

**CITY OF WIXOM
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, September 12, 2022
6:00 p.m. Wixom Community Center**

CALL TO ORDER BY COMMISSIONER MENZIES

ROLL CALL:

Maryann Chupa
Tom Menzies
Peggy VanSickle
Jeff Winters

CITY STAFF:

Community Services Director: Deanna Magee
Parks & Recreation Supervisor: Kathy Venegas
Recording Secretary: Mona Freiburger

GUESTS: None

Absent: Maryann Chupa, Lisa Ferrari, John O'Brien

Downtown Development Authority

Vanessa Willett
Kristin Rzeznik
Patrick Beagle
Kaitie Guzowski
Russ Meredith
Carissa Osburn
Jessica Buck

DDA Director, Laura Cloutier

Absent: Melanie Cheney, Mark Garmo

Library Board

Dulcie MacQueen
Leah Gettings

Library Director: Andrea Dickson

Absent: Veronica Simmons, Delores Grant, Christie Currier, Allison Wert

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

Quorum was met.

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes will be approved at the next regular Parks and Recreation meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: See Rules of Conduct listed at the end of Agenda

No public comments

TABLED MOTIONS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Facility Design for Playground

a. Overview of Project: Ms. Kathy Venegas, Parks and Recreation, introduced herself. She indicated Parks and Recreation recently built a playground at Gilbert Willis Park. Supervisor Venegas commented she will go through the park building process to show how this will translate to what's going to happen for the Civic Center project.

Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the development and maintenance of the operation of the City's parks system as well as development coordination and recreation programs. The Parks and Recreation Commission serves as an advisory board to the City Council and Community Services Department on the recreation needs of the City and assists in the planning and implementation of recreational events and park development for Wixom residents.

b. Funding/Budget: Supervisor Venegas commented the Civic Center Tot Lot Playground was built around 1998 with CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Funds. The replacement playground has been in the Parks & Recreation Master plan for a 2024 build utilizing \$75,000 in CDBG funds. During discussions around the new walking path, the DDA decided it would be beneficial to assist with the project and has allocated \$250,000 towards it.

c. Timeline: Proposed timeline for Civic Center Playground Design and Development.

February - March, 2023	Solicit Public Input
April - May, 2023	Prepare RFP
June - July, 2023	Collect RFP & Review
July - August, 2023	Hire Consultant
August - November, 2023	Concept Drawings
January - February, 2024	Bid Project
March, 2024	Award Contract
April - August, 2024	Construction
Sept - Nov, 2024	Complete Project

d. Input from P&R Commission: Supervisor Venegas presented a PowerPoint presentation in reference to the Parks and Recreation product design and development.

Steps to Build a Playground:

1. Establish a budget
2. Establish playground area/footprint
3. Establish a timeline
4. Decide on core factors
5. Get design quotes from vendors based on core factors & budget
6. Choose a design/contractor
7. Get approval from City Council
8. Begin project

Budget: Total budget of \$325,000. Funding sources are: DDA: \$250,000
CDBG: \$75,000.

\$350,000 minus \$25,000 for contingencies, There is an actual budget of \$300,000. Items to consider: cost of preparing the site; cost of equipment; cost of surfacing; cost of shipping; cost of installation; cost of ancillary equipment (benches, lighting, etc.).

The cost of equipment doesn't include items such as preparing the site, cost of installation, cost of shipping, cost of benches, lighting, etc. The vendor could install the equipment or there could be a community build, which was done at Gilbert Willis.

Playground area/footprint. Items to consider: Existing space available, space requirements for library usage, existing vegetation, drainage. Slope: Earthmoving/retaining wall costs. Footprint available to view on Parks and Recreation presentation. Existing footprint is 35' x 50'; possible new footprint: 100' x 150'. Things to consider with new footprint: existing space available; space requirements for the current usage; make sure that the things that are happening out there still happen out there. There is existing vegetation, lots of trees, rocks. Think about drainage and slopes. Discussion regarding putting this back into the hill, what's going to happen when the rains comes; retaining walls. All of those things factor into the cost.

