

Rock County Parks Position, LWV Beloit and Janesville

Both Leagues of Women Voters in Rock County, Wisconsin, have an interest in timely planning for parks, outdoor recreation and open spaces. Conclusions reached in our joint study in 2001-2002 are hereby modified to reflect progress that has occurred that is in alignment with our position. The heart of the position remains timely planning and adequate staffing.

Rock County Parks

The Beloit and Janesville Leagues of Women Voters support an updated five-year Rock County "Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan".

- The plan should contain a clear vision and mission for parks, outdoor recreation, and open spaces in Rock County.
- The plan should include site development plans with an inventory of parks, clearly saying how county park improvement priorities are set and how the priorities are monitored.
- The plan should be "user-friendly", i.e. written at a general-public reading level.
- The plan should provide mechanisms which intentionally seek public participation at every step of setting and monitoring park priorities.
- The plan should meet national and state standards.
- The plan should identify sources of funding for implementation.
- The plan's provisions should be achievable.
- The LWV endorses the use of outside consultants, when funds can be secured, to plan for park improvements in order to ease the county staff workload and to benefit from the expertise that consultants could provide.

The Beloit and Janesville Leagues of Women Voters recommend that the "Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan" be fully implemented.

- The LWV recommends use of the following options to implement the plan:
 - Provide funding through general tax revenues as well as governmental and private grants.
 - Utilize the Rock County Green Fund and other volunteer funding support.
 - Consider user fees while allowing accessibility to the public.
 - Acquire additional land for parks or open spaces through purchase, abandonment, donation, dedication or designation.
 - Seek and maintain partnerships with special interest user groups.

The Beloit and Janesville Leagues of Women Voters recommend that the county administrator and supervisors address more effective ways to oversee the administration of Rock County's parks.

note: The LWV finds the present county "Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan" planning process confusing when the roles of the Planning and Development Committee and the Public Works Department/Parks Division are unclear.

- The LWV recommends the continuation of the additional staff position, serving under the parks director, to coordinate volunteer efforts in planning, developing, maintaining, promoting, and funding our county parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces.

(February 2002 - LWV of Beloit/LWV of Janesville joint work group:
Brandeen, Diedrich, Hansen, Schoenfield, Stabb, Trewartha, Waech)
(2014 - revised: Brandeen, Deupree, D.Dobson, Schoenfield)