Chair John Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm on November 3rd, 2020 via Zoom Conference Meeting

**Roll Call:**
**Members Present:** John Johnson, Chris Bol, Paul Teini

**Members Absent:** Pam Roland, Chris Patchell

**Staff Present:** Sean Fletcher, Patrick McVerry, Ashton Anthony, Shannon Keene, Neal Conway

**Commissioner Liaison:** Eric Cunningham

**Introduction of Guests:** None

**Changes to the Agenda:** None

**Special Presentations:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** 
Paul Teini motioned, and Chris Bol seconded for a unanimous approval of the October meeting minutes.

**Old Business:**
A. Glenn Park South Trail Update – A letter was sent to community members that reached out to Director Sean Fletcher, as well as the Oakland Drive Winchell Neighborhood Association. The association wants the board chair and vice chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to attend one of their upcoming meetings to discuss the letter. The date and time of this meeting is yet to be determined. Sean Fletcher stated we should be able to move forward with the project in the spring of 2021. Chris Bol asked if the board would need a vote from the city commission in order to move forward. Sean Fletcher let him know that improvements to a specific park are usually included in the capital budget, and since this project is not a budgeted improvement it’s not something the commission would vote to approve. Eric Cunningham said the city commission wouldn’t oppose this project but could challenge it by asking the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board if they had reached out to surrounding communities.

B. Farmers’ Market Update – Sean Fletcher informed everyone that this project is now combining phase one and phase two. This will allow all the site work to be done in one construction season and eliminates moving the market more than one time. He hopes we will see price breaks on the concrete and asphalt by doing all the work at
once. During this phase, everything except the playground and winter market would be completed. We have applied for a trust fund grant for the playground, but the work could take a few years to complete depending on when we receive funding. He also mentioned that he is working with the People’s Food Co-Op on alternate locations for the market. Construction is likely to begin in April of next year. He also mentioned that through the planning process, sewer infrastructure was accounted for in the road design. Lastly, Sean said we will be eliminating invasive species in the area and will be adding more wetland and native species.

New Business:

A. Parks Department Update – Patrick McVerry highlighted projects his department has completed throughout the year. In April, his team completed assessments of playgrounds and parks with an outside contractor to evaluate risk management and playground compliancy. That month they also completed installation of new engineered wood fiber in all playgrounds. Upjohn Park was made completely accessible with new poured-in-place surfacing. A local artist was contracted to paint the skate park at Upjohn Park. Bronson Park is set to be completed the first week of November. Paul Teini asked what parks had failed the risk assessment. Patrick stated that Milham Park’s playground had failed, but this park will be redone after receiving the DNR Trust Fund Grant in the spring. He also mentioned that Southside Park’s playground, while not dangerous, has outlived its lifespan and will be brought into compliance in the spring.

B. Recreation Department Update – Ashton highlighted programs and events that occurred during the last few months. Instead of running camps over the summer, his team ran Super Rec programs which are free to all Kalamazoo City residents. These programs had a maximum of fifty kids per site which were maxed out all summer long. Kids were kept in pods of ten and Covid-19 protocols such as temperature screening and health questionnaires were completed daily. All Things Possible transitioned from one all summer long program, to three two-week sessions to get more youth enrolled. There were fourteen to fifteen kids registered for all three sessions. The Virtual Learning Support Program is currently accommodating elementary students at Mayors Riverfront Park, and middle to high school students at the Youth Development Center. There are three to four staff members on site to help kids stay on task with their schoolwork, and to provide them with activities and time outside. Lunch Time Live and Summer Cinema were hosted this summer but with much smaller crowds than usual. On average, there were about eight to ten vendors at Lunch Time Live compared to twenty vendors in a normal year. In previous years we would see between 300 to 500 people at the event, but this summer there were only about 100 people there each Friday during the two-hour time frame. Movies were hosted every other weekend throughout the summer at a variety of parks which were attended on average by about 100 people. Halloween Forest was a successful event. We set up tee times for families so they would have to reserve a slot in advance, and we didn’t allow groups of more than five per household. Families were checked in every three minutes, and they followed a guided trail through games and activities that took about forty minutes to complete. The pool did not open this year,
but the pool surface was refinished with a membrane that has a ten-year warranty. The pool locker rooms and office, as well as the Youth Development Center non-masonry exterior were also painted.

C. 2021 Meeting Dates – Chris Bol motioned, seconded by Paul Teini for unanimous approval of the proposed 2021 meeting dates.

**Event Recommendations:**
1. Maya Mokrzan, KIA Arts Fair, Bronson Park, June 4th to June 6th, 2021, event from 11:30am Friday to 5pm Saturday, setup at 6am Friday and teardown at 5pm Saturday. Chris Bol motioned, seconded by Paul Teini for unanimous approval.
2. Jennifer VanOosterhout, Gryphon Place Suicide Prevention Walk, Bronson Park, September 25th, 2021, event from 8am to 11am, setup at 6:30am and teardown at 11:30am. Paul Teini motioned, seconded by Chris Bol for unanimous approval.

**Comments:** All approved events will receive a letter from the Parks & Recreation Department notifying them of approval, and requesting the organizer follow the Governors Executive Orders in effect on the day of the event.

**Citizens:** None

**Commission Liaison:** None

**Friends of Recreation Liaison Update:**
Sean mentioned we had a successful and well-attended golf outing which will allow for more scholarships for kids to attend programs.

**Parks and Recreation Director Monthly Report:** Sean mentioned that the Parks division is looking into decreasing the amount of grass we mow in 2021, especially in areas that aren’t used by as many people. Instead of mowing these areas year-round, we could cut it a few times a year which would create habitats for insects and smaller animals and save us a significant amount of money that can be used to make repairs in other parks. Sean met with Pam Roland in MLK park and confirmed the park needs improvements. There have been many complaints about Harkins court regarding loitering and litter. He’s working with public safety to close vehicle traffic while still allowing pedestrian traffic. A path will be added in at the northside of the park. Other repairs include sidewalks, irrigation, tree planting, planting beds, and stamped concrete. The Martin Luther King Jr. statue was cleaned, waxed and detailed. He’s received cost estimates and are looking to start improvements in 2021.

**Staff:** None

**Board Members:** Paul Teini visited Milham Park, Crane Park and Upjohn Park and thought they were all in great condition. He mentioned the part of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail system that goes downtown can be confusing and is easy to get lost on, so he suggested adding signage to this part of the trail. Sean said we can work with public services on how to address this issue. Sean also mentioned we have a DNR Trust Fund grant for the walnut to pitcher section and we are on pace to finish that next year. Chris Bol appreciated the monthly
updates regarding Glenn Park bike path. John Johnson commented that Upjohn Park’s skate park paint job looks nice but wondered if anything else could be done about the rest of the graffiti. Sean stated we are working on getting power to that area so we can add cameras and he is working with the city electrician to see if we can mount a camera on a light pole closer to skate park. Sean finished the meeting with acknowledging the parks and recreation departments work throughout the year, especially with the many challenges surrounding Covid-19.

**Adjournment:** 6:10 p.m.

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom Conference.

Respectfully submitted by Shannon Keene, Recording Secretary

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Recording Secretary

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Chair