

MIDLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 5, 2020
MIDLAND CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7:00 P.M.

PROPOSED MINUTES

- 1) Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Nancy Carney.

Pledge of Allegiance

- 2) Roll Call:

- a. MEMBERS PRESENT: Billotti, Carlson, Carney, Johns, Rankin, Steidemann, Varela
- b. MEMBERS ABSENT: Rice
- c. OTHERS PRESENT: Marcie Post, Recreation Manager

- 3) Election of Chair and Vice Chair: It has been the Commission's practice to elect a new chair and vice chair annually at the first meeting of the fiscal year. In keeping with the practice, Murphy explained that the Commission could make nominations for the position of chair and vice chair, or since the previous year consisted of several canceled meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it would be appropriate as well to consider reinstating the current chair and vice chair. Rankin motioned to continue the terms of the current chair, Nancy Carney, and vice chair, Gary Billotti, for another year. Varela seconded this motion and the motion passed 7-0.

- 4) Minutes of February 4, 2020: Steidemann motioned, Vaerla seconded to receive minutes of the meeting of February 4, 2020. Motion passed 7-0.

- 5) Call to Audience: None

- 6) Adoption of meeting calendar for 2021: The Commission reviewed the proposed meeting calendar for the upcoming year, and decided to continue meeting on the first Tuesday of the month. There are 3 potential elections in 2021 that require altering the Tuesday meeting schedule on those months to the first Wednesday. The Commission decided not to meet in January and July due to the proximity to the respective holidays. Under the ordinance, the Commission must meet six times per fiscal year. The following meeting schedule was proposed for 2021 with the understanding that meetings will be cancelled in advance if the Commission does not have official business to address:

Tuesday, January 5	Wednesday, May 5	Tuesday, September 7
Tuesday, February 2	Tuesday, June 1	Tuesday, October 5
Tuesday, March 2	Tuesday, July 6	Wednesday, November 3
Tuesday, April 6	Wednesday, August 4	Tuesday, December 7

Varela motioned to accept the meeting calendar with meetings the first Tuesday of each month with the exception of January and July when no meetings will be scheduled, and with meetings on potential election months to be held on Wednesday. Steidemann seconded the motion and the motion passed 7-0.

- 7) Gift from the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation for maintenance at Thru Park: Murphy shared that as part of the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation's ongoing support of Thru Park, the Foundation has offered the City a gift of \$29,500 to provide maintenance of the park amenities. The areas in need of maintenance include: painting of the restroom building, restaining the large concrete letters and the snail climb walkway, painting the crocodiles at the foot bridge and the giraffe, replacing the tot picnic table due to failure of the coating and expanding the irrigation system into the outlawn. Murphy is hopeful this work will occur this fall. Murphy asked for a recommendation from the Commission to City Council to accept this very generous donation so the maintenance projects can move forward. Rankin made a motion to recommend that City Council accept this gift. Carlson seconded the motion and the motion passed 7 - 0.
- 8) Impact of COVID-19 on parks and recreation offerings: Murphy explained that concerns with maintaining social distancing, providing adequate cleaning of facilities, complying with group gathering size limits and securing and training adequate summer program staff amid the COVID-19 pandemic led the Parks staff to make a recommendation to City Council at their May 18 meeting to cancel several summer programs. Murphy stated the following changes were approved by Council in response to the pandemic:
- Closure of Plymouth Pool for the 2020 season
 - Closure of Stratford Woods Beach through June 1
 - Cancellation of the LEAP program for 2020
 - Cancellation of Tunes by the Tridge for 2020
 - Cancellation of the July 4 celebration and fireworks
 - Postpone use of City softball fields and volleyball courts until June 15
 - Offer shortened season for adult softball and beach volleyball

Murphy shared that playgrounds and park restrooms were closed early on in the pandemic response but were opened up as CDC guidelines were issued. The dock installations were also postponed, which in hindsight was extremely helpful as the docks were not a concern during the flooding event in May.

Post talked about the Walk Midland program which was able to be held with a social distance, touch free format. In the 35th year of existence, Post saw record numbers of participants with over 1,000 people joining in on walks. New this year, Post gave away gift cards to local Midland businesses instead of t-shirts to each evening's lucky winner of the drawing. Post also shared that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the usual number of teams are participating in the condensed softball season with $\frac{1}{2}$ the usual number of teams participating in beach volleyball. Post discussed the virtual programming that she is offering this year as well, including Parks Bingo, a Modern Mystery Tour Parks scavenger hunt and a virtual 5K in September. Post said that July was Parks & Recreation month and she is considering doing a virtual program annually to recognize this.

Post also discussed the fall recreation programs which at this point include Pooches at the Pool with social distancing guidelines in place, the Grand Experience trip to Mackinac Island and a Halloween movie at Stratford Woods. Post shared that the Appreciation of Beautification Awards will likely be a virtual recognition program this year.

