CITY OF WALLED LAKE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2026

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

PLEDGE TO FLAG

ROLL CALL: Dufresne, Fernandes, *Johnson, LaPointe, Linihan, O'Rourke

ABSENT: Arnold

OTHERS PRESENT: HR Director Sears, DPW Superintendent Ladd

**Attended meeting electronically*

P&R 10-01-26 MOTION TO EXCUSE COMMISSION MEMBER ARNOLD FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING

Motion by Johnson, seconded by Dufresne, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse commission member Arnold from tonight's meeting.

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:

Commission Member Fernandes requested that an item regarding the entrance to Hiram Sims Park off Bolton Street be added under Discussion Item No. 5.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

P&R 10-02-26 APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2026, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Linihan, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the September 14, 2026, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Banks Dolbeer Foster Farmhouse Sign

   The Commission continued its discussion regarding the replacement of the sign at the Banks Dolbeer Foster Farmhouse. Potential sign designs were considered, including an angled interpretive sign similar to signage at the City's beach or a sign attached to the

farmhouse. The preferred direction would avoid the previous tall, freestanding design and minimize ongoing landscaping and maintenance requirements.

Commission Member Linihan mentioned that Commission Member Arnold presented an AI-generated mockup of a proposed new sign at the previous meeting and indicated that she would obtain measurements of existing signs for reference. Mr. Linihan said commission Member Arnold was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

The Commission also discussed the overall condition and future use of the farmhouse. An open house held earlier in the year provided an opportunity for residents to view the building, which was reported to be in significant disrepair. Members expressed concern that restoration costs could exceed $1 million, particularly if the goal is to preserve the building's historic character. Potential options discussed included restoring the existing structure, seeking grants or private donations, soliciting volunteer assistance from local contractors and builders, or considering alternative uses for the property.

Commissioner Giovanni Johnson reported that he has been communicating with First Baptist Church in Detroit regarding historical documentation that may support claims of the farmhouse's connection to the Underground Railroad. Mr. Johnson said the church maintains a ledger documenting individuals who traveled through Walled Lake on their way to Detroit and onward to Canada. Commissioner Johnson said he will follow up with the church to obtain copies of the available documentation and, if possible, official or notarized records for review and present to the Commission and City Council.

Commission Member Fernandes agreed to contact the State Historic Preservation Office to explore available designation or recognition options. Ms. Fernandes asked Mr. Johnson to provide her with the documentation from the First Baptist church, as soon as possible.

2. 2027 Spring Egg Hunt Date

Commission member Linihan mentioned that the Commission previously discussed adjusting the City's 2027 Spring Egg Hunt date to avoid conflicts with other community events, including local church events.

After further discussion the commission decided to keep the event scheduled for the Saturday before Easter due to potentially unfavorable weather conditions with easter being in March this year. The Commission also discussed establishing a rain date in the event of inclement weather. Members discussed Saturday, April 3, 2027, as a potential rain date.

Recording Secretary Sears said she will verify the availability of the proposed rain date and report back at the next meeting.

3. 2027 Memorial Day Parade Route

The Commission discussed some proposed routes for the 2027 Memorial Day Parade. Commission members brought up several logistical and safety concerns associated with the proposed routes, including limited space for parade floats and trailers, residential driveway access, traffic control, parking, and emergency vehicle access.

DPW Superintendent mentioned that the planned downtown sidewalk and streetscape construction could begin in the spring and could affect traffic patterns and require reconsideration of the proposed route.

The Commission discussed continuing to stage the parade at the school, which has provided an established and effective setup for participants, volunteers, and parking. Members noted that the current staging arrangement has worked well, offers greater space, and presents fewer road closures and safety concerns. The importance of prioritizing public safety and maintaining emergency access was emphasized.

Chairman Johnson discussed concerns raised by downtown businesses regarding customer traffic and decreased sales associated with the current parade route.

Commission Member O'Rourke discussed inviting businesses to participate in the parade, allowing them to distribute promotional coupons, and engage with attendees.

Commission Member Fernandes emphasized the importance of consulting with the Police & Fire Chiefs regarding traffic management, public safety, and emergency access before making a final determination.

Commission Member Linihan asked Mr. O'Rourke to discuss the proposed approach with City Council to ensure support and coordination.

NEW BUSINESS: None

DISCUSSION:

1. Walled Lake Trailway | E-bikes

The Commission discussed growing safety concerns regarding e-bikes and other motorized mobility devices on the Walled Lake Trailway, sidewalks, and within City parks. Members expressed concerns about excessive speeds, groups of young riders, unsafe road crossings, and the potential for collisions with pedestrians and other trail users.

Commission Member Linihan explained the different classes of e-bikes, including Class 1 pedal-assist bikes, Class 2 bikes equipped with a throttle, and Class 3 bikes capable of speeds up to 28 miles per hour. Mr. Linihan said municipalities currently have the ability to regulate which classes of e-bikes are permitted and where. Mr. Linihan said potential regulatory options include limiting permitted e-bike classes on the Trailway, establishing a trail speed limit, improving signage, and clarifying which devices are allowed on City trails and within parks. Mr. Linihan said other communities have set a speed limit of 15

miles per hour which would apply to traditional bicycles as well as e-bikes. Mr. Linihan expressed the importance of consistent regulations and coordination with neighboring municipalities to avoid confusion for trail users traveling between jurisdictions.

Commission Member O'Rourke noted that the matter would also be addressed by the City's traffic safety board. Mr. O'Rourke further discussed the need to establish the traffic safety board, which currently requires additional members to reach the necessary membership for the committee to proceed. Mr. O'Rourke encouraged Mr. Linihan to consider serving on the committee based on his knowledge and experience with e-bikes and trail safety.

