:

Highway Meeting: Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. at the Department of Public Works.

Parks Meeting: Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. at the Department of Public Works.

Adjournment: Supervisor Pennycook moved adjournment at 8:56 a.m., seconded by Supervisor Homan. ADOPTED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda McElroy, Administrative Professional III

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