Chair John Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm on March 3, 2020 at Mayors Riverfront Park

**Roll Call:**
**Members Present:** Paul Teini, John Johnson, Pam Roland, Kayleen Shafer

**Members Absent:** Aliyah Adams, Chris Patchell, Sean Fletcher, Chris Bol

**Staff Present:** Corey Stamps, Patrick McVerry

**Introduction of Guests:**
John Hillard president of Milwood Neighborhood Watch Association.

**Changes to the Agenda:**
None

**Special Presentations:**
None

**Approval of Minutes:**
February minutes have been approved

**Old Business:**

A. **Process to acquire a new land and a list of possible parks that are unutilized (Chris Bol)**

Patrick mentioned we do not look for property in the City. If something happens to come up, they will evaluate it and go from there. The county has a list that gets sent out to us. The last time it was sent out was in December. One opportunity a while ago had 100 acres outside of the city limits. The owner wanted it to be a park but it’s not in the city limits.

Patrick continued; underutilized parks was looked at for the master plan, but nothing really came up.

Kayleen asked what about the Winchell area there is a small lot. Patrick mentioned they talked about it in the past, but they don’t know if the City wants to relinquish those areas.

Paul mentioned this came up because of the car wash being put up. Patrick mentioned they met with someone who brought that to their attention and its
something we would look into. There is a lot of history with that piece of land. The underground railroad was in that area as well.

John mentioned there is a property that was donated at the corner of Drake and Michigan. There were discussions about selling the property and whoever donated it said no you can’t do that. Patrick mentioned there is specific things tied to certain properties. For instance, Nalbert Park by Milwood Middle School.

John H goes down there to chill out, but he thinks it should be taken down. John Johnson would like to continue the conversation. He mentioned that Sean said some time ago the west side should have a park.

B. Liaisons for parks (John Johnson)
John mentioned all of us being a liaison for the park in our neighborhoods. Would it be helpful to Parks and Recreation? Pam mentioned she has already been doing that. She is a resident, so she looks at abandoned cars and everything. If you see something say something.

Paul mentioned we could have a list of like 5 parks. Everyone liked the idea. Corey and Patrick are looking into the list of parks for everyone.

New Business:
A. Milham Park Playground DNR Trust Fund Application Public Input

Patrick reported basically nothing has been done in a long time. With the improvements at the Farmers Market things got pushed back at Milham. So, they thought what they could do now to make an impact at Milham. They were able to move funding around to improve playgrounds. We have an initial budget of $250,000. Steven brown is writing a grant and with that we will be close to 400,000. They would take both playgrounds out, and replace them with 2-5yr old playgrounds and 5-12yr old playgrounds. They also plan to redo some of the sidewalks and move parking spaces up. They are looking to have this all completed next year.

Kayleen mentioned her only issue is that there is no handicap accessibility going up to Milham. Patrick mentioned that will all be incorporated into the phase for the park.

John H. reported they have had several parents come forward complaining about the playground equipment. John came to support what is trying to be done with the DNR and everything in the park. John mentioned he grew up in the Abraham Lincoln days and he remembers the zoo and Milham Park being the crown jewel of Kalamazoo. He moved back 18 years ago an nothing has been done in decades. This is the first-time real action has taken place by the Parks Department to fix the Park. The neighborhood group is working with Sean to help with a cleanup day. They also plan to have a concert in Milham park and if it is successful, they will have 2-3 concerts next year. John continued the big thing is the equipment and wants everyone to know that the milwood neighborhood supports everything that is happening in Milham Park. John also mentioned this is finally being done for Milham park and it goes back to when he was on the board in 2005. It was approved but nothing
was done. John also mentioned If we could do something with Nalbert Park that would be great. John heard everyone mention Asylum lake. John suggested that we contact a group his friend is a part of. They are working to save that portion of the land. The group doesn’t want what happened across the street with all the businesses. John continued; the Parks Department is going in the right direction with what they are doing. He wants a resolution to fund Parks and Recreation 2-3 times what they are being funded now. He remembers Nick Kik when he was the director, he made sure to take care of all the parks. A lot of the things that the Parks Department goes through now they didn’t have to back then. John has also talked with Sean and Sean feels like he doesn't have enough money to get things done. Parks are the face of the community so it’s important to take care of them. John looks at the City Commission meetings and is amazed at how much they meet and how much money they approve without permission. John concluded, if there is anything they can do please just let me know.

