

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS  
PARK AND RECREATION BOARD  
APPROVED MINUTES  
July 21, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Richard Spedowske at 6:27 p.m.

Present: Richard Spedowske, Karen Simmon, Megan Eppley, Caryn Schonert,  
Jason Kostecki

Absent: Stacy Pedigo, Deb Chipman, Mark Brejcha

Other: Mark Gifford, Public Works Director  
Heather Bowman, Park & Recreation Director

**MINUTES:**

*Motion by Karen Simmon, seconded by Megan Eppley to approve the May 12, 2016 minutes as presented. Motion Passed.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**Win Kellum Dugouts:**

Mark Gifford spoke on the current status of the reconstruction of the dugouts at Win Kellum. The bricks are there along with the 25 ft. cement slab. Ferris Club Baseball representatives, Nick Halm and Alex Manga, a former Ferris baseball player, met and spoke with Heather regarding the size planned for the dugouts. They would like to see them built larger as a team roster of 25 guys cannot sit within a 25 ft. area. Mr. Manga indicated that they would actually like to see the dugouts in-ground as opposed to above ground as they are being planned. The conversation lead to talks that Ferris alumni ball players have had regarding starting up a Ferris baseball team as there was in the past. Some of the alumni have expressed interest in financially backing this initiative. Since this conversation with them, we have obtained more bricks and have plans to add onto the slab and make the dugouts bigger.

The Job Corps group that was supposed to build the dugouts cannot be here until September now. During this time, Mr. Manga is working towards gathering financial support to put the dugouts back into the ground.

Richard asked about the requirements regarding depth. This hasn't been looked into yet. Karen commented on the fact that if there is a men's baseball team established at Ferris, there are NCAA regulations for the field and she could see a field being established on

Ferris campus if this were to happen. She would hate to see us have delays or setbacks and spend more money when we've come this far and in the end, they may not use it. Mark explained that we haven't made plans to go backwards. It will be left to see what that group comes up with. At this time, we are planning on the Job Corps group coming in September to finish up.

**MIMA:**

Daniel Cronk, Ferris instructor and coordinator of the MIMA, Music Industry Management Association, introduced himself. Jessica Schneider, Co-head of the Music on the Muskegon event and a student in the Music Industry Management program also was in attendance. She spoke on how the event is a Cultural Event to bring both the Ferris student and Big Rapids communities together. The difference in this year's program will be more of a focus on family activities. This will make it more appealing to all ages. There will be games and face painting in the pavilion area. Most other ideas from last year, overall music and the drum circle will be used.

One change will be in the Jaycee alcohol tent. There would be a beer tasting area. This will be located within the softball field fenced in area so as to better monitor alcohol consumption.

Dan spoke on an event in Sparta called the Sparta Celtic festival. This is running on its 7<sup>th</sup> year. He worked with this organization previously and just wanted to state that with this type of festival arena, a beer tent is not uncommon. He spoke on how he is a TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) certified trainer. There is a group of students on campus that are supplied as the Person Power for the Grand Rapids International Wine, Beer and Food festival. Each of those booths are staffed by TIPS trained staffing. One of the requirements is appropriate training. So the entire staff along with the Jaycees, will be fully trained in responsible consumption by adults. 75% of adults enjoy a refreshing adult beverage on occasion and it's conducive to creating draw. We make sure we are very responsible in the process.

Heather spoke on last year's Resolution passed by the Commission for this event. At that time, they were most interested in verification of the temporary liquor license and to have it approved by the Director of Public Safety. The Commission had approved the event contingent on a detailed plan with regards to clean up, management, security, damages, and music. She recommended that they have the same procedure in place when recommended to the Commission.

Karen spoke on hoping for better weather. There was a pretty good turn-out last year, even though the event was called early due to rain. Dan Cronk indicated that it was a fine opportunity for the coordinator of the program to find out what the students were made of.

Richard inquired as to where the new tent area will be located. Dan explained outside of the ball field area, north of the drive, where the main stage is. Richard suggested that they be very careful with driving stakes due to the call boxes down there. A MISS Dig should be requested.

Megan requested clarification as to location of the tent in relation to the main stage on the map that was provided to the Board members in the beginning.

*Motion by Megan Eppley, seconded by Jason Kostecki to recommend the approval of the Music Industry Management event Music on the Muskegon by the City Commission contingent on a detailed plan with regards to clean up, management, security, damages and music.*

**Vendors in Parks:**

Heather addressed the members regarding the copy of the Ordinance within their packets. Also within the packets is a listing of the ideas that the Policy Committee had come up with in regards to specific park properties and the policies that would apply to them.

*Motion by Karen Simmons, seconded by Megan Eppley to recommend that the City Commission approve the Park and Recreation Board policy regarding Vendors in Parks.*

**Holland Park:**

Heather updated the members on the status of the construction project of the memorial within the park. The dedication will be held August 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. All members have been invited to attend.

