

MIDLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 4, 2020  
MIDLAND CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
7:00 P.M.

PROPOSED MINUTES

- 1) Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairperson Nancy Carney.
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance: Led by students from Plymouth and Central Park Elementary Schools
- 3) Roll Call:
  - a. MEMBERS PRESENT: Billotti, Carney, Johns, Rankin, Rice, Steidemann, Varela
  - b. MEMBERS ABSENT: Carlson
  - c. OTHERS PRESENT: Marcie Post, Recreation Manager. Students from Plymouth Pioneers Programmers and Central Park Student Leadership.
- 4) Minutes of December 3, 2019: Billotti motioned, Rankin seconded to receive minutes of the meeting of December 3, 2019. Motion passed 8-0.
- 5) Call to Audience: None
- 6) Miracle Field public crowdfunding campaign: Post announced the kickoff of the Patronicity online crowd fundraising campaign for the Middle of the Mitt Miracle League. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation will grant the project \$50,000 if the City successfully raises \$50,000 via the online platform over the next 60 days.

Post introduced students from the Plymouth Pioneers Programmers Robotics Team and the Central Park Student Leadership group who presented the City with checks totaling \$1,700 toward the Miracle Field. The students hosted a can drive at Plymouth along with collecting donations, and the students at Central Park sold scented pencils to raise funds for this exciting project. In particular, this group is donating funds in support of an accessible piece of play equipment for the play area.

- 7) Currie Stadium proposal: Murphy shared a brief history of Currie Stadium located in Emerson Park, including the decline in fast pitch softball that has occurred in the area over the past twenty years. Murphy discussed structural maintenance concerns that threaten the continued safe use of the facility, leading to staff's decision to close the underside of the stadium for use effective immediately. Murphy shared that she is proposing \$130,000 in funds split between the FY2020/21 and 2021/22 Parks Capital Outlay budgets for the future demolition of the stadium. This process would leave the current ball field intact, but would remove the entire stadium facility. As part of the demolition plan, irrigation controls need to be relocated and a new electrical service will need to be run in order to maintain the ball field. In addition, a small storage shed will need to be added somewhere in Emerson Park for the softball attendant to keep game night supplies. Murphy shared that the public will be asked for their input on the future of this area of the park during the upcoming Parks and Recreation Master Plan update that will occur later this year.

Murphy shared that this was a very difficult decision to make as the stadium has been a community icon for decades now, lending itself to Midland being known as the softball capital of the world at one point. Murphy stated that this decision will not be popular with all residents. Staff has done a lot of research and outreach, including meeting with the Currie family and hosting a meeting with a contingent of softball enthusiasts over the past several years prior to announcing a timeline for the removal of the stadium. Murphy reiterated that the City is at a point where putting more tax dollars into the facility when the usage continues to decline each year is not the best use of funds.

8) Project Reports

- a. **Upper Emerson Park renovation update:** Murphy shared that the MDNR grant needed to be extended another six months as the punch list for the project remains incomplete. The interpretive panels are in place now, and in the spring new wildflower seeding will need to be done along with an asphalt patch. Murphy is still hopeful for a late spring ribbon cutting event.
- b. **Miracle Field:** Murphy reported that site design and building architectural design are underway for the Miracle Field complex. The goal is to bid out the project by early March with construction starting in late April. Murphy shared that the Miracle Field operating committee met for the first time this week to discuss how to structure the league and attract athletes. The project is 67% funded to date with an additional \$500,000 remaining to secure from outside sources.
- c. **Pickleball and tennis court complex:** Murphy stated that the MDNR quickly approved the site plans for the project and it is currently out for bid on the City's website. Bids are due February 11 and will need to be reviewed and approved by MDNR before an award can be made.
- d. **Grove Park improvements:** Murphy reported that the Grove Park renovation bid is live on the City's website. The contracted work includes the paved pathways and the basketball court. The project did receive a \$30,000 CDBG grant which is being used to purchase the small pavilion. The City will continue with demolition on site and will assist with installation of the pavilion, play equipment and playground fence this spring.
- e. **Cardboard Sled Race after report:** Post shared that 45 sleds participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual cardboard sled races at City Forest. Participants raced in three categories, with winners receiving Midland Parks & Recreation passes and/or Live Oak gift certificates.

9) Old Business :

- a. **Recreation fee approval:** Murphy shared that City Council adopted the recreation fee ordinances at their January 16 meeting. The fee increases took effect upon publication.

10) New Business: None

11) Adjourn: Motioned by Steidemann, seconded by Varela to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 8– 0. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Murphy  
Director of Public Services