

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Town of Washington

Door County

The Town Board of the Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin, hereby provides its written notice and agenda of the Special public meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Washington for Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, beginning at 10:00 p.m. per Department of Justice guidelines. The meeting will be held in the Rutledge Room at the Community Center. The town chairperson, or a designee has provided communication of this public meeting to the requisite news media, if any.

### **AGENDA**

#### **SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING**

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call/Quorum and Approval of Agenda
4. Specific matters intended for discussion and possible action by Town Board for closed session under one or more of the below-noted closed-session exemptions and reasons that allow for closed session:
  - a. Closed Session as authorized under section 19.85(1):
    - (g) Conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategies to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved.
5. Specific matters intended for discussion and possible action by Town Board for reconvened open session:
  - a. Action from closed session
6. Specific matters for discussion and possible action by Town Board in open session:
  - a. Approve WIZAP Committee Recommendation to release raw survey data
  - b. Approve employee for cleaning position at Rec Center
  - c. Approve costs for airport and cemetery tree cutting
  - d. Presentation by Town Clerk/Treasurer on charging options
  - e. Discussion of User Fee Considerations for visitors – Margaret Foss
7. Future meeting(s) agenda(s) discussion(s) and/or possible action(s) on future Town Board meeting(s), including specific items for inclusion on or exclusion from future agenda(s)
  - a. Regular Town Board – April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024
  - b. Annual Town Meeting – April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024
  - c. Regular Town Board – April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024
8. Adjourn

RECOMMENDATION

**WASHINGTON ISLAND PLANNING & ZONING  
COMMITTEE**

March 11, 2024

At a publically posted meeting of the Washington Island Zoning and Planning committee held on March 11, 2024, it was the unanimous recommendation of the committee members present that **the Town of Washington make public the Town of Washington Comprehensive Plan Survey results and the Open Ended Written Responses on the Comprehensive Plan Web Page.**

The motion was made by Kickbush, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael G. Kickbush AIA  
Secretary  
Washington Island Planning & Zoning Committee



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## Gym Assistant for Town of Washington Mosling Rec Center

1 message

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Town of Washington Office <townoffice@washingtonisland-wi.gov>

Wed, Mar 6, 2024 at 11:39 AM

To: siby.fall@worldline.com, richard.gaudreau@worldline.com, Katie McGrane <manager@moslingreccenter.org>

Richard and Siby,

I'm assisting Katie McGrane with filling out the credit card/ACH applications for the Town of Washington Mosling Rec Center. Would you be able to send me pdf forms of the applications? I also wanted to confirm that the estimate below is correct. Since we are a municipality, we are a tax-exempt organization, however we are not a 501c3 organization.

Another question about the transaction fee and rate, would we be able to charge the fee back to the customer? So that the town doesn't incur that cost but rather we pass that along to the purchaser? Also, does the discount rate refer to the transaction fee, or what does that rate refer to? If that's an additional fee for each transaction, would we also be able to pass that along to the purchaser?

- Credit Card Fees:
  - Set Up: \$49
  - PCI Fee+ monthly: \$19.95
  - Transaction fee = \$0.15
  - Discount rate: 2.65%
  
- ACH fess: They are much cheaper than cards. I encourage everyone to use it to save money if they already collect their clients bank details!
  - Set Up: \$49
  - Monthly: \$10
  - Per Transaction: \$0.35

ACH application: <https://boarding.na.bambora.com/?id=4f68b45c-5023-477f-8ec6-61a9b1901e89>

Credit Card Application: <https://boarding.na.bambora.com/?id=4ff56426-5085-4d90-a091-bb17bfc39115>

Thank you!

**Sincerely,**  
**Alexandria McDonald**  
**Town Clerk/Treasurer**

Town of Washington, Door County  
(920) 847-2522  
910 Main Road  
P.O. Box 220  
Washington Island, WI 54246  
Population Estimate 782

## **Visitor Revenue - User Fee Considerations**

Prepared by Margaret Foss, Washington Island Town Board Supervisor  
March 2024

The Island remains one of the last vestiges of an earlier time in Door County. This is one of our greatest assets, something that we all value, and quite possibly precariously close to being forever lost.

The Island is a limited resource upon which the ever increasing numbers of visitors has a huge impact in regard to infrastructure, services and sustainability. Once the Island consisted primarily of a vibrant local citizenry, along with a few summer home owners and resorters. However, we now see thousands of day tourists a week. The repercussions of these many day-trippers and short-term visitors can be felt in every corner of this place, and on every service it provides.

