

**CITY OF WIXOM
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, April 10, 2023
6:00 p.m. Wixom Community Center**

CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN:

ROLL CALL: John O'Brien, Chairman
Maryann Chupa
Alicia Churilla
Tom Menzies
Peggy VanSickle
Dan Williams
Jeff Winters

CITY STAFF:
Community Services Director: Deanna Magee
Parks & Recreation Supervisor: Kathy Venegas
Recording Secretary: Mona Freiburger
Assistant City Manager: Drew Benson

GUESTS: Shondra Okimura

Absent: Lisa Ferrari

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

Quorum was met.

CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

MOTION by Commissioner Menzies and second by Commissioner VanSickle to approve the Wixom Parks and Recreation Agenda, as submitted.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
Motion passes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Commissioner Menzies and second by Commissioner Winters to approve the January 9, 2023, minutes, as presented.

VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.
Motion passes.

CORRESPONDENCE:

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

None

TABLED MOTIONS

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Master Plan 2024-2029 RFP & Timeline

Director Magee stated the Master Plan proposal and timeline was included in the packet from Carlisle Wortman Associates. The Master Plan is required to apply for any DNR grants, CDBG grants, etc.

- Public Input Meetings/Commission Input/Joint Meeting

Director Magee indicated there will be public participation for their input through surveys as well as surveys at concerts, and open public meetings. We would like to get public input regarding recreation as well as the playground. We have narrowed down the plans with the DDA but would like to get the public's input as well, moving forward to go to City Council and possibly, apply for a SPARK grant to incorporate restrooms, etc. Director Magee stated she would keep the Commission informed.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented as far as the joint meeting aspect, they are trying to do these meetings at least once a year. The Parks and Recreation plan, public engagement, and the informational process would be part of the joint meeting topic. Then, it is a smoother opportunity for whether the DDA, the Planning Commission or City Council to have a discussion of ideas, things that we should take into the larger public discussion surveys. Assistance City Manager Benson indicated the joint meeting would take place later this year, possibly late spring or early summer.

2. Conversion of Roller Hockey Court at Gunnar Mettala Park to Pickleball Courts

Director Magee indicated the tennis courts at Gunnar Mettala Park need to be totally redone. The cracks on the courts are too large to resurface as in the past. Quotes were given to dig down two inches, mull it out, pave it and recoat the courts. As long as this work is being done, roller hockey is out, people aren't playing much tennis, the trend seems to play pickleball. Eight courts will be installed which the community needs and would like. There will also be one tennis court.

Director Magee commented she has this in the proposed budget which City Council will review and approve.

Commissioner VanSickle indicated she has not seen anybody play tennis on these courts, and the pickleball courts are busy. Director Magee indicated the replacement would have to go before City Council, regardless of which courts would be installed. The pickleball courts would replace roller hockey and the tennis courts.

Director Magee indicated she would keep the Commission posted on this subject.

3. Mack Park Update

Director Magee indicated there was a tentative drawing, and basic plan of the amenities for Mack Park. The clock and pavilion will be installed as soon as there is a plan for the Renton properties.

Assistant City Manager Benson stated the City is in the process of purchasing the rest of the properties next to Mack Park. The City would own, basically, every parcel from Mack Park up to the school property. This is approximately a little over four acres but when you subtract out the Air Line Trail, it is, realistically, 2.5 acres of developable area. The intention of the purchase, since the City has purchased half of it, is to turn this into a larger redevelopment effort. This would be another topic for the joint meeting discussion since it would involve a park, an opportunity to potentially expand the park, etc. The City is hoping to have some concept plans of both the redevelopment side of the northern parts as well as what the community might like to see from Mack Park. As an example, converting the residential house, which is approximately 700 square feet, into a public restroom facility to be at that trailhead point since all of the utilities are there.

