Chair John Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm on December 1st, 2020 via Zoom Conference Meeting

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** John Johnson, Chris Bol, Paul Teini, Chris Patchell, Pam Roland

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Sean Fletcher, Shannon Keene, Danielle Baucom, Neal Conway

**Commissioner Liaison:** Eric Cunningham

**Introduction of Guests:** None

**Changes to the Agenda:**

A. Downtown Social District – Sean Fletcher added Kalamazoo Downtown Partnership’s request to expand the social district boundary up to Bronson Park. This request went directly to City Commission, but City Attorney Clyde Robinson wanted to get input from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board since the group has talked at length about the challenges in Bronson Park surrounding alcohol and drugs. Commissioner, Eric Cunningham mentioned there are legalities around allowing alcohol in a park and City Commission would have to pass an ordinance amendment that would need to be approved in writing by Director Fletcher. This action would require two meetings and wouldn’t be passed until after Christmas. The ordinance would be ongoing through 2024. If the City Commission wanted to reverse the action, only one meeting would be required for a resolution. The drinks would have to be labeled and in a specific type of cup so people can’t bring their own alcohol into the park. Public Safety would address any of these situations. Eric Cunningham added that he was concerned about the possible health safety of allowing this during a pandemic since it has the potential to bring in large crowds and increase foot traffic to the area. Chris Patchell was less concerned about this during the months of December and January but could see a problem in the spring and summer months when events are happening in the park. Sean Fletcher appreciated the groups caution but believed we should help the downtown businesses in whatever way we can. Chris Patchell, John Johnson and Eric Cunningham all stated they need to think about how they can revert to a no alcohol policy when many other things in the city are currently not being enforced. Sean Fletcher said he will convey this thought at the City Commission meeting on December 7th and will find out if the ordinance is for a designated time frame, and if it can revert to board approval after the time frame ends. Paul Teini was in favor of doing whatever to help downtown businesses and understands this will only be in effect when it's allowed throughout all downtown. Chris Bol agreed with this
statement and added he doesn't want the group to not approve something because of fear it can't be taken back. Pam Roland stated there might be some negative feedback from a citizen viewpoint, but overall sees this as an initiative to help local businesses. Sean Fletcher concluded if City Commission doesn’t reverse the social district boundary until 2024, the board could evaluate whether Bronson Park should be removed before then. Overall, the expansion of the boundary was supported by the board and will continue to be evaluated, monitored and adjusted as needed.

Special Presentations: None

Approval of Minutes:
Paul Teini motioned, and Pam Roland seconded for a unanimous approval of the November meeting minutes.

Old Business: None

New Business:
A. Budget Update – Danielle Baucom presented an analysis of the 2020 budget. The Camp Kzoo program didn’t run this year and saved $110,000. Not opening the Kik Pool saved $136,000. Special events were reduced and saved $20,000. Field Trip Fest only ran for two weeks with reduced registration and saved $20,000. Adult softball was reduced to six weeks and saved $22,000. Adult volleyball hasn’t started and saved $16,000. Quite a bit of money was saved on temporary wages since there weren’t as many staff hired this year. The staff that were hired started later saving about $50,000 from Parks General and another $15,000 from Versluis Dickinson. $394,000 is expected to be returned to the general fund to support the 2021 budget. Having to cancel so much this year also resulted in reduced revenue. General park fees lost about $4,000. Bronson Park was used quite often but most events were for rallies and protests at no charge to the organizer. This resulted in about a $3,000 reduction. The Kik Pool made about $46,000 in 2019 which was reduced this year. The concessions at the Kik pool make about $7,500. Youth programming was reduced by $117,000, adult softball by $11,000 and adult volleyball by $11,000. Mayor’s Riverfront Park Complex saw a $38,000 reduction. $300 in advertising and $6,000 in sponsorships were reduced. Total reduced revenue was $256,861. Some wages were saved, and a second special events position was approved but not filled this year. Applications have gone out for that person to start next year resulting in a $56,000 savings. The lead sports facility coordinator and the head of buildings were off on workers comp resulting in an $80,000 reduction. There were a couple park cleanups costing about $1,600. The projects completed this year were Bronson Park, Upjohn Park poured in place surfacing, woodchips at each park, Kik pool resurfacing, and Hays Park crushed stone path. Tending Tilt will bring sheep to some of the parks to eat the grass. There are now several no mow zones that will save on outside contractual funds. Supplies such as chemicals for the pool were purchased, reducing the directives for 2021. The 2021 budget proposal has been submitted and there will be a resolution on December 7th to hold a public hearing. December 14th is a City
Commission work session; January 4th is a public budget hearing and January 19th is when the budget will be adopted. We received a Community Development Block Grant that will allow us to continue our after-school virtual learning programming without any reductions. The Farmers’ Market also received some large donations and city funds for improvements as part of the capital improvement project.