Richard spoke on several items that he noticed when he visited the park. Heather explained the reasons behind some of the items being as they are at this point. She will have our staff look into other concerns.

Karen asked about irrigation within the park. There is not any at this time, but could be down the road. There will be a drinking fountain. She is very pleased with what is there.

**Pool Funds:**

Mark spoke to the Board regarding the questions and concerns that Rosemary Jennings brought to the last Board meeting in May. She was very concerned about the need for remarketing the pool and that money was supposed to be set aside each year to take care of this. There should've been more set aside than what is there now, which is \$50,000. The estimated cost to do the entire pool is around \$250,000.

Caryn Schonert spoke on her experience with the condition of the bottom of the pool. Her children, who are very young, have used it at least 2 or 3 times each week and have come home with their feet so scraped up that she has had to bandage them. Her son wears water shoes and within a week, they were destroyed. She would like to see this fixed.

Mark agreed that this needs to be done. He is thinking that maybe we should address at least doing the shallow end. Caryn agreed. Remarketing ½ of the pool does not mean ½ the cost. It would be around \$150,000 just to do that end. It is definitely an issue, needs to be addressed and is being worked on.

**Watershed Grant:**

Heather spoke on the Muskegon River Watershed group having a new director. She approached the City about a grant that she could obtain but it has stipulations such as the types of trees that could be planted and the purpose behind them. They have determined that Clay Cliffs would be an ideal location for this grant money to be spent. She

submitted the grant which covers other areas within the Watershed district. Clay Cliffs portion could be \$50,000. We should hear some time in December as to whether or not she receives this grant. These funds would be very useful in implementing the Clay Cliffs Master Plan.

**Goose Round Up:**

Heather explained the success behind the first goose round up that was held. You should notice the significant difference that this has made. In total, she rounded up 56 geese. It was interesting to watch. These geese were relocated to some place near Tippy Dam.

**Recreation Authority:**

Mark updated the Board on what the current status of the Recreation Authority. Legislation has passed in Lansing allowing for municipalities to partner with a school district. The next step is to have the committee meet and come to agreement that they both can work with. The Big Rapids Public Schools Superintendent, Tim Haist, and some of the Board members will be attending the next City Commission meeting on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The Mayor, Heather and Mark will be attending the next School Board meeting on August 8<sup>th</sup>. We will have some draft Articles of Incorporation.

There has been some internal debate as to the members of the Authority Board itself and who it is made up of. At this time, it is a 7 member board consisting of 3 from the School, 3 from the City and the final member being chosen in opposite years by the school and the City. There has been discussion on having a larger group for the Board and maybe having a Park and Recreation Board member as a part of this Board.

Richard inquired as to whether or not the pool would be included in the Authority. Mark indicated that it is a distinct possibility that this could occur.

Megan asked if there would be a member on the Board who is just a resident of the community. There could be up to 5 community members on this Board. As it is set right now, 1 elected official from each the school and City, 1 staff member from each and the remaining would be the community members. The intent is to make it more community driven.

The County Recreation millage is up for vote on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and the group is watching this closely to see how it comes out. It will be a test to see how this Authority will handle going out for their millage request. There is a tremendous amount of potential in this being implemented and being a great asset to the community as a whole.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

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

**STAFF REPORTS: Recreation**

Heather spoke on a meeting that she and Megan Eppley had with Val Wells at the Ferris Recreation Center who is in charge of the facility rentals. The hope is to have a Friday night mother/son type of event like the daddy/daughter dance event. They found that they would not be able to utilize a facility there. They will keep working on trying to get an event planned along with a location. Any ideas anyone may have, please let either of them know.

Karen asked what the problem with using one of the facilities at Ferris is. Heather explained that they prefer that you use the Recreation Center when the students are not in there if you want to rent it out. They are in the facility on Fridays until 9 so this would not work for this type of event.

The Big Rapids Middle School gym is currently under construction so could not be planned to be used at this time.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS/BUSINESS:**

None.

**UNSCHEDULED BUSINESS:**

There was much discussion on the recent events regarding the use of the cameras in current criminal activity that occurred within the City in the past week, such as the bank robbery and a couple of assault complaints in Hemlock Park.

Richard brought up the need for more gravel/rocks to be added to the boat launch area in Northend Riverside Park. There are plans to do this as it needs to be done every year.

Richard asked if there is an endowment in place for Swede Hill. He would like to know if we could remove the Junipers and put something else in. The surrounding area is looking really nice yet this area needs some sprucing up.

Karen brought up the concerns that have been brought to her attention regarding parents not feeling comfortable with bringing their children to the Playscape area. Their concerns are for the different groups that hang out there rough housing and the use of foul language. She said that she has told them that if they don't feel safe, they should contact Public Safety. Jason also stated that he will not take his children there because of this.

**The next meeting of the Park and Recreation Board will be August 11, 2016 at 6:30 pm in the City Commission Room.**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paula Weipert