

**PROCEEDINGS OF
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
West Bloomfield Township Hall Boardroom
West Bloomfield, Michigan**

**Wednesday, July 22, 2026
6:00 PM**

APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairperson Brooks

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Robert Brooks
Secretary John Erich
Commissioner Merv Aronoff
Commissioner David Barash
Commissioner Amy Mindell

Staff Present: Kelly Hyer, Executive Director
Chris Frey, Parks Superintendent
Ashley Stokes, Recreation Supervisor
Crystal Smith

Absent: Treasurer Terrance Adams
Commissioner Sally Wenczel

Public: Connie Neese, Katrina Mason, Michelle Gross, Cynthia Katz, Howard Katz, Greg Janicki, Dale Young, Amir Shahnazery, Judi Comps, Gershon Blymstelo, Sue Leficofsley, Chelsea Kocher, Kamila Zinkovska, Aurora Maloshi, Barbara Acker, Mariam Ruftari, Harry Aldrich, Heather Aldrich, Suzi Benadenet, Kevin Taylor, Jeff Thomakos, Katja Thomakos, Susan Erich, Bob Adas, Dan Phillips, Reagan Leese, Karly Leese.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Aronoff, seconded by Commissioner Barash to approve the agenda.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: 2

Motion Carried: 5-0-2

PUBLIC FORUM- The Junior Commissioners in attendance introduced themselves.

ITEMS FROM THE TOWNSHIP LIAISON- No items tonight.

Recreation Supervisor Ashley Stokes presented an Eagle Scout Recognition award to scout Daniel Thomakos.

Daniel worked with West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Naturalist staff on his Eagle Scout project, fundraising for and building a snake enrichment climbing wall for the department's animal ambassadors. The wall will support environmental education and improve the quality of life for the live animals used in community programs. Planning began in March 2025, and the project was completed in June 2026. Recreation Supervisor Ashley Stokes thanked Daniel for partnering with WB Parks to enhance care for the animal ambassadors.

WB Trail Ambassador volunteer recognition.

Crystal Smith, WBPRC special events programmer and volunteer coordinator, recognized the 25 WB Trail Ambassadors. Since the program launched on June 6, the volunteers have been well received by trail users, who often thank them for their presence. Their friendly, approachable interactions help create a welcoming trail environment. Through trail reports, volunteers give West Bloomfield Parks and the Police Department valuable insight into daily trail conditions, maintenance needs, safety observations, wildlife sightings, and user trends, helping identify issues early and respond efficiently. Trail Ambassadors also serve as extra eyes and ears, promote safe and courteous use, assist visitors, and foster positive interactions. The program shows the value of community volunteers partnering with Parks and the Police Department, and WBPRC is grateful for their dedication.

Review of the Pine Lake playground design.

Parks Superintendent Chris Frey updated the Commission on Pine Lake Park plans. The natural playground goals were presented to the Commission last year. The project will support naturalist-led interpretive programs, encourage nature-based play and learning, promote environmental stewardship, and enhance child development. It will be the park system's first natural playground. Staff worked with the playground consultant for six to eight months to develop a plan that fits the budget and site while maximizing play opportunities. Proposed features include grassy mounds, retaining walls with ground-level caves, climbing walls with tunnels, log piles, slides, boulder mazes, swings, zip lines, seating, and shaded areas for families. Full property engineering and Township approval are needed to complete the park work at one time in the spring. Work on the playground and paths is expected to begin in spring, with the playground opening by fall. Because the natural playground includes grass, plants, trees, and other elements that need time to establish, there will be a short delay between construction completion and public opening.

CONSENT AGENDA

Items A through O are Consent Agenda matters considered to be routine by the Commission and enacted by one motion unless a member of the Commission wishes to discuss one of the topics.

Consent Agenda Items

- A) Approval of Minutes-Regular Commission June 27, 2026,
- B) Approval of June Revenue and Expenditure Report
- C) Approval of June Prepaid Expense Report in the amount of \$334,707.83
- D) Approval of Invoice Journal Report (Expenditures by Check & ACH) totaling \$716,292.20
 - a. Checks to be paid in the amount of \$200,474.49
 - b. ACH to be paid to Frank Rewold & Sons for the June Application and Certificate for payment #2 in the amount of \$515,817.71
- E) Approval of June Credit Card Refund Report totaling \$15,299.00
- F) Receipt of June Cash Balance Report

