

**CITY OF WIXOM
49015 PONTIAC TRAIL
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2019**

ROLL CALL:

The Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

COMMISSION: Tom Menzies (Acting Chairman), Maryann Chupa, Lisa Ferrari, Tom Marcucci, Jeff Winters and Mary Crause
ABSENT: John O'Brien (Excused), Kim Tyle (Excused) and Jason Martinez (Excused)
OTHERS: Deanna Magee (Community Services Director), Kathy Venegas (Recreation Coordinator), Steve Brown (City Manager) and Nancy Fisher (Recording Secretary), Vanessa Willett (DDA), Caleb Sheng (DDA) and Kristen Rzeznik (DDA)

Determination of a Quorum:

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

Agenda:

Ms. Magee noted that the Parks & Recreation Commission 2020 Calendar of Events requires the Commissioners' approval. She proposed this be added to the end of tonight's agenda.

Approval of the July 8, 2019 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes:

MOTION and seconded by Commissioners Ferrari and Winters to approve the July 8, 2019 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence:

There was no correspondence to be reviewed.

Call to the Public:

Two Lakeland High School students, Cindy and Mary Ann, were in attendance as part of their AP Government class. They introduced themselves.

Kristin Rzeznik said that she is a business owner, resident and member of the DDA. She noted that the DDA has been evolving and that next week she will potentially be voted in as the Vice Chair of the DDA. She would like the DDA to partner with Parks & Recreation in order to ensure support for downtown events. They want the downtown events to be successful. She tried to make it downtown last year for the tree lighting but got stuck at the Drafting Table. She is interested in what happens with the Munshaw Barn.

Caleb Sheng said that he is a DDA member who wants to become more involved with Parks & Recreation.

Unfinished Business:

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

New Business:

1. Gilbert Willis Playground Community Build

Ms. Magee noted that the playground renovation has been a long time project. She passed pictures out to all the Commissioners and noted that it was a good project. It heavily involved the Department of Public Works (DPW) staff. Ms. Venegas noted that over 100 volunteers participated throughout the course of the four day playground build. They partnered with Ascension, HRC, General RV and Community Financial Credit Union. There was also an impressive showing of community volunteers. Commissioner Marcucci asked how many days the build took. Ms. Magee said it was 4 days; some days were messy and muddy. Commissioner Crause noted that on Saturday morning they had to clean out the holes from the auger; it hailed. Acting Chairman Menzies agreed that it was like a lake. Acting Chairman Menzies commended Ms. Magee and Ms. Venegas on securing volunteers. He said that the businesses who participated were good. Ms. Venegas thanked the Commissioners and said this could not have been accomplished without them.

Ms. Magee noted that the equipment cost about \$100,000. She noted that the supervisors from Miracle Equipment Company were terrific to work with. The retaining wall work remains to be completed and the timbers have been ordered. The wall will be layered in three tiers due to the height to retain the ground and each tier will have benches for viewing.

2. Review of Events/Comments

▪ **BBQ & Blues**

Commissioner Marcucci said he attended and it was a good event.

▪ **Movie Night**

None of the Commissioners said that they attended.

▪ **Summer Concerts**

Commissioner Chupa said that the concerts were good. Commissioner Marcucci noted that a couple of them were pretty packed. Ms. Venegas noted that the Magic Bus and one other band's concerts were very well attended. It is nice to have bands which have a following of their own. She noted that the City's concerts are all well attended. She estimated that roughly 700-750 people attend each week's concert per her estimated count. She is meeting tomorrow to review the 2020 concert series schedule. Ms. Magee noted that they added two additional concerts this year at the end of the season. They will do the same for 2020.

▪ **Barkin in the Park**

Ms. Venegas noted that although it rained, 250 people still showed up. It was moved up a week in order to have warmer weather, but got rain instead. She noted it is only the second year for this event but it has potential. Most people bring a dog although it could

be two to three people per dog. This year they had pet adoptions. In a few years' time, this could be a signature event for the City.

3. Projects

- **Pontiac Trail Street Banner Bid (\$32,000)**

Ms. Magee noted that the street banner would go across Pontiac Trail from the 7-11. City Council allocated this in their budget and has received bids. She estimates the cost at \$25,000-\$32,000. The signage will be changeable for each event. Commissioner Marcucci asked whether it is permanent. Is it made of steel? Ms. Magee said that it is two poles on each side with panels on a wired system. The banner material will have slits cut for the wind to pass through. It will be good advertising for City Events. There will be a policy governing its use.

