



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

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

PLEDGE TO FLAG

Chairman O' Rourke took a moment to recognize the lives of those lost on 9/11. Mr. O' Rourke mentioned that Parks & Recs are an important part of cities and the lives that were lost in Pennsylvania, New York, and all over the place, due to their sacrifices, makes it possible for us to do what we do and to join our communities today. Mr. O' Rourke then asked any Veterans to raise their hands in recognition for their sacrifices.

ROLL CALL: Arnold, Fernandes, Johnson, Masi, O'Rourke, Adams

ABSENT: Robertson

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Whitt, Assistant to City Manager Jaquays,
Recording Secretary Hall, DPW Superintendent Ladd

P&R 9-01-23 MOTION TO EXCUSE COMMISSIONER ROBERTSON FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Johnson, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse Commissioner Robertson from tonight's meeting.

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

P&R 9-02-23 APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 12, 2023, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Fernandes, seconded by Masi, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the June 12, 2023, Parks and Recreation meeting minutes.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Ruth Du Fresne - 300 Eagle Pond, said she was here as a researcher for the Commerce Township Historical Society. Ms. Du Fresne mentioned that the Air Line Trail has a lot of historical significance, based off her research. Ms. Du Fresne proposed doing tours of the trail during the Farmers Market (and whenever able), around 5-10 minutes long, to tell this history. Ms. Du Fresne also mentioned adding history posters/ silent tellers along the trailway to get word out about the trail. Ms. Du Fresne suggested that this be added to our 5-year plan, as she recognizes

incorporating these items may take some time. Ms. Du Fresne had also mentioned that she would be interested in doing cemetery tours in the future. Ms. Du Fresne additionally shared that she is a member of the Oakland County History Coalition, made-up of a group of people who are doing research via grants and if a new grant gains approval, the information can become a part of the curriculum in schools, allowing our children to know the stories as well.

Chairman O' Rourke asked where Ms. Du Fresne suggests the silent tellers be.

Ms. Du Fresne said she would like them along the Air Line Trail.

Chairman O' Rourke confirmed they would be at flat boards, nature spots, etc.

City Manager Whitt mentioned that Walled Lake just acquired the trail and we will be working on updating signage to reflect that. It will be the Walled Lake Trail. Mr. Whitt explained that Ms. Kaylee Hall is the new Recreation Coordinator, which encompasses being the Market Place Manager and the first Trail Manager. Mr. Whitt stated that we rebranded the Farmers Market by making it a Market Place and confirmed with Ms. Hall that we had up to 47 vendors at one time. As the first Trail Manager, and while also being a police officer, Mr. Whitt mentioned Ms. Hall will work on trail safety (e.g., patrol and updating signage). Mr. Whitt mentioned that Ms. Hall, alongside Ms. Jaquays, will be the individual to work with on becoming a vendor at the market and getting the tours started up.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

DISCUSSION:

1. December Tree Lighting Ceremony

Chairman O' Rourke mentioned that Reverend Kenny Walkup from United Methodist Church is unavailable to do the invocation at the tree lighting this year and we will need to look for a pastor to fill in.

2. Foster Farmhouse

Chairman O' Rourke mentioned that the Greenhouse was grateful enough to paint the Foster Farmhouse two years ago. However, since then, he has seen it fall into disrepair. Mr. O' Rourke said the front porch has been depleted and the siding is peeling off. Mr. O' Rourke said he believes it is time to do something further that is a more permanent solution, such as having a rhino shield come out or fixing the siding. Mr. O' Rourke would like to make this an agenda item for next month's meeting.

City Manager Whitt mentioned he drives by this site everyday and recognizes the site is in disrepair. Mr. Whitt said this issue has been brought up in the past and that the siding needs to be fixed. Mr. Whitt said that we advertise the site as a historic place and recognize there needs to be siding on it and a look at the inside to tell this history.

Mr. Whitt mentioned that the improvements may make it less historical to some. However, when the site was moved, it had already lost some of this value and is a perpetual maintenance problem.

Chairman O' Rourke encouraged everyone to do a Google search of the site to see what it used to look like in its original state. Mr. O' Rourke also mentioned that doing a rhino shield, and keeping the original wood, could help with preserving some of the history.

City Manager Whitt mentioned that putting together pictures, stories, etc. and bringing people in for events is the way to help with history. The History Coalition has pictures that can be utilized for this. Fixing the siding/ appearance is a first step followed by a focus on renovating the inside. Mr. Whitt said ideas will be put together based on this discussion.

Commissioner Johnson reiterated that we are grateful for the Greenhouse painting the site and for hosting some events out that way to bring awareness to it. Mr. Johnson said that other cities have also faced issues with losing historical significance when having difficulty preserving the site in the same way. Mr. Johnson said this prevents funding, such as grants, from being obtained from the government. Mr. Johnson stated the first step to raising donations should be making the site look like somewhere where tours can be done, people can be brought in, and awareness can be brought to it.

