



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026**

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

PLEDGE TO FLAG

ROLL CALL: Arnold, Dufresne, Fernandes, Johnson, O'Rourke

ABSENT: Linihan

OTHERS PRESENT: HR Director Sears, DPW Superintendent Ladd

**P&R 09-01-26 MOTION TO EXCUSE COMMISSION MEMBER LINIHAN
FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING**

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Dufresne, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To excuse commission member Linihan from tonight's Meeting.

REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:

Commission Member O'Rourke asked to add discussion on the Airline Trail and E-Bikes to next month's agenda.

Chairman Johnson requested to add discussion on the 2027 Summer Concert Series to next month's agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**P&R 09-02-26 APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 10, 2026, PARKS AND
RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Arnold, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the August 10, 2026, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting minutes.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Banks Dolbeer Foster Farmhouse Sign

Commission Member Arnold stated that at the previous meeting, she had committed to providing the Commission with an AI-generated mock-up of the proposed sign, which she had since emailed to the members. Ms. Arnold explained that her goal was to

incorporate a combination of images and text to create a more engaging and visually appealing sign that could be easily read at a glance, rather than presenting a large block of text. Ms. Arnold also suggested that Commission Member Dufresne could be a valuable resource in identifying and refining the key points to include. She noted that the sign should highlight information about the house and Dr. Sarah Gertrude Banks, while presenting the information in a more approachable format that would encourage greater public engagement.

Commission Member Dufresne stated that she liked the inclusion of Dr. Banks' image on the sign and commented that Ms. Arnold's mock-up looked very nice.

The Commission discussed next steps, including measuring the existing sign at Mercer Beach to determine appropriate dimensions. Once the dimensions have been established, the Commission will reach out to a sign company to obtain a quote for the proposed sign. Commission members discussed reviewing Ms. Arnold's mock-up and providing any feedback or suggested revisions at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. First Reading of Proposed Parks & Recreation Ordinance

Commission Member O'Rourke said the proposed ordinance amendment was at the request of the mayor. The first reading was approved at the City Council Meeting on Tuesday, September 1st. The council requested the ordinance amendment be sent to the Parks & Recreation Commission for feedback. The ordinance will go back to council in October for the second reading.

Commission Member O'Rourke stated that, since Commission Member Linihan was unable to attend the meeting, Mr. Linihan provided feedback for Mr. O'Rourke to share with the Commission. Mr. Linihan expressed concerns regarding the proposed "temporary shelter" language, noting that the language could potentially prohibit individuals from using tents or similar temporary structures at the beach for purposes such as providing shade and protection from the sun. Mr. Linihan also expressed concerns regarding Item No. 6 under Section 54-1, stating that the provision could prohibit the use of temporary hammocks in the parks, which have become increasingly popular. Additionally, Mr. Linihan requested that "multi-use trails" be added to the language on page 9. He also recommended adding provisions addressing the use of e-bikes and e-motos to the ordinance.

Commission Member O'Rourke stated that, following discussions with Police Chief Shakinis, he would like parking spaces and parking lots to be added to the list of public spaces on page two and referenced as public spaces throughout the ordinance.

Commission Member Arnold questioned whether the existing ordinance currently provides for enforcement in parking spaces and parking lots.

Commission Member O'Rourke stated that, according to Police Chief Shakinis, the current ordinance does not provide for enforcement in those areas.

Commission Member Fernandes questioned the basis for the four-consecutive-hour time limit under Chapter 54, Article I, Division 1, regarding unattended personal property. She asked whether the four-hour limit was established specifically for the proposed ordinance or if the language was based on a provision from another municipality's ordinance.

Commission Member O'Rourke stated that he was unsure of the basis for the four-hour time limit and suggested conducting additional research to determine whether the four-hour period is appropriate.

Chairman Johnson noted that the proposed ordinance does not appear to address the use of park benches. He expressed concerns regarding individuals using park benches for extended periods or as a place to camp out.

