

**PROCEEDINGS OF
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING**

Thursday, August 26, 2021

7:00 PM

APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Brooks

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Robert Brooks
Secretary Vincent Kirkwood
Treasurer Merv Aronoff
Commissioner David Barash
Commissioner John Erich
Commissioner Terrance Adams
Commissioner Sally Wenczel

Staff Present: Jennifer Tucker, Executive Director
Kelly Hyer, Recreation Superintendent
Joe Ketchum, Parks Superintendent
Patricia Helson, Administrative Assistant
Pamela St. Peter, Recording Secretary
Greg Need, WBPRC Attorney

Absent: None

Public: None

PUBLIC FORUM

Laurie Golden spoke in regard to the Dog Park. She said it gave her a reason to get outside every day after the sudden death of her husband. She does not want memberships taken away from nonresident members. She is asking the Commission to consider grandfathering in current nonresident members of the dog park in order to allow them to continue using it. Tom Adams said he is a nonresident member of the dog park and he goes to the park frequently. He is heartened by the movement afoot by resident members of the dog park on their behalf. He sent a proposal to Superintendent Ketchum regarding a policy for the dog park to allow for the growth of resident members and still accommodate the most committed nonresident members. Alison Winehouse said she is a new resident to the area and the dog park has done wonders for her family and her dog. She is asking the Commission to do their due diligence with regard to this agenda item as it is a place of connection for many people. Denise Thomas has been a resident member of the dog park for two years and she would not be a member if it were not for her friend who live outside of the Township. It is a gathering place and a place of community and she is in favor of allowing outside residents of West Bloomfield to take part in the dog park. Mark Kaye stated that the dog park has been a social and emotional touchstone during the pandemic. He does not think the community should impart more detriment to people's social and emotional well-being and he would like a quantitative study done before this decision is made as to how many people with permits to the dog park are actually using it. Evan Mathis also thinks the dog park should be open to nonresidents. Ronald Segal said he understands

the need of WBPRC to limit the number of nonresident dog park users going forward but thinks current permit holders should be grandfathered in. Chairman Brooks said that Executive Director Tucker did not come to this decision lightly and the commission will take into advisement the sentiments of the public. Chairman Brooks read a statement into the record by Stuart and Wilson Farber in support of nonresident members of the dog park to continue to renew or extend their membership going forward.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Ayes: Adams, Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Erich, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried: 7-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Items A through G 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 July 22, 2021, Regular Commission Meeting.
- B. Approval of the July Revenue and Expense Reports.
- C. Approval of Prepaid expenditures in the amount of \$393,776.88.
- D. Approval of Expenditures paid by check in the amount of \$88,891.91.
- E. Approval of Refunds totaling \$28,409.00 for the month of July 2021.
- F. Receipt of the July Cash Balance.
- G. Receipt of the 2021 WBPRC Strategic Plan Final Draft.

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

Ayes: Adams, Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Erich, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried 7-0

ITEMS FROM THE TOWNSHIP LIAISON

Township Supervisor Kaplan stated that the Board decided that virtual meetings will continue through December 31, 2021. They expect to have live face-to-face meetings beginning in January 2022. Two developments were approved by the Planning Commission last month. One of them is a 26-home subdivision on Middlebelt and Long Lake Road. These homes will sell between \$900,000 - \$1.2 million. There is also an apartment complex being proposed comprised of 192 units on 14 Mile and Orchard Lake Road. Pasteur Homes is interested in the site next to Cauley Ferrari for a 5-story apartment complex. The Board will consider this project on September 13th. Commissioner Wenczel asked if any of these new developments are considering green infrastructure in their plans. Supervisor Kaplan said they are and the Board hopes they will achieve LEED certification. Commissioner Wenczel said it would also be great to see more storm water control on these sites such as bioswales and rain gardens. Chairman Brooks thanked the care that Supervisor Kaplan gives to all of the residents.

STAFF REPORT

Executive Director Tucker reported that in regard to the Covid-19 updates: WBPR continues to monitor and follow guidelines established by Oakland County, the MDHHS and the MIOSHA. WBPR is asking staff to give proof of being vaccinated and those that are not will be asked to mask as of August 31st.

Master Plan Update: The Master Plan survey is live on the WBPRC website and is open until September 30th. A general public meeting date will be announced soon. Strategic Plan Update: The final plan will be on the September WBPRC agenda.

Office space reorganization for the Nature staff has taken place.

Recreation Superintendent Hyer celebrated outstanding staff accomplishments. WBPR collaborated with JCC to work with their special needs campers and teaching them about careers in parks and recreation. The Oakland Astronomy Club came out for a Senior Constellation Night and they have been part of other programs as well.

The nature camps had very impressive numbers this summer. Veteran meetups have been very successful with monthly meetings that are well attended.