John Johnson mentioned we have talked about parks funding before. John doesn’t know what we can do other than advocate for Parks and Recreation at the commission meetings.

John H mentioned when he was on the board, they had discussions on what they should do with the park so it’s nothing new.

B. New Member Application

Chris Bol and John Johnson were concerned about the applicant who requested to be on the PRAB Board due to him applying for too many boards. John mentioned in the past we have voted to not have someone on the board. We felt like they were just trying to have a resume. How would you all like to proceed?

Kayleen mentioned if you apply for something and you don’t even show up then she doesn’t know. You don’t have to be invited to these meetings to attend. Kayleen mentioned she came to the meetings beforehand to learn and see what they were about. Kayleen continued, we don’t need more people to not show up.

John agreed and mentioned that’s our problem with the City liaisons, they don’t show up.

Pam asked is there a protocol if someone expresses interest

Paul would like us to reach out and deny it because there is no specific information.

**Event Recommendations:**
None

**Comments:**
None

**Citizens:**
None
Commission Liaison:
None

Friends of Recreation Liaison Update:
None

Parks and Recreation Director Monthly Report:
Patrick reported Milham Park dam design is 60 percent complete. Once we get the designs, we will host a community meeting. Once we come up with the design drawings, we will submit them. When we hear back from submitting the documents, they will finalize them, and it will go to bid. There will be a total of 2 meetings after the bid. Patrick mentioned he is not sure when the work will start. It could be in the fall.

Patrick continued; we are working through the process of updating the wood fibers in the playground areas. We want to have it complete in February. Spring valley, Lacrone and all the major parks that have been done in the last 6 months will get wood fibers.

Egg Hunt will be in April.

June 17 will be the grand reopening of Crane Park from 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Patrick continued; we have bad news our current mowing contractor quit on Monday. This was there 2nd year working with us. They emailed Monday and they weren’t able to fulfil the contract. Purchasing was able to go back to the next person from 2 years ago and they found someone.

Pam responded; contractors don’t know what they are getting into

Patrick mentioned he is on the Tree Committee and they wanted to know if someone from PRAB would like to be the backup for Chris Patchell. They meet the first Tuesday of the month at 2:00pm.

The Friends of Recreation received a part time coordinator instead of an executive director for their events.

Staff:
None

Board Members:
Pam mentioned she met with Sean about replacing trees in MLK Park. With the passing of Todd Pryor, the city received a new forester Perry and they briefly talked about a plan for the park. Pam asked Patrick for additional information on what is going on at MLK Park this Spring.
Patrick responded; Perry left the City in January but mentioned we have hired a new forester that will start in April. The new forester is originally from Michigan but has recently been working for the city of New York. Perry suggested before he left that we plant Hawthorne trees in MLK Park. Anthony (Public Service Manager) and Patrick are going to go look at MLK Park and they would secure everything to plant the trees.

Pam responded, it’s good to know they aren’t changing the trees. Pam continued; with all the improvements happening in the park is it possible to have the monument removed? They would like to put up a new monument for the park. Patrick responded, yes, we could do that. The monument is leaning and dangerous.

Paul mentioned, earlier we talked about the parks needing more money. We should really encourage Eric to come to the meetings so we can have the discussions about money and getting things done.

John agrees with Paul’s comments.

Kayleen asked, I know you do scholarships for the summer and asked if we do for the spring? Patrick said yes, we do.

**Adjournment:** 6:39 pm

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Community Room.

Respectfully submitted by Corey Stamps, Recording Secretary

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Recording Secretary

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Chair