- **Walking Path Around Civic Center – CDBG Funding**

Ms. Magee said that she put this in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) last year and is recommending funding this again in 2020, which will provide \$75,000 towards the total estimated cost of \$173,000. They will revisit this project in the spring budget meetings. There are a lot of people walking around the Community Center and City Hall to extend their walk and/or avoid Pontiac Trail.

- **Demolition of Munshaw House (\$10,000-\$12,000)**

Ms. Magee noted that all the Commissioners should have received City Manager Brown's email. Estimates for demolition of the house range from \$10,000-\$12,000. Is it repairable? Yes but it will be a costly undertaking since it is currently in very dire condition. They have tried to weigh the pros and cons of the house's use. She has spoken to the City's Historical Society and they do not have an interest in preserving it. They already work with two historical homes (Wire House & Gibson House) within the City and don't have the time or resources to deal with a third. She passed out a letter from the Historical Society to the Commissioners. She noted that they do feel that the barn has some historical significance and would like to see the barn moved to Gibson Park. She received a \$250,000 estimate from the City's Building Department to restore it. Commissioner Ferrari noted that the house's disposition has been discussed for the last 20 years with no resolution. Commissioner Marcucci asked about the house next door to the Munshaw House. Commissioner Ferrari said that it is privately owned, not City property.

Ms. Magee noted that Parks & Recreation and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) have explored various options. In 2016 the DDA suggested conducting a survey regarding whether residents wanted to see the Munshaw Barn used as a wedding reception venue or renovating it. Ms. Magee asked the Commissioners what they think about demolishing the Munshaw House. Commissioner Ferrari asked who would pay for the restoration. Ms. Magee said they secure bids for a contractor, however, there currently are no funds allocated for the restoration or the demolition.

Commissioner Winters asked what the historical significance of the barn. Is it worth a \$200,000 renovation? City Manager Brown said that it would cost over \$90,000 to move it, not including any future renovation. Ms. Magee noted that Commissioner Marcucci, a

concrete contractor by trade estimated \$18,000 for a concrete foundation. She noted that the goal would be to have a meeting center with restrooms at Gibson Park. She thinks it would definitely be used if moved there whereas nothing is being done with it at its current location. Note the last 2 Parks and Recreation 5 year plans include moving the barn to the Gibson House. These plans were approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission as well as City Council. Commissioner Marcucci noted that it is probably cheaper to tear it down and build something. Commissioner Winters suggested using part of what is there now and incorporating something. Ms. Magee noted that there were similar thoughts regarding the Walled Lake Depot that is on Trailway Council property. The Trailway Council spent six months talking about that. After investigation and discussion Walled Lake was totally onboard with taking it down and getting a new structure at some time. Commissioner Ferrari noted that the Historical Society was previously all in favor of saving it. Ms. Magee said that was true until they got the Gibson House. Commissioner Marcucci said it is the cost factor. Acting Chairman Menzies asked who would maintain it. Ms. Magee noted that the City maintains all the historical properties. They maintain the Gibson House and the Wire House.

Commissioner Marcucci asked what the plans are for the site if the house gets torn down and moved. Ms. Magee said that it could be a pocket park or additional parking. Commissioner Marcucci suggested a structure or pavilion. Ms. Magee said those are options and that it would probably be used a lot with downtown activities. What is City Council's position on the properties? City Manager Brown said there is no sense of direction from City Council. It has only been discussed at a budget work session but there is no full consensus.

Mr. Sheng of the DDA noted that the DDA is trying to catch up to Parks & Recreation. He noted that people get excited about the prospect of the barn; i.e., barn weddings. However, the concern is about the confrontation involved in people asking about the expense of moving the barn elsewhere. He is trying to secure an estimate. He believes that the City should be able to say that it has exercised due diligence.

