

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 4, 2023

Heather Carmona, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm at 851 South Eton.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Heather Carmona
Susan Collins
Pam Graham
Sarah Kupczyk
Anne Lipp
John Rusche
Steve Sweeney

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Katie Glasier, Seaholm High School
Archie Reynolds, Seaholm High School

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATION: Scott Zielinski, Director of Public Services
Brooks Cowan, Senior Planner
Leah Blizinski, City Planner
Carrie A. Laird, Parks and Recreation Manager
Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator

GUESTS: Jack Burns, Anne Bray, Todd MacIntosh, Diane Roach Smith, Claudia Unruh, and David Young

It was moved by Lipp, seconded by Rusche, to approve the minutes of the Tuesday, March 7, 2023, regular meeting as submitted.

Ayes, Heather Carmona, Susan Collins, Pam Graham, Sarah Kupczyk, Anne Lipp, John Rusche, and Steve Sweeney

Nays, None

Absent, None

It was moved by Sweeney, seconded by Lipp, to approve the minutes of the Tuesday, March 28, 2023, special meeting as amended.

Ayes,	Heather Carmona, Susan Collins, Pam Graham, Sarah Kupczyk, Anne Lipp, John Rusche, and Steve Sweeney
Nays,	None
Absent,	None

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Diane Roach Smith requested that before the city works to improve other parks please bring Kenning Park up to standard. Smith stated that the path to enter the park is extremely wet and muddy and huge trees are down in the middle of the park from the recent storms.

Claudia Unruh stated there is standing water issues in Kenning Park and a large tree branch is down from the recent storms. Unruh asked staff and members of the board to visit the park this week, after the recent rain. Unruh is requesting additional park maintenance and park improvements.

Bray stated that funding and proposal processes require time to execute. Bray stated that standing water issues have been a concern and is especially concerned about the Rouge River.

Smith asked the Parks and Recreation Board consider partnering with Eton Academy located near Kenning Park to include multisensory features.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

Agenda item #1: S. Eton Resurfacing & Northeast Corner of S. Eton and Lincoln Ave

SP Cowan liaison for the Multimodal Transportation Board (MMTB) reviewed with the Parks and Recreation Board the South Eton resurfacing and proposed plan for the northeast corner of South Eton and Lincoln Avenue.

SP Cowan stated that the MMTB is in the process of reviewing conceptual designs for the South Eton resurfacing scheduled in the capital improvements plan for the summer of 2024. The MMTB is looking at various designs and narrowing down the concepts to enhance pedestrian crossings and safer bike lanes which involve on street parking. This area is a delicate subject, so he is here to gather the Parks and Recreation Board's feedback.

MMTB has an open house scheduled on April 18, 2023, that would produce information that would go to the MMTB on May 4, 2023.

SP Cowan stated that a complete streets policy was adopted in 2011 for safe streets for everyone that includes pedestrians, cyclists and special needs. The city then adopted a multi-modal transportation plan which recommends bike lanes for both north and south Eton Road which are part of the City's inner city connector loop as well as Troy and Royal Oak's networks. In order to accommodate bike lanes on both sides of Eton there will be loss of on-street parking to facilitate safe visibility.

SP Cowan asked the Parks and Recreation Board to consider supporting a concept that adds parking, cutting into the Kenning Park parcel, situated at the northeast corner of Lincoln and Eton.

Rusche supports adding parking to support drainage remediation and asks that when SP Cowan takes the proposal to city commission that the property be officially recognized as park property and earmarked for future pickleball courts when funding becomes available in 2024/2025.

SP Cowan confirmed the city is investigating underground water retention and a parking lot would enable this concept. He will also ask the City Commission to designate the area as park property.

Lipp suggested that engineering plans for drainage to consider in advance drainage volumes for future pickleball courts.

Graham is in favor of making infrastructure improvements but not in saying how to activate parks without having a plan that meets the need of the neighborhood.

