

**PROCEEDINGS OF
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
Township Board Room
4550 Walnut Lake Road
West Bloomfield, Michigan 48323
Thursday, June 27, 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 Robert Brooks
Commissioner David Barash
Secretary Michele Hembree
Commissioner Vincent Kirkwood

Staff Present: Jennifer Tucker, Executive Director
Joe Ketchum, Parks Superintendent
Kelly Hyer, Recreation Superintendent
Township Liaison Warshay
Administrative Assistant Patricia Helson

Absent: Commissioner Sukenic

Public: None

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Hembree, Kirkwood, Wenczel

Nays: None

Absent: Sukenic

Motion Carried 6-0

Resolution Declaring July as Parks and Recreation Month

Chairman Wenczel read the Resolution aloud, to declare July as Parks and Recreation Month.

CONSENT AGENDA

Items A through C 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 May 23, 2019 Regular Commission Meeting, as amended.
- B. Approval of the May Financial Reports.
- C. Approval of prepaid expenditures in the amount of \$233,787.09. Expenditures in the amount of \$478,117.08. Credit card refunds totaling \$3,790.50 for the month of May 2019.

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Brooks, to approve Items A through C on the Consent Agenda.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Hembree, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: Sukenic
Motion Carried 6-0

STAFF REPORT

Executive Director Tucker introduced the newest staff member, Ms. Patricia Helson. She is the new Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director. This position has been empty for four years. She has extensive experience working for a municipality and a law firm. Everybody is excited to have Ms. Helson as a part of the West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation Team. Apple Island was designated on the National Register of Historic Places on June 1st. The celebration was fantastic with folks from the community dressed up in costume portraying the history of the island.

West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation is partnering with the Orchard Mall to provide dedicated senior services space and that project is now underway. Everybody is very excited about this endeavor and looking forward to senior services being consolidated into one place. The West Bloomfield Senior Services Advisory Team has put together a survey which is currently available on the website or it can be filled out in person at the RAC.

The Splash Landing project continued in May with an unexpected stall due to permitting and engineering review issues at the Township level. With the amount of rain we have had, it is likely that the construction would have been delayed until June regardless. Unfortunately, with all of the subcontractors that will be working on this project, a lot of them have started other jobs so that may affect the schedule.

Parks Superintendent Ketchum reported that staff, along with Nelson Masonry, installed the new information kiosk at West Bloomfield Trail at Arrowhead Road. Parks staff collaborated with the Recreation Staff with design, content and final installation. The kiosk was officially commemorated on June 1st for National rails day. He thanked staff members Chris Frey and Megan Kurnat for their hard work in designing, managing and organizing the project.

Staff removed three original benches and added four new ADA compliance benches at Drake Sports Park. These benches are surface mounted so they can be easily removed to be repaired or replaced. Staff roto-tilled, laid out plots, and added six new water spigots at the Community Garden at Karner Farm. Gardeners were allowed to begin planting over Memorial Day Weekend. New plots were engineered so they are all now the same size. Staff removed and replaced three nature interpretive signs. The signs are located in the nature preserve and along the West Bloomfield Trail. This is a continuing project in which we are replacing the original interpretive signs with updated and rebranded signs. Residents and businesses can sponsor the signs and can find the information on the website.

The irrigation systems have been fully charged and tested at Drake Sports Park, Marshbank, RAC, Keith Sports Park, Schulak Farm. Staff has also attached the concert hill irrigation at Marshbank Park to the well. This will reduce the cost of water and sewer at Marshbank Park.

The new Mean Green electric 60" ZTR mower is in service and staff is happy with its performance. It is much quieter and doesn't bother the pickle ball and tennis players so this has been a great addition. Seasonal park staff training took place at Marshbank Park on June 5th. Twelve seasonal employees participated in the training along with full time staff. Staff also assisted Keith Elementary 5th grade class with another successful end of the year party at the Community Sports Park on June 12th. This annual party has been held at the Community Sports Park for 13 years. The Parks department appreciated the school district allowing them to use the Keith Elementary parking lot for the softball tournament that had to be relocated because of the rain. This is a good example of the give and take between the Parks and Recreation Commission and the local school districts.