2023-2024 build fits in with the master plan for Parks and Recreation. It is a little bit flexible but there are some things that we want to consider such as community input whether a survey online or whether that is something that we make as part of our redoing our master plan which is coming up. Public input meetings. Parks and Recreation master plan is due for 2024. CDBG fund availability. CDBG funds are not always going to be available, move on the project because the funds go away after a certain amount of time.

Core Factors: Items to consider: Who will use the playground? Ages (2 to 5, 5-12); ability/Accessibility; Capacity. Everything is ADA accessible. Doesn't necessarily mean it is an accessible playground. Things to think about: do we want other abled kids to be playing on this playground; might mean change in surface, change in approach, and change in equipment.

Type of Structure, Themes, "Must haves"

Community build? Organization of volunteers; cuts installation costs; community pride. Significantly cuts the installation costs to do a community build; also builds community pride.

Design Quotes: List of playground vendors and their websites included in Parks and Recreation presentation: Miracle Equipment; Penchura (National Bid List); Playworld; Adventure Play Systems; Kompan; Michigan Pro Playground. Most vendors will come out and do a quote, measure the space, give quote with specifications and drawings. In doing this, if a vendor is chosen from a National Bid List, it streamlines the process. It avoids the additional costs in time of going through the bid process and doing advertisement for that.

Gilbert Willis Park Play Structure Pictures included in Parks and Recreation presentation. Vendor: Miracle Equipment; utilized national bid process; community build in three days by staff, local companies & volunteers; equipment and surfacing cost - \$100,000; DPW provided earth moving/grading/cement work, barrier, DPW installed woodchips; DPW installed retaining wall behind playground; DPW costs \$30,000.

Next Steps: establish a budget; establish playground area/footprint; establish a timeline; decide on core factors; get design quotes from vendors based on core factors; budget; choose a design/contractor; get approval from City Council; begin project.

Discussion: Chair Willett, DDA, commented the DDA wanted to combine resources with Parks and Recreation and the Library to do something fantastic within budget reason. Their thought was not just installing a tot lot but building out this area to benefit the downtown. This would include the residents and bringing in other people from other areas to come downtown, stay downtown, and support the businesses. The \$250K is not just to install a tot lot. The DDA is planning on contributing, potentially, year after year, not just \$250K in totality but perhaps a portion now, a portion in a year and a portion the following year. One of the reasons for the DDA's involvement in the walking path is because Chair Willett thought it was a great area for people to come down, hang out and do things, not just smaller children but older kids, and adults along with the Junction, to stay downtown and do things, spend money in the restaurants and the businesses.

Chair Willett commented she thought Parks and Recreation has done a fabulous job, and they have done all of the leg work. The DDA would be a funding mechanism with some input but times have changed and they want to do bigger and better moving in the future. Chair Willett indicated she understood the work that has gone into the projects and the work that the DDA is has asked for, but she thought this could be something fabulous.

e. Input from DDA Board - Director Cloutier gave the presentation for the DDA. Presentation can be referred to in the DDA's project design included in the packet.

Plan View of Civic Center pictures referred to and included in DDA Walking Path around Civic Center presentation. This has been discussed with members of Parks and Recreation Commission, Library Board and the DDA. The DDA, quick background information: The DDA

is responsible for, not only to bring people into our downtown but to support businesses. We have to stay within our DDA plan. There is a project list within the DDA plan.

Director Cloutier indicated DDA Chair Willett and Vice Chair Rzeznik had a conversation with City Manager Steve Brown, who is not in attendance tonight, regarding the DDA helping to fund the walking path. Within those discussions and discussions within the DDA board, the DDA would like to see, eventually, a bigger landscape project with the walking path. The first step is to solidify the playground. Safety for the walkers was a big concern. DDA contributed \$73,000 to help make the pathway possible. The budget that the DDA is contributing is \$250,000.

With the DDA plan, currently, the VCA (Village Center Area) park improvements, the DDA can work on a series of pocket parks throughout the downtown. In keeping with traditional character, the project improvement needing gazebos, benches, play equipment, etc.

