



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Cheney, Fernandes, Johnson, O'Rourke, Robertson

**ABSENT:** Masi, Palmer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mayor Ackley, City Manager Whitt, Captain Kolke, DPW Team Lead Ladd, Recording Secretary Gross, Confidential Assistant Jaquays, DDA Board Member Millen

**REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**P&R 02-01-21 APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2020, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Cheney, seconded by Fernandes, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the September 14, 2020 Parks and Recreation meeting minutes.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. Trailway Safety Concerns

Chairman O'Rourke said this item was brought up at the last meeting. Mr. O'Rourke expressed his safety concerns pertaining to the trailway crossings. Mr. O'Rourke said he would like speed bumps to be placed on the trailway path before the intersections at Decker and Pontiac Trail.

City Manager Whitt said city administration is currently working on getting additional signage for the trailway intersections within the city. Mr. Whitt said he feels placing speed bumps on the trail would not be appropriate. Mr. Whitt said it then becomes a safety concern as far as people tripping over them or hitting them on their bikes and causing injuries. Mr. Whitt said he also believes placing speed bumps on the trail would be in violation of the trailway grant.

Chairman O'Rourke asked that the grant language be sent out to the commission through email so that they could better understand the potential violation.

Commissioner Johnson expressed his concern about the pine trees near the trailway crossing on Decker. He said they are a visibility concern. Mr. Johnson agreed with Mr.

O'Rourke that something needs to be done to address the concern of people darting out across the road without stopping. Mr. Johnson said there is going to be a fatality if we do nothing. Mr. Johnson said we need to address the problem.

## 2. Update on Parks & Recreation Donations

Chairman O'Rourke said this agenda item goes back to Mid-June of last year when Mr. Millen graciously proposed a \$10,000 donation to the foster farmhouse. Mr. O'Rourke said he didn't see the \$10,000 on the revenue and expenditure report. Mr. O'Rourke said he would like an update on if that money was actually collected and if there was any money left over after painting the farmhouse.

City Manager Whitt said the initial \$5,000 was billed to the city in the form of an invoice. Mr. Millen wrote the city a check to cover that shortly after. The rest of Mr. Millen's donations were approved by City Manager Whitt and paid directly to those that did the work on the foster farmhouse and Riley Park. Mr. Whitt said Mr. Millen's initial commitment has gone up several more thousands of dollars since then. Mr. Whitt said he believes Mr. Millen is actually here with us tonight. Mr. Whitt mentioned Mr. Millen is a new member on the Downtown Development Authority. Mr. Whitt said if he is here, he can give you an update himself.

Mr. Millen said last year he committed up to \$10,000 between painting it and fixing the parking lot at Riley Park. Mr. Millen said the foster farmhouse is a big project and it needs to be done in parts. Mr. Millen said he is in the process of putting in \$35,000 worth of windows and doors. Mr. Millen said he was able to come up with some money and he was able to get some additional money from other cannabis companies and remodeling companies. Mr. Millen said Channel 4 is going to be doing a story on the Foster Farmhouse at the end of February for black history month and tonight Channel 2 did a story on it as well. Mr. Millen said tomorrow it will be on WWJ Radio. Mr. Millen said his goal is to have the one main room of the farmhouse done by the beach party this year. My. Millen said he would like some artifacts brought back into the farmhouse to be put on display for the residents of Walled Lake and surrounding communities. Mr. Millen said by that time he would estimate over \$100,000 would be put into the farmhouse.

The Commission thanked Mr. Millen for his generous donations thus far and any future contributions.

Mr. O'Rourke asked if they should dedicate a line item for donations when planning for the 2022 & 2023 budget.

City Manager Whitt said that the city is not collecting donations for the farmhouse. Mr. Millen and his team are committed to rehabbing the foster farmhouse and Riley Park. Mr. Whitt said he will approve any improvements and repairs. Mr. Whitt said Mr. Millen and his team will pay for those improvement and repairs. Mr. Whitt said none of these donations need to be included in the budget.

Mr. O'Rourke said he seems to be the only person on the commission with some confusion on how this is working. Mr. O'Rourke asked that Mr. Whitt have a meeting with his to discuss this further.

Mr. Whitt agreed to meet with Mr. O'Rourke one on one at a later date.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Parks & Recreation Commission 2022 & 2023 Budget Discussion

Chairman O'Rourke stated that on page 10 in the packet is a revenue and expenditure report period ending 01/31/2021. Mr. O'Rourke asked if the unused money rolls over, or if the money is returned to the general fund at the end of the budget year.

City Manager Whitt said any money that was not utilized will be returned to the general fund. Mr. Whitt said if you would like an increase for a specific line item you will need to make a recommendation to council to increase that line item. Mr. Whitt said it does not mean you will receive an increase. He said city council has the final say on the budget and the Commission would have to get any changes approved by them.

Chairman O'Rourke said since he already plans on having a meeting with the City Manager, they could go over the budget as well. Mr. O'Rourke asked if all the commission members could email him their input and he will share it with the City Manager.

