

**MINUTES
CITY OF PLAINWELL
PARKS & TREES COMMISSION
April 12, 2018**

1. Matthew Bradley called the meeting to order at 5:19 PM in Council Chambers, due to a meeting conflict in the Conference Room that caused the location to be changed.
2. Roll Call: Present: Matthew Bradley, Sandy Lamorandier (entered late), Bunny LaDuke, Marsha Keeler, Tom Belco. Absent: Todd Overhuel, Gina Berry. Also attending: Public Works Superintendent Rick Updike (entered late).
3. Approval of Minutes:

Tom Belco moved to accept and place on file the minutes and summary of March 15, 2017. Matthew Bradley supported the motion. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

4. Parks:

Sherwood Park Maintenance Report - Marsha Keeler

Marsha reported that Sherwood Park is busy with lots of people out enjoying the sunshine. Bunny asked about the Blue Star Memorial; Sheryl noted that the components were disturbed during the flooding but the DPW crew restored it. Bunny noted that the Blue Star Mothers have considered relocating it to a place where it is more visible. They are considering the M-89/N. Acorn Street corner near the flower beds and sculpture. Tom asked if the memorial would be noticed there with the Industrial Park sign so close. Sheryl asked if a location near the new Sherwood Park building would be appropriate; the elevation was above the recent flood waters and will be made higher yet with fill before the building is erected. Bunny noted that it will not be an easy move, as it includes a giant rock. Consensus was to look at suggestions, at next month's meeting, of appropriate locations that they might consider.

Marsha noted that she feels there are too many small flower pots set out along the Sherwood park sidewalk in the summer.

Sheryl reported that Rick is working on obtaining a joint MDEQ/US Army Corps of Engineers Permit. Rick is delayed but will be here soon to answer other questions. The location will be north of the basketball courts and closer to the street.

Hicks Park Maintenance Report - Bunny LaDuke

Bunny reported that she has found a 3rd source for the ferns we want that offers them for \$0.59/each, sold by lots of 100. It's still too cold to plant them but she is targeting planting them the week after Memorial Day. With the reduced price, she recommended buying extras in case some die. She suggested planning on planting them the week after Memorial Day.

Pell Park Maintenance Report - Todd Overhuel, Sandra Lamorandier

Sandy entered the meeting, and asked what tree was chosen for the Arbor Day Tree this year; Sheryl reported that it is a redbud. Matthew noted that their life expectancy is 50-70 years.

Sandy noted that the park fence needs to be scraped and painted as soon as weather allows.

Rick entered late. Sandy noted that the sculpture bed is growing moss from excess moisture retained there; she asked that Rick have the drainage issue fixed before he retires, as the flowers will be here in May. Rick will remove the soil and either drill through, or remove, the concrete underneath. He noted that the entire pit sloped to the front, where the old pump pit sat and circulated water through the fountain, so they drilled two holes through the front side last year, thinking that would be enough to drain it. Sandy noted that it is still too wet.

Sandy noted that all the welcome signs and park signs need to be repainted. The young memorial trees in all the parks need their trunks mulched and their sign posts wrapped to protect them from weed trimmer damage. Rick will see to it.

Rick noted that the City received a SAW grant, which will be used to GIS-locate all the storm & sewer lines. He has directed them to begin at Sherwood Park and, at that location, also obtain exact elevations to be used in constructing the new building.

Responding to questions, Rick stated that he needs funds authorized to purchase playground safety mulch and matting to replace what was washed away by the flooding. Those expenditures are from the General Fund, for which there is a spending freeze at this time.

Tom Belco moved to recommend that the City Manager be asked to find the funds to replace the lost playground mulch and matting in Sherwood Park. Matthew Bradley supported the motion. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Marsha asked if there are plans to put cameras on the bridges to deter vandals; Rick reported that Erik had it in the works for a while but he does not know where it stands right now.

Cook Park Maintenance Report

Tom reported that he has been over the area planned for the dog park, several times. He is concerned that the nearby pavilion needs painting and roof work. He feels that, as we move forward with the dog park, we need to spruce up that building. Bunny noted that it is possible to ask a grantor to modify a grant to expand its scope and suggested that perhaps Denise could try to have some grant funds redirected for that. Rick reported that the DPW has removed some small trees and trimmed others, moved the gravel road and covered the abandoned road with soil, placed rocks to block the old road, and put the water tap in. They will build a parking area at the pickle ball court. He showed them the design for the dog park entry. Bunny also noted that the City should be reimbursed from the grant for the labor and equipment expenditures that the DPW is putting into its construction. Sandy noted that 37 bricks are done and ready to be placed. Rick noted that the remaining available spaces will be filled with blanks. Rick reported that he left the bigger trees to shade both dog areas and people on benches outside the enclosures. Matthew asked about doggie waste bags; Rick noted that he has six dog waste stations that will be installed that have both bag dispenser and lined receptacles for the waste. Tom asked who decides whether dogs are large or small; Rick stated that MSU has published very well-researched guidelines for dog parks. The dog park will have very nice signs featuring the rules, usage directions, and its name.