Ms. Willett of the DDA said that she is a city resident and lives near Gilbert Willis and walks there with her dog. She owns another house off Maple Road near General Motors. She does not believe that the City needs more parks. Her background is in construction. There are a lot of uses for the barn including cider and donuts, pictures at graduation, weddings and selling Christmas trees. She has asked larger corporations about donating toward restoration. It is a historical building and once it is gone, it is gone. She has lived in this area her whole life and is only learning about this now. No one goes there so it should be moved. She would hate to see it go into a parking lot. She attends all the music and park events. She suggested starting the Panther Hunt event later next year due to dwindling light.

Commissioner Marcucci noted that the house is separate from the barn. Ms. Magee said that the house and the barn are two different issues. Commissioner Ferrari asked about the barn's size. Ms. Magee said it is 30 feet by 50 feet. The barn contractor is the same one they have talked to for a while (the last 16-17 years). Some of these discussions have occurred over a long term.

Mr. Sheng of the DDA noted that one thing that is new is the City's reliance on the County for assistance and funding. Preservation of historical sites is an important priority for the County. The County asks the DDA about this all the time. Ms. Magee noted that

the County is a great resource for everyone including on the recent Michigan Airline Trailway construction. She noted that there are different options for cost and how those monies will be spent.

Commissioner Crause asked whether the Munshaw House could be restored if it was completely funded. Ms. Magee noted that would need to be discussed by City Council. Commissioner Winters asked whether it is part of the Master Plan to leave the house there and have it as an events center. Ms. Magee noted that was not in the Parks master plans. City Council will need to make a decision regarding the house as well as the barn. Keeping them both may be too expensive. She noted that the April 26, 2019 City Council minutes reflect that the Mayor did not think so. Commissioner Chupa asked whether they want to save the barn and not the house. Ms. Magee said she would like to discuss both. Commissioner Chupa suggested that perhaps someone would move the house to another location and renovate it at their own cost. Acting Chairman Menzies said that the odds are against that. He noted that there appears to be more interest in doing something with the barn than with the house due to cost constraints.

Commissioner Ferrari noted that working on the Gibson House for such a long time has been a painful process. It has been used but not as much as she imagined. Ms. Magee noted that people from the business park use it all day long. It is used for staging races and it contains community gardens. Someone has started a run there too. She noted that there has been heavy City investment in the Gibson House and that those were Community Development Block grant dollars. Commissioner Ferrari noted that the Munshaw House is in much worse disrepair everywhere than the other houses were. Ms. Magee noted that they have spent \$43,000 on the Munshaw barn and \$438,000 on the Gibson Park and House (ADA improvements, gazebo addition, paved ADA parking area, circle roadway to south parking lot and construction of a soccer field). Acting Chairman Menzies said that it is great if businesses will invest in it. However, the house seems cost prohibitive. Commissioner Marcucci agrees. He suggested making a recommendation on the house, then discussing the barn. He does not think they want to invest in the house and that it should probably be demolished. City Manager Brown said that the house is a big blight concern. Commissioner Marcucci noted that the demolition bid was only for the house and not also the barn. Ms. Magee noted that the house has deteriorated so much. They looked at taking it down about 7-8 years ago and even had environmental studies done at that time.

Acting Chairman Menzies asked the Commissioners for their feedback regarding demolition of the Munshaw House. No one was opposed. They agreed that they would like to secure more information regarding the barn. City Manager Brown noted that the Commissioners' action tonight takes the form of an advisory recommendation to City Council. Ms. Magee noted that it would entail \$18,000 just for the foundation if the house were to stay there. The barn requires structural improvements and probably \$30,000-\$35,000 in interior improvements in order to bring it up to Code for the electrical and foundation work. City Manager Brown said those estimates range from \$18,000-\$35,000. Ms. Magee noted that it is \$50,000 if the barn stays here and that is without bringing it up to current standards. City Manager Brown noted that it could cost \$60,000 for a full restoration. It could cost \$90,000 to relocate it to another location. Then does it get moved to the Gibson House or demolished?

Commissioner Ferrari asked what City Council's take on the barn is. City Manager Brown said that there is currently no consensus. Some Councilmembers are concerned

about the amount of monies already spent on the Gibson House. Ms. Magee noted that of the \$435,000 spent, all were grant monies. Commissioner Winters asked about the annual maintenance cost. Ms. Magee said that runs about \$7,000 and that DPW takes care of it.

