

Parks Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 13, 2016
6:00 p.m., Council Chambers



City of South Haven

1. Call to Order by Warren Toneman at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Jeff Arnold, Bob McAlear, Chuck Moore, Wendi Onuki, Marilyn White, Warren Toneman

Absent: Patti Reinert

Also present: Bill Hunter, DPW Director; Kathy Burczak, Abonmarche; Amy Cook, Abonmarche

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Arnold, second by Moore to approve the September 13, 2016 Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.

All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes for the Record

A. April 12, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by McAlear, second by Arnold to approve the April 12, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

All in favor. Motion carried.

B. August 9, 2016 Workshop Meeting Minutes

A brief discussion ensued regarding the necessity of approving workshop minutes which was clarified by Council Representative Jeff Arnold.

Motion by Arnold, second by Moore to approve the August 9, 2016 Workshop Meeting Minutes as written.

All in favor. Motion carried.

5. Public Comments and Inquiries Concerning Items not on the Agenda.

None at this time.

REPORTS

6. Project Updates

Halberstadt reviewed updates on projects under development.

1. **Black River Park, Fishing Pier.** Prism Environmental began building and grounds improvements per the adopted improvement plan.
2. **BMX Pump Track.** Clay from the Kalamazoo street construction project is being delivered as planned.
3. **Cemetery Improvements.** Abonmarche is getting close to being able to send the project out for bids.

In response to a question, it was noted that funding for this project comes from people purchasing plots which are put into a fund earmarked for cemetery improvements. Another query brought the response that this project will not deplete the fund and there will be money left over for future improvements.

4. **Dyckman Beach Sign.** Staff indicated that it is time for decisions to be made in design of fonts and colors, which will be discussed in a later item on the agenda.
5. **Harborwalk.** On 09/13/2016 a one foot wide easement was obtained from the neighboring parcel owners. Concrete replacement has started near North Shore Drive and landscape work has occurred to permit sidewalk placement.
6. **Kids' Corner.** Waiting to see if a grant award will be made. In the interim staff has been replacing older damaged boards and doing preventative maintenance.
7. **North Beach Improvements.** Design is ongoing. This project will be discussed under Item 7 of tonight's agenda.

In response to a question about funding, it was explained that funding will be partially from the state and partially city funds.

8. **Optimist Tot Lot.** In response to a question Halberstadt encouraged anyone with creative ideas for playgrounds and parks to send those to him for consideration.
9. **South Beach Restrooms & Splash Pad.** Olson Brothers will be putting new shingles on the pavilion and restroom building.
10. **Water Street Streetscape Improvements.** Abonmarche will be looking at two different types of construction for building the staircase.

In response to a question regarding landings on the staircase, staff noted that once we dive into the design this issue can be brought back to the commission.

NEW BUSINESS

7. Commission will be requested to review the proposed play equipment for the North Beach Project.

Kathy Burczak explained that this master plan is a result of work done by the consultant with the public; an accessible playground structure was needed for grant approval. There was a landing space and a mat for access in the plan and upon further discussion with the city, direction was given for a theme type of project that would have play value, be accessible, and fit within the sight-line of the existing play structures. After questions regarding what Burczak meant by city direction, and queries about why the Parks Commission has not seen this before now, Halberstadt clarified that the city manager requested Abonmarche to look at a boat-themed structure.

Burczak informed that the existing equipment will remain in place except the dome circular climber which is in poor condition. The proposed play structure is an additional, new piece of playground equipment required for grant approval. This will add an accessible structure where there never has been one and is designed to encourage group play and interaction.

Burczak noted that the master plan that was approved indicates locating this structure in front of the triangle parking lot and where the existing pieces are with an accessible mat leading up to it with transfer station.

Option 1. Visually it looks large; it is 11'6" at the highest point. It has a couple of slides, a deck surface and the illusion of looking like an adventure ship. The packet includes photographs of the piece in an existing park.

Option 2. This structure is similar but without the smokestacks which lowers the height; there is still the effect of a ship but not as much. This option is offered in case there is concern with the height of Option 1.

Halberstadt said we are looking at two different options because of concerns with the impact on views by people that have property along the lakeshore. We have had several public input meetings and workshops. In response to a question by Onuki regarding the smokestacks, Burczak stated the smokestacks are primarily aesthetic. Discussion ensued regarding the differences between the options.

