

**PROCEEDINGS OF
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
Township Board Room
4550 Walnut Lake Road
West Bloomfield, Michigan 48323
Thursday, April 25, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Wenczel

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Sally Wenczel
Treasurer Merv Aronoff
Commissioner David Barash
Commissioner Vincent Kirkwood

Staff Present: Jennifer Tucker, Executive Director
Joe Ketchum, Parks Superintendent
Meagan Kurnat, Marketing Manager
Township Liaison Warshay

Absent: Commissioners Brooks, Hembree, Sukenic
Kelly Hyer, Recreation Superintendent

Public: None

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Barash, to approve the agenda.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Kirkwood, Wenczel

Nays: None

Absent: Brooks, Hembree, Sukenic

Motion Carried 4-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Items A through D are Consent Agenda matters considered to be routine by the Commission and enacted by one motion unless a member of the Commission wishes to discuss one of the topics.

- A. Approval of Minutes from the February 28, 2019 Regular Commission Meeting.
- B. Approval of Minutes from the March 21, 2019 Regular Commission Meeting.
- C. Approval of the March Financial Reports.

D. Approval of prepaid expenditures in the amount of \$324,380.99. Expenditures in the amount of \$76,484.85. Credit card refunds totaling \$4,082.50 for the month of March 2019.

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Barash, to approve Items B through D on the Consent Agenda.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Kirkwood, Wenczel

Nays: None

Absent: Brooks, Hembree, Sukenic

Motion Carried 4-0

STAFF REPORT

Executive Director Tucker reported that the month of March was very busy with preparation for the upcoming spring and summer seasons. On March 8, the International Women's Celebration was held at the Southfield Westin Hotel and Conference Center. She was invited to attend the function along with other executives of many other professions. The Greater West Bloomfield Community Coalition's 10th Annual Fundraising Gala took place on March 20 at Planterra Conservatory. Director Tucker, Superintendent Hyer and Marketing Manager Meagan Kurnat attended.

The Splash Landing Spray Park Project is gaining momentum. WB Parks Staff and JHLE had a meeting with Michigan Recreation Construction on April 2nd to discuss the next steps. They are just waiting on one more permit. Excavation should be happening in the next couple weeks. The West Bloomfield Michigan Week annual awards breakfast is on May 10th at Baypointe Golf Club and Director Tucker will be the Emcee. As a save the date for the Commissioners, the new kiosk dedication will be on June 1st at 8 am on the trail. The ITC donated about \$9,000 to help pay for that kiosk.

Parks Superintendent Ketchum reported that the first game for the men's softball league is tonight at Drake Sports Park. Little League and soccer has already started. There is a lot of activity in the parks now. Staff got the basketball courts and playgrounds ready. The tennis and pickle ball nets were installed at Drake Sports Park and Community Sports Park and the courts are now open for use.

The water wells have been chlorinated and put back in service at Bloomer Park, Community Sports Park, Marshbank Park and Karner Farm for the 2019 season. The water service at Drake Sports park was turned on and all park restrooms are now open and in operation. The backstop netting, shade covers and benches for the dugouts and bleacher areas at Drake Sports Park have been installed. Staff is also installing new signs that Marketing Manager Kurnat has put together that are all branded with the new branding so this is another step towards completing of the rebranding project. Signs are being replaced slowly.

This time of year staff cleans carpets and furniture and they also stripped and waxed the tile floors at the RAC. This is being done to get ready for summer and getting the building nice and clean for the kids for the summer camps. After camps have ended in the fall staff does this deep clean all over again. Laser grading was done at Keith Sports Park; this gets a nice crown to the field, a 1% slope from the middle of the field out to the sidelines which achieves a proper slope for the infield to drain.

Parks staff attended MIOSHA safety training at Oakland County Parks. The training was offered by MParks through the Parks Resource Committee. Subjects included ladder training, what to do if MIOSHA inspectors show up to your shop, trench safety, fuel storage along with other best practices. This MIOSHA training is very important. Parks and Recreation insurance company just notified staff that the multiplier has lowered to a point where Parks and Recreation will save \$60,000 on workers compensation insurance next year. This is a huge compliment to staff for taking training seriously and there haven't been any serious

injuries for almost five years. This MIOSHA training also goes into each staff members personnel file. Having this type of training keeps the employees safe and protects the Commission from liability.

