

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes**  
**November 14, 2023**

Chair Kazmira Herberger called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at Mayor's Riverfront Park.

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** Kazmira Herberger, Ben Stanley, Joseph Buckman, Isabela Ballez, Katelyn Bekken

**Members Absent:** Rachel Hughes-Nilsson, Riley Nilsson, Jarrett Blackmon

**Staff Present:** Patrick McVerry

**Commissioner Liaison:**

**Introduction of Guests:**

1. Chris Bol – Former Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Member
2. Brad Schmidt – Loy Norrix High School Cross Country & Track Coach

**Changes to the Agenda:**

**Special Presentations:**

**Approval of Minutes:**

Joseph Buckman motioned, seconded by Kazmira Herberger for unanimous approval of the October meeting minutes.

**Old Business:**

1. National Go Skateboarding Day – No update.
2. Youth Paddle 101 – Bela Ballez dropped the sponsorship packet off to D&R Sports Center for possible event funding since she needs around \$1,100. She is also seeking food for the event and Katelyn Bekken will connect her with Rachel Bair at the KVCC Food Innovation Center.
3. PRAB Involvement in Kzoo Parks Events
  - a. Tree Lighting Ceremony – Patrick McVerry let the board know there are enough volunteers for the event.

**New Business:**

1. 2024 Meeting Dates & Locations – The board chose to meet at Emerald Drive Park on June 4<sup>th</sup>, South Westnedge Park on July 9<sup>th</sup>, Blanche Hull Park on August 6<sup>th</sup>, and Verburg Park on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

2. 2024 PRAB Goals – Topic will be addressed at December meeting.
3. Blanche Hull Cross Country Trail – Chris Bol and Brad Schmidt presented their plan to turn Blanche Hull Park into a cross country trail so it can be used for the Loy Norrix Cross Country team home meets. They want to widen and connect the existing trails to create a 5k course. Their goal is to have the work completed by September 2024 so they can host the meet there. There will be multiple loops in the park so community members can choose which path to take if they're not long-distance runners. There is a creek that runs through the southside of the park, so a bridge is needed in two spots. If those can't be installed immediately, the 5k course will be in the northside of the park until the other paths can be accessed with a bridge. They need some assistance from the City in order to make the bridges happen. Patrick McVerry will need to reach out to Director Baker from Public Services to make sure the bridges are designed correctly. He also said the City Manager's Office is enthusiastic about this plan since Blanche Hull hasn't been activated and has been identified as an issue in the upcoming 5-year Master Plan. Ben Stanley motioned to move forward with the Blanche Hull Cross Country Trail plan, seconded by Bela Ballez for unanimous approval.

**Event Recommendations:**

**Adopt-A-Park Applications:**

**Comments:**

**Citizens:**

**Commission Liaison:** None

**Friends of Recreation Liaison Update:** None

**Parks and Recreation Director Monthly Report:** Patrick McVerry informed everyone that the Master Plan will be presented to the board at the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. This will start the 30-day public comment period before it goes to City Commission.

**Staff:** None

**Board Members:** Ben Stanley commented on adding green paint to the bike lane on South Westnedge Avenue before Michigan Avenue and adding rumble strips in between the car and bike lanes. He mentioned Day in the Park and Wilderness Inquiry canoe events. He also let everyone know Portage allows drinking alcohol in all but two of their parks and wanted to know if Kalamazoo was considering this.

**Adjournment:** 6:47 p.m.

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at Mayor's Riverfront Park.

Respectfully submitted by Shannon Keene, Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Keene", written over a horizontal line.

Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in pink ink, appearing to read "Fanny Huleger", written over a horizontal line.

Chair

12/5/23