- 9) Impact of May 19-20 flood event on parks: Murphy reported that with record river level of over 35', there were several areas in the parks that were impacted greatly beyond what normally occurs with annual flooding. Murphy outlined the following areas of damage:
- a. Emerson Park – the electrical at the stadium was rendered unusable, which means there will be no lights at Diamond 1 (potentially a permanent situation). The irrigation controls will need to be relocated out of the stadium and connected to an alternate electrical feed.
 - b. Gerstacker Spray Park – the filter and main pump were both damaged and needed to be replaced.
 - c. Rail Trail – a section of Rail Trail under the M-20 bridge was washed away. MDOT will replace this as it was under warranty from the M-20 bridge reconstruction project. The trail is gravel and passable for now.
 - d. Chippewassee Park – the electrical was under water and will need more repairs. Fortunately the skate park electrical had not yet been reconnected after the M-20 bridge project required an electrical feed to be relocated, so no loss there.
 - e. Service Annex Building – this building houses the horticulture and ball diamond operations. It was inundated with about 7 feet of water with lots of resulting damage. The electrical service needs replaced and the horticulture end of the building needs mold remediation completed. Staff are currently operating out of job trailers with a temporary electrical service and a large shipping container to secure their tools and equipment.
 - f. Tridge – water lapped at the underside of the center of the Tridge, damaging the light controls located under the decking. Water came up onto the wood at each entrance to the Tridge. A structural engineer reviewed the Tridge and there was no damage to the structure.
 - g. Redcoats Complex – the complex was completely under water. Electrical and automatic door locks needed replaced along with one backstop that was damaged by the flood waters.
 - h. Upper Emerson river overlook – the new site came through the flood without any damage. Murphy said water reached nearly 6 feet up on the red trellis and there was a lot of caked mud to clean up. The bottom portion of railing on the boardwalk along with the floating dock had not yet been installed due to the delay in spring park work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so this was very fortunate as this area of project is most prone to flood damage.

Murphy shared that there was a lot of general clean up required to areas like the parking lots by the Farmers Market, that is not typically seen after a regular flood due to the amount of mud and sand deposited from the flood waters. Murphy also shared that the Parks staff helped out in many other areas of the City, including the Library, Riverside Place and the golf course which all sustained significant damage.

10) Miracle Field update: Murphy gave an update on the fundraising efforts, sharing that \$1.18M have been raised to date for the construction with an additional \$50K toward the endowed maintenance fund. With the funds being donated, the City's purchasing ordinance allows to forgo the bid process in selecting a contractor. Murphy has been working with a local consortium of contractors on the project and the revised budget for construction is \$2.06M which includes the design work and construction oversight. The original budget was \$1.5M and Murphy explained there are three reasons for the increase in cost. The original bid estimate came from a Detroit construction firm, and the project designer said bid costs tend to be higher the further north the project site is in the state. Secondly construction bid prices have been coming in higher overall this year. And the biggest reason for the increase in cost is that the original bid estimate was prepared before the soil boring tests were completed. The tests came back indicating very unstable soils, which will add significant cost to site excavation and preparation costs. Murphy shared that the plan to move forward includes phasing in the project, with a project start this fall. The first phase will include building the field itself along with the accessible parking area in front of the complex and the restroom portion of the clubhouse building. The old Civic Arena parking lot will be left as is and used for parking until funds are available to complete the project. Murphy proposed that a second round of fundraising will occur in late winter/early spring with the goal to raise enough fund to complete the build out of the complex next year. This will include adding a park shelter, a new parking lot with a bus/vehicle drop off loop, a playground area and completion of the concession portion of the clubhouse building.

11) Project Reports:

- a. **Upper Emerson Park renovation and bridge/roadway removal**: Murphy reported that the punch list has been completed and she has submitted a request to close out the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant with final reimbursement to follow. Murphy reminded the Commission that the Department of Natural Resources provided a grant for this project totaling \$295,000. Murphy added that the City's Engineering Department is removing the vehicle bridge to the east of the project site, and the remaining portions of old Emerson Park Drive are being removed as well. Staff will be able to return the old road bed to park green space along the river.
- b. **Central Park Pickle Ball & Tennis Court project**: Murphy shared pictures of the asphalt surface for the courts and the installation of fence posts. The asphalt surface needs to sit for a while for the oils to dissipate before the blue and green coating is placed. Murphy shared that COVID-19 has set all park projects behind schedule but she is happy with the progress to date. The project is on schedule to complete this fall.
- c. **Grove Park renovation**: Murphy shared pictures of the project to date, including the wide paved pathway leading into the park from the Rodd/Grove intersection, the new playground fence, the We Saw four-seat see saw and the new basketball court. Murphy reported that parks in-house crews will be installing a pavilion with two picnic tables and a custom archway entrance sign that says GROVE PARK at the Rodd/Grove entrance. The project is scheduled to be completed this fall. Carney asked if the City was planning a grand opening and Murphy shared that the Midland Noon Rotary, who donated \$160K to the project, is planning an event once we can safely be together again.

12) Old Business : None

13) New Business: None

14) Adjourn: Motioned by Steidemann, seconded by Rankin to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 7– 0. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Murphy
Director of Public Services