

**CITY OF BIG RAPIDS  
PARK AND RECREATION BOARD  
APPROVED MINUTES  
February 9, 2017**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Richard Spedowske at 6:34 p.m.

Present: Richard Spedowske, Megan Eppley, Caryn Schonert, Mark Brejcha,  
Karen Simmon, Margaret Maynard

Absent: Deb Chipman, Jason Kostecki, Leigha Oberle

Other: Heather Bowman, Public Works Director

**MINUTES:**

*Motion by Karen Simmon, seconded by Mark Brejcha to approve the January 12, 2017 minutes as presented. Motion Passed.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**Welcome New Board Member:**

Heather introduced new Board member Margaret Maynard. Margaret spoke a little bit about herself. All members welcomed her to the Board.

**Community Library Park Plans:**

Heather spoke on the plans being discussed at Library Park. Information is in each board packet including correspondence from Miriam Andrus, Library Director. The Friends of the Library have been interested in doing improvements to the Library grounds with purchasing and having new playground equipment installed. The pictures show various pieces of playground equipment that they are fundraising money to purchase. There is no cost information included within the information that the Board has. The information provided to the Board is just for informational purposes at this time so that if they hear discussion regarding this park area, they will know what the discussion is about.

The prior City Manager, Steve Sobers had wanted to have a parking lot put on the Library grounds, entering of Michigan, where the Anna Howard Shaw statue is currently located. He felt that the statue could be relocated to a different location on the Library grounds. This would allow for the parking lot. This was only a concept. The Library Board is in favor of this and at a previous meeting that they held, passed a Resolution in support of having a parking lot installed in that location. Their hopes were to have it

installed during the 2017 construction season while Michigan Avenue is being paved. This project was not included in that project, nor was it budgeted. At this time, there are no funds available for this to be done. This is another “for informational purposes only” item so that all Board members are aware.

Another item within the packets are pictures of locations for a Community Garden area on the Library grounds, on the Oak Street side of the property. There is a Seed Sharing program that occurs at the Library so they are interested in adding this Garden area to reinforce the idea behind the Seed Sharing.

Mark Brejcha inquired as to why we would put a parking lot in the location due to having to move a statue and take down a great number of trees. Why can it not be located off the alley to the west. Heather replied about much discussion that is going on with regards to the history of the Anna Howard Shaw statue. Also, this was not budgeted so this is not a project that will be done in 2017. The cost could range from between \$20,000 to \$60,000.

Richard Spedowske spoke about the idea of moving the statue. He recalls a great deal of people know the history behind the statue being there and moving it will not be agreed upon by many. The parking lot makes more sense to come off the alley. Trees being removed would be less likely in this manner. The play area being put too close to Michigan Avenue may need to be looked at.

Margaret Maynard spoke on the parking lot being put in the back could hinder handicap accessibility. Heather spoke on the cement area in the back is marked as handicap parking. There were intentions of putting in a full-size parking lot years ago, however it was not done due to the number of trees that would have had to be removed. The spaces that are there now is what they ended up doing.

Megan Eppley asked about putting in handicap spaces on the street. Yes, that is a possibility. There could be an access off Oak Street for a parking lot.

### **Skate Park:**

Heather spoke on the upcoming On Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm there will be an Open Committee meeting. About 3 weeks ago, there was a posting put on the City Recreation Facebook page about having an interest in starting an effort to get input on a park design and to start looking for grants and ways to fundraise. There was a great deal of interest shown by the comments, emails and calls received. Any Board members interested in attending are welcome to.

Richard asked about a possible location. Heather indicated that Hemlock is being looked at as an option due to the other amenities there. He also inquired as to it being used for dual purpose, as an ice rink in the winter.

### **Tree Planting Program:**

Heather spoke to the Board about the current tree planting program that the City has. She stated that the staff will be bringing a recommendation to the Board next month to increase the fee. Within this recommendation, the request for the property owner to water and maintain the tree will be included as well.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

None

**STAFF REPORTS: Recreation**

None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS/BUSINESS:**

None.

**UNSCHEDULED BUSINESS:**

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, the Mayor will sign a Proclamation to have the City of Big Rapids become a Monarch butterfly community. Carrie Weis Streimer applied for a grant to have 4000 plugs of milkweed delivered to the City which will then be planted in many locations. Many of the plugs will go at Clay Cliffs. Looking for many different groups and organizations to assist with the planting.

The City has hired a new Recreation Program Coordinator, Brynn Chesebro. Please stop by and introduce yourself. She will also be the new Farmer's Market Master. She will be going to Lansing for the training session that they offer.

Richard asked about the street light that is damaged and another that is not working on and near the Baldwin Bridge.

**The next meeting of the Park and Recreation Board will be March 9, 2017 at 6:30 pm in the City Commission Room.**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paula Weipert