Parks staff hosted a Rain-Bird Irrigation Certification class at Schulak Farm; two staff members took the class. After the training, staff took a certification course which means they will be certified on how to install and fix the irrigation system. Superintendent Ketchum said he is very appreciative to the Commission for all the training they receive because it definitely pays off in the end. It also gives staff the tools to be competent and professional in their jobs. Treasurer Aronoff asked if staff will be installing pipes at Splash Landing. Superintendent Ketchum that staff will be on site when underground installations are done at Splash Landing. Staff is very familiar with the contractor and will be on site to see that the installation is being installed correctly and also to find out where all the pipes will be so if a problem occurs they know what is going on. Commissioner Barash said the ball fields look beautiful.

Commissioner Kirkwood asked if there is an exact date for the opening of Splash Landing. Director Tucker said they are hoping to be operational in 2020. They hope to have it up and running this year so staff can make sure everything functions correctly before they close down for the winter. Commissioner Kirkwood asked if they are too far away from an opening to discuss events leading up to it. Director Tucker said they have started brainstorming but if Commissioner Kirkwood has any ideas he should send them her way. Commissioner Kirkwood said he was just thinking how the Commission could get the Township excited, especially the young people who will be using this facility. Commissioner Kirkwood asked if the laser grade happens every year. Superintendent Ketchum said that staff adds material every year to Drake and Keith Sports Park and they do laser grading every 4-5 years.

Marketing Manager Kurnat gave the Recreation report. Recreation recruitment efforts have been concluded. Staff has been going around to different job fairs for six months. Staff has fulfilled the majority of seasonal positions. It is great to have new faces on staff with a lot of energy and new ideas. Staff has been busy promoting the summer camps and getting the word out. Naturalist Endres attended the Metro Parent Camp Expo on March 3rd with Recreational Programmer Stokes. Staff held a summer camp Sneak Peek on March 23rd and more than 200 people attended. Nature Camps had 25 children register and 75 children entered to win a free week of camps.

Showcasing some of the Commission's partnerships, the Full Moon Hike was held on March 19th and the commission partnered with Oakland Astronomy Club. The Rouge River Watershed Tour was held on March 30th and this event was a partnership with Friends of the Rouge and the Oakland County Water Resource Commissioners Office.

Upcoming events include Touch a Truck and the community seems quite excited to have it back. There will be free inflatable's and food trucks as well as equipment and vehicles for the kids to explore. There will be a \$5 charge per car for parking and those funds will be donated to the Parks and Recreation camp financial aid program. May 10th is the Senior Dance which will be held at Green Oaks Country Club. This is a fun night out for seniors with a 20 piece live band, gourmet buffet and lots of dancing. That same weekend on May 11th is the Native Plant Sale at Marshbank Park. It starts at 8 am. They have partnered with Plants for Ecology and a portion of the proceeds are donated back to the Nature Room.

The first ITC walk of the season will be on Saturday, May 4th at 8:30 am at Marshbank Park. These walks are held Tuesday evenings at 7 pm and Saturday mornings at 8:30 am at different locations in the Township. It is a great way to get exercise, meet new people and explore West Bloomfield. There are four Kids Kommotion events throughout the summer with the first one being May 23rd. Staff is moving the two evening concerts back 30 minutes to accommodate the toddlers who attend. The Optimists Club of West Bloomfield will be selling all of the refreshments as a fundraiser for their organization. The Marshbank Music Series is also back again this year. There will be two bands each night as well as a beer and wine tent. There will also be a live broadcast by LakesFM. With the increase of events the commission also has an increased need for volunteers.

Ms. Kurnat continued with the Marketing Update. Staff focuses on seven main areas for marketing. The first area is Advertising. There is a small budget for advertising and staff tries to be careful with the budgeted advertising dollars. Staff does some Facebook and Instagram advertising on an as-needed basis. They also partner with some blogs such as Oakland County Moms and the Commission has a summer camp directory as well as a regular directory on that blog that is updated seasonally. They have had this paid partnership for several years and continue to see the results showing up in the commission's website traffic analytics. Staff also does some print and digital ads. Staff recently purchased a small ad in the Lakes Area Buys Guide focused on sponsorships. Video is also used to advertise many of the recreation programs.