- G) Receipt of June Check Disbursement Report for the Connect Bond Reimbursement from Township Report
- H) Receipt of the 2026 WB Township Budget Schedule
- I) Receipt of Fully Executed Connect Community Center including GMP Agreement between West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission and Frank Rewold & Sons
- J) Receipt of Donor Opportunities brochure for Connect Community Center
- K) Receipt of Fully Executed Connect Community Center Owner Held Contract between West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission and Frank Rewold & Sons, as outlined in the Connect Community Center Agreement with BJ Construction Services, for the amount of \$844,830 for Carpentry of the Connect Community Center
- L) Receipt of a Prime Contract Change Orders:
 - a. PCCO2 revised for the Connect Community Center Bond Project to Frank Rewold & Sons, Inc for the amount of \$34,793.78 from owner contingency for work outlined in bulletin 2, 3 and 4
 - b. #PCCO3 for the Connect Community Center Bond Project to Frank Rewold & Sons, Inc for the anticipated change order moving money between applicable allowances to trade line for a net change of \$0
 - c. PCCO4 for the Connect Community Center Bond Project to Frank Rewold & Sons, Inc for the anticipated change order moving money between applicable allowances to alternative cost code for a net change of \$0
 - d. #PCCO5 for the Connect Community Center Bond Project to Frank Rewold & Sons, Inc for the amount of \$6,159 from owner contingency for security equipment changes per the RFI
- M) Receipt of West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Form 5572
- N) Receipt of Email Communication from Olivia Dixon regarding Public Land Preservation: 12-Acres of Forested Wetlands
- O) Receipt of fully executed SMART Municipal Credit Program Contract FY 2026-2027

Motion by Commissioner Aronoff, seconded by Commissioner Barash to approve items A through O on the Consent Agenda.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: 2

Motion Carried: 5-0-2

STAFF REPORT

Executive Director Hyer reviewed the recent groundbreaking celebration for the Connect Community Center. She provided an update on the Connect Community Center timeline, meetings overview, and future reporting. Photos of the worksite were shown, highlighting the progress being made and outlining what next steps would be.

Superintendent Frey delivered the Parks and Maintenance report.

Staff completed several maintenance, facility, signage, and capital project updates across Township parks, improving safety, appearance, durability, and overall visitor experience.

- **Trails and grounds:** Staff restored bare lawn areas near new trail intersection signs, repaired unauthorized trail access with temporary fencing and berm restoration, and refreshed mulch and flower beds at the Marshbank overlook.

- **Sports facilities:** Ball field netting at Drake and Keith Sports Park is being reinforced with stainless steel ties, and Bloomer Park's basketball court improvement project is complete with new branded perforated glass backboards.
- **Park signage:** Staff are repairing and protecting sun-damaged signs with clear coat treatments and completed replacements for Marshbank directional signs and the Drake Park skate park sign.
- **Softball tournament:** Drake Sports Park hosted 52 teams for 68 games over three days, with staff supporting temporary fencing, field preparation, and ongoing maintenance throughout the event.
- **Marshbank Phase 2:** The asphalt project was completed in mid-June, about three weeks ahead of schedule. The sports field lot and east side reopened about a month early, while Maple Ridge reopened ahead of the original August 1 target after turf restoration.
- **Next steps:** Restored lawn areas are about 70 percent established and will continue filling in over the next several months. Phase 3, covering the entrance and lodge parking lot, is planned for fall 2027.

Supervisor Stokes provided the Recreation Report to the Commission.

June programming reflected strong community engagement across trails, nature education, youth activities, sports, summer camps, and senior programs.

- **National Trails Day:** More than 170 participants attended the event, which included guided nature education stops, a new stamp activity, sponsor giveaways, and the launch of the Trail Ambassador program with 15 volunteers supporting trail users.
- **Kids Komotion:** The concert continued to draw strong resident participation and featured an interactive performance, bounce houses, library craft stations, sponsor booths, and character meet-and-greets.
- **Nature Programs:** The nature team continued delivering programs while activities are temporarily relocated from the nature room. The Go Fish program at Marshbank Park sold out both sessions, with 82 total registrants and a waitlist, although thunderstorms allowed only the first session to proceed.

Volunteer and partner engagement remained an important part of June programming. Girl Scout Troop 7713 completed a pollinator and rock garden installation at Marshbank Park with 19 volunteers and parent support, continuing a six-year partnership with West Bloomfield Parks. Event sponsors ITC and Lederman also supported National Trails Day by providing participant giveaways and water. Sports programming and summer camps began in June. Staff recognize the camp programmers and CSR team for supporting the start of the season; approximately 391 camp forms have been processed to date. Softball champions included Copper Mug Dawgs, Red Headed Stepchildren, and Union Lake Wolf Pack. Senior programming included the free eight-week Matter of Balance program, facilitated by AgeWays with snack sponsorship from Jewish Senior Life, and attended by 20 participants. Additional senior offerings included volunteer-led Nature Journaling and a progressive luncheon in partnership with senior centers in Southfield, Royal Oak, and Ferndale, bringing together 70 participants.

Upcoming Events include:

- **Marshbank Music Series:** Wednesdays beginning August 5, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
- **Live Animal Show: The Reptarium:** August 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Marshbank Park.
- **Bees, Butterflies, and Blooms:** August 22, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Marshbank Park.

ITEMS FROM THE OFFICERS

A. Items from the Chairperson

Chairperson Brooks thanked staff for the improvements reflected in recent program materials and junior commissioner slides, noting that they demonstrated the quality of the parks and the effort required to maintain them. He also recognized improvements at Connect, including new baffles near the table tennis areas to improve participant experience. Chair Brooks commended staff for coordinating the Marshbank Park asphalt project, noting the complexity of managing traffic flow, sequencing, safety, and public access

throughout the work. Chair Brooks asked staff to summarize the department's response to recent smoke and poor air quality conditions.