Kenyon Park Maintenance Report – Matthew Bradley

Matthew reported that Kenyon looks great and he is looking forward to the new season.

Darrow Park Maintenance Report - Sandy Lamorandier

Sandra reported that the benches in Darrow need to be painted/stained. The posts need to be wrapped to protect them from being beat up by the string trimmers. Bunny asked if the park was flooded; it was not. The small memorial trees need to be mulched in all the parks.

Riverwalk, Band Shell & CBD Maintenance Report

Gina was not present. Rick noted that he walks the Riverwalk every day. The dog flooring across the trestle has not been installed yet, nor has the Debt Crew yet cleaned and refinished the Riverwalk boards. Marsha suggested using less flower pots on the downtown streets.

5. New Business

A. Planting Day is May 19th

Sandy noted that our next meeting is just a couple days before planting day. Matthew noted that he and his wife enjoyed themselves tremendously last year and will be back this year, possibly bringing their granddaughter.

6. Open Business

A. Arbor Day Celebration Update

Arbor Day in Plainwell will be on Friday, April 27th. Matthew noted that he cannot be present but asked if it would be possible to have someone video the event. Sandy will see if the city still owns a video camera but felt that someone could record it on a phone or tablet. Matthew suggested posting the video online. Tom noted that the SENIORS IN ACTION newsletter has a feature on our Arbor Day celebration. He also had a newspaper clipping from the Union Enterprise on the Plainwell dog park. Sheryl will scan copies into the record.

7. Public Comments

Rick Thomas, Plainwell resident and Master Gardener, noted that Master Gardeners are required to do volunteer hours and our Planting Day qualifies for that. He asked if the city has approached the Extension Service to have it put on their list of opportunities. Sheryl asked for contact information and will contact them tomorrow. Bunny noted that the Chula Vista members have their flower sale the same day as Plainwell planting day, but will be planting the bridge planters on the Wednesday following again this year.

8. Staff Comments

Rick stated that this is the most pleasant group of people that he has ever had the pleasure of working with, and he appreciates their goal-oriented attitudes and all the work they have accomplished. Commissioners noted that they have enjoyed working with Rick Updike and truly appreciate his service to the city.

Sheryl noted that Denise is asking commissioners for recommendations regarding agility equipment for the dog park, and has supplied information. Commissioner reviewed the equipment options.

Sandy Lamorandier moved to allow Denise to use her own judgement to get the best value she can for the money available. Marsha Keeler supported the motion. In discussion, Bunny asked if there will be instructions on how to use the equipment; Rick noted that the Kalamazoo Kennel Club on D Avenue has Agility lessons available. Tom asked if there will be cameras to help protect the equipment; there will not. Sandy noted that she is hoping that the dog park will bring many more people to the park and that they will take ownership and watch for any vandalism or theft that might be attempted. Tom asked if there is money to cover the Agility equipment; there is. Bunny noted that the labor and equipment that the city is putting into the project should be repaid by the grant; Commissioners noted that, if allowed, it would put money back into the General Fund that would allow the DPW to undertake park repairs that are on hold for lack of funds, such as the pavilion repairs, and asked that Denise check on the terms of the grant. Bunny asked if there would be lighting; none is planned but it could be added if it is discovered that it is needed. City parks close at 10 PM. **On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.**

9. Chairman's Report

Matthew thanked Commissioners for being willing to wait for him to arrive before starting the meeting. Commissioners discussed the problem of the door being locked when they arrived just after 5 PM. Sandy will talk to GHD to see if they have changed the programming; Sheryl will create a sign to put on the door to note that there is a meeting, so no one will remove the block that holds the door open.

Sandra Lamorandier moved to adjourn the meeting. Marsha Keeler supported the motion. Tom Belco noted that we have not had Commissioners Comments yet. **On voice vote, motion failed 4-1.**

10. Commissioners' Comments

Tom Belco thanked Rick Updike for his years of service as DPW Superintendent, and expressed the hope that he will enjoy his retirement.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, May 17, 2018 at 5 PM.

12. Adjournment

Sandra Lamorandier moved to adjourn the meeting. Marsha Keeler supported the motion. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted, Sheryl Gluchowski, Deputy Clerk

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