Rusche mentioned abrupt end of sidewalk in the southern entrance of Kenning Park.

Carmona asked for clarification about the Parks and Recreation Board's authority for the public property on the northeast corner of Eton and Lincoln.

DPS Director Zielinski clarified that the Eton Road resurfacing project is ahead of the master plan and because the city has always treated this area as a park that planning is reaching out to the Parks and Recreation Board for input.

Smith asked that the corner space be kept a green space and is concerned that it has been considered designated commercial space and the parking and drainage is being addressed to support the new restaurant that is being built.

MacIntosh is against taking away greenspace to add parking.

Unruh is against taking away greenspace to add parking. Further she is concerned about the safety of the intersection. She suggests the Parks and Recreation Board review the emails residents sent to the Planning Board about this topic.

Burns would like to see the corner under discussion be turned into a community park.

Unruh states that adding a parking lot at the northeast corner is unnecessary because there is plenty of parking in front of the tennis courts.

Graham stated that she would not be in favor of adding parking spots on the greenspace when the Parks and Recreation Board discussed adding pickleball courts to the property. Graham stated that users would park in the lots south of Lincoln near the tennis courts.

Carmona wanted to clarify that she is comfortable with allowing the parking concept to be included in the MMTB Open House to allow the people in the neighborhood the opportunity to comment.

Collins also stated that the corner green space should be kept a park.

SP Cowan confirmed the Parks and Recreation Board does not object to the parking option being included in the MMTB Open House to get feedback.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

Agenda item #2: Parks and Recreation Draft Master Plan RFP

PM Laird reviewed the city's draft Parks and Recreation Plan update request for proposals (RFP) prepared by Staff and reviewed by Planning Director Dupuis and Assistant City Manager Ecker to engage a consultant to coordinate the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update process. She also reviewed the timeline and the process to evaluate the responses with the Parks and Recreation Board ultimately making a recommendation to adopt the Plan to the City Commission in January, 2024.

PM Laird asked the Parks and Recreation Board members to send interview questions in advance for the in person presentations.

PM Laird highlighted that the plan, upon completion, will be forwarded to Michigan's Department of Natural Resources which enables applications to grant funding opportunities.

DPS Director Zielinski explained the reasoning behind asking for interview questions in advance of the in-person interviews. Additionally he mentioned that it would be perfectly acceptable if the Parks and Recreation Board consultant recommendation was different from the staff recommendation because ultimately the city commission will make the final decision.

Graham after confirming the process used to develop the RFP asked if there are any documents related to best practices for both accessibility and environmental that could be included in the assessment.

Sweeney inquired about company tenure requirements.

DPS Director Zielinski replied that it is baked into the "related project experience" element of the RFP.

Kupczyk agrees with the inclusion of accessibility considerations.

Carmona inquired if the RFP was informed by the Birmingham Green Strategy that was done in 2021 and the Sustainability Plan.

CP Blizinski emphasized that those items are strategies are in draft form and are being used by the Environmental Sustainability Committee who will be writing the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. The documents Carmona referenced do not have a seal of approval or adoption from the city commission.

Carmona stressed the importance of providing environmental guidance within the process.

CP Blizinski indicated she had some documents that might be helpful that she will provide to DPS Director Zielinski.

Carmona wondered about the possibility of adding a research component to help delineate property identified casually and officially as park property.

DPS Director Zielinski said there are good considerations for both in house property research as well as consultant research.

PM Laird said there is room in the document to include an inventory of community property.

Carmona compared submission requirements and evaluation procedure and criteria and inquired why proposed innovations was not included in evaluation criteria.

DPS Director Zielinski replied that it would be demonstrated within their "ability to provide" with their project plan.

Bray, is looking for water issues to be addressed in a cohesive manner across all areas of the city. Bray is interested in the plants the city is proposing to use as well as the long lasting chemicals that ultimately get poured into our waters.