2. Pond & Mosquito Treatment at Sims Park

DPW Team Lead Ladd said in the past we have utilized the company Bluewater Aquatics to treat the ponds at Sims Park for weeds and algae. Mr. Ladd said we also have them spray mosquito control at Sims Park. Mr. Ladd said he is asking for the commission's approval for pond and mosquito treatments at Sims Park for the 2021 year.

**P&R 02-02-21 MOTION TO CONTINUE POND & MOSQUITO TREATMENTS AT SIMS PARK FOR THE 2021 YEAR.**

Motion by Cheney, seconded by Robertson, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To continue pond & mosquito treatments at sims park for the 2021 year.

3. 2021 Parks & Recreation Grants

Recording Secretary Gross said in 2019 the city applied for a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant. Ms. Gross said as most of you remember the grant was applied for in order to make improvements at Mercer Beach. Ms. Gross said the DNR awarded the City the grant, and the work was supposed to begin in the spring of 2020. Ms. Gross said, however COVID-19 has delayed the project. Ms. Gross said all 2019 federal grants are on hold as we wait for federal approval. Ms. Gross said the pandemic shut down

federal offices, and tribal reviews, stopping progress of all State of Michigan Land and Water grants. Ms. Gross said all 2019 grants remain stalled at the federal approval level so the DNR is not yet able to issue the contracts with the local grantees. Ms. Gross said for Land and Water grants, the state is the grantee with the National Park Service and all of the awardees are sub-grantees of the state. Ms. Gross said the city is still able to incur engineering expenses to prepare plans, specifications and bid documents at this time, but do not have permission to advertise for bids or do work until after the contract is signed by the city and the DNR and the plans approved for bid by the DNR.

Chairman O'Rourke asked if we had an estimate on when we might receive federal approval for the grant.

Recording Secretary Gross said there has been no indication of a time frame from the DNR.

Commissioner Fernandes said she would reach out and see if she could get a time frame.

#### 4. 2021 Parks & recreation Meeting & Event Schedule

Recording secretary Gross said she included the 2021 meeting schedule, 2021 event schedule, and the 2021 event flyer in the commissions packet. Ms. Gross said that the 2021 event flyer is on the city's website and was placed in the message board at Mercer Beach.

#### 5. Park Bench Proposal

Recording secretary Gross said the city received a letter addressed to the Parks & Recreation Commission from Joan Lewandowski, 32273 Marblehead. Ms. Gross read the letter aloud to the commission:

*"With your permission I am proposing putting a park bench with my son's name on it in the little park by the lake next to the tiki bar restaurant. My son died suddenly of a heart attack a year ago. He lived at 14 mile and Novi Rd. but considered Walled Lake his home. He had a boat and really enjoyed the lake that way. He was single and did frequent the restaurants in Walled lake. It would mean a great deal to me to have him remembered this way and be able to sit on it myself and remember him. I would be willing of course, to pay all the expenses if your department handles it and take care of it myself if I have your permission to do it. I am enclosing a self-addressed envelope if you will notify me by mail and my other information if you call. I would not be doing this until spring of 2021."*

City Manager Whitt said the Parks and Recreation Commission is a recommending board to the Council. Mr. Whitt said the board may recommend this request for council review but there are concerns to keep in mind. Mr. Whitt said one concern being if the city allows this request then how many others will want to make similar requests. Mr. Whitt said another concern being the upkeep. Mr. Whitt said in this case Ms. Lewandowski

says she will maintain the bench but if she does not follow through, the city will be responsible.

The commission agreed with City Manager Whitt's concerns.

Commissioner Fernandes said maybe this is a good time to recommend to council to create a policy on memorial objects within the city so that the commission knows how to proceed with these situations going forward.

Chairman O'Rourke said he agrees with commissioner Fernandes, she has made a great point.

**P&R 02-03-21            MOTION TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO CREATE A  
POLICY PERTAINING TO ADDING MEMORIAL OBJECTS  
WITHIN THE CITY**

Motion by Fernandes, seconded by Robertson, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To recommend to council to create a policy pertaining to adding memorial objects within the city.

**DISCUSSION:**

Chairman O'Rourke asked that discussion on a park walkthrough be added to the March Agenda. Mr. O'Rourke said in the past we usually walk the city parks in the spring to identify what needs improvements and repairs. Mr. O'Rourke said last spring we did not do a walk through due to COVID-19. Mr. O'Rourke said he would like to discuss the possibility of doing a walk through this year with masks and social distancing. Mr. O'Rourke said perhaps this is not the right time, but he would like to at least start the discussion.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

Neal Wolfson, 565 Winwood Court- Mr. Wolfson said very good meeting, he was very impressed. Mr. Wolfson said there were many good ideas, and it looks like the commission is getting things moved forward.

**P&R 02-04-21            ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

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Miranda Gross  
Deputy Clerk

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Dennis O'Rourke  
Chairman