

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

Thursday, September 30, 2021 APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman 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
Ruth Lyons, Finance Manager
Mona Freiburger, Recording Secretary
Greg Need, WBPRC Attorney

Absent: None

Public: None

PUBLIC FORUM

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Adams, to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: All
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried: 7 to 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 August 26, 2021 Regular Commission Meeting.
- B. Approval of August Revenue and Expense Report.
- C. Approval of Prepaid Expenditures in the amount of \$358,376.61
- D. Approval of Expenditures paid by check in the amount of \$47,602.99

- E. Approval of Credit Card Refunds totaling \$10,890.50 for the month of August 2021.
- F. Receipt of the August Cash Balance.
- G. Approval of the 2021 WBPRC Strategic Plan Final Draft.

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

Ayes: All
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried: 7-0

ITEMS FROM THE TOWNSHIP LIAISON

Ms. Kris D'Arcy commented the DTE Redundancy Loop is supposed to be starting soon and completed sometime this year.

The Civic Center Campus, emergency access drive, is back on track and set to resume its installation soon.

The Annual Household Hazardous Waste Event will be held October 1st and 2nd, 2021. Friday evening is for senior citizens from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 pm., drop off at Town Hall. Saturday hours for residents are from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

STAFF REPORT

Executive Director Tucker gave her reports on the following items:

COVID Update: The Parks and Recreation Department have gone back to wearing masks when dealing with the public. More than the majority of the staff is vaccinated but they are taking precautions. Currently, they are not taking any more indoor rentals because of the COVID precautions to keep people safe and make sure the staff stays healthy.

Master Plan Update: There were sessions held for the Master Plan update for input from the public. There were over 700 responses from the survey. Currently, staff is working on the survey responses and those responses will be shared within the Master Plan document. There was a brainstorming session with staff for the Master Plan which was very productive. Everyone wore masks in the room but they were all able to meet together. It was very well spent time.

Strategic Plan Update: Director Tucker commented this was a huge undertaking and thanked the Strategic Plan Committee for helping them accomplish the plan. Undertakings since 2017 included Lily Pad Springs which was a big accomplishment. The kiosk was installed and dedicated at West Bloomfield Trail by Arrowhead. Interpretative sign projects are being redone. There are diversified sponsorships to make sure that we maintain those sponsorships and continue to have the revenue coming in. A "Needs Assessment" is being done for the RAC.

Executive Director Tucker indicated they are working on the budget plan for the 2022 and amending the 2021 budget. There is a budget planning meeting to be held on October 7, 2021.

Recreation Superintendent Hyer commented and presented photos of some community updates.
Recreation Activity Center: Tents were erected this summer for a lot of the outdoor programming. The idea was to make a dedicated, outdoor space for hosting programs due to COVID. The library noticed the tents during the summer and approached staff to host a couple of their concerts. The library was grateful and appreciated the space.

Staff Appreciation: Superintendent Hyer presented photos and shout outs to the recreation staff for the challenges overcome because of the pandemic. Staff included Senior Operations Coordinator Heidi Russell, Park Naturalist Supervisor Lauren Azoury, Recreation Programmer/Camp Administrator Ashley Stokes, Customer Service Representative Ruth Simon and Recreation Operation and Systems Coordinator Amy DeRosier. The staff really hustled this year, more so than other years and they had more participation in camp than ever before.

Staff navigated and delivered customer service every day for Lily Pad Springs. They worked behind the scenes to organize wristbands to make sure tickets were prepped every day. Superintendent Hyer indicated she wanted to make sure the Commission knew that they had a really strong team behind the scenes while navigating through the pandemic.

Pet Adoption took place at Drake Sports Park; it was a lovely day. There were several inquiries and applications were collected for rescues that were there. They did not do any adoptions onsite. This is a program that a local realtor brought in that they could not do this year, so P&R maintained the tradition.

Mother/Daughter Tea is another tradition. This is a cooperation between recreation staff and nature staff. Adaptations were made for COVID and the program was held outside. The art and some of the new props belong to P&R so they are ours to keep for future programs.

Nature Update: Bees in the D is by far one of the most popular programs this summer. This program fills up quickly and a second session was added with a total of 50 beekeepers for a day. Bees in the D is based out of Detroit and has been a phenomenal partner over the year. We do still have some hives which were moved to Karner. We will continue to build some partnerships with Bees in the D.