Commissioner Fernandes mentioned it is important to get the whole story. Mrs. Fernandes mentioned it is more valuable as a place to learn and teach all that has happened and what it means.

3. Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Assistant to City Manager Jaquays mentioned there have been many significant changes that have taken place in the last 1-1.5 years that need to be revisited to update the Master Plan, such as Foster Farmhouse, the Walled Lake Linear Trail, and the rebranding of the Farmers Market. Ms. Jaquays said they are in the process of updating the plan, although nothing is solidified yet, and some of the discussions from tonight can be incorporated in the plan to give direction on projects, such as updating the Foster Farmhouse. Ms. Jaquays said they are open for feedback from everyone.

Commissioner Johnson asked what their role is and if their help is needed on updating the plan.

Assistant to City Manager Jaquays explained that it is up to Parks on what direction they would like to take, what projects to work on, to relook at amenities at the parks, etc.

City Manager Whitt added that the Parks and Recreation Commission serves as an advisory board to City Council. Mr. Whitt mentioned that Walled Lake has never had a Recreation Department. Mr. Whitt said City staff has provided staffing for assisting the Commission including a recording secretary. Mr. Whitt said recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Commission are provided to City Council. Mr. Whitt said Commissioners should read the plan and look at what they would like. If anything requires funding, their role is to draft the requests for them. Keeping up the plan is important. Mr. Whitt gave the example of the new Walled Lake Trail title and updating it in the plan and mentioning trailway safety. Mr. Whitt said the Commission's role is to identify things that need to be fixed or identified in the plan, based on their experiences. Mr. Whitt said that one of the reasons we did not get the pickleball courts is because it was not in our plan. Mr. Whitt also mentioned collecting money, outside of City Council, would be difficult, in terms of getting stuff done.

4. Market Place Update

Recording Secretary Hall said that the market continued to do well the past month, even heading into Fall and the end of the season. Ms. Hall said that the highest number of vendors we have had this year is 47, versus 12-15/ week the market used to see. Ms. Hall explained that we still have a consistent flow of vendors attending each week in the twenties. Ms. Hall mentioned that next week is the Fall Festival at the market, from 11am-2pm, where there will be hot cocoa, free cider and donuts, a grab-and-go station with crafts for kids, and live music from a local musician. Ms. Hall stated a Harvest Festival will be hosted in October.

City Manager Whitt pointed out that one of the vendors from the market now serves as one of our very own commissioners: Heaven Adams with the Virgin Bar. Mr. Whitt said they have attended almost every week and have been doing well.

Commissioner Adams thanked Ms. Hall for her work based on being a vendor and just being new to the market.

5. Trailway Safety

City Manager Whitt mentioned Ms. Hall will be doing the trail work because she is a Certified Reserve Police Officer and will be attending the police academy in January for four months. Ms. Hall will be finishing the season as a special project person. Mr. Whitt said Ms. Hall will look for safety issues, look at code enforcement issues, etc. and bring it back to the police and the board. Mr. Whitt said Ms. Hall will look at overgrown areas, when things need to be cut, look for garbage overflow, and more.

DPW Superintendent Dan Ladd said the rain garden next to the fire station was planted last Saturday. Mr. Ladd stated about 20 volunteers showed up to help with the Huron River Watershed Coalition planting, which they had a grant to do and that had been a couple years in the working. Mr. Ladd said the third week of this month is the scheduled date for 21 new trees to be planted along the barn, walking trail, and beside

the bridge. Some pine trees will also be planted to shield the Department of Public Works equipment.

Commissioner Johnson mentioned he is excited about the trees as well as having someone out on the trail. Mr. Johnson mentioned he has noticed issues with bikers following the signage and having a presence out there may assist.

City Manager Whitt said Ms. Hall's role will be to update signage and look over the trail. However, she will not be out there to write tickets. Ms. Hall will work on what we can do to remind them to slow down, stop, etc. Mr. Whitt mentioned Ms. Hall is also tasked with the tree lighting, as well as working with Jery Millen's staff on the Trunk or Treat.

Commissioner Fernandes asked if there was a date for the Trunk or Treat. Assistant to City Manager Jaquays confirmed it is October 29th. City Manager Whitt said the flyer will be sent out to them that was put together by Millen's staff.

City Manager Whitt confirmed with Ms. Jaquays that we sponsored the petting zoo and pony rides last year. Mr. Whitt said our Department of Public Works also helped set-up. Mr. Whitt said this year it will be bigger and better for the children.

Chairman O' Rourke welcomed Ms. Hall aboard and thanked her for her work and already putting a lot on her plate. Mr. O' Rourke also welcomed and formally introduced Commissioner Adams, as she appeared for her first meeting.

P&R 9-03-23 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Kaylee Hall
Recording Secretary

Dennis O'Rourke
Chairman