Commissioner Williams stated we have the Air Line Trail, the clock and gazebo which would be installed, then the trail and extension trail. He inquired if the concept would change so that the Trail is going to go behind the businesses. Director Magee stated no. Commissioner Williams stated the Trail is confusing on how to lead the people to the South Lyon Trail from here. He liked the idea of having a public restroom, but he would also propose to have some parking spots for people who want to start here, then go one way or the other; the Air Line Trail or the South Lyon Trail. Assistant City Manager Benson commented this makes a lot of sense. Signage would be a big part of this plan.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he would anticipate everything that we have ordered would be installed as planned. The planning piece would include what to do with the house on the property, consider additional expansion where the building is, or other amenities. Assistant City Manager Benson stated this is a unique opportunity to get more out of Mack Park and make it more pedestrian friendly. The closing on the two properties should be by the end of the month, assuming all goes well. These are the early stages, but, hopefully, get a plan together and find a developer to work with by late summer or the fall. The lease on the one building is until February, 2024, but they are open to leaving earlier. This would be a conversation the City would be willing to have; but if they would like to stay the length of the lease, the City is prepared, as well. The commercial structures will be in place until middle of summer, and the City will be working with them.

4. Tot Lot Playground Project – DDA budgeted \$250,000 towards the project for 2023-24

Director Magee stated the DDA has budgeted \$250,000 towards the project, but she is not sure if that's toward the playground structure, itself, or if it is for the whole project. Th design would be part of the public input session.

5. Review of Events

- Daddy Daughter Dance

Supervisor Venegas indicated this event was sold out. The event was Wixom residents, only. Supervisor Venegas commented there was a resident who has a new photo booth with an iPad, which you stand on a platform. The camera goes around you with music and takes a video. This was very cool, and the kids loved it. The resident will come back for some future events. She donated the photo booth activity for this event but will be charging the next time she attends.

- Easter Egg Hunt & Bunny Fun Event

Supervisor Venegas commented the Easter Egg Hunt and Bunny Fun Event was held on a beautiful day. The event was sold out. The events continue to be popular, and we are keeping it different and new each time.

6. Upcoming Events:

- Michigan Airline Trail – Phase II Ribbon Cutting – April 22, 2023
- Mother Son Dance – May 11
- Summer Concerts – June 1 – August 17
- Family Fun Nites – June 1 – August 17
- City Employee & Volunteer Appreciation Picnic – June 8
- Lite The Nite – June 22
- BBQ & Blues Event – July 20

Supervisor Venegas indicated they were thinking of doing a dinner dance event in which you would purchase a ticket, have a nice, catered meal, wine and live entertainment. The planning is in the early stages. This event would be in lieu of the wine tasting and would be held in February/March, 2024.

Supervisor Venegas had a meeting with the pickleball director. They are planning to hold four different sessions during May, June, July and August. Participants would sign up for a month at a time. The sessions would be held on Tuesdays from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; three different games. She will be sending out information for the signups. This event would not be limited to residents, only.

7. Walking Path at Civic Center Completed. Landscaping & Amenities Spring 2023

Director Magee indicated the walking path is completed. She stated they are working with the landscape architect from Carlisle Wortman for ideas for the different areas with grasses, landscaping, a possible water feature, restroom, etc., all in different phases. The project would start with vegetation costs, etc.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented the DDA set aside monies for fiscal year 2023-24 but it is intended for summer 2024; their thought process has mainly been focused on the actual park structure, but they are also interested in what happens. The DDA is open and willing to be a part of a larger project, and this would be a good conversation to bring to the DDA Design Committee.

8. Grant Applications Submittal

- Oakland County Senior Center Improvements – Received \$200,000 Grant
- Spark Grant I – Civic Center (playground, additional walking path, restrooms, water feature)
- Spark Grant II – GM Park Improvements – (pavilions (2); restrooms, fitness course, amenities, court restoration)

Director Magee stated they received the \$200,000 grant from Oakland County and planning to spend this on improvements to this building for air filtration systems, replace air units, HVAC units, tile, ceiling, LED lighting, etc., as well as outside landscaping.

Director Magee commented they would like a couple of plans: A, B, C. Part of the Oakland County grant they received for this building was to dress up the outside exterior area of this building. The Oakland County grant has to be expended by 2026.

Director Magee indicated she attached the information she received from the landscape architect for the initial stages. Staff will come back to the Commission with a recommendation and discuss with the DDA, as well.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated he did like the note regarding improved lighting along the walking path. He has received comments that when it gets dark outside, it is hard to see along the path.