Nature: We continue to do our staff cross training and the public programs which included kayaking. A couple of kayaking outings had to be cancelled due to the weather. Outdoor survival day was sold out for August.

There were incredible numbers for Walk West Bloomfield and our Wheels to the Road program. Photo collages were put together which capture the energy and the excitement for the walkers and how appreciative they are of the program along with some of the prizes. Over 5,000 miles were walked this year with incredible attendance.

Photos were shown of the biking program. The biking program is self-led; the bikers ride throughout the community on their routes and they have to text or email back some selfies.

Connect Update: Connect is back open. Memberships are up, members are returning and there are new people joining every day. We're trying to capture photos from new people; all the photos shown were people who walked in off of the street or heard about Connect from their friends.

Upcoming Events: The last senior concert of the season is coming up next Thursday. The senior health expo is a partnership with Henry Ford Hospital and is hosted at Connect this year. There are themes to the sessions and they are asking everyone to pre-register. For this program, masks are required because of the partnership with Henry Ford Hospital.

Heroes Appreciation Breakfast: The Heroes Appreciation Breakfast will be continuing at Orchard Mall. This event is for our veterans on November 5, 2021. SignUpGenius is live if anyone wants to volunteer but they are reaching out to past volunteers first. This is a collaborative partnership as it has been in years past, however, the library has come on board this year to support us in this endeavor.

Parks Superintendent Ketchum reiterated Superintendent Hyer's comments in that it was a wonderful summer with everyone's cooperation between Parks, Recreation and CSR staff. Everyone came together as a team to get through the summer and the residents benefited from this.

Drake Service Yard: Superintendent Ketchum presented photos of the staff and their activities throughout the summer and start of fall. Phase two of the redesign of the parking lot was completed. They created a new concrete area to install bin block. The bin blocks are used for storage of materials such as mulch and top soil. The purpose of the bins is to keep the material inside and out of sensitive environmental areas.

Invasive Species Management: Staff was busy in August with the removal and treatment of Canadian thistle. They removed the heads of the thistle so the seeds will not reproduce. The contractor treated the phragmites and have done so for the last five years. This is a never ending battle with the invasive species.

Storm damage: Superintendent Ketchum commented it has been a crazy summer with tree damage from storms. Contractors are also working to take out some storm damage but staff was able to handle almost anything that came their way. Superintendent Ketchum thanked the residents who call to inform them of the locations, some giving GPS coordinates of the damaged trees.

Treasurer Aronoff inquired what they did with a downed tree. Superintendent Ketchum indicated if they can get equipment in there, they will chip it up. In the nature preserve, they will roll the big stumps in the woods to let nature take its course. It is good habitat for insects, birds, etc. They use the chips throughout the parks for mulch in the landscape beds.

Commissioner Wenczel inquired if the Township considered doing any controlled burns in the parks. She indicated this is a great option and efficient to move away from using chemicals. Executive Director Tucker commented in her past position, they have burned hundreds of acres and a lot of municipalities use this as a tool. It is a great option to chemicals. It can be a very economical option because you can burn the swales in 15 or 20 minutes and we won't have six staff out there clipping heads off of invasives. Executive Director Tucker stated she would not advocate something that she thought was dangerous or some kind of threat.

Commissioner Wenczel also asked if the Veteran's Breakfast is just for local veterans or if she could bring a veteran from out of town. Superintendent Hyer indicated it is open to any veteran.

ITEMS FROM THE OFFICERS

A. Items from the Chairperson

Chairman Brooks commented it was really heartwarming to receive calls over this year about how well done the resident input sessions were done. He indicated the residents enjoyed the sessions and thought it was really good input in a safe fashion. It is important to know and to give the feedback to your staff as well as to the livingLab. The residents appreciate the staff which is why they give their genuine feedback and information, so kudos to the team. Our new librarian speaks very highly of Superintendent Hyer and this partnership which speaks volumes to the leadership of the staff. Chairman Brooks thanked the staff for protecting the community, to keep people safe, and for their hard work.

B. Items from the Secretary

Secretary Kirkwood commented on the staff report regarding the major achievement in going through a pandemic. He was impressed in how the staff performed in maneuvering and adjusting to keep everyone safe.