Commission Member Arnold raised a question regarding Section 54-15, concerning the removal of property. She requested clarification regarding what types of personal property would be subject to removal. Ms. Arnold recommended narrowing the scope of the provision by providing a more specific definition of "property."

DISCUSSION:

1. 2026 Summer Concert Series – After Action Report

Recording Secretary Sears reported that the 2026 Summer Concert Series has officially concluded. She noted that the weather cooperated throughout the series, and no concerts required rescheduling. Mrs. Sears reported that attendance and participation were excellent, and she received a significant amount of positive feedback from attendees. She also noted that several of the bands reached out following their performances with positive feedback and expressed interest in returning next year. Mrs. Sears suggested that the Commission consider pursuing sponsors to help offset the cost of booking bands for next year's concert series. She noted that several bands were willing to work within the City's budget; however, they indicated that the compensation offered was considerably lower than their typical rates. Mrs. Sears also revisited the possibility of incorporating food trucks into next year's concert series, which was discussed at the previous meeting. She stated that she would work on exploring this option for the 2027 season. Mrs. Sears then asked whether any Commission members had questions, comments, or concerns.

Chairman Johnson commended Mrs. Sears for her work promoting the concerts through flyers, yard signs, and social media posts. He expressed his appreciation for the efforts of both Mrs. Sears and Mr. Ladd in promoting and supporting the concert series.

Commission Member O'Rourke asked about the proposed locations for the concerts. He questioned whether the Commission preferred to continue holding the first and final concerts at the Casey J. Ambrose Public Safety Campus or hold all concerts at Hiram Sims Park.

Commission Member Dufresne stated that she attended the first concert at the Casey J. Ambrose Public Safety Campus and enjoyed the event, noting that the weather was beautiful. However, after attending the subsequent concert at Hiram Sims Park, she felt that Hiram Sims Park was a better overall location for the concerts. She expressed her preference for holding all concerts at Hiram Sims Park, citing the shade provided by the trees and the available areas for children to play.

Commission Member Arnold clarified that she was not making a formal proposal but suggested considering the property across from the beach as a potential location for one of the concerts next year.

Chairman Johnson said Chairman Johnson commented on the concert budget, stating that the current budget of approximately \$500 to \$800 per band is considerably lower than what he has experienced in other communities as a talent agent. He noted that performers are being asked to transport their equipment and perform for nearly two hours, and that many bars typically pay more than the current amount. Chairman Johnson acknowledged that, as a small community, the City may not be able to offer the same compensation as larger communities and must work with bands that are willing to perform within the available budget. However, he suggested increasing the minimum compensation to approximately \$1,000 per band. He noted that the typical rate for a concert in the park can range from approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000, particularly when performers are responsible for providing their own sound equipment. He stated that there are, however, four- and five-piece bands that may be willing to perform for approximately \$1,000 to \$1,200. Chairman Johnson also discussed the locations of the concerts. He stated that he had originally been one of the strongest advocates for holding all of the concerts at the Casey J. Ambrose Public Safety Campus. However, after attending concerts at both locations and speaking with members of the community, his opinion changed. He said he spoke with attendees about their experiences and received consistent feedback that Hiram Sims Park was preferred because families could bring their children, who could play in the park while they enjoyed the music. Chairman Johnson noted that he also received positive feedback regarding the concerts held at the Casey J. Ambrose Public Safety Campus, particularly the opportunity to provide a different experience for residents. However, he stated that one of the most common comments he heard was a desire to see a more recognizable or regional act perform at the concerts. He suggested that bringing in a regional act with name recognition, such as an artist who had a popular song in the 1990s, could generate additional interest and attendance. Chairman Johnson suggested exploring community sponsorships to help increase the concert budget and attract higher-profile performers. He recommended developing a list of local businesses that could be approached regarding sponsorship opportunities. He also suggested seeking input from potential sponsors regarding the types of performers they would like to see at future concerts. Regarding concert locations, Chairman Johnson stated that he did not recommend moving all of the concerts to Hiram Sims Park. Instead, he supported continuing with the current approach of holding the opening and closing concerts at the Casey J. Ambrose Public Safety Campus or somewhere else, while holding the remaining concerts at Hiram Sims Park. He felt this provided a good balance and recommended making the opening and closing concerts larger events with higher-profile performers.