Director Magee commented she wanted to keep everyone informed; and the plan is in progress.

Commissioner Winters stated there has been discussion for restrooms at Mack Park, restrooms at the pocket park, and other areas. He indicated there, definitely needs coordination and if three restroom areas are needed. Director Magee indicated three restroom areas are not needed.

Director Magee stated they did not apply for the first SPARK grant, and they are waiting for the second round. Assistant City Manager Benson and Director Magee have met to discuss options for the second SPARK grant.

9. Disc Golf Course at Gilbert Willis Park – Phase II Design done. DPW to complete clearing for course in Spring.

Director Magee indicated Phase II design is completed. They have budgeted for signage, power, etc., to be installed as soon as they finish with the installation of the holes which is budgeted for 2023-24. Clearing was being done in February and March then the ice storm hit. They are hoping for assistance with DPW through two ventures; one is the DDA paying for a maintenance staff person because the demands on DPW for the downtown area is requiring it. The second plan is to take some of the road capital projects which is double in size from ten years ago.

INFORMATION:

Assistant City Manager Benson commented he had attended a goal setting session with City Council two weeks ago with a discussion about staffing. At one point, the City had 64 full time employees in the early 2000's. 2009 through 2013 were difficult times and staffing levels were down to 52 to 54 employees. Right now, there are approximately 56 full time employees. The City's population has increased, significantly, since then as well as the amount of capital assets to be maintained. Staff has been working on priorities in terms of additional capacities and the mechanisms for doing this. The DDA has agreed that they would like to see better maintenance in the district in terms of the how often the trash cans are emptied, etc., There are a variety of general maintenance activities, and one mechanism would be is that the DDA could contribute the cost for one full time general operator in the DPW in exchange for certain levels of service such as trail maintenance, etc. This would be included in the budget that City management is presenting to City Council. The DDA has approved a preliminary budget for this. There was also discussion to increase the capacity for managing capital project including how to fund projects, apply for the grants, etc. There is a focus on parks, roads, sidewalks, streetscape. All of these tasks are time consuming.

Assistant City Manager Benson indicated the DDA is well funded through their TIF captures which is a relatively new occurrence within the last two years. The DDA has been very thoughtful and open to understanding the responsibilities that come with having a larger capture of their own. A lot of these projects have come together through various funding sources. There have been many opportunities to take advantage of the SEMCOG grants, Oakland County, or State grants.

Assistant City Manager Benson discussed the project the DDA has spoken about for the grassy area at Old Wixom Road and Pontiac Trail. They have tentatively titled this project the West End Commons Area. The intent is to take a piece of property that the City owns that is otherwise undevelopable because of the utilities are above and underground. It would, literally, be cheaper to move the road back on top of this area than it would be to move the sewer line. The drawing shared is not the final plan. This is a concept. The concept was submitted to House Representative Haley Stevens' office, for congressionally director spending. House Representative Stevens was a big fan of this particular project, and their office will be submitting

this as one of their requests. This is not a guarantee that dollars will happen, but there have been projects around Oakland County which received congressionally directed spending. This particular project may become a larger conversation with the Commission. The intention is, essentially, to turn this area into a park. The vision is a more adult oriented area that complements the social district. These topics would be part of the discussion that ties in very well with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Given the DDA has money that they have a larger level of control over, they want to have input and be a part of the planning process. This area would be a gathering place. This is just the first concept.

Assistant City Manager Benson commented he had stressed to the DDA to remember if they want to create a new park, the Parks and Recreation Commission has to be a part of that discussion.

Director Magee commented House Representative Stevens' chose this project, but they also put in applications for Gunnar Mettala improvements with that grant option. Assistant City Manager Benson indicated multiple things and congressionally directed spending is an interesting tool. The federal government would, theoretically, cover 80% of the cost. The DDA said they would cover the remaining 20% of the project, as well.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

None

STAFF COMMENTS:

Supervisor Venegas thanked everyone for their valuable input, and she also thanked Assistant City Manager Benson for his updates.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Commissioner VanSickle and second by Commissioner Winters to adjourn the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

All in favor.

Motion passes.