



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2020**

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

**ROLL CALL:** Cheney, Hecht, Johnson, O'Rourke

**ABSENT:** Loch, Palmer, Robertson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Manager Whitt, Council Member Owsinek, Council Member Lublin, Council Member Woods, DPW Leader Ladd, Recording Secretary Gross, Confidential Assistant Jaquays

**REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:**

Chairman O'Rourke requested to add discussion on the smoking policy at Mercer Beach under new business item number 3. Mr. O'Rourke also requested to add discussion on retail parking at Riley Park and the trailway parking lot under new business item number 4.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**P&R 06-01-20 APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 2, 2020, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Cheney, seconded by Hecht, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the March 2, 2020 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

1. Update on 2020 Farmers Market – Opening and New Regulations

Confidential Assistant Jaquays explained the market will be opening June 17, 2020 with adjusted policies and practices in response to COVID-19. Ms. Jaquays described the safety precautions that will be implemented and directed members to visit the City's website for a detailed explanation of these new changes. Ms. Jaquays explained that the farmers market will be utilizing social media to share updates and information as things change.

Chairman O'Rourke asked how engagement with vendors has been since the pandemic.

Ms. Jaquays said that many of this year's vendors are repeat vendors from previous years and that they are looking forward to attending opening day.

City Manager Whitt said many of the vendors participate at other markets, so many of Walled Lake's vendors have already booked their Wednesdays to attend our market. Mr. Whitt said if the Farmer's Market were to be moved to another day, as has been suggested by certain uninformed officials, the city would lose our committed vendors.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **1. Update on Walled Lake Trail – Withdrawal from Trailway Mgmt. Council**

City Manager Whitt said the attached resolution in your packet was passed by council at the May 19<sup>th</sup> regular scheduled meeting. Mr. Whitt said the preamble of the resolution tells the story of what has occurred. Mr. Whitt said nothing was “sprung” on the trail council, Walled Lake has been having the discussion of pulling out of the trail for a year or two. Mr. Whitt said one of the biggest reasons being a lack of transparency of the Trail Management Council and certain members of the trail council. Mr. Whitt said the cost to the City of Walled Lake had been deemed inequitable. Mr. Whitt said any money spent on the trail was split into three ways. Mr. Whitt said the other local governments are much bigger, the taxable value in Commerce Township is ten times that of Walled Lake's taxable value. Mr. Whitt said but the Trail Management Council expected Walled Lake to pay one third of trail expenditures.

Mr. Whitt said the Walled Lake City Council has been trying to get a better deal for its taxpayers and Walled Lakes' Trail Management Council representative, John Owsinek determined that a fair deal for Walled Lake taxpayers wasn't feasible. Mr. Whitt said the Walled Lake City Council voted six to one to pull out and it has now become a linear park by resolution. Mr. Whitt said that means this commission will be including the Walled Lake trail in their plans and have to make this update to the Parks & Recreation master plan. Mr. Whitt said the public works department will now have to make plans for maintenance of the Walled Lake Trail and police and fire will make plans for public safety. Mr. Whitt stated that the city has not lost a trailway, the city has gained a liner park. Mr. Whitt said the City Council has also regained control over Walled Lake taxpayer dollars. Mr. Whitt suggested commission members look at the city resolution provided in their packet, it speaks for itself.

Commissioner Hecht said he thought he read in the spinal column that Wixom offered to help pay Walled Lake's portion.

City Manager Whitt said that is just another example of a lack of transparency. Mr. Whitt said he served as the Walled Lake trail representative previously had to pull away from it because the Trail Management Councils failure to be transparent and failure to explain to the Walled Lake taxpayers what they were actually spending the money on. Mr. Whitt said from the very beginning the Trail Management Council hasn't provided an audit to show where the tax dollars have been spent. Mr. Whitt said they continue to vote and move ahead with construction knowing it isn't in the best interest of the City of Walled Lake. Mr. Whitt said it wasn't just about paying one third of the cost, it is the lack of transparency and failure to meet their own requirements under the local agreement that caused Walled Lake Council to move in the direction they did. Mr. Whitt said the president of the Trail Management Council presumed to act as a code enforcer on Walled Lake's portion of the trail indicating he was

directed by Walled Lake officials to do so. Mr. Whitt said that misstatement annoyed some council members, as he was not instructed to act as an enforcer in Walled Lake. Mr. Whitt said Supervisor Scott is not a law enforcement officer, yet he went over and presumed to do code enforcement, pulling up signs from private businesses, addressed business owners, and presumed to do police work. Mr. Whitt said that is just one of the many issues, the Trail Management Council president is out of control. Mr. Whitt said as far as Wixom helping Walled Lake pay a portion that was in regard to the additional stuff they were going to do on the trail. Mr. Whitt said Wixom was never going to pay for Walled Lakes. Mr. Whitt said otherwise they would have come to the table. Mr. Whitt said Walled Lake has been trying to get a better deal for over a year now through the interlocal agreement and that didn't happen. Mr. Whitt said there was no fixing this, the second level of government was not helping and never helped to begin with. Mr. Whitt said we still have a railway, now Walled Lake controls it, and it is a linear park. Mr. Whitt said the Trail Management Council was trying to add to the trail which would create perpetual maintenance for Walled Lake. Mr. Whitt said now the City Council and the taxpayer's, control Walled Lake's portion of the trail.

