

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes
June 3rd, 2025

Chair Kazmira Herberger called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m. on June 3rd, 2025, at Mayor's Riverfront Park.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Kazmira Herberger, Isabela Ballez, Chris Bol, Rachel Hughes-Nilsson, Karen Wellman, Riley Nilsson

Members Absent: Bjorn Nelson

Staff Present: Patrick McVerry, Deidrean Barrett

Commissioner Liaison: Chris Praedel

Introduction of Guests:

- Heather Hemingway from Eurofins PSS presenting for Henderson Green
- Heather Benac representing West Main Hill Neighborhood Association for Academy Green
- Representative from Kalamazoo Junior Girls

Changes to the Agenda: None

Special Presentations:

1. Heather Hemingway presented a volunteer initiative by Eurofins PSS to adopt Henderson Green, focused on STEM education, wellness, and twice-yearly park clean-ups.
2. Heather Benac presented on the Academy Green adoption, detailing an ongoing native plant pollinator garden effort. She grew over 1,000 native plants herself and requested modest support for signage and possible reimbursement for minor materials.
3. Kalamazoo Junior Girls shared the history and future plans for MLK Jr. Park, including their upcoming 38th annual Plant Day on June 8th. They discussed long standing involvement in maintaining flower beds, concerns about safety and usability of the park, and the need for infrastructure improvements.

Approval of Minutes:

Rachel Hughes-Nilsson motioned; seconded by Isabella Ballez for unanimous approval of the May meeting minutes.

Old Business:

1. Park Inventory and Park Adoptees List – Karen Wellman plans to review the adoptee list with Deidrean Barrett upon her return.

2. Youth & Family Paddle 2025 – The event will be first come, first served, and more explicitly geared toward families. Activities will include kayaking. Volunteers are still needed, and snacks will be provided. Attendance will be capped at 50 participants.

New Business: Arcadia Park Redesign Update – Kazmira and Rachel shared an update from the Arcadia Creek Festival Place redesign committee. There was discussion around using a future completed phase of the park for a major fundraising gala to support citywide parks and potentially a future parks millage campaign.

Event Recommendations: None

Adopt-A-Park Applications:

1. Applicant for Henderson Green – A motion to approve Eurofins PSS's adoption of Henderson Green was made and seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Applicant for Academy Green – A motion to approve West Main Hill Neighborhood's adoption of Academy Green was made and seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments:

Citizens: None

Commission Liaison: Chris Praedel provided an update on block party permit concerns, including city attorney review and ordinance conflicts regarding timelines and noise expectations. He also emphasized a long-term goal to reform the process citywide while balancing neighborhood concerns with inclusive community engagement.

Friends of Recreation Liaison Update: None

Parks and Recreation Director Monthly Report: Patrick shared that construction at Verburg Park is pending permit approval. Planned features include a pump track, kayak launch, and shelter upgrades.

Staff: None

Board Members: Discussion on the need for park security, maintenance, and increasing park visibility through regular community use. Talk of developing a major citywide fundraising event to support long term improvements and community building. Consideration of coordinating an event with efforts to support a parks millage campaign. Preliminary conversation about recruitment for the board.

Adjournment: 7:00 p.m.

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 8th, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at Crane Park.

Respectfully submitted by Deidrean Barrett, Recording Secretary



7/8/2025

Recording Secretary



7/9/2025

Chair