While we welcome our tourists and their vital economic value, we can also acknowledge their increasing impact on infrastructure and services - the Island's roads, parks, trash management, septic and water, public safety, and more. The cost of providing these services is a burden that is borne disproportionately by property taxpayers even as a growing portion of the impact is being driven by day visitors. The burden is not being shared.

Revenue is needed to maintain and improve the Island's roads, parks, trash management, septic and water, public safety, and more and our decades old system of providing that revenue is no longer sufficient, is no longer equitable, and no longer reflects the changing nature of tourism on the Island.

Before us now, as residents and taxpayers, is how to more equitably share the costs we, the residents and the visitors, incur together. This is not a problem unique to the Island. Tourist destinations across the country have grappled with this issue for many years and we are fortunate to have many examples of other communities' successful approaches to a solution.

I suggest it is reasonable to justify and expect our visitors to share the burden of preserving and sustaining this wonderful place by implementing user sustainability fees for overall visitor access.

## Proposition

The Island can justify and impose a user/sustainability fee to visitors for such services and “products” as parks and beaches, roads, wastewater, and trash, public safety and emergency services, by virtue of the large and increasing impact visitors have on these aspects of infrastructure. Because island residents and property owners already pay their share via property taxes, this user/sustainability fee would not apply to them. **An annual vehicle sticker could be automatically mailed to property owners with their property tax bills.**

## Legalities

“Local governments have broad authority to implement user **fees** for the services they provide.” (Janice Mueller, Wisconsin State Auditor, 2004)

Wisconsin Act 134 provides that fees imposed by local governments, “shall bear a reasonable relationship to the service for which the fee is imposed.” (Best Practices Review: Local Government User Fees April 2004 - BPR)

Full Report: <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/lab/reports/04-0UserFeesFull.pdf>

“**User fees** differ from **taxes**, which must be authorized by the State Legislature.” (BPR)

Only the legislature can authorize a **tax**. The legislature has authorized several optional local taxes for local governments:

- A tax on real and some personal property
- A registration charge for certain motor vehicles, commonly known as the “wheel tax”
- A sales and use tax of 0.5%, which only counties can levy
- A municipal tax on establishments providing short-term lodging to the public, typically applicable to hotels, motels, rooming houses and commonly known as the “room tax”
- A “premier resort area tax,” whereby a county, city, village, or town that meets certain criteria may impose a 0.5% sales tax (BPR) **Washington Island does not qualify because there must be at least 40% of the equalized assessed value of taxable property within the municipality used by tourism-related retailers. (League of Wisconsin Municipalities. <https://www.lwm-info.org/Taxation-FAQ-6>)**

“**Taxes** are typically a means to generate revenue for the community at large, while **fees** often relate directly to payment for a service or product by a consumer of that service or product.” (BPR)

Three categories of **user fees** are associated with:

- Services necessary for everyone - utilities, trash and recycling
- Quality of life - health services, parks, recreation, public transportation

- Regulatory and administrative processes - licenses, permits, development fees
- Also, public charges:
- Services - parking, mass transit, county-operated nursing homes, public health activities

### **Fee Collection and Amounts**

There is a wide variety of fee amounts and types across the state. It is recommended (in the BPR) that local governments

- regularly review services and fees
- determine actual costs
- negotiate with credit card companies
- ensure fiscal security
- maximize interest earnings
- make a variety of payment options available to users (to provide flexibility and convenience).

Some local governments charge local residents, some charge different amounts to residents and non-residents, and some do not charge locals for certain fees.

***The amount we charge should bear some correlation to the products and services we expect to cover with the revenue. This will need to be determined by the Town Board and Clerk/Treasurer.***

### **POSSIBLE ISLAND COLLECTION METHODS**

The mechanics of collecting such a fee or fees needs careful consideration in order to ensure ease of public cooperation, ease of management for the Town, and fiscal security.

We can consider all options, including these ***preliminary*** ideas:

1. Collect "user/sustainability fee" at the Welcome Center via website and/or human attendant by use of cash or credit card. Provide a day or season sticker.
2. Collect "user/sustainability fee" via website only, using credit card where the purchaser prints their own vehicle sticker at home, or if purchasing on the island provides license plate info for tracking.

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### **Tourist Fee Examples**

#### **Wisconsin Counties**

- **Vilas County Parks User Fee**  
<https://cms9files.revize.com/vilascountywi/Forestry%20and%20Land/Park%20User%20Fees.pdf> - User access fees for all vehicles accessing county parks and landings starting on June 15th for the 2023 summer season.



