

**CITY OF WIXOM  
49015 PONTIAC TRAIL  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING  
MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2018**

**ROLL CALL:**

The Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

**COMMISSION:** John O'Brien (Chairman), Maryann Chupa, Tom Menzies, Tom Marcucci and Mary Crause  
**ABSENT:** Jason Martinez (Excused), Mary Walsh (Excused) and Lisa Ferrari (Excused)  
**OTHERS:** Deanna Magee (Community Services Director), Kathy Venegas (Recreation Coordinator) and Nancy Fisher (Recording Secretary)

**Determination of a Quorum:**

A quorum of the Parks and Recreation Commission was present for this meeting.

**Agenda:**

No additions or changes were made to the agenda.

**Approval of the January 8, 2018 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes:**

**MOTION** and seconded by Commissioners Menzies and Marcucci to approve the January 8, 2018 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes.

**VOTE:**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Correspondence:**

There was no correspondence to be reviewed.

**Call to the Public:**

There were no comments made by the public.

**Unfinished Business:**

There was no unfinished business listed on the agenda for this meeting.

**New Business:**

**1. OTC Playground Enhancement Fund**

Ms. Magee noted that she had hoped Mr. Dungan of OTC would be present tonight. She has exchanged emails with him regarding the play structure at Gilbert Willis Park. Mr. Dungan is the OTC teacher who, in concert with his students, raised monies for the play structure. Mr. Dungan had a goal of \$100,000. Ms. Magee placed \$25,000 in the Parks & Recreation budget in order to reach the \$100,000 amount. The play structure needs repairs or replacement since the slides were damaged and cannot be replaced. Parts are no longer available. Mr. Dungan told Ms. Magee that he has another \$10,000 check for her although she has not yet received those monies. She will maintain a continuing dialogue with him.

## 2. Parks & Recreation Survey

<http://www.wixomgov.org/government/community-services-parks-recreation/parks-recreation-survey>

Ms. Magee noted that Ms. Venegas created the Parks & Recreation Survey and it is accessible online. It is comprised of simple questions designed to determine what the community wants and does not want in terms of parks and recreation opportunities. Forty responses were received with most of them favorable. The questions are basic and ask the participants to rate Parks & Recreation, whether they liked individual events or not, what they would like to see offered in the future and how they rate Parks & Recreation staff. They also tried to figure out whether residents knew about the trail system, whether they have attended Holiday Markt and if so whether they enjoyed it. The survey responses reveal a definite desire for more adult events. Respondents noted that there is no actual tree lighting at the Tree Lighting event.

The Parks & Recreation staff has brainstormed and is considering taking some of the elements from the Holiday Markt and incorporating them into the Tree Lighting. That way families can attend some activities and adults can go to others. That would make it a signature event that everyone can attend. Ms. Magee asked the Commissioners for their feedback. Commissioner Crause asked what Ms. Magee is looking for. Ms. Magee said she is aiming for both adult and family events. She noted that the wine tasting event was very popular. Ms. Magee and Ms. Venegas noted that per the completed surveys, the summer concert series was the most liked event. Ms. Venegas noted that she designed the survey so that the respondents could say that they were unaware of the event. That allowed her to arrive at a percentage of what was liked, disliked, etc. The Holiday Markt was the only events that came in at under 50 percent which means that the residents did not like it or love it. There were 31 well-responded to surveys.

Commissioner Crause said that she will send the Parks & Recreation online survey link to her subdivision for those households to complete it. She believes the Commissioners need to come up with something to get people to come on Saturday during Holiday Markt. Ms. Magee noted that it could not be combined with Breakfast with Santa; due to the required setup time of the Friday prior to the event. Commissioner Crause asked whether the turnout would be bigger if Santa was on Saturday and Friday featured entertainment and a beer tent. She suggested swapping the days and extending it. Ms. Magee noted that the problem is that it is a busy time of year for everyone. Commissioner Menzies noted that kids attend on Friday night. He suggested pushing the dancers who perform to Saturday around noon since that is a dead time. ----- Ms. Venegas noted that Dance Dynamics and Big City Dance are two of the biggest troupes. Dance Dynamics has another event on Saturday which is why they prefer coming to the Holiday Markt on Friday night. It does draw a crowd with the kids due to their families attending.