Chairman Johnson also discussed the possibility of holding a concert on the DDA property across from the beach. He stated that, personally, he did not recommend using the property at this time. His concerns were primarily that the property is not owned by the City and that utilizing the location could require street closures, potentially creating additional traffic and parking challenges. He stated that he would be more supportive of the location if there were a way to use the property without requiring street closures and if adequate parking could be provided.

Commission Member Fernandes reminded the Commission that City Council approved the 2027–2028 budget at its June 16 meeting. Therefore, the Parks budget for that fiscal year has already been established.

Commission Member Dufresne noted that other communities hold fewer concerts and suggested that reducing the number of concerts could allow the City to allocate a larger budget toward individual performers or bands.

Chairman Johnson agreed with the suggestion to reduce the number of concerts and stated that reducing the series from seven concerts to four could allow the City to make each event larger and more memorable. He suggested incorporating additional activities, such as yoga before the concert, lawn games, or other family-oriented activities, to create a more engaging community event while also reducing the overall financial strain of the concert series. Chairman Johnson stated that he had been contacted by several individuals regarding the concert series and had directed them to Mrs. Sears. He noted that some of the bands that performed during the previous concert series had also expressed interest in returning. Chairman Johnson stated that, while the final decision would be made by the Commission, he would like to continue the approach of bringing back some popular performers while also introducing new bands to the concert series. He expressed that he did not believe it would be beneficial to have the same bands perform every summer and supported maintaining a balance between returning favorites and new performers. Chairman Johnson stated that he felt the discussion was a good starting point and that the Commission could continue the discussion at the next meeting.

2. Market Place Update

Recording Secretary Sears reported that the Farmers Market has continued to experience an increase in vendor participation, along with a steady presence of returning vendors. The market is averaging more than 28 vendors per week. Mrs. Sears noted that several vendors are currently offering fresh produce, which has contributed to increased patron attendance. Mrs. Sears reported that the annual Back-to-School Festival was held on August 19th, with 37 vendors participating and a strong patron turnout. Families enjoyed a variety of vendors, the TRU Pizza Co. food truck, and various free giveaways and activities. Mrs. Sears reported that the next scheduled event is the Harvest Festival, which will take place on Wednesday, October 7, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The event will feature live music by Weekend Comeback musician Nic Cole Klaes from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., activities with the Walled Lake Library, free giveaways from State Farm, and take-home activity kits provided by Home Depot. Travelin' Tom's Coffee Truck of Holly and Shopdog Cheeseburgers will also be in attendance. Mrs. Sears added that the Walled

Lake Fire Department will be present to provide information on fire safety, as the event coincides with National Fire Prevention Week. Mrs. Sears thanked Ms. Kaylee Hall for her hard work and making the market a success this season.

3. 2026 Tree Lighting Ceremony

Recording Secretary Sears reported that the 2026 Tree Lighting Ceremony is scheduled for Monday, December 7. Mrs. Sears stated that she spoke with Pastor Alex of Walled Lake United Methodist Church, she will be providing the invocation for the event. Mrs. Sears noted that she will provide additional updates at the next Commission meeting as planning progresses and the date of event approaches. Mrs. Sears asked if any commission members had any comments or questions.

Commission Member O'Rourke asked whether he would be needed to serve as Santa again this year.

Recording Secretary Sears stated that she would verify whether someone had already committed to serving as Santa and would follow up with Mr. O'Rourke.

Chairman Johnson commended Commission Member Pat for his assistance with the hot cocoa program and discussed ways to improve preparation and service. He suggested starting the burners earlier to allow the hot cocoa to warm more quickly and coordinating with McDonald's, if they are able to donate coffee again, to have it delivered closer to the beginning of setup. He noted that having several servings prepared in advance would help accommodate the high demand during the event.

P&R 09-03-26 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Miranda Sears
Recording Secretary

Giovanni Johnson
Chairman