Commission Member Johnson indicated plans to follow up with a prospective applicant who had previously expressed interest in serving on the traffic safety board.

No formal action was taken. The Commission will continue to monitor the state and our neighboring community's transportation and safety discussions regarding e-bike use, speed limits, permitted device classifications, signage, and enforcement.

2. 2027 Summer Concert Series

Commission members reviewed the artists and bands that had contacted the city, along with performers from the 2026 series. Members emphasized the importance of selecting performers earlier than in previous years to improve availability and potentially secure bands within the City's budget. The goal discussed was to finalize the lineup before Christmas.

Chairman Johnson suggested conducting a public poll on the Parks and Recreation social media pages to gather resident feedback on bands. Mr. Johnson encouraged the commission members to continue reviewing available performance videos and artist submissions.

The Commission expressed support for continuing the venue arrangement used in 2026, with the opening and closing concerts held at Casey J. Ambrose Public Safety Campus and the remaining concerts held at Hiram Sims Park.

Commission Member O'Rourke noted that the Oakland County stage application and concert dates would need to be addressed earlier this year to support planning and avoid additional costs.

Chairman Johnson discussed the importance of booking established bands with local followings and generally preferred groups with multiple performers over solo acts for the concert series.

Commission Member Linihan mentioned soliciting sponsorships from local businesses to increase funding and potentially attracting higher-profile regional performers for the opening and closing concerts. Mr. Linihan mentioned including the newly opened credit union, Speedway, and local businesses in the community. Mr. Linihan also discussed

working with the Lakes Chamber of Commerce to share sponsorship information. Mr. Linihan discussed developing a sponsorship packet for review at the next meeting. Mr. Linihan suggested a model in which the commission requests equal contributions with a consistent banner recognizing sponsors throughout the series. Mr. Linihan suggested that a list of prospective businesses, proposed contribution amounts, and sponsorship recognition options should be developed before outreach begins.

3. Market Place Update

Recording Secretary Sears provided an update on the Harvest Festival held on Wednesday, October 7th. Mrs. Sears said the event was well attended and the weather was beautiful. Mrs. Sears said there were almost 40 vendors present, reflecting continued growth and interest in the market. Mrs. Sears said that State Farm provided complimentary donuts and cider from Parmenter's Cider Mill in Northville, the Home Depot distributed complimentary Halloween craft kits for children, and Savvy Sliders provided a food truck which was well received by vendors and attendees. Mrs. Sears said Nick from Weekend ComeBack provided live music for this event. Mrs. Sears said a seasonal photo backdrop featuring hay, pumpkins, and scarecrows was available for attendees. Mrs. Sears said the library brought activities for the children and Traveling Tom's Coffee brought their coffee truck. Mrs. Sears said the Fire Department participated in recognition of National Fire Prevention Week by distributing fire safety information and fire-themed items, including hats, to children. Mrs. Sears concluded by informing the commission that three market dates remained in the season.

The commission thanked Ms. Kaylee Hall for her hard work and commitment to making our market a success.

4. 2026 Tree Lighting Ceremony

Recording Secretary Sears said, as a reminder, the 2026 Tree Lighting Ceremony is scheduled for Monday, December 7, at 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Sears said commission members and volunteers are encouraged to arrive at approximately 5:30 p.m. to assist with setup, including preparing hot chocolate and set up of cookies and other refreshments. Mrs. Sears said Santa Claus has been confirmed through coordination with the Police Chief and will participate at no cost this year. Mrs. Sears said future arrangements for Santa's participation may need to be revisited. Mrs. Sears said Portrait EFX will return to provide Santa photos and staff contacted McDonald's regarding participation and requested an earlier arrival time than in previous years. Mrs. Sears said McDonald's has traditionally provided complimentary coffee and brings their mascot Grimace. Mrs. Sears said the Fire Department is expected to provide complimentary popcorn. Mrs. Sears said a donation request was submitted to Costco for gift cards to help offset the cost of cookies contacted the Glee Club was contacted and confirmed regarding their traditional musical performance. Mrs. Sears said the Walled Lake Methodist Church choir confirmed its willingness to participate again this year, and their pastor will also deliver the invocation. Mrs. Sears said the Walled Lake Western & Northern bands have been confirmed and the library plans to distribute complimentary children's books. Mrs. Sears said lastly, the candy canes and ornaments have been ordered, and the event flyer has been completed.

Chairman Johnson expressed interest in participating musically during the ceremony, noting that a planned performance in a previous year had been missed due to illness.

Recording Secretary Sears indicated that the ceremony schedule was still being finalized and that participation could be considered as the program develops.

5. Hiram Sims Park – Bolton Street

Commission Member Fernandes asked if the pedestrian access path between Bolton and Hiram Sims Park could be improved. Ms. Fernandes noted that the existing informal footpath crosses grass and can lead pedestrians through adjacent yards. Ms. Fernandes requested a more clearly defined path, potentially paved with asphalt or surfaced with gravel, would improve access and better guide pedestrian traffic.

Commission Member Linihan said the city owns the narrow strip of property in between the neighboring properties.

DPW Superintendent Ladd indicated that improvements could be explored.

The Commission also discussed the deteriorating asphalt trail within the park.
The Commission discussed potential improvements to recreational facilities at Hiram Sims Park, including resurfacing the existing tennis court for possible pickleball use. Members noted that the tennis court appears to receive limited use, while pickleball facilities in other communities have attracted significant participation.

Commission LaPointe suggested installing new outdoor exercise stations along the path. Mr. LaPointe mentioned he visited a park in Fenton that has these stations and shared pictures with the commission.

P&R 10-02-26 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Miranda Sears	Patrick Linihan
Recording Secretary	Vice Chairman