Ms. Magee noted that it is a busy time of year for a 2-day event and moving many of the Holiday Markt activities (beer tent, carriage rides, fire and ice display) would allow Volare all of its parking back for the busy restaurant season.. Ms. Venegas noted that with the new treelighting format there would be nothing across the street. She suggested having the tent in the parking lot in front of the Community Center with a one-night event on Friday for kids and adults. Commissioner Marcucci asked whether there would be enough room. Ms. Venegas noted that there would not be any vendors. It would just be a tree lighting which would become more of the central event. Commissioner Marcucci noted that the tent expense is huge. Ms. Venegas noted that would be cut in half since they would use only one tent. It was noted that would also do away with the requisite costs for the overnight police presence and additional DPW overtime. Ms. Magee suggested having all that activity but no vendors. The Commissioners asked what

kids would do. Ms. Venegas said those activities would be held inside where Santa greets the kids. That is why Friday of the Markt, across the street, is so slow until this is done.

Commissioner Chupa noted that weather and potential extreme cold conditions need to be factored into any planning. Chairman O'Brien and Ms. Magee said the activities could be held just outside the senior lounge doors.

Ms. Venegas noted that there were discussions about getting a band with a strong following. 50 Amp Fuse has split into two separate bands. Chairman O'Brien asked whether it would be worth checking into them. Ms. Venegas said that there have been a lot of requests for 50 Amp Fuse. The City uses an entertainment promoter to book its events and the promoter has told Ms. Venegas that crowd control is a concern with this band since it has such a strong following. It would necessitate expenditures for overtime police staff for public safety. They could open up the parking lot across the street.

Ms. Magee distributed a copy of the March 20, 2018 City Council Goal Session minutes for the Commissioners to review. Chairman O'Brien noted that if the events, noted in the minutes are pushed to Saturday, the costs would be quite high and incur overtime of staff. Ms. Magee noted that the City Council budget sessions are next week. The goal session minutes reflected some council comments reflect they felt the events are boring or stale. However, the existing events are at capacity, sold out, and are all well attended. She solicited ideas for new events from the Commissioners. Commissioner Menzies noted that the survey respondents are generally those who are more attuned to what is going on. He would like to see some feedback from the others since this could be skewed. Chairman O'Brien asked about getting the Parks & Recreation survey out to all of the homeowner's associations. Ms. Venegas noted that the survey was included in the past two Friday Blasts. She will send the link for the online survey to Commissioner Menzies. Commissioner Menzies would like to see how many people within his subdivision will complete the survey. Ms. Venegas noted that there is a link which allows people to insert their email address where the homeowner's association's email address could be added.

Chairman O'Brien asked for other ideas which were elicited from the completed surveys. Ms. Venegas said they received requests for a splash park, a farmer's market and a traveling picnic around the City; i.e., a traveling barbecue grills. Commissioner Menzies noted that outlying ideas can sometimes be molded into a sustainable event. He noted that people do not come for the vendors. He would like to get them here for real tree lighting. Ms. Venegas noted that within the current budget and space constraints, the Holiday Markt is as good as it can be and based on Council comments it is not good enough.. Events all time and money and at what level do we stop funding it? Perhaps, it needs to be evaluated. Ms. Magee suggested tying it in with tree lighting, Lighting a large real tree, carriage rides, ice sculptures, moving beer and wine tent to front of Community Center, and still having the Fire & Ice display. Staff and event costs would be a lot less expensive. Volare and Alex's restaurants complain regularly about disappearance of available parking for the restaurants during the event. Commissioner Menzies noted that City Councilman Rzeznik was a big booster of the Holiday Markt. Ms. Magee noted that Councilman's Rzeznik 2017 event comments suggested adding more huts; however, that would drive the cost up another \$20,000.

Commissioner Menzies noted that Friday is great. Saturday is okay perhaps up thru mid-afternoon. Ms. Magee noted that it was suggested moving the Markt to February; however, that does not work because people are not buying anything then. She and Ms. Venegas have spent a lot of time brainstorming. Commissioner Chupa suggested changing it from the Holiday Markt to

a Winterfest and cut things back. Ms. Magee noted that it is too long a timeframe to get that condensed a population. If you bring all the other activities, it appeals as a large-scale event. Currently, the successes are Santa and the reindeer; however, there is no focus on adults. Commissioner Chupa asked whether one night is too large to handle a large crowd. Ms. Magee said no since the Department of Public Works (DPW) is already here and the parking is here. It would be a more effective use of funding for one Signature event for all ages and something for everyone. After discussion, it was the consensus of the commission that this event template for the tree-lighting event is a good idea and should be considered.

### 3. Review of Events:

- **Skate Night**

Ms. Magee noted that it was cold and snowy on Skate Night. Ms. Venegas added that parent-teacher conferences also got rescheduled to that evening so although there were 100 people in attendance it was lighter than it would have been otherwise.

- **Bunny Hop**

Ms. Magee noted that the Bunny Hop event was packed.