Upcoming events include the Camp Out, Community Garage Sale and Family Outdoor Block Party which will be hosted in the parking lot of the RAC.

Parks Superintendent Ketchum reported that July was busy with a lot of storm clean-ups. Staff is also doing everyday maintenance throughout the parks. Parks staff also helped with storm clean up in Farmington Hills. Ramp repairs were made at the skate park. The ramps are over 15 years old and are repaired annually. Staff also helps with setup and tear down of tents for the concerts as well as assisting with parking. Trail repairs have been ongoing with the number of storms that have occurred this summer. The Parks department is very short staffed and staff members are putting in long hours including nights and weekends.

Commissioner Wenczel said the trails look amazing. She asked if woodchips from downed trees can be donated. Supervisor Ketchum said staff uses a lot of the woodchips in the landscape beds. In the past, DTE used to come pick them up for free and they were burned for energy. Chris Frey said that sometimes Parks has to pay a small trucking fee to get the wood chips hauled out if there are too many but 90% of the time, they are used in the natural landscape beds. Commissioner Wenczel said West Bloomfield High School is looking to put in a nature preserve trail and they need wood chips donated. Supervisor Ketchum said they would have no problem delivering wood chips to the school. Commissioner Wenczel asked when Lily Pad Springs is closing for the season. Superintendent Ketchum said it closes on Labor Day. There is not enough staff to keep it open after Labor Day.

ITEMS FROM THE OFFICERS

A) Items from the Chairperson

Chairman Brooks said a friend called him and said the personal pride of staff members at events is second to none. Staff has great relationships, one to another, and that makes the parks shine.

B) Items from the Secretary

Secretary Kirkwood thanked staff for a great summer.

C) Items from the Treasurer

Treasurer Aronoff said he has heard from many residents that they are happy with the work that staff does. There is a class online for new grandparents this Saturday run by Henry Ford Hospital.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive: Chairman Brooks

Chair Brooks stated that the Executive Committee met on August 11. They talked about the agenda for tonight's meeting. They discussed Commission Matters: General Master Plan Project; Strategic Plan Project; Splash Pad Operations; Cell Tower Update. The next meeting is scheduled for September 9 at 6 pm

B. Strategic Plan: Commissioner Wenczel

Commissioner Wenczel reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met virtually on July 28th and August 11th. The Committee discussed edits, additions, omissions and general comments regarding the rough draft of the plan. Commissioners submitted written comments to Director Tucker. Any additional comments should be made to Direct Tucker by September 12th. The July meeting agenda included the Schulak property and the Letter of Intent from the Friendship Circle,

B. Finance: Report from Treasurer Aronoff

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

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration to Approve the 2022 Office Closure Schedule

Executive Director Tucker reported that Administrative Staff is recommending the office remain closed on December 28 and 29 between Christmas and New Year's. Administrative staff is recommending closing the office due to difficulty scheduling customer service and expected very low customer traffic. Previously, the few calls received were forwarded to a Staff Member's mobile phone and addressed appropriately. Staff will be asked to use their leave time or work with an approved work plan. Chairman Brooks asked if this time is equivalent to the office closure in 2021. Director Tucker said they are actually closing for three days and two days in 2022.

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Barash, to Approve the 2022 West Bloomfield Parks Commission Office Closure Schedule.

Ayes: Adams, Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Erich, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried 7-0

B. Consideration to Approve the 2022 WBPRC Meeting Schedule

Executive Director Tucker reported that the meeting location will be determined by the Executive Committee. All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 pm. All meetings are on the fourth Thursday of the month except where noted:

Thursday, January 27, 2022
Thursday, February 24, 2022
Thursday, March 24, 2022
Thursday, April 21, 2022 (Third Thursday)
Thursday, May 26, 2022
Thursday, June 23, 2022
Thursday, July 28, 2022
Thursday, August 25, 2022
Thursday, September 29, 2022 (Fifth Thursday)
Thursday, October 27, 2022
Thursday, November 17, 2022 (Third Thursday)
Thursday, December 15, 2022 (Third Thursday)

Motion by Commissioner Barash, second by Treasurer Aronoff, to Approve the 2022 WBPRC Meeting Schedule.

Ayes: Adams, Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Erich, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried 7-0

C. Consideration to Schedule the Drake Master Plan Meeting, 2022 Budget Meeting and the Five-Year Master Plan Meeting.

Executive Director Tucker reported that the Master Plan process includes meetings with the Commission. The Drake Master Plan is ready for review by the Commission. The Five-Year Plan will be ready in October. In addition, it is also time to schedule the 2022 WBPRC Budget Meeting. The meetings will start at 6:00 pm and will be held virtually.

