

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS
PARK AND RECREATION BOARD
APPROVED MINUTES
May 12, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Richard Spedowske at 6:32 p.m.

Present: Richard Spedowske, Karen Simmon, Megan Eppley, Deborah Chipman,
Mark Brejcha

Absent: Stacy Pedigo, Jason Kostecki, Caryn Schonert

Other: Mark Gifford, Public Works Director
Heather Bowman, Park & Recreation Director
Paula Weipert, Board Secretary

MINUTES:

Motion by Karen Simmon, seconded by Deborah Chipman to approve the April 14, 2016 minutes as presented. Motion Passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Rosemary Jennings spoke on her concerns regarding the \$50,000 that was set aside for the future pool remarcite project. Her understanding was that the Park Board recommended that the budget include \$25,000 to be set aside each year until there is enough for this project to be completed. This money along with what was supposed to be set aside this next fiscal year, would've met half of the estimated cost. There is nothing budgeted this next fiscal year.

Joyce Staffen spoke on Pickleball. The pickleball group currently use the tennis court in Hemlock Park. They would like to see a separate court put in just for pickleball. Heather explained how the group currently use the courts and that they would like to paint blue lines where they have been marking their court using blue tape. All Board members present agreed to allow the pickleball group to paint their blue court lines within the tennis court.

Miriam Andrus, Big Rapids Community Library Director spoke on the Library survey responses that have been received. Most of the responses indicated the need for playground equipment to be installed. The current equipment is very old. Miriam stated that she would be looking to apply for grants utilize Friends of the Library endowment fund monies for the purchases. She would also like to see a mutt mitt dispenser placed somewhere on the park grounds as are located in other city parks. An additional request is to have a park sign installed near the Anna Howard Shaw statue. Miriam suggested that the park be renamed from its current name of Library Park to possibly Shaw Park.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Public Hearing Regarding Master Plan:

Chairperson Spedowske opened the Public Hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Mark Gifford spoke on the purpose of the Public Hearing. The City's Park Master Plan has been in place for 5 years and will expire in 2017. Marlies Manning has been hired by the City to work on the Master Plan.

Marlies spoke to the audience present regarding her experience with the parks system and most recently the additional land purchase as part of the Clay Cliffs Nature Area. She asked the audience to think of the strengths that they see with the park lands and listed them on a whiteboard in front of the group. The following items are what the audience offered as strengths:

- Diversity
- The Riverwalk and River
- Serene natural areas
- Parks well disbursed throughout the City
- Variety of amenities
- Amount of use
- Feel safe
- Well maintained
- Much of the river front is public

Marlies than asked the audience for ideas on the challenges that they see with the park lands and listed them on the whiteboard in front of the group. The following items are what the audience offered as challenges:

- Funding for improvements
- Dog litter
- Goose control
- Funding for staff limits extra work that can be done over and above improvement's
- Large amount of land to take care of
- Limited amount of park land
- Sports fields are dispersed – need consolidation
- Concessions are difficult
- Few winter activities and amenities
- Aging play equipment and amenities

Marlies than had the audience break into small groups. Each group wrote their suggestions of their "Goals for Parks" and their "Vision". After some time allowed for this project, a spokesperson from each group read their lists aloud. The majority of the lists reiterated the items above. Some specified more clearly the intent of the item. For example, an amenity would further be explained as a year round Farmers Market pavilion that could double as an ice rink in the winter months.

Marlies collected these sheets from the group and thanked everyone for their attendance and input.

Chairperson Spedowske closed the Public Hearing at 7:50 and readjoined the Regular Meeting.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Copies of current and upcoming Special Events are included in the Board packets.

STAFF REPORTS: Recreation

Heather spoke on upcoming events. The pool will open June 6th for registrations. It will be cleaned before the holiday.

She updated the group on the progress of the Win Kellum field. Heather and Mark met with Ferris Club President Nick Halm and Alex Manga, Ferris Club baseball alumni. They would like to upgrade the ball park and have alumni who are interested in donating to this venture. They both spoke on the size of the dugout that is intended to be installed. They feel that the current planned size is approximately 15 feet too small. Additional bricks have been delivered.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/BUSINESS:

None.

UNSCHEDULED BUSINESS:

None.

The next meeting of the Park and Recreation Board will be June 9, 2016 at 6:30 pm in the City Commission Room.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Weipert