

Town of Wilson Park & Forestry Commission – What We Do

The Park & Forestry Commission (P&FC) oversees the operation and administration of the Town of Wilson's seven parks, 3 conservancies, and 2 cemeteries. In addition, the P&FC helps coordinate invasive species control in the community.

The P&FC meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM in the Town Office meeting room. Meetings last for 60 to 90 minutes, usually closer to the one-hour time frame. Commissioners are appointed by the Chairman (John Ehmann) of the Town Board of Supervisors. The Town board must approve the appointments. There are seven Commissioners, six of whom are appointed to staggered 3-year terms and one appointed to a yearly term as a representative of the Black River Advancement Association (BRAA).

Greg Hopkins currently holds the BRAA appointment and is the Chairperson of the P&FC. The other Commissioners include Tom Sonntag, Vice Chairperson, Jane Kettler, Secretary, Nancy Kissel, Dori Nemeth, and Andy Van Stelle. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary are elected by the P&FC Commissioners annually.

Meetings must comply with State of Wisconsin Public Meetings Regulations which require public postings of the date, time and location of each meeting; the meeting agenda must also be posted. Action may take place on an issue only if it is included on the posted agenda. The Chairperson normally coordinates the posting with the Town Clerk. Meetings are governed by Robert's Rules of Order and any applicable Town or State of Wisconsin regulations. (In actuality, P&FC follows Robert's Rules fairly loosely to keep discussions free-flowing and the meetings relaxed and amiable. If there is a need to follow Robert's Rules more closely, such as how to add an amendment to a motion, the current Chairman has a good background in parliamentary procedures.)

P&FC is one of the commissions or committees with the responsibility to recommend action to the Town Board of Supervisors. Sometimes the Town Board directs the P&FC to research a topic or issue and submit its recommendation to the Town Board; at other times, P&FC responds to citizen input or relevant programs which can help to improve our community. In both cases, the P&FC researches, reviews, discusses, and votes to send recommendations to the Town Board. Basically, the Commissioners discuss a relevant topic until a consensus is reached and we vote to take appropriate action. Whenever possible or needed, a written report is prepared, voted upon, and, if approved, forwarded to the Town Board. The atmosphere is relaxed and discussions are quite fun. All Commissioners appear to feel comfortable in contributing thoughts, ideas, and information in their areas of expertise as well as sharing a collective sense of humor.

Occasionally, Commissioners do get involved in projects that require a partial Saturday in one of the parks, such as the tree-planting at Schinker Creek Park. (We are slowly creating Citizen Care Committees or "Friends of _____Park" neighborhood volunteers for each of the parks or conservancies. We had about a dozen citizens help with planting nearly 60 trees in Schinker Creek Park.)

The Commission has secured several grants in the past few years: a Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant to purchase land for Schinker Creek Park, another Stewardship Grant to purchase playground equipment, picnic tables and a pit toilet for that park; a third Stewardship Grant enabled the Town of Wilson to renovate Gruber Memorial Fireman's Park/Jung Bell Tower Park with a gazebo, fitness trail, tot playground equipment, and improved soccer facilities. Still another Stewardship Grant has been secured for eradicating Japanese barberry in the Mueller Family Conservancy.

For more information, please go to the Town of Wilson website and click on the "Board/Committees" tab to access the "Park/Forestry" portal. Under the "Info On" tab you will find the P&FC semiannual reports of its activities under "Newsletters." By clicking the "Government" tab, you can find "Ordinances" where Chapter 30, a 4-page document, states the rules and regulations of the parks, conservancies, and cemeteries. Or, stop in the Town office at 5935 S. Business Drive.