

**JOINT PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION/PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JANUARY 14, 2015
CITY HALL WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
WYOMING, MICHIGAN**

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cook, Hornecker, LaMar, Skinner, Velthouse,
Wustman

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

MEMBERS ABSENT: Broek, Harley, Hartfield, McGregor,
Councilman Pastoor

PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bueche, Goodheart, Hegyi, Micele, Spencer,
Weller, Woodruff

PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMBERS ABSENT: Arnoys, Postema

STAFF PRESENT:

Rynbrandt, Director of Community Services
Cochran, City Planner
Lucar, Administrative Aide

OTHERS PRESENT:

Pam Blough, P.M. Blough, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER

Parks & Recreation Commission Chair Wustman and Planning Commission Chair Spencer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Motion by Woodruff, seconded by Hegyi, to excuse Arnoys and Postema. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Cook, seconded by Velthouse, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion by Hornecker, seconded by Velthouse, to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2014 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Motion by Woodruff, seconded by Hegyi, to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2014 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

IDEAL PARK

- Presentation of Draft Park Master Plan

Consultant Pam Blough of P.M. Blough, Inc. gave a presentation on the background and process involved in developing the proposed Master Plan for Ideal Park. City staff did a large public outreach soliciting input from citizens. There were two public meetings held in the Ideal Park neighborhood, hosted by the Ideal Park Christian Reformed Church. Both meetings were well-attended. The first meeting involved site analysis and information gathering. The second meeting was the unveiling of the preliminary master plan and gathering additional public input.

Ideal Park is a historical park, built between 1933-1938, known for its beautiful canopy of trees. Unfortunately, the tornado in July 2014 destroyed a majority of the trees. The City has spent over \$500,000 in tree removal, which has come out of the Parks and Recreation millage fund. The facilities that currently remain are the lodge, two bridges, the picnic shelter and restrooms and the maintenance building by the railroad tracks. The tennis and basketball courts are still there, but are over 40 years old and in poor condition. The old walkways are not ADA accessible, and the parking lot is in need of replacement. There are a few beautiful wooded lots that are still there. The two playground areas were destroyed. Ninety percent of the park is in the floodway of Buck Creek, which will impact redevelopment. They met with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), who is very open to discussions regarding redevelopment of the park. The DEQ requires that all “fill areas” must balance with “removal areas”. Comments were also received from the Kent County Drain Commission.

The public comments received set the tone for the proposed park design. The overall feeling was to retain the historic character of the park and embrace its natural features. Some of the recommendations were that the new play area be located in a more central location, that there be picnic areas and a buffer of trees along the railroad tracks to reduce noise. The access to the park should be from Crippen Avenue and Averill Avenue, not 56th Street. The public comments were used in developing the proposed master plan elements, some of which include a play area, replanting of trees, picnic areas, natural pathways through wooded lots, a large shelter, a small picnic shelter, restroom building and parking lots. The new facilities will be located east of Buck Creek for better access. The City Engineering Department has evaluated and endorsed the entrance and parking concepts. There will be a total of 110 parking spaces provided which is comparable to the number of spaces currently available. The cross-hatched area on the plan

shows residential properties that could be acquired on Averill Avenue to add land to the park and square it off.

Motion by Hornecker, seconded by Cook, to recommend to City Council approval of the Ideal Park Master Plan. Discussion followed.

Woodruff asked the difference between the “lawn” and “open play lawn”. Blough replied the open play lawn will contain no trees and is purely for open field play.

Micele asked the location of the 100 year floodplain. Blough pointed out on the map the 100 year floodplain boundary. Micele asked if the park will be open 24 hours. Rynbrandt responded there will be set park hours, like with other City parks. Micele asked if the shelters and lodge would be reservable. Rynbrandt responded affirmatively. Picnic area sections can also be reserved.

Woodruff expressed concern that emergency vehicles cannot reach the historic lodge area located west of Buck Creek. Rynbrandt replied emergency vehicles would have to park on the east side of the bridge and physically transport a patient over the bridge. The issue of access was one of the main reasons for locating the new facilities east of Buck Creek.

Chair Wustman asked how the decision was made regarding the number of parking spaces. Rynbrandt replied the number of parking spaces is based on past use of the park.

Hornecker asked the capacities of the shelters. Rynbrandt responded the historic shelter can hold about 75 people, the proposed large shelter would hold about the same number of people as the Lamar Park shelter, and the small shelter would hold about the same number as the Pinery Park shelter. Future construction drawings and approvals by the DEQ and Drain Commission would inform the actual size of shelters that may be appropriate to the site. However, it is important to note the intent on the master plan to have shelters and their proposed locations.

Chair Spencer asked if the signage would have more of a historic look. Blough replied they are looking at alternatives that work with DEQ requirements.

Skinner inquired about the proposed lighting and security. Blough responded they have kept security in mind with the design, providing for visibly clear views of the main facilities. Rynbrandt mentioned the clear views are important for the purpose of police patrolling. It is proposed that there will be lighting at all the main facilities and parking areas. There has not been a high rate of vandalism here, only some illegal dumping of trash. The neighbors also keep a close watch of this park.

Weller asked if a dog park could work here. Rynbrandt replied the original Citizens for Dog Park Committee had proposed two locations in the city – Marquette Park and Battjes Park. There was not much interest in a dog park from the Ideal Park neighborhood.

Goodheart inquired about the flooding problems experienced by the surrounding homes. Rynbrandt responded that these homes experience flooding, some of which are located in the floodplain and some in the floodway. The Kent County Drain Commission and the City of Wyoming Engineering Department are aware of the flooding. There are currently no grant resources available to acquire these homes. The City has had preliminary discussions of developing a floodplain acquisition policy in the future. Related to park expansion, the City had appraisals done on the Averill Avenue home closest to the park and the homeowner thought the appraisals came in too low. Goodheart thought, in redeveloping the park, they should look into ways to reduce the floodplain. Rynbrandt noted that City Engineering, Public Works and the Drain Commission were consulted on the parks redevelopment plan in part because of these concerns.

A vote on the motion carried unanimously.

- Master Plan Timeline Update – Rynbrandt referred to the current timeline for the plan input and adoption process:

February 9: City Council Work Session

February 11: Parks and Recreation Commission (if needed)

February 16: City Council Adoption

COMMISSIONER CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS

There were no further Commissioner comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Barszcz, 5730 Crippen Avenue, pointed out that Buck Creek has an extremely large watershed, and all the houses on Crippen experience flooding. In 2013 his basement wall collapsed because of the flooding. He was concerned that the proposed trailhead parking lot off 56th Street could cause more problems. Rynbrandt said she will notify the City engineers in this regard.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Velthouse, seconded by Cook, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Kimberly S. Lucar, Administrative Aide
Wyoming Planning Commission