Moore asked the cost of the structures to which Burczak responded that Option 1, the ship with transfer installed is approximately \$48,000 while Option 2 installed the same way is about \$40,000. In response to another question by Moore, Burczak noted that she did research other options in the same theme. One, a tugboat theme, was a custom play structure which cost around \$80,000.

Toneman suggested that if this amount of money is being spent, the children's' view of the lake and perspective should be considered. In response to Burczak noting that the purpose of this type of structures is to spark imaginative play, it was asked if a theme would limit imaginative play.

Discussion ensued regarding the difference in the amount of sand at the North Beach as compared to the aerial provided in the package. Halberstadt explained that the north beach doesn't lose a lot of sand; due to how the piers are located the North Beach tends to gain sand while the South Beach has lost a large amount of sand this year.

Discussion ensued regarding locating this play structure on the North Beach to which Onuki added that while she and her friends and their children do not go to the North Beach, if the boat-themed play structure was there she and her friends would go there.

In response to a comment by Moore, who feels the Parks Commission was not given enough input in deciding on a play structure, rather were given the option to vote on a \$40,000 or \$48,000 price tag, Toneman noted that since the splash pad will have a ship theme this play structure would provide continuity on both sides of the river and would tie in well. Discussion ensued regarding the number of children that can play on this structure at one time. Burczak explained the amount of space needed for a swing set is sixteen feet in front and back and six feet on each end and noted that a swing set would only accommodate three kids, but this will have accommodation for 20 to 25 kids.

In response to a question by Moore regarding whether any play structures that work like Lego© are available, Burczak noted that once this structure is in place, expansion can take place with a variety of other play items. Halberstadt added that the center part of the proposed structure is of a modular type design, with the piece that looks like the bow of a boat added to create the boat theme.

McAlear stated he was ready to make a motion to accept the proposed boat themed play structure but there was dissent by some members.

Motion by Arnold to instruct staff to continue exploring other theme playground options to be brought back to the Parks Commission. Second by Moore.

Ayes: Arnold, Moore, Onuki, White
Nays: McAlear, Toneman

Motion carried.

8. Commission will be requested to review improvements at the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum campus.

Ann Long, Chair of the non-profit board of Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum, 903 South Bailey Avenue. Explained a little of the history of the museum which was deeded to the city in 1938. The museum site was initially placed under the Parks Department to preserve it.

Long noted that the board is proposing removing the invasive species in the under canopy, such as burning bush and Japanese honeysuckle and replacing them with native plants to maintain the integrity of the woods and so it looks as it did in Bailey's time, improve the nature trails and create a sanctuary for animals and people. Long explained that while the property has been safeguarded within the park system it is not really a park, but more of a natural setting, which the board wants to capitalize on.

Long explained that eventually the board wants to have areas of art throughout the trail so it is a retreat for those who are looking for a sanctuary in nature. There is a variety of hardwoods and it is beautiful.

Halberstadt noted there is at least 1000 feet of trail and indicated that what staff is looking for tonight is a motion of support from the commission.

Motion by McAlear to support the proposal by the Liberty Hyde Bailey museum board. Second by Arnold.

All in favor. Motion carried.

9. Commission will be requested to review the color and font selection for the Beach Access Signage.

Halberstadt explained that the color and font need to be decided on and reminded that this will be a standard for future signs. Some questions for the commission were

- 1.) Do we want the city logo on the sign?
- 2.) What font (see page 47 of the packet)? Recommends a simple font
- 3.) Colors
- 4.) Does the commission prefer "Oak Street Beach" or just "Oak Beach?"

Onuki asked if there is consistency with any of the other beach names and Halberstadt noted the names of the other beaches, none of which included the word street. Consensus for just calling it Oak Beach.

Arnold likes the idea of the logo, McAlear does also. There appeared to be consensus for using the logo.

Halberstadt suggested the blue #24 or #25 for the color of the lettering, the city logo being red and white. Onuki stated she likes the san serif in the example in the packet. Discussion ensued regarding what colors would be used where. There was consensus on the blue in the logo being the same as the lettering.

Toneman noted that he wants it to be simple, uniform and easy to read for those who aren't from South Haven, so they see the sign and they know it's one of our public beaches.

10. Commission will be requested to review the feasibility of instituting a ban on smoking in City Parks and other public outdoor spaces.

In response to comments about the information provided, Hunter agreed that he researched this subject quite a bit and noted that many communities along the lakeshore struggle with smoking on the beaches and outdoor spaces.