- **Easter Egg Hunt**

Ms. Magee said that 285 kids attended the Easter Egg Hunt and that there were more young kids this year.

### 4. Upcoming Events:

- **Wine Tasting (Friday, April 13, 2018)**

<http://www.wixomgov.org/home/showdocument?id=7066>

Ms. Venegas noted that she has received 85 registrations for the wine tasting to date and that she expects it to sell out at its 125-person capacity. Ms. Magee said this has always been a popular event. Commissioner Chupa asked whether 125 people is the absolute limit. Ms. Venegas said that it is due to the tables and the way that the wine tables are set up which allows people to mill around. They had 128 people last year.

- **Founder's Day (Sunday, May 20, 2018)**

Ms. Magee asked the Commissioners to add Founder's Day on their calendars. Commissioners Menzies and Crause volunteered to help with this event.

- **Summer Concert Lineup 2018**

Ms. Magee noted that Ms. Venegas is working on the concert lineup. Ms. Venegas distributed a flyer with the names of the bands and the dates of their performances.

Ms. Magee noted that she is toying with the idea of doing a Taste of Wixom style event in September and selling tickets targeted toward adults. She will meet with the City Manager this week to get some direction regarding this. Commissioner Menzies asked why something couldn't be done mid to late summer, perhaps a car festival with a beer tent. He noted that other communities do that. Ms. Venegas noted that she believes there is an event involving cars and coffee at Eight Mile Road and Beck. Chairman O'Brien

suggested picking a Saturday and contacting a car club to pair that with beer and entertainment. Ms. Magee noted that the Commissioners have to keep in mind that all Saturday events involve expenses related to City overtime staffing. Ms. Venegas noted that Keith Erdman, president of the Walled Lake Eagles organization, has inquired about doing a car show on a concert night as well. Commissioner Menzies noted that the cars could be parked on the grass on concert nights.

**INFORMATION:**

Michigan Airline Update - <http://www.miairlinetrail.com/>

- **Friends of the Trailway**
- **Design & Engineering for Development of the Trail Ongoing**
- **Grant Application Submitted to the MDOT**

Ms. Magee noted that there is a regular friends group for the Trailway and the link is contained on tonight's meeting agenda. Work is currently underway on the Trail development. The Trailway Council has received a conditional commitment from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for a TAP Grant; however, the communities were requested to up the local match for the grant to \$1.3 million. The Trailway council manager has been actively discussing funding options with some foundations and private donors. However, these foundations wish to remain anonymous. These groups will make a decision on the City's funding application sometime this June. Otherwise, the local communities have to come up with the monies on their own. People are already using and riding on the trail.

**1. Community Center Update**

Ms. Magee noted that the Community Center renovations have been completed although there are a few minor items remaining on the punch list. Ms. Venegas said that she has received a lot of positive comments. Commissioner Marcucci confirmed that the Community Center lounge was out of commission for a 2-month period but that the seniors had access to space across the pond at City Hall.

**2. 2018-2023 Parks & Recreation Plan—Approved**

Ms. Magee noted that the Parks & Recreation Master Plan was filed at the end of February, 2018. It will be filed with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) which will enable Parks & Recreation to apply for grants. The next project is the parking lot at Gibson Park utilizing block grant funds.

**COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

There were no comments made by the Commissioners.

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

Ms. Venegas thanked the Commissioners for everything they do and for volunteering to assist with events. She noted that nothing would happen without them. Ms. Magee echoed that she appreciates the Commissioners' support. Commissioner Menzies noted that City Council's comments about the events being 'stale' could mean a lot of things. It is not necessarily bad. They may just want something to be a bit more robust. Chairman O'Brien noted that if the Holiday Markt has not grown in 5 years, that will not change. Ms. Magee hopes that City Councilmembers will personally attend the Parks & Recreation event and offer feedback. Commissioner Menzies noted that he has never seen City Councilmembers at the

events with the exception of the Mayor. Commissioner Chupa is glad that the Markt only comprises 2 days but feels it would be better as a 1-day event. Ms. Magee noted that the problem is that she has to build the whole infrastructure which was a big part of the cost. Commissioner Menzies noted that downsizing the event would take a lot of burden off of them. Ms. Venegas noted that just not having the vendors would eliminate months of work on behalf of City staff. Chairman O'Brien asked what happened with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and their handling of events they were going to take over from Parks & Recreation. Ms. Magee noted that City Council goals minutes reflected similar recommendations as the Parks and Recreation did when we requested to review and discuss. The DDA really wants to do its own thing and focus on the downtown. The Derby Day run will now be just a run and the Block Party will continue.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

This meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was motioned and adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Nancy Fisher  
Recording Secretary