



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**February 4, 2026
Grand Rapids Public Service Center**

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Max Gibbs, Luke Stier, Sonja Forte, Kelli Jo Peltier, Hannah Mico, Megan Catcho, Stacy Bare, Marta Johnson

Others: Christy Brunsell, Laura Cleypool, Karie Enriquez (Grand Rapids Parks Department)

Approval of Agenda

Hannah Mico requested the agenda be amended to add Chair and Vice Chair election. Motion made by Max Gibbs, supported by Kelli Jo Peltier, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Kelli Jo Peltier, supported by Hannah Mico, to approve the October 1, 2025 minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Comments from Public

None.

Chair/Vice Chair Election

Hannah Mico was nominated for Chair. Hannah accepted the nomination. Motion made by Kelli Jo Peltier, supported by Max Gibbs, to elect Hannah Mico as Chair.

Max Gibbs was nominated for Vice Chair. Max accepted the nomination. Motion made by Hannah Mico, supported by Megan Catcho, to elect Max Gibbs as Vice Chair.

Agenda Item(s)

2026 meeting schedule

Hannah stated there has been quorum issues and therefore agenda items needing to move from one meeting to another. Hannah stated monthly meetings may be better. Sonja stated meeting monthly would make being a board member difficult. Discussion occurred regarding meeting virtually and that is not an option due to open meetings act and charter. Laura suggested starting the meetings earlier.

Motion made by Max Gibbs, supported by Stacy Bare to approve the 2026 meeting schedule as presented. Motion carried.

Naming of Nature Grove at Riverside Park

Karie provided an overview of the project and discussed the naming process for this new feature at Riverside Park. Laura stated the Board will be kept informed on groundbreaking and ribbon cutting events that get scheduled for this project.

Budget and Strategic Operating Plan

Laura reviewed the City's updated strategic plan and explained the Parks and Recreation Department is on the second iteration of the departmental plan. There are five strategic priorities with each one having multiple objectives and strategies to accomplish the outlined priorities.

Laura stated the budget was submitted and the Parks and Recreation Department requested staff for a new trail maintenance crew. This new crew will support paved trails and is essential for greenway work. Laura stated that if approved the crew will consist of one permanent and 3 seasonal employees. Stacy stated the new crew will be important and there may be ways to coordinate the crew with Friends of Grand Rapids Parks. Laura stated the park maintenance area of the department is being restructured to include a new facility maintenance supervisor. Parks and Recreation Department is also in process of hiring an Assistant Director.

Laura stated about \$500,000 was requested for forestry. Laura stated the budget for the new Martin Luther King Park Community Center is about \$520,000 for staffing and operations.

Marta asked whether there is opportunity to connect schools to seasonal work. Marta also asked if there is a way to track progress on parks work throughout the year. Laura stated there are metrics, such as, number of trees planted and residents within a 10-minute walk to a park that are tracked internally and will see if a public facing dashboard can be developed.

Comments from the board/partner reports

Stacy stated Friends of Grand Rapids Parks (FGRP) is continuing to grow and is hiring a trail coordinator. FGRP is close to finishing the floral quality index/assessment of the park system. There are a number of insectivore plants. FGRP submitted a grant for native plantings along Plaster Creek. Stacy updated the Board on the Bike Park and a potential skatepark. Developing a partnership with Sonja to get more kids outside to explore parks. Weekly volunteer events continue to be held.

Megan stated world of winter is going on now and ends March 1.

Hannah stated the Urban Forestry Committee is focusing on public education and information access about the importance of the City's urban canopy.

Future agenda items

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Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.