Hunter explained he found that there are some communities that have ordinances which could be found readily on their website. Others mention non-smoking but it is not in their ordinances. Hunter noted that this is the debate for the Commission, "Do you want an ordinance that is enforceable or do you want to just add it to prohibited acts?"

Hunter said the city gets complaints about the butts on the beach, noting that it is hard to clean up even with the beach cleaner. The butts do eventually get in your waterway. So it's something to consider. Moore stated he personally would not want to have someone smoking next to his grandchildren. Onuki had that happen and the smokers would not stop, in fact they laughed at her, so she and her children left.

McAlear wondered about talking to police department about enforcement, noting he is against smoking but wondered if trying to enforce it, along with alcohol, makes it more complex. Hunter said there are considerations; if you just use signage maybe 50% will obey it and 50% will say they are going to smoke anyway and that can get confrontational.

Discussion ensued regarding the effectiveness of signs. McAlear said he can support putting it on signage but right now with the alcohol he thinks it adds complexity with enforcement. Arnold noted that at City Council we heard from Police officers regarding enforcement on the rental issues, that they are tasked to protect life and limb; they will enforce rental issues secondarily.

Hunter said, "That is not our intent, we just want to make it clear in the ordinance and on signage, but that is for the commission to decide. Arnold said Michigan State just banned smoking on all campuses. McAlear pointed out that a college has a captive audience and they have to obey.

Onuki asked if there would be fines, to which Hunter responded, "Yes, and they are graduated, first offense, second offense, etc. if the commission wants to go that route."

McAlear asked what the state parks do. Moore said zero alcohol. It was noted that while the alcohol policy is a whole different issue, if the state parks regulate smoking that would be a benchmark.

White said people are going to smoke regardless and asked if the city has the legwork to enforce that kind of ordinance. Told about being at a recent Elkenburg Park event and there were people smoking and the city, state and sheriff law enforcement officers did not seem to find that to be a problem. "Are you willing to pay more officers to come in? Maybe you could have designated places where people can smoke." White noted that she does not really mind if people want to smoke around her.

Toneman asked if you want us to make a motion. Hunter said if the commission would like us to, staff could add smoking to the violations list. Hunter also stated the issue does not have to be decided tonight.

Motion by Arnold to amend the prohibited acts ordinance 58.83 to add smoking to prohibited activity in public outdoor spaces, Second by Moore.

Staff was asked for clarification regarding the use of the words "public places" and whether public places would include such places as the pavilion. Halberstadt pointed out that there are city spaces that are not technically in a public park. If we amend the ordinance to include parks and beaches, it doesn't necessarily include other public spaces. After discussion it was decided that staff will come back to the commission with suggested language. Discussion ensued regarding other public spaces and adding vaping as well as smoking. Halberstadt said staff will investigate the ordinance.

Motion carried.

11. Elkenburg Park tree planting.

Hunter explained that Chemical Bank has graciously offered man power to plant trees. At the recent event in Elkenburg Park it was noted there is a lot of sun and not much shade in this park. City staff proposes adding ten additional trees to this park, still leaving open green space for kids to play.

Moore said he drove by and wondered if the proposed trees are fast-growing. Hunter noted that staff also considered that but some of the fast-growing trees, like silver maple, will not have longevity. The arborist recommended these varieties. In response to questions it was noted that the City of South Haven is providing the trees and the bank is providing the labor. The city will prepare the holes and they will plant the trees.

Onuki asked about the idea of planting ornamental cherry trees, explaining the tradition in Japan that when the cherry trees bloom people take the day off and have picnics under the cherry trees. Hunter suggested looking into the hardiness zone, looking into the possibility of the species you are referring to.

Motion by Arnold, second by McAlear to proceed with the Elkenburg tree planting.

All in favor. Motion carried.

12. DPW Director Comments

Hunter thanked the commission.

13. Commissioner Comments

Moore: Spoke about his concern that the kayak rental is storing the kayaks on racks on the beach, while the agreement was for the kayaks to be removed each night. Hunter will review the agreement and look into it.

Moore: Signage on park benches. "What size is it going to be?" Arnold noted that the commission wanted to get it standardized. Hunter explained that the plaque size will be in the application for the donation. Those options will be gone over with the applicant.

Discussion ensued regarding plaques for tree donation and the life expectancy of various items that can be donated.

14. Adjourn

Motion by McAlear, second by Arnold to adjourn at 7:33 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary