

5/15/2026



Friends of Wauwatosa Veterans Memorial, Inc.
11525 W North Ave.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

Common Council Members,

The purpose of this letter is to strongly encourage the members of the Common Council to approve the agreement for construction of the Wauwatosa Veterans Memorial on the City property at the corner of Harwood and Milwaukee Avenues.

This Memorial has a long and sometimes frustrating history which began 5 years ago. Its construction has been delayed by location changes, design changes, the pandemic, and of course last summer's flooding. We were thrilled to break ground for the Memorial in Hart Park during the Memorial Day celebration one year ago where over 100 community members, public officials, alders and the Mayor celebrated our efforts. Three months later, we were devastated to learn this site was no longer feasible due to the floods. Through hard work and collaboration with the City, we located the current site. While we were saddened to lose Hart Park, we are excited about the possibilities and benefits of this site.

The design of the Memorial melds several components in a unique, personal and inspiring way. The pergolas (modeled after the WWII Memorial in Washington DC) and surrounding vegetation shield the interior to provide a dignified and contemplative space separate from the surrounding city streets. The space will be paved with over 320 personalized bricks, engraved with the names of Wauwatosa Veterans, donated by friends and family. Finally, a planned interactive kiosk will provide visitors with an opportunity to learn about the history of our City and its Veterans. As one Design Review Board member observed, the Memorial situated at a main entry point into the Village is the "perfect urban project." It will provide a grand and fitting entrance to Wauwatosa and a prominent tribute from our community showing pride for those who fought to protect it.

Concerns about the site and design have been addressed through the approval process. The scale of the Memorial has been tailored to fit the new site. Photometrics have been completed to ensure Memorial lighting will not distract neighbors or passing motorists. Entrances, fencing and vegetation have been placed in a way to prevent pedestrians from

“shortcutting” through the Memorial. Cameras will monitor the site for security. Offset exceptions for walkways and the pergolas are minimal and easily mitigated. Finally, even though the City will assume ownership of the Memorial after completion, we will continue to partner with the City to ensure the Memorial’s continued upkeep and promotion.

Through our outreach efforts, we’ve sought to heighten awareness of the Memorial. Businesses, veterans and community groups have donated more than \$250,000 in monetary and in-kind donations for construction, including \$55,500 for the engraved pavers. We have maintained an online and social media presence and have had ongoing communication with our stakeholders. We have had booths at many festivals in and around the Village to answer questions and promote the Memorial all with great effect. At the most recent Design Review Board meeting, a longtime community member who lives near the new site commented about her excitement upon learning the Memorial’s proposed location. She went on to describe a gathering early this spring where she talked with neighbors who were similarly excited about the educational, historical and commemorative prospects the Memorial would provide for families, students at nearby schools, and the community. Finally, she recognized how the Memorial, prominently displayed at our Village entrance, would give the community a place to honor and learn about our brave Veterans in a way that no other city has. Indeed, you may be hearing similar things from your constituents.

However, along with praise for the Memorial, we have heard disappointment about how long it has taken to get it built. Things like the floods were unforeseen and unavoidable. On the other hand, never-ending changes to its size, design and location are avoidable. While we are open and responsive to input, we stress the importance of getting the Memorial built soon and are wary of anything that will further delay its construction. Given that the Memorial will be built with donations and in-kind services, delays increase costs, and frustrate supporting businesses, Veterans, families, and other supporters. **They deserve to have this Memorial built as soon as possible.**

We extend thanks to our donors, Veterans, and their loved ones for their unwavering support during this long process. Thanks to the City Administration, supporting boards, alders, and the Mayor for recent efforts in selecting, finalizing and promoting this site. Finally, thank you for your consideration in anticipation of this important vote. The Board looks forward to your decision. As we contemplate the approaching day of remembrance, Memorial Day, let’s commit to building this Memorial now so we can begin to honor our Veterans in a manner they deserve.

Sincerely,

The Board of the Friends of Wauwatosa Veterans Memorial, Inc.

