

**WARREN PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 15, 2025**

Call to order: Meeting called to order by Commissioner Salka at 6:33pm

In Attendance: Mike McCrillis, Adam Sawka, George Chapp, Heather Craig,
Sara Frederick, Ken Voss, Ken Dalpra and Council Ex-officio Councilman Jonathan Lafferty

Unexcused Absence: Jim Schoenherr,

Approval of Agenda: A motion by Commissioner Frederick, seconded by Commissioner McCrillis to approve the Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers: Commissioner Sawka was elected unanimously as Chairperson. Commissioner McCrillis was elected unanimously as Vice-Chairperson.

Vote on approval of September 25, 2024 Minutes: A motion by Commissioner Dalpra, seconded by Commissioner Fredrick to approve the minutes from September 15, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

A. Flood Damage and Building Operations

- The building reopened on November 1st after flood-related closure.
- Memberships were extended due to the closure.
- Operations are running smoothly with minor issues:
 - New boiler and hot water system adjustments.
 - Pumps are functioning well.
- The small slide needs replacement; the company requires full payment upfront, costing approximately \$2,500.
- The large slide is operational.

B. Skate Park Developments

- **Phase 2:** Includes restrooms, a pavilion, parking lot, entrance, landscaping, drainage, and a pathway.
- City permissions are required before continuing work.
- No date set for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony.

C. Splash Pad Update

- Located at Wiegand Park with 21 features, including water jets and splash zones.
- Renovations include restrooms, pavilion, new furnishings, and lighting.
- Completion expected by late spring.
- Open to the public with no usage fee.
- Work paused for winter, to resume in spring.

- Maintenance and continuity plans are in place, focusing on the filtration system.
- City permissions are required before continuing work.

D. Halmich Park Renovations

- Final walkthrough completed for Ball Diamond Restrooms.
- Upcoming bid for south restrooms renovation.
- All facilities will be ADA compliant.
- North Pavilion renovations include new bathrooms and utility shed.
- Pavilion to hold 500 people, with potential for enclosed space using garage doors.
- Consideration for multi-use, including weddings and farmer's markets.
- Estimated cost for pavilion renovations is near \$1 million.

New Business:

A. Accomplishments and Projections

- **Completed Projects:**
 - Renovation of Halmich Park.
 - Installation of two new play structures:
 - ****Lick Park:****Universal playscape with pour-and-play, expected completion in spring.
 - ****Veterans Park:****Challenge playscape with a rope course, opened in November, received positive feedback on social media.
 - Nine-hole disc golf course at Steinhäuser Park, well-received, with temporary restroom facilities.
 - Reopening of Owen Jax Community Center with senior activities and other programs.
- **Future Goals for 2025:**
 - Renovate north and south restroom facilities.
 - Design and build a pickleball court at Veterans Park.
 - Repave parking lot at Warren Community Center.
 - Expand city transportation services for residents, including field trips.
 - Reorganize Parks and Recreation Department structure.
 - Complete skate park and splash pad.
 - Renovate or remove the stadium from Warren Community Center.

Grants and Funding

B. Recent Grants

- **Shaw Park Renovation Grant:**
 - Received from the Michigan Trust Fund, includes a cricket field, new playscape, restroom renovations.
 - Awaiting signed documents from the Department of Natural Resources.
- **Urban Community Forestry Grant:**
 - \$195,000 received for a citywide tree inventory and planting.

- \$165,000 allocated for inventory, \$30,000 for planting, with plans to enhance canopy and landscape, particularly at Eckstein Park.
- No matching funds required; 100% reimbursement upon completion.

Commissioner Comments

Warming Center Initiative

- **Context and Need:**
 - Due to exceptionally cold weather and a recent community death, the City Council is exploring using Owen Jax Center as a daytime warming center.
 - Hours proposed: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., aligning with Trinity Lutheran homeless shelter's night services.
 - Considerations include logistics, security costs, and potential impact on existing services.

Active Mobility Plan

City of Warren Initiatives

- Development of non-motorized transportation options like walking and biking.
- Community input is being gathered for the plan.

Winter Activities Proposal

- Suggestions for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing programs.
- Potential for cross-country ski rentals to utilize city parks during winter.

North Pavilion and Community Events

Future Plans

- Consideration of hosting small festivals, such as Oktoberfest, at the North Pavilion.
- The facility is designed for multiple uses and community engagement.

Legal Review of Sports Program Contracts

Background

- A lawsuit in Colorado highlighted the need for airtight legal agreements regarding sportsmanship and conduct.

Action Steps

- Review of WVAC registration forms by the legal department to ensure compliance and protection.

Recreation Center Access and Partnerships

Non-Resident Access

- Consideration of non-resident passes for the recreation center.
- Discussions with Hazel Park for a cooperative agreement to share facilities.

Promotion and Resident Access

- Exploration of offering free access days for residents to promote the recreation center.

- Aim to increase community engagement and facility utilization.

Appreciation and Acknowledgments

- The meeting began with expressions of gratitude for the hard work and efforts of the community members. It was noted that such dedication is not common in many communities.

Audience Participation

Transition to Electric Landscaping Equipment

- **Inquiry:** A question was raised in audience participation by resident Gerald Hasspacher about municipalities transitioning to all-electric landscaping equipment and whether the City of Warren could do the same.
 - **Current Status:** Some electric tools are in use in Macomb, including a lawn mower and a weed whacker. However, the transition is gradual due to cost and performance considerations.
 - **Challenges:** Electric tools like the DeWalt lawnmower are useful for smaller areas but have limitations in battery life, especially in commercial settings.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made at 7:32pm by Commissioner Dalpra, seconded by Commissioner Fredrick. The motion passed unanimously.