Council Member Lublin said when Walled Lake initially had a meeting with Commerce Township and Wixom about renegotiating the interlocal agreement the other two communities said they understood our concerns and were willing to renegotiate. Mr. Lublin said if they wanted to cut a deal, they would have done it already. Mr. Lublin said they will never want to and that why I voted to pull out of the trail council. Mr. Lublin said he believes it was the right move for Walled Lake.

Council Member Owsinek said it started to become egregious, they wanted to stripe the trail, place water fountains on the trail, and a shelter structure. Mr. Owsinek said all of which would create engineering costs which would drive up our cost coming out of our fund balance from the Walled Lake taxpayers. Mr. Owsinek said he just cut to the chase and said "no more" spending of Walled Lake taxpayers' dollars.

## 2. Report on Parks Maintenance

City Manager Whitt said we began today to do repairs and maintenance to Riley Park. Mr. Whitt said Mercer Beach is next. Mr. Whitt said if you have been to Sims Park lately you will notice a lot of work has been done. Mr. Whitt said that had to do with the recommendation of the recreation commission. Mr. Whitt said we got a slow start because of COVID-19 but we have hit the ground running.

DPW Leader Ladd said we have a lot going on at Riley Park. Mr. Ladd said we patched up the parking lot today. Mr. Ladd said we did an inspection on the playground equipment and determined it needs to be removed and replaced. Mr. Ladd said the posts in the ground are rotting beyond repair and we have removed some of it already last year to ensure safety. Mr. Ladd said the house is going to be repainted as well. Mr. Ladd said we have removed approximately 25 trees at Sims Park last winter and early this spring. Mr. Ladd said we have already ground up the stumps, put topsoil and seed down and the grass is already growing. Mr. Ladd said unfortunately we had a large tree branch fall on the basketball court fence. Mr. Ladd said it did some damage so we will need to repair that. Mr. Ladd said we opened Mercer Beach today and got the buoys in the water. Mr. Ladd said the porta johns have been

delivered to all the parks and the water has been turned on at all facilities. Mr. Ladd said he has already sprayed all the round up and inspected all the equipment at all the parks. Mr. Ladd said he has been very busy and is looking forward to the summer.

Chairman O'Rourke asked Mr. Ladd if he would be spraying for mosquitos even though the summer concerts have been cancelled due to COVID-19.

DPW Leader Ladd said it would be a good idea to continue with that service. Mr. Ladd said it really helps and people will still be enjoying the park.

Chairman O'Rourke asked if there has been a cost increase for that service.

DPW Leader Ladd said no there has not.

### 3. Smoking Policy at Mercer Beach

Chairman O'Rourke expressed his concern about the use of marijuana at Mercer Beach. Mr. O'Rourke suggested creating an ordinance for the purpose of prohibiting the use of marijuana at our parks. Mr. O'Rourke mentioned the beaches and parks are beginning to get busy with the weather warming up and he wants everyone to have a pleasant experience at all the city's parks.

City Manager Whitt said we do not need an ordinance prohibiting the use of marijuana at Mercer Beach because it is already prohibited by state law. Mr. Whitt said what is needed, is signage and enforcement.

Chairman O'Rourke asked that there be more enforcement down by Mercer Beach. Mr. O'Rourke said he doesn't see much enforcement going on in that area and we are starting to see the beach fill up with the warmer weather coming.

Commissioner Hecht agreed and expressed his concern with the lack of enforcement downtown.

City Manager Whitt said Dan Ladd and I are already working on getting signage. Mr. Whitt said he has an upcoming meeting with the police chief and will work on getting more enforcement downtown as well.

### 4. Retail Parking at Riley Park and the Trailway Parking Lot

Mr. O'Rourke expressed his concern of local retail businesses using the public parking lots as employee parking or overflow parking at Riley Park & the Trailway head parking lot. Mr. O'Rourke said he was wondering if it is considered legal and if it is, is there a way to prohibit the businesses from doing this.

City Manager Whitt said it is not illegal to park at these lots, because it is public parking. Mr. Whitt said what the city can do provide parking regulations for these facilities through City

Council. Mr. Whitt said the parking lot at Riley Park was used for curbside parking, and this is not illegal because there were no prohibitions for this. Mr. Whitt said the intention for the Trailway Parking lot was not for Lume or Sky's the Limit or employee parking from neighboring enterprises. Mr. Whitt said we now have an opportunity and responsibility to regulate parking for city facilities, including Riley Park and the Trailway.

Chairman O'Rourke emphasized his concern with making accessible and well-maintained park parking lots, including regulations and enforcements.

Mr. Whitt acknowledged that now is the time to address these issues.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:** None

**DISCUSSION:** None

**P&R 06-02-20 ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

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Miranda Gross  
Deputy Clerk

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Dennis O'Rourke  
Chairman