Permit fees for the 2023 season are as follows: - Daily Permit, \$5.00 - Resident Seasonal, \$25.00 - Resident Senior (oldest person in household over 65 years of age), \$15.00 - Non-Resident Seasonal, \$45.00 - Commercial Operator Seasonal, \$250.00 (Single Vehicle) - Commercial Operator Seasonal, \$375.00 (Multi-Vehicle) - A convenience fee of \$1.00 for daily permits and \$4.50 for seasonal permits applies to cover transaction costs. The new permitting system is quick and user-friendly, whether purchasing a daily permit or applying for an annual seasonal permit. Daily and seasonal permits can be **purchased on-site at each park and landing location through a user's mobile device by following the simple instructions on the location's posted signage.**

*"The County board has responded to stakeholder concerns about the wear and tear of continued growth in the use of the county's parks and landings and the new permitting system will help support ongoing upgrades and maintenance to support the parklands and ensure we preserve the amenities into the future."* says Todd Bierman, Parks & Recreation Supervisor for Vilas County Forestry, Recreation and Land.

- **Adams County Parks User Fees**

<https://www.co.adams.wi.us/parks/user-and-fee-information>

**Vehicle Stickers are required for all County Parks / Public Accesses (stickers are included with camping fees):**

Petenwell Park, Castle Rock Park, Arrowhead, Camelot, Sherwood, Big Roche-A-Cri, Hwy 21 WI River Access, Patrick Lake, Jordan Lake, Mason Lake, and Crooked Lake. Also at the County Treasurers Office in the courthouse. **Stickers may also be purchased online at [www.adamscountyparks.com](http://www.adamscountyparks.com)**

**Season stickers run April 1 - March 31 Annually.**

Season / Day Use Stickers are available at these locations: Petenwell Park, Castle Rock Park, Bighorn Store, Wagon Wheel Campground, and the County Treasurers Office in the courthouse. 2023 Season use sticker - **1/\$25.00 or 2/\$40.00** when purchased at the same time

Day use **\$5.00** / vehicle per day

### U.S. Islands

- San Juan Islands, Washington, San Juan County considering requiring residents and visitors to purchase stickers (cars, bikes, boats) to access parks and recreational sites. Funds would be used for maintenance of marine facilities, moorings, marine protection measures, and parking. Fee estimated at \$10-\$15.  
([waggonerguide.com](http://waggonerguide.com), [theorcasonian.com](http://theorcasonian.com), [mynorthwest.com](http://mynorthwest.com))
- Nantucket Island, Massachusetts - imposes taxi, parking, and beach user fees.

- Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, considered an "embarkation fee increase" in 2022 - "Finance committee member Sherry Countryman said the overall goal of an increase is "to make improvements and enhance the revenues in the town." (MV Times - "Oak Bluffs, Tisbury look to triple embarkation fees," December 2022). (MV Times - "Oak Bluffs, Tisbury look to triple embarkation fees," December 2022).  
<https://www.steamshipauthority.com/reservations/fares> (Fares include Town Embarkation Fee of \$0.50 one-way or \$1.00 round-trip)  
<https://www.mass.gov/technical-information-release/tir-04-18-ferry-service-embarkation-fees>

### U.S. National Parks/Seashores

- Padre Island National Seashore - Standard Pass \$15-\$25 daily, Annual Entrance - \$45
- North Whidbey Island - Discover State Park Pass or \$10 per day
- Apostle Islands, Wisconsin - Docking \$15 - \$30, Parking Day Use \$5-\$8, Annual \$25 - \$40
- Fire Island, NY - Parking and/or transportation fees
- Jekyll Island, Georgia - Parking pass required must be purchased online in advance or at the entry gate. \$10 daily or \$100 yearly

### International Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Islands

- Iceland - tourism access fees are to go in effect in 2024. Parking fees already exist for many natural sites and parks.
- Faroe Islands, Denmark - Fees charged, largely by local landowners to allow tourists to walk their privately owned sites. (Tourism numbers have doubled over the last 8 years, largely due to social media campaigns.)
- Koh Tao Island, Thailand - \$.60 (THB 20) per tourist (300,000 - 500,000 tourists annually) user charge collected at the pier upon arrival (to offset environmental damages).
- Bonaire Marine Park, Netherlands - \$10 - \$25 annual entrance fees
- Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia - exact user fees unknown
- Gilotongan Marine Reserve, Philippines - exact tourism fees unknown

### States

- Hawaii - House Bill 2406, passed on Feb. 23, 2024, would impose a "tourism tax" on visitors to collect revenue that state would use to address the effects of climate change on the islands - flooding, coral erosion, pollution, wildfires, etc., elsewhere referred to a "tourist fee."

### Cities/Countries:

- Venice, Italy - entrance fee to the city, ranging from approx. \$3 - \$10
- Amsterdam, Netherlands - \$14 day "tax" for visitors
- Athens, Greece - Acropolis - time-slot system, electronic ticketing, and fast lane entry options