Secretary Kirkwood mentioned how Superintendent Hyer highlighted her staff and people who worked with her but he wanted to highlight her in the way she handles situations with poise and grace. He thanked Superintendent Hyer for a job well done.

Secretary Kirkwood also thanked Ms. Ruth Lyons in finance for some of the behind the scene activities to get things accomplished. Secretary Kirkwood knows Superintendent Ketchum understands he is appreciated as well.

C. Items from the Treasurer

Treasurer Aronoff thanked Superintendent Hyer for all of the programs that she put together including the bee hive programs, bicycle program, etc. which were very impressive. He also indicated he was proud of the way Superintendent Ketchum maintains the parks and Jennifer who coordinates it.

Treasurer Aronoff commented there is an interesting link on the Internet called Traillink.com which is part of the Rails to Trails Conservancy. Every trail in the country is listed on this website. If you search for the West Bloomfield trail, there is great information about the trail including the history, and interesting features. If you are on the trail, and take an interesting photograph, you can submit it to the West Bloomfield page on Traillink.com.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Executive: Report from Chairperson Brooks (September 9, 2021)

Chairman Brooks indicated they had a virtual meeting on September 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Present: Secretary Kirkwood, Treasurer Aronoff, Chairman Brooks and Executive Director Tucker. In that meeting, the agenda for this meeting, September 30, 2021 was reviewed. They also discussed the COVID updates relative to masking requirements, project updates including the general Master Plan project with the public meetings and how they were scheduled as well as the inputs expected. The Strategic Plan project was discussed. Splash Pad operation closing which occurred on Monday, September 6, 2021, feedback from the survey was discussed and the facility needs assessment, the purchase agreement with Schulak, 2022 budget process, the NRPA conference that Executive Tucker attended in Nashville, the Cooperative DIA Grant and the September 13, 2021 Township Board Meeting. The next scheduled meeting is October 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

B. Strategic Planning: No Meeting

Secretary Wenczel commented she did not have a report since they did not meet. She indicated it was incredible to go through and see the process, updating and strategizing for the Strategic Plan. She appreciated the time and effort that went on behind the scenes.

C. Finance: Report from Treasurer Aronoff (September 30, 2021)

Treasurer Aronoff indicated tonight's finance committee met via Zoom at 6:00 p.m. Present: Executive Director Tucker, Finance Manager Ruth Lyons, Commissioners Adams, Barash and also Treasurer Aronoff. Treasurer Aronoff stated the committee discussed and reviewed the August, 2021 invoices, vouchers and the monthly budget status. The next meeting is scheduled in October prior to the regular Commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration to Approve the Selling of Surplus Equipment

Superintendent Ketchum indicated he would like consideration to approve the selling of surplus equipment. Staff recommended that the equipment be sold using Craig's list with minimum bids required.

The equipment listed are:

2009 GMC Sierra 3500 Truck
2008 GMC Sierra 3500 Cube Truck
2020 GMC Canyon complete pick up bed
2007 Alumagoal Soccer Goals (2 sets)

The bid prices were assessed by research and comparable prices to Kelly Blue book for the trucks. The soccer goals were researched online with similar soccer goals.

Motion by Treasurer Aronoff, second by Commissioner Barash, to approve the selling of surplus equipment.

Ayes: All
Nays: None
Absent: None
Motion Carried: 7 to 0

PUBLIC FORUM - Limited to 2 minutes per Resident for new topics

No public comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Executive Director Tucker commented they are working items for the budget meeting and will send out an electronic vision of the budget items next week. If anyone would prefer a hard copy instead just let her know.

Chairman Brooks commented there is a snap shot from a Parks and Recreation Commission zoom meeting. He asked if the Commission would be comfortable and interested for an outdoor picture of the Commission, all we have is a Zoom picture. He asked the Commission to respond back within the next day or so.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, Treasurer Aronoff made a motion to adjourn; unanimously supported. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mona Freiburger
Recording Secretary

The West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission will provide necessary aids for access, such as requests for a sign language interpreter or accommodations for a disability, please contact Pat Helson at 248-451-1918. Please make your requests early; a week will allow us to provide seamless access.

(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.)