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Barash, to Approve the Drake Master Plan Meeting on September 27, 2021, the 2022 Budget Meeting on October 7, 2021, and the Five-Year Master Plan Meeting on October 21, 2021.

Ayes: Adams, Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Erich, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried 7-0

D. Consideration of Continuing with Virtual or Returning to In-Person Commission Meetings.

Executive Director Tucker stated that the WBPR Commissioners have the discretion to continue to have virtual meetings until December 31, 2021. The Commission could also change to in-person meetings if they so choose. No motion is necessary unless the Commission decides to change to in-person meetings.

E. Consideration to Approve the Recommendation from the Strategic Plan Committee.

Commissioner Wenczel presented a resolution from the Strategic Plan Committee reflecting their recommendation in regard to the Schulak, Farms property. Also attached is a Letter of Intent received from the Friendship Circle. Commissioner Wenczel read the resolution aloud. Commissioner Adams asked what is the intent of the property by the Friendship Circle. Director Tucker said the Friendship Circle will continue in the spirit of enhancing the betterment of life of people with special needs. The property will allow the Friendship Circle to continue their camp programs for people with special needs.

Motion by Commissioner Barash, second by Treasurer Aronoff to sell the Schulak Farm property to the Friendship Circle for the price of \$1,119,000.00; directs the Commission Attorney to prepare a formal purchase agreement, consistent with the Letter of Intent received from the Friendship Circle and the Resolution from the Strategic Plan Committee; and authorizes Chairperson Robert Brooks to execute the purchase agreement on behalf of the Commission.

Ayes: Adams, Aronoff, Barash, Brooks, Erich, Kirkwood, Wenczel
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried 7-0

F. Consideration to Approve the Bid Proposal for the Recreation Activities Center Needs Assessment.

Executive Director Tucker reported that a Request for Proposals was sent out to six consulting firms to provide professional services to develop a Needs Assessment for the redevelopment of the Recreational Activities Center. The Assessment will gather input from the residents, WBPRC and WB Parks staff members. That input, along with analyzing the current and future demographics, will be used to create a final Needs Assessment Report including cost analysis for the redevelopment of the RAC. One firm submitted a proposal for the project. Plante Moran Cresa's bid total is \$45,000.00. This consultant is affiliated with Plante Moran and is a real estate consulting and program management/owner's representative firm. Cresa has recently done projects for Van Buren Township, Farmington Hills and Birmingham. The full RFP is available for the Commission's review at the Recreation Activity Center upon request. Treasurer Aronoff asked what projects Plante Moran Cresa has consulted on in the referenced townships. Robert Stempien, Plante Moran Cresa, said they are currently engaged with Van Buren Twp doing a community center project. In Farmington Hills, they converted a high school into a community center. In Birmingham they did a Needs Assessment for a municipal ice area.

Commissioner Erich asked what is the possible scope of this project. Director Tucker said currently the facility at Connect is about 7200 sf which is the same as the RAC is currently, including office space. One of the things they hope to gain is expanded senior services, an expanded interpretative nature education and an expanded footprint to house offices in a more user-friendly way. Commissioner Barash asked if there will be dialogue with the Township Board regarding a greater community plan for this building. Director Tucker said she did have a conversation with Township officials today to indicate they are looking at the picture and are trying to think of things to help the community including fire, police and library services. Commissioner Wenczel asked staff to look at a township sustainability plan with this RAC redevelopment. Treasurer Aronoff asked what is the advantage of using a consultant on a project such as this. Director Tucker said Cresa will extract and put in a visible way what the public wants to see in this facility as well as what constructions costs will be, as well as how this will be funded. Chairman Brooks asked how the pandemic has played a role in helping the commission decide what is

right for the community. Mr. Stempien said it is an ever-evolving type of process of discovery and understanding. What they are seeing now is supply chain issues with Covid and there are shortages of materials that affect the industry which is really escalating costs associated with construction. The architect added these supply chain issues are affecting everybody and they are being more mindful of materials. Treasurer Aronoff asked what the consultant fee includes. Mr. Stempien said the package will include a demographic study, public input, public meetings, information gathering, cost modeling, and looking at alignment with the Master Plan and Strategic Plan. The timeline is from September through the end of December.

Motion by Commissioner Barash, second by Treasurer Aronoff, to Approve the Bid Proposal for the Recreation Activities Center Needs Assessment from Plante Moran Cresa in the amount of \$45,000.00.

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Commissioner Wenczel said she is excited to continue talking about sustainability. She thinks WBPRC needs to keep their finger on the pulse of climate change. Commissioner Barash thanked everybody involved in putting together the draft of the Strategic Plan. It is a big undertaking and he appreciates the hard work that went into it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Treasurer Aronoff wished everybody a Happy Rosh Hashanah.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Wenczel made a motion to adjourn, and unanimously supported. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vincent Kirkwood

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.)