

**PROCEEDINGS OF
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
West Bloomfield Township Hall Boardroom
West Bloomfield, Michigan**

**Thursday, January 26, 2023
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 John Erich
Treasurer Terrance Adams
Commissioner Merv Aronoff
Commissioner David Barash
Commissioner Vincent Kirkwood
Commissioner Sally Wenczel

Staff Present: Joe Ketchum, Interim Executive Director
Kelly Hyer, Recreation Superintendent
Chris Frey, Parks Superintendent
Carrie Manning, Recording Secretary
Lauren Azoury, Naturalist
Brittany Trout

Absent: None

Public: None present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC FORUM

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Aronoff, seconded by Commissioner Barash to approve the agenda.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Motion Carried 7-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Items A through F 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 Regular Commission Meeting December 14, 2022.
- B) Approval of December Revenue and Expenditure Report.
- C) Approval of Prepaid Expenses in the amount of \$\$239,518.53.
- D) Approval of Expenditures paid by Check in the amount of \$63,539.93.
- E) Approval of Credit Card Refunds totaling \$876 for the month of December 2022.
- F) Receipt of the December Cash Balance.

Motion by Commissioner Adams, seconded by Commissioner Aronoff to approve items A through F on the Consent Agenda.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Motion Carried 7-0

ITEMS FROM THE TOWNSHIP LIAISON - No Items tonight

GREEN TEAM REPORT - Presented by Green Team lead, Lauren Azoury. The Green Team was initiated in November 2021. The Team is made up of 14 staff from Admin, Recreation and Parks and has 4 subcommittees: Marketing, Events/Programs, Land Stewardship, and Equipment/Supplies. All the Staff voted on 5 things they can put into practice to establish buy-in and participation. The Team established and accomplished their goals in 2022. The Marketing team is active in social media and comes up with monthly themes and “Green Dreams”. Events and Programs have built a preferred purchasing list and sponsors and vendors are encouraged to offer “green” products as their giveaways at events. Land Stewardship has introduced prescribed burns throughout the Park system as well as obtaining a Natural Features Inventory of native and invasive flora and fauna in the parks as well as continuing to remove invasive species in the parks. Equipment and supplies have switched out around 800 florescent light bulbs to LED bulbs, replaced 8 pieces of gas-powered equipment with electric equipment as well as installing 2 Water Bottle Refill Stations, with 3 more planned in 2023. Staff has worked on creating a tracking system and creating measurable goals. Staff is encouraging Green practices when renting shelters by highlighting wording discouraging balloons and confetti usage, No Mow signage in the parks and distributing “Caught Being Green” pins.

Commissioners Wenczel, Aronoff and Brooks commended Lauren and the Green Team on her presentation and their hard work. Commissioner Aronoff inquired if other parks systems were researched to see and determine what steps could be taken and Lauren confirmed yes.

STAFF REPORT

Interim Executive Director Ketchum thanked Lauren and the Green Team for their initiative and accomplishments and expressed his pride in the team and their future. Interim Executive Director Ketchum informed the Commission that interviews are scheduled in early February for the HR Manager position and applications are always being accepted for seasonal positions. Staff has been invited to provide feedback on the Green Team Initiatives and the Staff Retreat, held on January 10, 2023 at the Longacre Farm in Farmington Hills. Goals were determined by and for the staff and was a great event with great discussion. Interim Executive Director Ketchum recognized two Five Year Milestone employees: Brittany Trout and Brandon Jackson. Brittany is a Recreation Programmer and has been recognized by mParks as “New

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Professional of the Year” as well as being the 22-23 President of the West Bloomfield Optimist Club and Vice Chair for the mParks Student Focus Area. Brandon has earned his Backhoe Loaders certification, Certified Pesticide Applicator license, Aerial Work Platform license and is the Mow Crew Foreman. He has saved the WBPRC money by also handling all the chainsaw maintenance and chain sharpening. Chairman Brooks and all the Commissioners thanked Brittany and Brandon for all their hard work and dedication to the WBPRC.

Superintendent Frey provided the Commission with the Park and Facilities report, advising that Staff waited as long as they could but they have installed the air bubbler systems around the Canoe/kayak launch at Marshbank Park. The bubbler system assists in protecting the dock from damage during freezing/thawing conditions. Park Staff has also prepared the sled hills for use, prepping with safety fencing and proper signage. Staff also provided some last-minute maintenance to the trails on the Civic Center campus prior to the very successful Solstice Walk in December. As December brought few weather events, it was a good time to train and prepare staff for larger weather events. Staff have been using the winter months to attend certification training and to keep certifications current.

Superintendent Hyer delivered her Recreation report to the Commissioners, commenting on the volunteer hours that totaled over 500 hours. Connect membership is up 18% at around 444 members. Superintendent Hyer highlighted a couple of Connect members celebrating milestone birthdays at 90 years old and 100 years old. WBPRC is partnering with Bloomfield Hills to present Pickleball on Monday nights, which has already filled up. The Winter Solstice Walk hosted over 300 attendees. Naturalist Lauren Azoury has met with West Bloomfield Schools to provide curriculum for 4th Grade students. Upcoming events include the Chinese New Year Celebration on January 27th, the 2023 Black Expo, being held at Orchard Mall on February 25th from 10-1 as well as the return of the Daddy/Daughter Dinner Dance on February 8th & 9th at the Jewish Community Center. Commissioner Barash commented on the nice graphics on the event flyers and Commissioner Wenczel commented on her and her family’s enjoyment of the Winter Solstice Hike.

ITEMS FROM THE OFFICERS

A. Items from the Chairperson

Chairman Brooks would like to thank all that came out to West Bloomfield Middle School to celebrate 95-year-old Reverend Jack Fried and the focus of what can you do to create community.

B. Items from the Secretary

Secretary Erich acknowledged federal money from Congresswoman Stevens and former Congressman Andy Levin for the WBPRC given at the end of the Congressional Session.

B. Items from the Treasurer

Treasurer Adams wished everyone a Happy New Year and that the Finance Committee would be bringing an investment policy for the WBPRC within the next couple of months.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive: Chairman Brooks

Chairman Brooks stated they met on January 12, 2023, at the RAC, Room 102. Present were himself, Secretary Erich, Treasurer Adams and Interim Executive Director Ketchum, Superintendent Frey, Superintendent Hyer, and Finance Directory Stephanie Smith. They discussed tonight’s Commission meeting agenda, the status of the HR Sub Committee as well as updates regarding the Lilly Sub Station,

Senior Center/RAC proposals. Also discussed was a relationship with the Bloomfield Hills Schools, the Arrowhead Bathroom Project, grant opportunities and the January Staff Retreat. Their next scheduled meeting is February 9, 2023, and will be held on the second Thursday of each month.

Finance: Report from Treasurer Adams

Treasurer Adams indicated the Finance Committee met Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 6:00pm. The Committee assessed the budget to actual spending for the month ending December 31, 2022, also the Year-End. This included the divisions of administration, recreation, parks, transportation, and the Commission. The data indicates line-item budgeting of the year, the amount spent on each item for the month, the amount spent on each item year to date and percentage of the budget spent on each item for the year to date. The Committee was also provided revenues associated with property taxes, recreation, and other sources of income. The committee was satisfied with positive results and reported they are under budget year to date. Through the end of the fiscal year, the Commission was approximately \$450,000 under budget. The committee reviewed invoices, vouchers, and prepaid expenses for the month. The committee reviewed agenda items for tonight's meeting. Any questions or concerns were addressed and satisfied. The next meeting is scheduled prior to the regular Commission meeting on February 23, 2023, at 6pm, prior to the monthly Commission Meeting.

Strategic Planning: Report from Commissioner Wenczel

Commissioner Wenczel stated the Committed did not formally meet but the upcoming resolution under new business is pertinent to what has been discussed the past year.

HR Committee: Report from Commissioner Erich

Commissioner Erich stated their goals are to discuss reorganization. Commissioner Barash is on the Committee with him, and they will be meeting with Finance Director Stephanie Smith for her input on moving the reorganization forward.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution for the sale of property at 6778 W. Maple Road (Schulak Farm)

Interim Executive Director Ketchum filled the community and Commissioners in on the history of the Schulak property with the WBPRC. After failed attempts to sell or lease the property to an interested party, it was determined that the property does not fit into plans due to infrastructure issues such as parking, lack of accessibility, and the design of the building is conducive to holding classes or programs. Proceeds from the sale of the property would benefit the other parks, future expenses, and infrastructure.

Discussion amongst the Commissioners included who would approve the buyer and continued input from the Strategic Committee would still be needed.

Motion by Commissioner Barash second by Commissioner Aronoff to authorize Interim Executive Director Ketchum of West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation to retain a real estate company to act as the Commission's agent on their behalf and approves the sale of the 6889 West Maple Road property.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Motion Carried 7-0

- B. Consideration to Approve Proposal from Michigan Natural Features Inventory for the amount not to exceed \$74,980.83 divided between to budget years.

Presented by Interim Executive Director Ketchum and Naturalist Lauren Azoury, a thorough inventory of our natural features, rare wildlife species and natural communities would be done by the company in order to better prioritize what areas need which kind of attention. This would provide a more efficient use of time, resources, and personnel.

Discussion questions were raised by the Commissioners including the depth of the inventory, which will include all areas from water, all species of plants and flowers and all animal species in the Parks. The first year is weighted higher than the second year due to the planned inventory process that will be taking place. The second year cost would be determined by the action plan from the inventory, but will not exceed the total amount being proposed. Current WBPRC Staff will be invited to participate and will also be provided future education.

Motion by Commissioner Aronoff, second by Commissioner Wenczel to approve the Proposal from Michigan Natural Features Inventory.

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Motion Carried 7-0

- C. Consideration to Approve Engineering and Architectural Fees from Green Flush Restrooms for \$13,000 for the design drawings for the Green Flush Restroom to be installed at the West Bloomfield Trail and Nature Preserve at Arrowhead Road.

Motion by Commissioner Barash, second by Commissioner Wenczel to Approve Engineering and Architectural Fees from Green Flush Restrooms

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Motion Carried 7-0

PUBLIC FORUM- None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Aronoff wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

Commissioner Kirkwood announced that the Black Expo on Saturday, February 25, 2023, will be presented by the Diversity Task Force, with support from the West Bloomfield Township Library and the WBPRC. On February 1st, Commissioner Kirkwood will be speaking about the Diversity Task Force, what they do and events at Congregation for Humanistic Judaism.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission the meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm

Reviewed by,
John Erich

(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.)