Ms. Willett of the DDA noted that CAM (Construction Association of Michigan), along with large corporations, might supply labor and equipment. CAM can supply this through its members. She noted that the DDA has an interest in getting involved in that. She just joined the DDA in April of this year.

Ms. Magee noted that the City has participated in projects like this which included Rebuilding Oakland. Acting Chairman Menzies suggested trying to figure out how to keep the barn here instead of moving it. Ms. Magee urged the DDA to submit plans along with actual figures for doing this. Commissioner Marcucci asked how much funding can be secured. Commissioner Ferrari asked how long it will take. Ms. Magee asked whether the DDA has funding for this. Ms. Sheng said that the DDA is looking into this and he realizes that Parks & Recreation and City Council need cost estimates to work with. They are working on this. He suggesting discussing this outside of meetings to see whether it is an acceptable class of uses. Acting Chairman Menzies asked whether someone from the Parks & Recreation Commission needs to work with the DDA. Ms. Magee said that if the two can partner, that would be great. She suggested they attend each other's meetings. Acting Chairman Menzies suggested having a special meeting. City Manager Brown noted that further discussion is warranted. Commissioner Marcucci noted that figures will be required before things get too far down the road. Commissioner Ferrari noted that she is leaning toward demolishing the barn.

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

Ms. Magee noted that the second trail paving has been completed. City Manager Brown noted that the electrical is now in, the first course is in place and the finished course went down within the last week. Ms. Magee noted that the trail is still officially closed and that bollards still need to go in. City Manager Brown noted that the official opening is slated for November 13, 2019. Ms. Magee noted that people are already using the trail and she has been receiving many positive comments.

4. Upcoming Events

- **Treelighting**

Ms. Magee noted that this year's tree lighting will be similar to last year's which was a huge success. This year's tree will be 4 feet taller in height.

INFORMATION:

Ms. Magee noted that the Fall Fest went really well despite the very cold weather. Acting Chairman Menzies noted that it was very windy.

Ms. Magee passed out the Parks & Recreation 2020 Calendar of Events to the Commissioners. She noted that if approved, it will get incorporated into the City's master calendar. Ms. Venegas noted that this year's events are much the same as last year with the only difference being the Historical Society's events. The ice cream social and Founder's Day are up in the air. Ms. Magee noted that they are

contemplating the details and format of Founder’s Day but concentrating more on the historical aspect incorporating the Wixom Historical Society to possibly run the event. Parks & Recreation evaluated the event and decided to do that. Acting Chairman Menzies suggesting continuing to incorporate the vintage car show as part of that event, perhaps with some music. He noted that in the past they have had as many as 45 cars. Commissioner Winters confirmed with Ms. Magee that Founder’s Day is officially off the Parks & Recreation calendar of events. Ms. Venegas noted that when they receive word on the Historical Society events and DDA events, those will be added.

MOTION and seconded by Commissioners Ferrari and Chupa to approve the 2020 Parks & Recreation Calendar of Events as submitted.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Sheng of the DDA said that he attended last year’s tree lighting and he became an immediate fan. He noted that the DDA is entering a new phase of marketing and that they would like to contribute to the tree lighting event. Ms. Willett asked how many people attend. Ms. Venegas said that thousands of people come. Ms. Magee noted that people say over and over that they thought they would come for five minutes and yet stayed for four hours. Commissioner Crause requested having more outside warming stations; i.e., while standing in line for the carriage rides. Ms. Venegas noted that there were problems with the heaters last year. This year’s tree lighting is scheduled for December 6, 2019.

Ms. Rzeznik noted that the DDA is doing the downtown holiday dazzle again this year for the holidays. Businesses will put their lights up after Thanksgiving and leave them up through January 6th. Commissioner Chupa said that she loved the bikes that were placed downtown with flowers this year. Commissioner Ferrari said that she did not know what they were; no one talked to them about it.

Acting Chairman Menzies thanked the DDA Boardmembers for coming tonight. He said that hopefully they can collaborate with the Parks & Recreation Commissioners.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Chupa noted that the Historical Society is having a program on Monday night at 7 p.m. regarding the Battle of Chickamauga. She encouraged everyone to attend.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Ms. Magee thanked everyone for their discussion regarding the Munshaw House and Barn. She noted that these topics needed input.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was motioned and adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Nancy Fisher
Recording Secretary