Publications are also used in marketing such as brochures, fliers and signage. The Activity Guide is mailed 3 times a year to every house in West Bloomfield. That is the biggest print project that she works on throughout the year. There is also the printed Camp Guide and new this year will be a senior newsletter which will be mailed three times a year to anyone in the recreation system that is over the age of 50 or calls in and asked to be mailed the newsletter. The first newsletter will be mailed June 1st. Fliers are distributed through the school district three times a year. They are also posted in the parks, libraries, Town Hall and any other place they can find a display case. When there are sponsors for specific events they are also given fliers to be placed in their business. These are a source of pride for businesses and it shows that they are active in the community. There is also a lot of event promotion through sign banners.

Ms. Kurnat said another part of her job is handling Media Relations. Staff works closely with Civic Center TV and they have all events posted under Calendar. Recreation staff appreciates all of the coverage that Civic Center TV gives them. They also work with West Bloomfield Beacon whenever possible to get the word out about upcoming events and programs. The Commission's website had just under 100,000 visits in the past year. Online registration numbers continue to improve; 25% of recreation traffic is from referrals. All of the community partners that link back to the Parks and Recreation website prove how important those relationships are. More than 6,000 of those visits came directly from social media. More than 60% of website visits were done using either a phone or tablet which proves the importance of having a mobile friendly website and having a fast load speed for all of the web pages.

In regards to Email marketing, this is one of the most effective and cost effective tools to get the word out about recreation programs. The E-Blast is sent out once a week and that goes to 15,500 email addresses once a week. They get new subscribers once they gain a new customer. Also, when someone new enters the Parks and Recreation website they get a pop-up where they can enter their email. The Senior News email goes out monthly to about 5500 seniors. Emails last year drove about 18,000 visits directly to the website and it is an easy way to remind residents what is going on. Ms. Kurnat said she will be giving a presentation to Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce on June 18th about the commission's email program.

In regards to Social Media, the main channels that are used are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The Facebook page, the main focus is on events as well as staff bios and park improvements. The Instagram page focuses more on nature photography. Instagram Stories are used for program promotion. Twitter is used to share articles, news coverage and volunteer recruitment opportunity with teens.

In regards to Partnerships, Ms. Kurnat said her department takes the stance that the stronger their community partners are, the stronger the community is. Whatever they can do to lend a hand to help their partners they are always willing to do. A lot of times, that just means showing up. When their community partners have an event or a fundraiser they try to represent as much as possible. The Recreation department partners with police, fire, town hall, chamber of commerce, service groups, non-profits, school districts, Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital as well as clergy associations.

Ms. Kurnat said she is also responsible for the sponsorship program and there are a lot of different ways that local businesses can get involved with the Parks and Recreation Commission whether it is through print ads or sponsorship banners. She is involved with branding also and anything that contains the Parks and Recreation Commission logo she is involved with. She is also in charge of photography and you will usually see her at events with a camera around her neck. Ms. Kurnat said they have been fortunate to have great marketing interns in the past.

Commissioner Kirkwood asked how staff keeps track of website visits. Ms. Kurnat said they use Google Analytics. Commissioner Kirkwood asked if sponsorships are for events or if they are sought out in general. Ms. Kurnat said that sponsorships are used for everything from dog waste bag dispensers to park banners to event sponsorships. There is also a sponsorship brochure that is updated annually. Interested businesses or individuals can also download a sponsorship guide from the website. The website also specifically highlights sponsorship opportunities for new events. Commissioner Kirkwood asked why the Touch a Truck event was not held last year. Ms. Kurnat said that event was held for three years in a row and then it wasn't held last year. Director Tucker said that basically the market was saturated for that event and they weren't getting the numbers that they did the first year. It was just time to stop. Ms. Kurnat said a lot of the surveys that were put out indicated that the Touch a Truck event was missed. Parks Superintendent Ketchum said that they had another concern that the surrounding communities were all having Touch a Truck events and since the market was saturated they decided to take a year off. They try to keep events fresh and new without overdoing it. Commissioner Barash welcomed Ms. Kurnat to tonight's meeting and said it was a pleasure to hear her speak. Her ability to fill in for Superintendent Hyer is terrific. He thinks the branding looks beautiful and he hopes the township as a whole can incorporate it at some point. Chair Wenczel said she had the privilege of going on the Watershed tour and Naturalist Endres was a great leader and everybody learned a lot. She loves that event reminders are sent out via E-Blast and she thinks the communication is excellent. She asked if the new kiosk is for maps and event postings. Ms. Kurnat said it is a combination of both. This is a custom kiosk with three panels; one side is dedicated to the trail history and has a trail map; the other side is related to the nature preserve; the center panel is about Parks and Recreation overall and lists all of the park addresses. There is also a small display case where they can swap out seasonal event information. Chair Wenczel asked if there will be takeaway maps in the kiosk. Ms. Kurnat said the old kiosk had that but it ended up turning into a garbage receptacle so they decided to eliminate the ability to open and close the kiosk.

