

**MINUTES
CITY OF PLAINWELL
PARKS & TREES COMMISSION
July 13, 2017**

1. Matthew Bradley called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.
2. Roll Call: Present: Marsha Keeler, Matthew Bradley, Bunny LaDuke, Sandy Lamorandier. Absent: Justin Burchett, Todd Overhuel. Also attending: Public Works Superintendent Rick Updike.
3. Approval of Minutes:

Sandra Lamorandier moved to accept and place on file the minutes and summary of June 15, 2017. Marsha Keeler supported the motion. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

4. Parks:
Sherwood Park Maintenance Report - Marsha Keeler
Marsha reported that the planters along the sidewalk do not look like they are full enough, but the other planters are all beautiful.

Pell Park Maintenance Report - Bunny LaDuke

Bunny reported that she sees no problem in the park. Sandy noted that the kayak business is very busy. Commissioners commented on the abundant number of kayakers on the river and on the mill race, as well as in Darrow, Sherwood and Pell Parks.

Sandy noted that the sculpture bed had irrigation turned off three weeks ago but it is still too wet for the plantings to thrive; only the alyssum likes soil that wet. Gina Barry was present and suggested using iris. Commissioners noted that their blooming season is very short and the plants can get very tall. We need to research some water garden plants that would love perennially wet soil.

Hicks Park Maintenance Report - Todd Overhuel

Todd was not present. Bunny reported that the bare spots are back on each side of the sidewalk under the park trees and reminded Rick that she is waiting for the DPW crew to put down edging in a nice curve before she plants those areas with ferns.

Cook Park Maintenance Report

Sandy noted that a resident near upper Cook made several negative comments, feeling that the park is neglected, and that residents were not being informed of the potential dog park coming to the park. The resident reported that a baby swing had the center cut out so someone's child could fit, and that the action on a spring toy was in the wrong direction. Rick noted that he checked the spring toy and could find nothing wrong, and that he is looking for an interchangeable child swing. Commissioners suggested sending residents surrounding the park a letter, perhaps included with the water bills, with information on the potential dog park and on the potential Kalamazoo Valley River Trail extension. They noted several events were held throughout the town and in the park itself promoting the dog park, and it has been in many city postings and electronic news letters, as well as being discussed in many meetings over the last several months.

Commissioners noted good progress on the pickle ball courts.

Kenyon Park Maintenance Report – Matthew Bradley

Matthew reported that the park looks good and is heavily used. Rick noted that, with the irrigation repaired, the grass is green and beautiful. Matthew asked what other organized sports use the park; Rick stated that Rocket football practices out there. Matthew asked about the softball league; Rick stated that they renegotiated their contract and pay for field usage. Matthew noted that the infield of

one field is about 1/3-flooded with the recent heavy rains. Rick is aware of the drainage issue; Bunny suggested researching a surfactant such as is used on farms to help drainage.

Darrow Park Maintenance Report - Sandy Lamorandier

Sandra reported that the park looks good, except that the Magiera memorial tree is being over-grown by the surrounding shrubbery. She asked that the DPW trim the bushes back.

Riverwalk, Band Shell & CBD Maintenance Report

Matthew stated that he walked it today and saw no problem. Sandy noted that the flowers are wonderful.

5. New Business

A. Remove or Relocate Tree At Industrial Park Sign on Acorn Street

Sandy reported that the Industrial Park Board would like to extend the sign on Acorn Street and add the capacity to post information, e.g. "XXX is hiring". To do that, they would need to remove or relocate the adjacent tree. Rick noted that underground utilities abound on that corner and suggested that no decision be made until a MISSDIG can be called in and the situation evaluated. He remembers that the reason the water spigot is located in its position is because of the utilities underground. Bunny, noting the difficulty and expense in extending an existing sign in an attractive manner, asked if they could not just as effectively remove the sign and install one a few feet further away from the tree. Sandy is not sure what the IP Board intends or whether that would be feasible. Bunny will talk to Erik Wilson about it. Rick will call in a MISSDIG and evaluate the responses. Consensus was to table further discussion until the MISSDIG is marked.

6. Open Business

A. Election of Officers

Sandra Lamorandier nominated Matthew Bradley as Chairperson. Marsha Keeler supported the motion. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Sandra Lamorandier nominated Bunny LaDuke as Vice-Chairperson. Marsha Keeler supported the motion. On voice vote, motion carried unanimously.

Sandy noted that she researched Justin's term of office, and it expires in December, not September. It will be his decision if he continues until December but he has stated that he will not re-up.

B. Dog Park update

Bunny suggested sending out donation envelopes to spur the fund-raising efforts for the dog park. Commissioners noted the urgency that has to be directed into this effort if we are to make the August 18 deadline. Sandy will talk to Denise and see where she stands on suggestions made at the last meeting. Commissioners suggested five or six little ads in each issue of the Shoppers Guide between now and then, and that we reserve and use the top right corner of the front page, if available, to promote dog park funding efforts. They asked if any local events are planned.

C. Plainwell Auto Landscape Update

Rick reported that he will be unable to address the landscape adjacent to Plainwell Auto until the street and airport paving projects occurring this month are finished.

7. Public Comments

Gina Barry reported that the grate on the trestle bridge hurts her dogs' feet, and they refuse to cross there. She stated that a lot of her friends are complaining about it; it needs a plank surface. Rick noted that the city owns the trestle and the spur. When the Kalamazoo Valley River Trail is extended, he plans to incorporate a path to the downtown, including re-decking the trestle with wide but separated bike paths and pedestrian walkways. He noted that the trestle deck was upgraded a couple of years ago to include safer decking and two handrails. Sandy noted that the trestle is part of the character and history of Plainwell. Rick will see if there is a low-cost resolution.

Gina Barry asked why the walkway under M-89 at the bridge by the library is posted as no entry. Rick noted that it does not conform to code. There was an opportunity a few years ago to upgrade it and extend it to the library itself, but the library declined to participate with the city in funding the project. It is essentially a path to nowhere, although residents use it to access the library anyway.

8. Staff Comments

None.

9. Chairman's Report

None.

10. Commissioners' Comments

Bunny LaDuke commended the Public Works Department for doing a fantastic job taking care of the city. She noted that residents along Allegan Street do not pull the weeds from the joints on top of the curbs, and asked if it would be possible to have the debt crew do that work. Rick noted that our access to the debt crew was cut to one shortened day, less than half of the hours we used to have available. Commissioners suggested that a request to maintain the adjacent curb lawn could be added to the informational mailer. Gina mentioned that she might have access to a volunteer crew to walk the curb lawn and pull weeds for community service credit. She asked about high school students; Sandy noted that we have little response from them for various projects that we have promoted there.

Matthew Bradley questioned the responsibility for repairing the playground turfed at Gilkey School. It is the school's responsibility.

Matthew Bradley invited anyone interested to join him on his periodic Biking Tour de Parks, about an eight mile bike trip.

Sandy Lamorandier noted that Denise Siegel recently appeared on Channel 3 with Laurie Moore, promoting the dog park project. Commissioners noted the need for quick and heavy promotion of the project, suggesting that Denise ask Tracie to help with advertising. Rick Updike volunteered to write the newsletter to inform and to promote both projects accomplished and planned by the Parks & Trees Commission.

Commissioners commended the Public Works Department for their rapid and effective response to the bridge basket vandalism, noting how quickly the basket were replanted and replaced, and how well they look.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, August 17, 2017 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 6:22 PM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,
Sheryl Gluchowski
Deputy Clerk