

CITY OF MUSKEGON

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD

MEETING

April 15, 2026 @ 5:30 PM

CITY OF MUSKEGON, ROOM 204

933 TERRACE STREET, MUSKEGON, MI 49440

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm.

ROLL CALL

Present: Roberta King, Sarah De La Rosa, Sidney Long, Mayor Johnson, Yancy Weaver, Lynnette Marks, Hillery Ross, David Ruck, Aaron Bodbyl-Mast, Leann Heywood (late)

Absent: John Burt

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. 1/21/26 Minutes DPW- Parks and Recreation

Motion by Marks, second by De La Rosa to approve the 1/21/26 Minutes. Motion passes unanimously.

UPDATES

A. Parks & Recreation FY27 Budget Update DPW- Parks and Recreation

1. Director Karczewski shows a presentation to the commission that outlines the Recreation Budget and the Parks Budget. He notes the primary reason for an increase from the previous year is due to an increase in staff cost.
2. In the Recreation Budget, the key expenditures fall into the following categories: personnel, building rentals, contractual services, and supplies. The Parks Budget key expenditures were as follows: personnel, seasonal staff, vehicle rental, building rental, and utilities

3. Ruck inquired what last year's totals were and Director Karczewski said they were approximately \$200,000 less.
4. Marks asked where park improvements fall in the expenses, and Director Karczewski noted that his presentation was a brief overview of mostly operational costs and there are additional funds that improvements come out of.
5. De La Rosa asked if a sponsor was found for the fireworks. Director Karczewski said there has not been anyone interested so far – noting that the City staff does ask a lot of local organizations for money for other events which makes additional requests difficult. Mayor Johnson adds that after the 2026 Fireworks show, City staff will discuss finding a partner or possibly handing the fireworks off to another organization to assist with the expense.

B. Park Projects Update DPW- Parks and Recreation

1. Director Karczewski presents current parks improvement projects: Kruse boardwalk, McGraft pickleball court, Richards kayak launch all came in under budget and we have found contractors for these projects. Improvements will begin soon.
2. Director Karczewski notes that with the cost savings, we decided to replace the McGraft Park playground, which is the older playground in our system. There was an engagement for this during April. He also mentions that we will have additional engineering construction oversight on some projects that we previously were not able to afford with the given budgets.
3. The Sheldon Park and Hartshorn Marina bathrooms construction is moving slower than anticipated, but we still hope to have them up and running as soon as possible.
4. Pere Marquette Beach parking lot bids are due on April 23. The plan is to redo and add additional parking spots at the beach.
5. De La Rosa inquired about the timber blockades at Reese Park and Sheldon Park parking lots. Director Karczewski notes that it is planned to put wooden curbing around the parking lots at the locations and the current logs were put down as a temporary solution. There is a plan to cut the logs in half, put them up vertically in the ground and connect them with rope to make a fence.
6. Mayor Johnson asks Director Karczewski if there are any plans to install cameras at city parks due to the amount of damages that have been happening lately. Director Karczewski notes that he has added about 10 cameras at parks in the City in the past year and a half including Beukema, Sheldon and Hartshorn, and still intends to continue adding more as budgets and technology restrictions allow. Ruck notes that some may feel that parks should be a place to get away from cameras. Mayor Johnson says that could be a conversation in the future if the City decided to add cameras to all parks.

7. Director Karczewski notes that there has been more parks usage, and the more people in the parks, the safer they are. Mayor Johnson asks if park usage is tracked at all, and Director Karczewski said that we do have data from [Placer.AI](#). Mayor Johnson said it would be helpful information for justifying funding the parks when feedback from the community sometimes says that they are not being used.
8. Additional park updates from Director Karczewski include a small park clean up day at Smith Ryerson Park and McGraft Park; a small, unfenced park at the old skeleton building has been created; and work is being done to keep the fish cleaning station at Fisherman's Landing open and accessible.
9. Discussions are had about fishing tournaments at Fisherman's Landing and how they get a 50% discount on parking and receive more services. General consensus from the committee and the mayor are that they should not get a discount. Heywood notes that it would likely be a PR nightmare to make a change. Mayor Johnson also notes that they are taking away from public amenities. Director Karczewski notes that the directive came from the City Manager.

C. Summer Recreation & Events DPW- Parks and Recreation

1. Director Karczewski notes the following summer programs: Boys and Girls Club will have a free half day camp at Reese Park, YMCA will be back at McGraft Park doing full day summer camp, Boys and Girls Club will have a 5-8pm program for teens at their facility with the school district providing dinner (Monday-Thursday for the entire summer), Meet Up and Eat Up will be back at Smith Ryerson, a group called Healthy 2 Connections will be joining at Smith Ryerson to provide Lunch & Learns about neuroscience health and violence prevention, MPS are still looking to establish summer recreation at the middle school to fill the Pathfinders void.
2. Marks said she was given different information regarding the Boys and Girls Club partnership, specifically the dates and type of programming. There also may be a hurdle with the typical registration process that Boys and Girls Club uses.
3. Mayor Johnson inquired if it would be possible to have the summer evening programming run 2 days at the Boys and Girls Club building and 2 days at the middle school.
4. City-specific events were also presented for the Spring and Summer. Planned events include: Community Action Day Bike Path Cleanup, multiple craft class, senior social painting, weekly walking club, spring soccer league, fishing teen nights, patriotic tie dye, McGraft Park Concert Series, the Lakeshore Art Festival, 4th of July Fireworks and preparty, Chalk the Park, Reptiles 101, Soggy Doggies, and Touch the Trucks.
5. Director Karczewski adds that by next summer he hopes to hire a Recreation Supervisor

DISCUSSION

A. 2027 Parks Master Planning DPW- Parks and Recreation

1. Director Karczewski notes that as a department, there is a plan to focus the 2027 Master Plan on recreation and programming more than was done in the last Master Plan that focused heavily on parks and upgrades. He is looking for initial input from the committee about what they would like to see on the plan.
2. Bodbyl-Mast asks what the timeline for the plan is and Director Karczewski notes that it is due by February 1st, 2027 in order to get into the grant funding cycle.
3. Mayor Johnson questions if bidding out the plan after July is too late on getting input during the nicer weather season. Director Karczewski mentions that previously it was done all in-house and we intend to have a firm do this for us. Mayor Johnson would like options for priorities by the July meeting rather than it being open-ended to the committee.
4. De La Rosa would like to poll the community on sustainability of funds noting that we won't have ARPA funding again.
5. Bodbyl-Mast suggested a limited survey due to how robust the previous survey was.
6. Mayor Johnson suggests holding a May Meeting followed by polling the group.
 1. The entire group votes yes, and the meeting will take place on the second Wednesday in May (May 13).
 2. Marks requests that the existing plan is sent to the committee.
 3. Ruck suggests defining parks and what they mean to our community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Marks, second by Ross. Motion passes unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,