Smith wanted to clarify that zoning-wise there is no "parks" designation, it all falls into public property, and it is important to understand where the Parks and Recreation Board has impact.

DPS Director Zielinski explained about the function of zoning.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

Agenda item #3: Amend the May 2, 2023 Parks and Recreation Board meeting date to May 9, 2023

It was moved by Lipp, seconded by Kupczyk, to move the May 2, 2023 Parks and Recreation Board meeting to May 9, 2023, to accommodate the RFP process.

Ayes,	Heather Carmona, Susan Collins, Pam Graham, Sarah Kupczyk, Anne Lipp, John Rusche, and Steve Sweeney
Nays,	None
Absent,	None

Agenda item #4: Parks and Recreation Board Rules and Procedures

Graham was not in favor of adopting the proposed changes for the following reasons:

- The proposed structure does not follow typical recommended structures
- It will be difficult to implement Section C and having six (6) items on an agenda
- An expert recommended that boards not lock themselves into specific order, rather they should structure meetings as necessary
- Article V and VI are confusing

Graham would like for the next meeting to follow the proposed agenda but she does not approve changes to the procedure.

DPS Director Zielinski provided clarification to Graham's points:

- The city attorney has reviewed the order proposed and it is similar to everything else the city follows.
- The referenced support materials are reference and not law
- The limitation of six (6) items is for New Business and does not preclude bringing back previous items
- Item VI "rule violation" relates to patrons use of parks and public grounds

Graham inquired if the Parks and Recreation Board or other City of Birmingham's Board Rules of Procedures were available online.

Carmona noticed inconsistent terminology has been used, e.g., bylaws, policies etc. and felt it was helpful to bring formatting consistency which enables focused deliberation during discussions and interacting with staff. She approves of this proposal.

Lipp commented she is not comfortable putting the motion forward to enable the use of the Order of Business unless the debatable items are put on a future agenda for review.

It was moved by Graham, seconded by Rusche, to accept the amended Parks and Recreation Board Rules and Procedures.

Ayes,

Heather Carmona, Susan Collins, Sarah Kupczyk, Anne Lipp, and John Rusche

Nays,

Pam Graham and Steve Sweeney

Absent,

None

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #1: Email received from Diane Smith

Carmona thanked Diane Smith for her email that was discussed during the related Agenda Item I.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #2: Prescribed Barnum Park Burn

PM Laird stated the burn was executed Thursday, March 30th, to allow native plants to flourish and inhibit invasive species.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #3: Zamboni Purchase

RC Folk said she is looking forward to receiving our new electric Zamboni in the middle of July, 2024.

DPS Director Zielinski stated that this is the first EV purchase for the City – which is a pretty big deal.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #4: mParks Foundation Play Is Essential Grant

PM Laird announce the City of Birmingham was awarded the maximum amount of \$2,000 for seatbacks for the sea-saw and the stationary cycler in Adams Park.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #5: Oakland County Parks and Recreation 2023 Grant Program Opportunities

PM Laird reported that Birmingham is eligible to apply again this year. The deadline is approaching and the submission will focus on the trail improvement concept plan, under the predevelopment grant for the maximum amount of \$25,000.

Kupczyk inquired about how the city was going to make trails accessible by wheels/ wheelchairs as well as converting rubble mulch areas that could be a barrier to a child in a wheelchair.

PM Laird stated that the next step is to prepare concepts for cost estimates to enable planning for improvements. The city is still waiting on the concepts from the architect.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

NEW BUSINESS:

Carmona plans to share a draft wayfinding and signage plan for a Western Michigan rails and trails alliance she received from a member of the Oakland County Parks Commission. It is in draft mode, so it should not be circulated publically.

DPS Director Zielinski appreciated receiving a copy and offered to share it with the City's Wayfinding Committee to get their thoughts on it because they are getting involved with the trail system plan.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

Carmona stated the next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at 6:30 pm, at 851 South Eton (with a possible location change).

Chair Carmona adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm

Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator