



**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

**February 5, 2025  
Grand Rapids Public Library**

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

**Roll Call**

**Present:** Max Gibbs, Hannah Mico, Luke Stier, Kelli Jo Peltier, Megan Catcho, Sam Moore, Marta Johnson, Stacy Bare

**Others:** David Marquardt, Michelle Slykhouse, Karie Enriquez, Dervin Figuereo, Victoria Keenan (Grand Rapids Parks Department)

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion made by Sam Moore, supported by Max Gibbs, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion made by Megan Catcho, supported by Kelli Jo Peltier, to approve the August 7, 2024 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Comments from Public**

None.

**Chair and Vice Chair election**

Kelli Jo nominated Max Gibbs to be chair. Max accepted the nomination. Motion made by Megan Catcho, supported by Marta Johnson, to elect Max Gibbs as chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Motion carried.

Kelli Jo nominated Hannah Mico to be vice chair. Hannah accepted the nomination. Motion made by Megan Catcho, supported by Marta Johnson, to elect Hannah Mico as vice chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Motion carried.

**Agenda Item(s)**

**2025 meeting schedule**

Motion made by Hannah Mico, supported by Stacy Bare to approve the 2025 meeting schedule as presented. Motion carried.

**Plaza Roosevelt Park naming**

Victoria stated over 200 names were submitted (any city resident was able to submit a name suggestion). The submissions were narrowed down based on the City's park naming policy, then a stakeholder group narrowed the list further to a top six. Those top six names were provided to city residents with an option to vote for their favorite. Of the 209 votes, the top choice is Navarro Plaza.

Megan asked what the second and third names were and what the vote difference was. Victoria stated Unity Park was second, with only three less votes, and La Placita was third.

Motion made by Max Gibbs, supported by Marta Johnson, to accept Navarro Plaza as the park name to be presented to City Commission for approval. Marta stated the process seems robust, however opening to a city-wide vote at the end may lend itself to people with more resources being able to obtain the votes. Discussion took place about parks that were renamed in the past and how the current park naming policy came about. This is the first park to be named following the policy adopted in 2011. Motion carried.

### **Park projects update**

Karie stated a list was provided in the agenda packet and that there are a lot of projects either under construction or will be. The Cherry Park project just needs sports court surfacing, concrete was done already. Canal Park will be closed for about a year while under construction. The pool house will be open for the season this summer at Martin Luther King Park and the lodge will open in 2026. An erosion control project at Plaster Creek will happen this summer (east of Madison and east of Eastern).

Max asked about removing the fake mounds at Ah Nab Awen Park and Karie stated outreach was done already about this. Karie stated the work at this site will be done when the larger river project goes through that area. Stacy stated Friends of Grand Rapids Parks may be able to assist with some of the funding for this project and that it was requested certain species be incorporated into this project.

Marta asked if it is a goal to have more accessible restrooms built at parks. Karie stated that when restroom renovations are done they are to be accessible, have male, female and all gender areas.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of and how to communicate the status of projects to the public.

### **Urban Forestry update**

Hannah attended the Urban Forestry Committee (UFC) meeting in January. Hannah stated UFC members wrote a letter to Mayor David LaGrand outlining forestry priorities and asked whether anyone would want a letter from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to be sent. Kelli Jo will help draft a letter with Hannah to be sent to Mayor David LaGrand and former Mayor Rosalynn Bliss.

### **Comments from the board/partner reports**

Stacy stated Friends of Grand Rapids Parks (FGRP) is trying to figure out what will happen with the federal grant funds that they have. FGRP is averaging 1,299 trees planted per year and this is more than double since starting with the organization. Stacy stated volunteer hours have increased and there is more outreach for volunteer engagement. FGRP is working with West Michigan Mountain Biking Association on trail opportunities. FGRP annual fundraiser is scheduled for February 22 at Richmond Park.

Megan stated World of Winter is happening now.

### **Future agenda items**

- Trails update
- Meeting format discussion
- FY26-FY30 budget discussion
- Community gardens in parks
  - Urban agriculture and Kent County food policy

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.