Secretary Hembree asked if staff members are doing a comparison between the electric mower and the regular gas-powered mowers to see if that is the direction they want to move for all mowers in the future. Parks Superintendent Ketchum said that staff will always have some gas mowers or diesel mowers present in its fleet just because of the vast amount of grass that they cut. However, early indication is that they would probably get another electric mower when another gas mower needs to be replaced. Electric operated machinery would also be considered for smaller pieces of equipment such as chain saws and weed whackers as they create quite a bit of pollution. Commissioner Brooks asked where the Mean Green mower is being used. Parks Superintendent Ketchum said it is in their fleet of mowers and is cutting at every park that is mowed. He said the new mower was having some issues due to the length of grass from the recent rains but the sales representative came out and helped staff figure out the issues and staff members are starting to get the hang of it now. Commissioners Brooks said it is important to keep the interpretive signs up-to-date because people stop and look at them with their kids and become more educated; he thinks the work that staff is doing on them is so important, especially asking for sponsors. Commissioner Barash asked what the interpretive signs cost. Executive Director Tucker said the first two that were sponsored were for a memorial and they paid \$2500 for two but they typically run about \$1000 each. Commissioner Kirkwood asked if the Senior Services area at Orchard Mall will have signage outside of the building. Executive Director Tucker said there will be signage but the next question is what the space will be called. Commissioner Kirkwood asked if that area will be open a certain amount of hours throughout the day or only when an activity is going on. Executive Director Tucker said that staff is still working out the operations of it but the essence is that folks can come in and have a cup of coffee, sit down and chat together. It will be staffed whenever it is open.

Recreation Superintendent Hyer gave the Recreation report. She stated that the first Kids Komotion Concert was held on Thursday, May 23 at Marshbank Park with about 600 participants counted. June's morning concert had to be canceled due to the weather but more have been slated for the month of August. The make-up concert has been tentatively scheduled for September 11th. There were over 140 participants for National Trails Day which is a huge increase in walkers from the normal ITC walks which typically have 30 or so walkers. American Cycle was in attendance with a bike station as well as providing transportation to and from different stops. The Outdoor Play Area was opened. There is a pick up day scheduled for this weekend to pick up plants from the Native Plant Sale.

Naturalist Azoury hosted the quarterly meeting for the Southeast Michigan Nature Center Coalition Meeting in the Nature Room. There were 12 in attendance. Topics of discussion include how each center delivers conservation messages, how to start a natural play area and standards for warning signage at nature facilities.

Recreation staff kicked off summer camps this week. Camps are being licensed by the state this year so staff needs to put in a minimum 40 hours of training to be licensed. The training was well received. Camp WB is sold out for the entire summer and all other camp minimums have been met.

This was one of the most challenging spring seasons for adult softball. All of the players love the remodeling at Keith and Drake Sports Parks and the players are very appreciative of the changes.

The Senior Dance was well attended and very well received and Glen Oaks is a great host for the Commission. Attendees are already asking when the dance will be held in 2020. Naturalist Endres co-presented a 4 week archery class for seniors with the Farmington Hills Archery staff. Seven people attended and were excited to learn about archery. Wheels to the Road bike club has been developed with six group recreational bike riding events planned. This is a new volunteer-run program and the schedule will be released this week.

Staff is registering fall soccer leagues. This is being brought back because the spring Little Kickers program was a rousing success. Staff is looking for volunteer coaches.

Other events to look forward to:

Mudd Day 6/29

Summer on the Bank 7/13

Marshbank Music 7/17, 7/24, 7/31

There have been changes to Summer on the Bank after receiving feedback from last summer's event and staff hopes everyone will be happy with those changes. Staff has advertised with banners on the light poles and they love to hear back from residents that they have seen the signs.

Commissioner Kirkwood asked Superintendent Hyer to explain Wheels to the Road. Superintendent Hyer said this is a bike club. It is intended for ages 50+ but anyone is welcome. It is a way for people to come out and ride in a group bike ride. The ITC walks are very popular but staff has heard for years that residents would also like to bike ride and they had to be sent to other communities. This is a volunteer led ride and each bike captain leads a route and that map will be published ahead of time. Commissioner Kirkwood asked if Recreation offers any bike safety programs. Superintendent Hyer said there used to be a bike safety program but it was geared towards preschoolers and kindergartners and that has not been offered in the past couple of years. That is also being considered. Secretary Hembree said the cycle company that came out to the kiosk dedication was outstanding and suggested they be asked to come down and make a presentation on bike safety for this club. Superintendent Hyer said that is a great idea and staff could reach out to them. Chair Wenczel asked how long these rides are. Superintendent Hyer said they are about 6 miles long but that is being left up to the bike captains of each ride.