**Event Recommendations:** None

**Comments:** None

**Citizens:** None

**Commission Liaison:** Eric Cunningham asked how many events were coming up since he got a lot of kickback after KalamaTopia. Sean Fletcher mentioned that New Year’s Fest is not happening this year, but event applications are coming in for events late in the spring and early summer. Our response is that organizers must adhere to executive order regarding outdoor gatherings at the time of their event. City resources allocated to the event are also contingent on the executive order. The remaining events in 2020 are the Holiday Markets on December 5th, 12th and 19th. Pam Roland asked if we received any requests for the Martin Luther King Celebration. Sean Fletcher responded they will have to talk with the City Manager’s Office about this since it is a city sponsored event. If it can be done safely and falls within the guidelines in January than it can move forward. However, if the numbers continue to get worse, the event may have to be canceled. Eric Cunningham asked who would be responsible for monitoring the upcoming Holiday Markets. Sean Fletcher answered with either the Sheriff’s Department or the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. Sean Fletcher suggested that Eric reach out to them and ask someone to swing by the event, especially since he received complaints about KalamaTopia. Eric Cunningham recommended a process be put in place for monitoring these events to ensure organizers are adhering to the guidelines. Sean Fletcher stated that the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety is part of the approval process, so they are aware of all upcoming events.

**Friends of Recreation Liaison Update:** None

**Parks and Recreation Director Monthly Report:** Sean Fletcher shared information regarding the December 14th Board Study Budget Session and asked everyone to tune in and voice their support for the department. The Farmers’ Market project is going out to bid. The Bank Street road realignment will be an addendum and we may get better pricing if one company does everything for that project. Bids for the splash pad at LaCrone Park were received, so if everything goes well, that project will start in the spring. Money is also being moved around in the budget for upgrades at Martin Luther King Park to begin in late spring or early summer.

**Staff:** Shannon Keene mentioned the Holiday Cheer Drive Thru event happening on December 16th from 3pm to 6pm at the Parks & Recreation office. This event features a letter to Santa mailbox and Holiday Mystery Craft Bags for Kalamazoo families.
Board Members: Chris Bol thanked Eric Cunningham for continually showing up to the meetings and appreciated his support. He asked for an update on the new board members and was told all three applicants would be approved in December and can start attending meetings in January. Chris Patchell asked for an update on repairs to tennis and pickleball courts from Sean Fletcher and was told those repairs are part of routine maintenance and could be coordinated early in the spring. Pam Roland shared she watched the Tree Lighting Ceremony on Zoom and thanked the City Commissioners for the Christmas caroling and storytelling. She also thanked Sean Fletcher for the meetings they’ve had regarding Martin Luther King Park and is excited for the new tree memorial plaques. Paul Teini visited Bronson Park and Davis Street Park and thought both looked to be in good shape and is happy to be a member of the board. John Johnson asked Sean Fletcher where the Farmers’ Market will be relocated next season and was told it is moving to Mayor’s Riverfront Park. A meeting is scheduled with the People’s Food Co-Op and the Kalamazoo Growler’s to determine some cross-marketing opportunities with their games and the Thursday markets. The project should take approximately a year to complete. John Johnson also commented on the Christmas lights downtown and thought they looked better than ever. Sean Fletcher said we spent a little more money this year and credited Eric Cunningham with spearheading that work. Lastly, Sean Fletcher said he’s not heard from the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood Association but will reach out to them to arrange a meeting about the Glen Park bike path.

Adjournment: 6:36 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted by Shannon Keene, Recording Secretary