Superintendent Chris Frey reported that existing air quality procedures were expanded as conditions reached unusually high levels, prompting staff to adjust operations and prioritize employee and participant safety.

- Outdoor staff were kept inside when readings were highest.
- Essential outdoor work was limited, completed quickly, and supported as needed.
- Indoor maintenance tasks were prioritized until conditions improved.

Supervisor Ashley Stokes reported that the splash pad closed for two days, camps and outdoor programs moved indoors where feasible, and some activities, including splash pad field trips, were canceled or rescheduled. At Connect, air purifiers were used after smoke affected the building, improving indoor air quality and allowing staff and select drop-in programs to continue safely.

B. Items from the Secretary

Secretary Erich thanked staff and fellow commissioners for attending the groundbreaking event despite challenging conditions, noting that the event was brief but successful.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive: Chairperson Brooks

Chairperson Brooks stated they met on July 8, 2026. Present were himself, Secretary Erich, Treasurer Adams, Executive Director Hyer, Parks Superintendent Frey, Recreation Supervisor Stokes, Finance Manager Stephanie Smith, HR Manager Forton and Marketing & Events Manager Tehako. They discussed the monthly meeting agenda, the Connect groundbreaking ceremony, and new monthly reports from Rewold. They also talked about other projects, contracts, and agreements. Outstanding legal and personnel items were discussed. Their next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

Finance: Report

Executive Director Hyer indicated the Finance Committee met Wednesday, June 24, 2026, at 6:00pm. Present were Treasurer Adams, Commissioner Barash, Commissioner Wenczel, Finance Manager Smith, and Executive Director Hyer. The committee reviewed construction payments, budget adjustments and amendments. Bond draw requests were also reviewed. The committee reviewed agenda items for tonight's meeting. The interest from the investment fund, year to date, stands at \$147,701.53. The committee reviewed the finance reports for the month. The next meeting is scheduled prior to the regular Commission meeting on August 26, 2026, at 6pm.

Sustainability: Report from Commissioner Mindell

Although the committee did not have a formal meeting, Commissioner Mindell provided an update on sustainability efforts discussed following the Earth Day event. At the event, she connected with the community engagement organizer for Make Food Not Waste, a nonprofit focused on supporting Michigan's goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030. Commissioner Mindell and Executive Director Hyer are reviewing a potential EGLE grant opportunity that could support food-waste sustainability initiatives already underway through the Parks Green Team and potentially expand similar efforts at the Township level. She noted that the connection was a positive outcome of the Earth Day program and demonstrated how parks can bring people together in ways that create new partnerships and opportunities.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration for Approval of the 2026 Employee handbooks and authorization of future compliance updates.

Motion by Commissioner Aronoff, seconded by Commissioner Barash to approve the Full Time, Part Time and Seasonal Employee Handbooks as written and edited by Eventure HR and approved by legal. In addition, authorize the Executive Director to approve any future updates to the Handbooks as required by State of Michigan or Federal laws.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: 2

Motion Carried: 5-0-2

B. Consideration for Approval of Professional Services Agreement with livingLAB for the development of the West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission 5 Year Master Plan for a cost of \$45,550.00.

Motion by Commissioner Aronoff, seconded by Commissioner Barash to approve the Professional Services Agreement with livingLAB, subject to attorney review, for the development of the West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Commission's 2027-2031 Five-Year Master Plan in an amount not to exceed \$45,550 and authorize the Executive Director to execute the agreement on behalf of the Commission.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: 2

Motion Carried: 5-0-2

C. Consideration for Approval of Drake Sports Park security cameras to Identify Inc. for a cost of \$56,137.72.

Motion by Commissioner Barash, seconded by Commissioner Aronoff to approve the purchase and installation of 13 security cameras from Identify Inc to be installed at Drake Sports Park on the Maintenance building, community building, and restroom building in the amount of \$56,137.72.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: 2

Motion Carried: 5-0-2

ANNOUNCEMENTS- None

PUBLIC FORUM- Connie Neese introduces herself as a park commissioner from Fort Gratiot and explains that her commission wants to learn from well-run park commissions. She praises the organization, parks, staff, and overall work being done.

Chair Brooks thanked Connie for her comments and said the Commission appreciates her feedback.

Chair Brooks explained that the Commission's role is to serve the community, listen to residents, and ensure the parks reflect the people who use them. He noted that strong parks depend on relationships, careful planning, community input, and being prepared for funding and grant opportunities.

He added that West Bloomfield is known for its parks and recreation, and the Commission wants to continue building on that strength by setting clear goals and reflecting residents' priorities in the master plan. Chair Brooks closed by thanking Connie again for attending and sharing her comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:27PM.

Reviewed by,
John Erich

(As a permanent record, an audio tape of this meeting in its entirety is on file and will remain at the Parks and Recreation offices where it may be heard.)