

## 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 7 parks, 3 conservancies, and 2 cemeteries. In addition, the P&FC helps coordinate invasive species control in the community, plants native trees/shrubs, explores & implements trail creation/expansion to increase access for our community to enjoy, etc.

The P&FC meets on the **first** Tuesday of the month, at 6:30 pm, @ the **BRAA Hall**. Meetings last 60-90 minutes. 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). As of this writing, we are seeking a replacement BRAA liaison appointment. Current members include: Deborah Lisberg, Chair; Bill Hartman, Vice Chair; Dóri Nemeth, Secretary. Additional members include: Andy VanStelle, Tom Sonntag, and Samantha Olsen. One position is presently vacant. Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary are elected by the P & F 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. Chairperson normally coordinates the posting with the Town Clerk, but Chair & Vice Chair cooperate on this. Meetings are governed by Robert's Rules of Order and any applicable Town or State of Wisconsin regulations, although we continue to follow Robert's Rules fairly loosely to keep discussions free-flowing and the meetings relaxed and amiable.

P&FC is an Advisory committee, with responsibility to recommend action to the Town Board. Sometimes the Town Board directs 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. The atmosphere of meetings is relaxed, and discussions are animated and quite fun! Commissioners appear to feel comfortable in contributing thoughts, ideas, and information in their areas of expertise, and share a collective sense of humor.

Occasionally Commissioners participate in a partial (weekend) day tree planting event, or a few hours during the week doing invasive species removal. Establishing "Citizen Care Committees" or "Friends of \_\_\_\_\_ Park" groups is a goal we hope to achieve as we move forward.

In early 2022, P&FC secured an Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation match grant through ROOTS (Restore Our Trees Sheboygan) & LNRP (Lakeshore Natural Resources

Partnership, in the amount of \$12,000. The Town's contribution consisted of some funding, but also Donations-in-Kind. With this grant we purchased and planted ~ 82 trees of diverse native species .... (Yellow birch, Maple, Tamarack, Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak, Linden, White Pine, Hackberry, + more) .... planting them within the Jerving Conservancy, Fireman's Park, and at Schinker Creek Park over the course of two workdays. We had tremendous volunteer support! Protective exclosures were positioned around vulnerable trees, and to preserve this investment, teams of P&F members continued to water them as needed during periods of inadequate rainfall. The Black River Fire Department assisted in this endeavor (@ Fireman's Park), as did resident, Jim Gruber, who monitored & supported watering of trees in Jerving.

Our 2023 focus is on tackling Invasive Species. The Noxious Weed ordinance has been updated and will be rolled out eventually. Barberry in the Mueller Conservancy is high priority, and Stantec is engaged to address (funding approved). Additionally, removal of Honeysuckle within the Jerving Conservancy has been an on-going project. Bill Hartmann has been organizing workdays there and a core group of volunteers continue to make headway. We'll advertise these opportunities in the hope of garnering additional volunteer support.

Additional initiatives:

- Access to Jerving Conservancy, via the formal Public entry point, has historically remained less than "user-friendly". The Town Maintenance crew has created a navigable path, and P&F is considering best way-finding trail markers and additional signage to ensure respect to homeowners whose properties abut.
- Balzer Woods: this unique property has So Much to offer! The current path is linear, short, not particularly fascinating, and doesn't provide the opportunity to fully appreciate this Gem. We're working with a Boy Scout troop on a trail expansion project and a possible lookout point/benches near the Black River.
- Community garden plots @ Schinker Creek Park are underutilized. We'll advertise to solicit participants. The Pollinator Garden there continues as a "Work In Progress" – Helpers Welcome!!

For more information, or to get involved, please reach out to any P&F member – (contact info provided on this website) – or visit the Town office @ 5935 S. Business Drive. Also, by clicking the "Government" tab on the website, you can find "Ordinances", where Chapter 30 states the rules and regulations of the parks, conservancies, and cemeteries.

Thank you! Deborah Lisberg 01/20/2023.