Background: Started with a walking path. Parks and Recreation wanted to implement a walking path for twenty years around the Civic Center; people walk the parking lot of the Civic Center; safety is a large concern for the walkers as police need to quickly get out of their parking lot to respond to a call; CDBG Funds available to pay for part of it, but there is not enough grant money to pay for the whole project at this time; City Council was presented this project over the last few years, and they turned down using taxpayer funds to pay for it; City Manager wants to complete the project soon, so he asked DDA if they could assist; asking the DDA to fund \$73K. This is a good project for the DDA and Parks and Recreation to partner on. This project could help draw people from the Air Line Trail to the downtown; adds another layer to our Trail Town aspirations; and DDA has available funds now. Area has library, water fountain small playground, basketball hoops, parking and restrooms (inside police station). DDA feels that in order to fund the path, there needs to be destination elements to draw people to it as Wixom already has the Air Line Trails including sidewalks. Obviously, all of this would not happen but possibly a dog park or splash pads, or gardens and benches, as Vanessa alluded to.

HRC is seeing that this whole space in red, as indicated in the DDA presentation, is really what the possible layout for the playground is based on the utilities and things that fall within that area. The yellow section is the danger zone, where you start to get into the retaining wall, more expensive. The red area is the primary area. There are some utilities that run through the property that will have to be contended with.

Civic Center Programming ideas include: Destination playground; shelters, picnic tables and benches; musical playground; educational gardens; dog park; MALT trailhead; barn; sledding; splash pad; water garden; children's disk golf; restrooms.

Playground: Unlike other playgrounds in the area to make it a destination not just for Wixom, but to surrounding communities; yes, we are here for our community but our job as the DDA is to bring people into our downtown whether they live here or not, either to put them into our businesses, to visit our parks, stay and do things here in the downtown. Suitable for a variety of ages; ADA; include break out areas such as shelters with tables and benches.

Director Cloutier presented slides of other community playgrounds and their costs. Howell installed a park into their downtown, \$440K. They wrote grants and had major sponsorships in that park. Downtown Holland, their cost of their new park was about \$400K. Grand Haven with

approximately the same surface area, about 10,000 square feet, \$500K with 1,600 volunteer hours.

Director Cloutier presented ideas for other areas such as a dog park. The DDA is working on a feasibility study. The DDA is working on a feasibility study for the barn, as well, whether to move it, etc.; Ideas for the gardens for the future. All for future thinking. The DDA Design Committee did reach out to Penchura approximately a year or so ago, they did come out, looked at the site and provided renderings for the template. The equipment budget was \$77K; total project cost was \$125K to \$130K. Prices may be different today. For tonight, Director Cloutier indicated the chair. Timing and funding are priorities for the play structure.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented in reference to the funding aspect, if it was feasible to go after grants. There are a variety of funding and grant opportunities. There are grants that are specific for Main Street programs.

f. Input from Library Board - Director from Library Director Andrea Dickson presented a PowerPoint presentation to explain why they are involved and the priorities of the library on this project.

The mission of the library is to serve the needs of our diverse community with quality collections, services, and programs that support its informational, educational, cultural, and recreation needs. The Library Board of Trustees is an elected governing board formed of six trustees. They are responsible for the overall governance of the Library, including finances and policies. The Wixom Public Library is a separate entity from the City of Wixom, with a dedicated operating millage approved by voters.

The library mission includes the core focus of all library services and projects meeting the needs of Wixom community members. Equity in access has been a key strategic goal of the library, focusing on a safe, comfortable, accessible and welcoming environment for all users. The Wixom Library would like to see community needs and equitable access incorporated into the surrounding playground and courtyard area.

Library Involvement: Main Contact: Parents report any issues and feedback to library regarding current playground and courtyard. DDA capture: The DA captures funds from the library's operating millage: Fiscal year 2022-23 capture was \$58,538; 5.95% current library budget. Total captured from library millage since 2003 was \$372,823.

