

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes
February 3rd, 2026

Chair Kazmira Herberger called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. on February 3rd, 2026, at Mayors Riverfront Park.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Kazmira Herberger, Isabela Ballez, Rachel Hughes-Nilsson, Karen Wellman, Elizabeth Kraatz, Riley Nilsson

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Deidrean Barrett

Commissioner Liaison: Chris Praedel

Introduction of Guests: None

Changes to the Agenda: None

Special Presentations: None

Approval of Minutes: Elizabeth Kraatz motioned; Kazmira Herberger seconded for unanimous approval of the January meeting minutes.

Old Business:

1. Park Inventory and Park Adoptees List – Discussion continued regarding outreach to potential park adoptees and identifying parks suitable for additional community involvement. The Board discussed the possibility of establishing community gardens in parks that have appropriate infrastructure such as water access and neighborhood engagement. The Board agreed to revisit the Park Inventory and Park Adoptees list in June.
2. Youth and Family Paddle 2026 – No updates available currently.
3. 2026 World Migratory Bird Day – A raptor program featuring several birds of prey (including owls and a hawk) has been scheduled. Possible participation from partner organizations including the Land Conservancy and Wild Ones. Volunteers will assist with logistics, including helping escort presenters and managing crowd spacing during the raptor program.
4. Adopt-A-Bench/Tree – The Board discussed updating the Adopt-A-Bench form and website materials. Improvements may include updating the design and formatting of the application and creating a promotional video to explain the program. This item will be brought back to the agenda in April.

New Business:

1. Sharing the Spirit of America – The Board discussed participating in the “Sharing the Spirit of America” nationwide event commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The event will take place on July 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Communities across the country will simultaneously read the Declaration of Independence. Parks may serve as gathering locations for community readings with Bronson Park serving as the primary Kalamazoo location.

Event Recommendations: None

Adopt-A-Park Applications: None

Comments:

Citizens: None

Commission Liaison: Commissioner Chris Praedel provided updates from recent City Commission discussions. Funding was approved for the Verburg Park playground replacement. Homer Stryker Field improvements were approved, including seating upgrades and protective netting. Updates were shared regarding the Milham Park creek restoration project. Upcoming design meeting for neighborhood improvements were discussed, and board members were encouraged to attend.

Friends of Recreation Liaison Update: None

Parks and Recreation Director Monthly Report: Commissioner Praedel’s comments addressed the items included in the Parks and Recreation Director’s printed monthly report.

Staff: None

Board Members: The Board reviewed proposed logo concepts for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Members will review the options, and a formal vote will be scheduled for the next meeting.

Adjournment: 6:58 p.m.

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10th, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at Mayors Riverfront Park.

Respectfully submitted by Deidrean Barrett, Recording Secretary

Recording Secretary

Chair