ITEMS FROM THE OFFICERS

A. Items from the Chairperson

Chair Wenczel said the parks are looking awesome.

B. Items from the Secretary

None.

C. Items from the Treasurer

Treasurer Aronoff praised the excellent staff report. With summer being right around the corner many people will be taking part in a lot of physical activity. He hears the same complaints every year about aches and pains while playing sports. He suggested residents go on YouTube or work with a personal trainer and find strengthening and flexibility exercises for their sport as well as a good nutrition and hydration program.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive: Chair Wenczel

Chair Wenczel stated that the committee met on April 11, 2019. They talked about the April 25, 2019 Commission meeting draft agenda. They discussed the formation of a Policy Committee. Joscelyn Davis, JADE Strategies joined the meeting. The committee also discussed the Greater West Bloomfield Youth Coalition; Key dates for the ReFac Project. There will not be an Executive Committee meeting during the month of May.

B. Finance: Report from Treasurer Aronoff

Treasurer Aronoff stated the committee met before tonight's meeting and discussed and reviewed April invoices, vouchers and the monthly budget status. They also discussed the agenda items for tonight's meeting. The next meeting is scheduled in May prior to the regular Commission meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

(A) Consideration to Create a Commission Policy Review Committee

Chair Wenczel said that the Commission's consultant, Joscelyn Davis, has recommended the formation of an ad hoc committee for the purpose of reviewing the policies of the Commission. Two or three members will be appointed by majority recommendation of the Executive Committee.

The Commission Policy Review Committee will be paid per meeting as any other committee.

Treasurer Aronoff asked if selection of committee members will be done informally or will that be at a meeting of the Executive Board. Chair Wenczel said she will like to select the committee members at the training when more Commission members are present. Director Tucker said the training is currently scheduled for May 15th and 22nd. The training will start at 6 pm and each session will last about two hours. There will be food provided. Additionally, due to scheduling the consultant and the attorney, the training will go on regardless of last minute conflicts or illness of Commission members. Commissioner Barash agreed that if the majority of Commission members will be in attendance, the training should proceed.

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Barash, to approve the formation of the Commission Policy Review Committee. Members will be appointed by majority recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: Brooks, Hembree, Sukenic
Motion Carried 4-0

ITEMS FROM THE TOWNSHIP LIAISON

Township Liaison Warshay reported that on Saturday, April 21st the Township held Hazardous Waste Day. It was very successful with over 1300 people attending on Saturday. He is looking forward to Touch a Truck. May 1st will be the West Bloomfield Youth Assistance awards at the high school; these are nice awards to hear stories of what the youth are doing in the community. There will be a Special Election on May 7th. If you live in the Walled Lake School District there is a bond issue up for vote; it will do a lot of work in the schools and drop the millage rate if it passes. The Township Board has held two meetings since the last Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. On April 1st the Board approved to put on the August 6th Special Election two millages; one will be replacing the two existing public safety millages with one combined millage and the second was to renew the safety path millage. The safety paths have not been built throughout the Township and there is still a lot of work to do. Construction costs have increased since the time the millage was initially passed so the Township is not getting as much concrete for their dollars as they used to. The dip in housing values during the recession affected revenue as well. At the April 15th meeting the Board clarified the language on the safety path millage and made it more user friendly and make it more clear to the voters what they are voting to approve or not approve. The Town Board also passed an ordinance about storage of boats and RV's. Essentially, if you are in a lake area or HOA that has lake privileges, you can have your boat outside during the summer months. If you are not in one of those areas, it has to be in an enclosed facility like a garage or shed and cannot be stored on your driveway. As far as RV's, they have to be screened out of sight if one is kept on your property.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Wenczel cautioned everyone to be safe and to enjoy their time on the trails.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Treasurer Aronoff made a motion to adjourn, and unanimously supported. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Acting Secretary, David Barash

Pamela St. Peter
Recording Secretary

(As a permanent record, an audio tape of this meeting in its entirety is on file and will remain at the Parks and Recreation offices where it may be heard.)