Library priorities and goals: Fully inclusive playground, library's priority with a new playground is building a playground and space that is inclusive to children of all physical and cognitive abilities Children's librarians have received substantial feedback from Wixom parents.

Inclusive playground elements such as multi-sensory experiences (vestibular, visual, tactile, auditory). Equipment of different challenge levels; physical layout designed for mobility disabilities; areas for children with sensory and cognitive disabilities; spaces for different types of play (solitary, parallel, cooperative, etc.)

Community needs and current usage includes: Ensure significant space for toddlers and younger children. Other City playgrounds are designed for older kids; heavily used after story

times and library programs: Key ages: 2 to 5. Families regularly visit library, play outside with other families, and then picnic by playground: enhance tables and seating areas; shaded spaces to enjoy long visits.

Courtyard: residents like the trees and shade; improve landscaping such as plants and/or flowers; improve seating and table operations such as solar powered table; residents use courtyard to work and connect to library's Wi-Fi, which is available 24/7

Program & Quiet Space: Library needs outdoor program space: summer story times, sensory play and themed activities; quiet area of library located near courtyard: public computers and study tables along windows; need some distance between features and windows.

Additional considerations: parking lot: shared parking lot for library, community center, city hall and police station, lot fills during busy times of the day and during large events hosted by any department, already have to coordinate events to ensure little overlap due to limited parking; future maintenance needs: how much staff maintenance will be needed after completed; cost of ongoing maintenance.

Discussion: Commissioner Menzies indicated all of the information is overwhelming. He commented he loved a lot of the things discussed along the path; he could see different pockets of things. Commissioner Menzies commented there is almost a need for a master plan, what it is we want to do, and try to plot it out in different areas. If there is monies available now, start with the playground equipment, then see what else can be built.

Director Cloutier commented the DDA has discussed getting a rendering of what the whole entity could look like in the future and what the area would look like in phase.

Chair Willett asked if everyone was on the same page; is the library going to continue to budget money? There are DDA funds available. Think long term. The DDA plan will be redone; eventually, the library may not be part of this. This project is not a one or two year project; it is a five to ten years down the road. Chair Willett indicated she would like everyone vested. She asked if Parks and Recreation was willing to put in money in the future years. Director Magee commented, originally, when Parks and Recreation put the block grant funds in, the playground plan was for roughly \$100K (\$75K of CDBG funds with \$25K from the general fund). The CDBG funds needed to be used in two years and has been extended to three years. There is a cutoff to use those funds or the funds go away. Five years ago, there was no DDA funds. The funds does not qualify for vegetation plantings, landscape, etc.; it is hard type items, structural items that don't go away in a few years. The plan was always to subsidize the block grant with \$25K city contribution. A total of \$100K. The census track area for CBGD funds are south of Pontiac Trail, so the area in discussion does qualify. Benches and a restroom facility would qualify; this would have to be done in a three year cycle or lose the funding. The restroom at Gunnar Mettala was \$120K.

Chair Willett commented she pushed for the pathway because she thought in the long term; this property is a great value to the library, to the City, to Parks and Recreation, to have people in the downtown area. She indicated she travels all around the country and the downtown areas that are built out, they keep people coming in regularly and it is fabulous. This is a longer term project. This area can be a great adventure for people to come, grab a book, go outside and

read to their kids, do events outside, etc. This project will take a lot of volunteer time and a lot of committee time.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented he thought with Parks and Recreation master plan coming up in 2024, this would be an opportunity to build in the further steps. The DDA's current plan runs until 2027. This will have to get worked out and extended. In this timeframe, this will be done and be able to incorporate into the plan. Assistant City Manager Benson did not think there is a commitment that can be made today. Chair Willett indicated we need to readjust and think about what we want. The DDA is helping with other major projects in the City that are very important as well. She commented the flowers in the downtown area as fabulous.

Mayor Beagle agreed with Assistant City Manager Benson in that once the master plan with Parks and Recreation is completed, they are going to know a lot more. Nobody can commit to anything more than what was committed tonight. City Council will not set aside \$100K for the future. If all of the money is put in the play structure, Mayor Beagle indicated he was not going to come downtown because he did not have children. Everything else along this trail is going to get him to come down and stay.