Commissioner Barash asked what the benefits of licensing the summer day camps are. Superintendent Hyer said licensing a camp shows that Parks and Recreation meets and exceeds the standards set by the State of Michigan. It also lets the parents know the camps have passed inspections set by the state. Commissioner Brooks said he is impressed by the stats on the website visits and asked why some programs have higher hits than others. Superintendent Hyer stated that when there is an event and people want more information, the WBPRC website is included. If people are interested in a certain event those hits are naturally higher because people are seeking out information. Secretary Hembree said there is a lot of crossover with event attendees. Senior events naturally bring in grandchildren and events geared for children also tend to bring in a lot of parents and grandparents as well. She thinks it is wonderful that there is so much crossover.

Commissioner Barash asked if someone can purchase native plants that have not pre-ordered. Superintendent Hyer said the pick-up was intended for people that pre-ordered plants but the supplier bends over backwards if somebody is looking for a specific plant. The supplier also has other sales in the area so he can connect a resident with other information if a specific plant is not available. Chair Wenczel said the amount of selection WBPRC has for children's programs is awesome and her daughter is enjoying herself.

ITEMS FROM THE OFFICERS

A. Items from the Chairperson

Chair Wenczel thanked staff for having everything under control in the thick of the summer. She has heard great responses from parents about all of the camps and activities and said that staff is doing an awesome job.

B. Items from the Secretary

Secretary Hembree said she would like to toot the horn of West Bloomfield on a whole. This Township has so much to offer and so much to see and do.

C. Items from the Treasurer

Treasurer Aronoff reminded the public that next week is the 4th of July. Parks and Recreation commissioners and staff want to caution everybody to take some safety measures and check with local ordinances as far as lighting off fireworks as there may be some limitations on what is allowed to be used. If you are going to use fireworks, make sure there is adult supervision. Children should not be allowed to use fireworks. He learned that 25% of injuries on the 4th of July are from sparklers so make sure to have a bucket of water nearby in case of an emergency. If you light a firework and it does not go off, don't reignite it; just douse it with water and throw it away. Never ignite any firework in a container. He wished everybody a wonderful 4th of July.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive: Chair Wenczel

No meeting.

B. Finance: Report from Treasurer Aronoff

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

(A) Consideration to Approve the Members of the Commission Policy Review Committee.

Chair Wenczel said that at the April 11th Executive Committee meeting it was recommended that the commission form a policy review committee by Joscelyn Davis of Jade Strategies. Following, at the April 25th Commission meeting, it was an action item and consideration to create the formation of the Commission Policy Review Committee was passed by the Commission, 4-0. The purpose of this action item is to create that committee. She added that Commissioner Barash reached out to her as to why he

would like to be on the committee. Commissioner Barash said that being one of the newest on the Commission, he thought he may be able to look at issues with fresh eyes and provide some insight that may be helpful in helping the Commission move forward and it would be his pleasure to serve on this committee.

Chair Wenczel said that in discussions with Commissioner Barash that he recommended Commissioner Kirkwood as a new member as well and she thinks that Treasurer Aronoff as a senior member would be an asset to this committee. Secretary Hembree said she believes that every commissioner should have an opportunity to be on this committee and she doesn't think it should be pre-decided. She would also like to be on this committee not being that new but having issues with policy and procedure and having brought forth those concerns at recent meetings. Treasurer Aronoff said he would be happy to forego his position on the committee to Secretary Hembree.

Motion by Commissioner Brooks, seconded by Treasurer Aronoff, to appoint Commissioner Barash, Commissioner Hembree and Commissioner Kirkwood to the Commission Policy Review Committee.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Hembree, Kirkwood, Wenczel

Nays: None

Absent: Sukenic

Motion Carried 6-0

(B) Consideration to Approve Dates for Commission Training.

Chair Wenczel said that it is time to review the Commission's responsibilities, meeting procedures and code of conduct. Joscelyn Davis of Jade Strategies along with Greg Need, WBPRC Attorney will be leading the Commission training sessions. The possible dates are September 4, 5, 11, 18, 25 or 26, 2019. The Commission needs two evenings starting at 6 pm for the training.