Director Cloutier commented everyone is a resident and/or business owner, the majority. Also, that's where public input comes in. She agreed with Mayor Beagle, there is not going to be a consensus tonight but Director Cloutier thought everyone was on the same page. The presentations had a lot of overlap. We need to see what transpires with the master plan and have faith that it will include building out the other portions of the path.

Board Member Meredith commented everyone has agreed that, eventually, we would like to do other things. The \$300K is for the playground and what can be built out in that space.

There was discussion regarding getting more professionals to lay out a plan to see what can be done; school involvement projects such as growing milk weed for Monarch butterflies. This is a limited project.

Commissioner VanSickle commented she loved the idea and overall concept of bringing people downtown. It does start with one step and that would be the playground. Start with the budget, what is needed and what does the community want. Chair Willett indicated we are talking about a playground plus, not just a playground. Working together is key and the library's input is invaluable.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the main goal of this meeting is finding out the common themes to focus on. Shade seating within this space. Replacing structures; improve and enhance them. Accessibility. Better access to path. Attention grabbing piece.

Vice Chair Rzeznik commented the attention-grabbing piece is why the DDA got involved in this project. It was because of the walking path. It would be wonderful to have an attention-grabbing piece in this project. Chair Willett indicated this area should be a different atmosphere. Gunnar Mettala is a park. This is an area where the community is going to be coming, doing things and not just the small children. There was discussion to decorate the path area per season.

This area is a downtown attraction. There needs to be something different than Gilbert Willis and Gunnar Mettala parks. There are a lot of people that walk along the pathway.

Director Cloutier commented she did not think the discussion was just focusing on the 2 to 5 age for the playground. Chair Willett commented the \$250K will go towards the playground project which is not just a 2 to 5 year old tot lot.

Vice Chair Rzeznik commented we need to have an overall concept, have a few different renderings and then take to the public for them to give feedback. For the renderings, a budget has to be established.

Director Cloutier recommended to the DDA Board to commit some funding for this project because the DDA has been talking about this. Everyone is on the same page that this playground is going to be bigger than just the tot lot. Benches and shelters, etc., may come but if there is an overall scope of the whole area as well, the DDA can commit to possibly doing a rendering for that, as well. Director Cloutier asked the DDA members if they were onboard with the \$250K to go towards a "kick ass" playground. Chair Willett commented as long as the playground is not just a 2 to 5 year old tot lot.

Director Dickson commented a playground for multi-age groups, have an area for tots but incorporate older kids as well; having an inclusive playground, have outdoor tables for adults and then, eventually, build out to expand the back. The playground companies should be contacted to give a general footprint for the budget. A budget number cannot be established until the companies know the square footage area, dimensions, the ages; surfacing is a big difference.

Vice Chair Rzeznik commented she would like to see what could be done with the whole \$300K budget for just the playground with multiple sections; more people may go along with this plan. Board Member Guzowski commented she would like to see this, as well, along with a lesser option.

Chair Willett indicated there will be a strategy session in October for future funds. Director Magee commented there should be another discussion to present again to Parks and Recreation when they do their master plan.

Board Member Meredith commented the top number right now is \$300K. It is a reasonable idea to get a proposal for \$300K. There will be a strategic plan coming up in October, so by November, the DDA should know the plan to sit down and discuss.

Director Magee commented a rendering could be done with the two options; it is a basic CAD drawing. It would look similar to what was presented by Penchura.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented we are looking at a slightly larger building pad and there is the opportunity to work with the supplier on the further side for the amenities than just the play structures. The footprint would be approximately 10,000 square feet.

Director Cloutier indicated she would have a discussion with Director Magee to work with the budget and plan.

g. Community Build Option for Installation was done at Gilbert Willis Park. Cuts the installation costs to do a community build; also builds community pride.

INFORMATION:

No further information

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

None

STAFF COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Chair Willett and second by Board Member Meredith to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
Motion passes.