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, seconded by Commissioner Barash, to approve the Commission Training Sessions scheduled for September 25 and 26, 2019.

Ayes: Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Kirkwood, Wenczel

Nays: Hembree

Absent: Sukenic

Motion Carried 5-0

ITEMS FROM THE TOWNSHIP LIAISON

Township Liaison Warshay said the Township is doing overlays to the road and these add 5-7 years to the road life. The roundabout is going in very soon at Maple Road and Middlebelt Road. That intersection will be closed while the roundabout is constructed and alternate routes are advised. The Food Truck Rally was a fantastic event. On August 6th, the Township has placed two millages on the ballot. One is a Public Safety millage which funds police, fire, emergency and rescue services. There used to be two millages and the Township is combining them into one for the same amount. The other millage is the Safety Path millage which will extend the safety paths. Over the years, with the rise in construction costs, the Township is not able to build quite as much as it had planned and the maintenance costs are starting to add up as well. Even if this millage passes, it won't build all the safety paths that were envisioned but it will add many more sections as well as maintain the existing paths. Township Liaison Warshay said that if a resident is not registered to vote, you can still register up through election day by coming into the Township offices. You can also vote No Reason Absentee. Commissioner Kirkwood asked if absentee ballots need to be dropped off at the Township offices. Township Liaison Warshay said ballots do need to be dropped off; it cannot be an electronic submission because there needs to be a signature on the ballot.

In regards to fireworks, residents can shoot off legal fireworks from 11 am – 11:45 pm from June 29 – July 5th. No permit is required for certain fireworks. Township Liaison Warshay said that in regards to the Resolution Declaring July Parks and Recreation Month, that the word “citizen” was used in that resolution. Slightly over 20% of the Township’s population is foreign born and they are not all American citizens. He knows that the Township wants to ensure their health and participation in the parks as well. They pay taxes and enrich the communities.

Township Liaison Warshay reported that the Township Board has held two meetings since Parks and Recreation last met. On June 3rd it gave preliminary approval for a one-family clustering option for 13 condominiums off Halsted Road. The Board approved a lot of fireworks displays; these are large displays that require a permit. The Board also approved a new agreement for a cell tower with AT&T; that will be constructed on the water tower. This will benefit the Township by increase its revenue. The Board also approved streetscape improvements along Orchard Lake Road. That includes maintenance so if there are any issues with the landscaping, it will be replaced. The Township Board also extended its contract with Green for Life which is the waste hauling company. During the June 17th meeting, the Board authorized an increase in water and sewer rates; the water rate is 0% and the sewer rate is 1.7%. New vehicles were also authorized, those being a crane truck for the Water Utilities Department and another fire truck. The Board is spreading out the purchase of fire trucks so they don’t have to purchase five or six at once. The fire truck purchased was at a cost of \$580,000.00. He wished everybody a happy 4th of July.

Treasurer Aronoff asked if the Township is pleased with the quality of the grass on the boulevard. Liaison Warshay said he believes the streetscape improvements will include the grass. He knows there were issues getting electricity turned on for a while that affected the use of sprinklers. Secretary Hembree said she has noticed lanterns being used. Liaison Warshay said it is basically throwing fire in the sky and then it comes down somewhere. Secretary Hembree said it is serious. She saw one being lit and saw the person using it could have been burned so she stayed in the area where she could keep an eye on things. She is concerned with when those lanterns come down and dry brush or houses in their path as those lanterns have serious flames. Liaison Warshay said that is something where someone may need to contact the state legislature so they are not allowed to be sold in stores.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Hembree said it was Commissioner Kirkwood’s comments at the last meeting about the decrease in the student population playing sports and a possible driving factor being the use of technology. Parks and Recreation has a great team who builds, constructs and designs activities and she suggested maybe creating a class or activity that will speak to technology for teens so this Commission is creating another relationship. Bringing in more teens will bring in more parents and grandparents to the parks as well. She also suggested senior games which will bring out more grandkids and expose them to Parks and Recreation as well. She then suggested lacrosse as a new activity that could be offered. She has taught lacrosse in the past and it is an outstanding game.

Chair Wenczel wished everybody a happy 4th of July.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Treasurer Aronoff made a motion to adjourn, and unanimously supported. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Secretary Michele Hembree

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.)