

MIDLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 7, 2016  
MIDLAND CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
7:00 P.M.

PROPOSED MINUTES

- 1) Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson John Metevia
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Roll Call:
  - a. MEMBERS PRESENT: Billotti, Bovid, Metevia, Rankin, Rice, Steidemann
  - b. MEMBERS ABSENT: Carlson, Carney, Varela
  - c. OTHERS PRESENT: Stephanie Richardson, City horticulturist; Andrea Foster, Little Forks Conservancy; Rob Maxwell, Wild Ones; Richard Kopple, Mapleton United Methodist Church; Kali Cochran, United Way
- 4) Minutes of May 3, 2016: Steidemann motioned, Bovid seconded to receive minutes of the meeting of May 3, 2016. Motion passed 6-0.
- 5) Call to Audience: None
- 6) Arrance Family Cemetery final report: Dick Kopple from Mapleton First United Methodist Church shared a final update on the renovations at the Arrance Family Cemetery located on Waldo Court. The church partnered with Midland's Home Depot to clear out trees and brush, restore and reset the old gravestones, and construct a fence around the cemetery. A dedication ceremony was held on Memorial Day with over 70 people in attendance. Mr. Kopple thanked City staff, the City attorney, Home Depot and the Midland County Historical Society for their help with the project.
- 7) United Way Little Free Library request for Plymouth Park: Kali Cochran from United Way requested approval to install a Little Free Library (LFL) at Plymouth Park near the Born Learning Trail. Cochran provided background on the Born Learning Trail, installed at Plymouth Park in 2014. Cochran talked about the concept of the LFL and the desire to install one near the trail. United Way Young Leaders have pledged to maintain the LFL and the Exchange Club is sponsoring it as well. Murphy asked for a motion to approve the donation of a Little Free Library with the agreement by United Way for ongoing upkeep. Rice motioned and Steidemann seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.
- 8) Little Forks Conservancy – weed ordinance recommendations and pollinator garden project: Andrea Foster from Little Forks Conservancy and Rob Maxwell from Wild Ones made a presentation on proposed updates to the City's list of noxious weeds included in the City's weed abatement ordinance. Foster also shared pictures of a new pollinator garden recently installed in Emerson Park near the Rail Trail. Little Forks received \$1000 from the United Way and The Dow Chemical Company in partnership with Keep America Beautiful. There were 22 volunteers who helped plant the garden. The volunteers also removed some invasive plants from the Rail Trail. The City is creating a sign to post at the garden as well. Murphy

asked the Parks & Recreation Commission for a formal motion to recommend said changes to the City Council for consideration in the form of an ordinance amendment. Rankin motioned, Billotti seconded the motion. Motion passed 6 - 0.

- 9) America In Bloom update: Murphy reported that the America In Bloom (AIB) committee received a grant from the Charles J. Strosacker Foundation for \$7,500 in support of the program. A group of committee members marched in the Memorial Day parade, handing out seed packets to spread awareness of the program. Murphy shared that the AIB committee has developed the tour plan for the judge's visit July 21 and 22 to highlight some of the best Midland has to offer. In addition, a press release went out the end of May on the Secret Garden contest that will run in conjunction with the regular Beautification Awards. Yard signs have also been purchased for residents and businesses who do yard improvements in support of America In Bloom. The AIB committee will decide on how to distribute the yard signs. Murphy shared that the AIB award ceremony is in October in California. Assistant Director Jan Yurgens and Mayor Maureen Donker will attend to represent the City, with a report provided back to the Parks & Recreation Commission in November.
  
- 10) Division Report – Horticulture: Stephanie Richardson, city horticulturist, shared an update on projects and initiatives of the horticulture division. Downtown projects include the organic turf program at the Farmer's Market, the Ellsworth Streetscape, and the DDA Streetscape committee for a new Main Street design. Richardson shared photos of this year's hanging baskets, portable pots and Main Street planting beds. Highlights this year are tropical plants. For Midland Blooms, Richardson shared that crews had to remove a large amount of soil from the planting beds to get the proper grade as the new road was put in at a higher grade than the former roadway. She is also continuing the soil bioremediation program in the Blooms beds. Marigolds were chosen this year because of their hardiness with the disruption of the soil from the road construction. Richardson shared some entranceway projects. M20/Currie Parkway has experienced 2 years of hard winters with heavy snow and animal damage. Damaged plants were replaced with 30 crabapple trees and 70 shrubs. At Eastman Road overpass, Richardson removed diseased hawthorns and overgrown junipers, and replaced these with crabapple trees and new junipers. She also shared the removal of planting beds along the top edge of the bridge because of safety concerns with sending maintenance crews up to weed the areas. Richardson talked about priorities in the parks, including updating landscape areas around park signs and transplanting cat mint from the Eastman Road Boulevard to the Center City traffic islands. Richardson is currently working with the Center City Authority on a landscaping plan for around their new wayfinding signs, and also is working with MDOT to take over maintenance at the roundabout. She is also working with engineering to preserve the plants at the Saginaw/Wheeler traffic island during road reconstruction this summer, and putting new plantings in at the Golfside boat launch. Richardson shared that the Community Garden is up and running at full capacity with a wait list for the third year in a row. She has a new garden manager and a new Facebook page to keep gardeners informed. The MSU Extension is partnering with the Community Garden to offer 3 educational sessions at the garden this year.
  
- 11) Project Reports:
  - a. **River overlooks**: The railing for the overlooks has been installed with the exception of one piece at the middle overlook on Golfside Drive. Murphy stated staff is working with the contractor on final punch list items, including lack of germination of the grass seed along the entire project into Chippewassee Park.

- b. **City Forest trail signage vandalism:** Murphy shared that about 10 of the new signs at City Forest have been vandalized. The sign designer is working with the fabrication shop on samples of replacement material that will hold up better to this sort of behavior. The signs will be replaced once a new material is tested and selected by staff. The cost of the replacement signs will be covered by the City's insurance fund.
- c. **Consumers Energy Saginaw Road tree planting:** Murphy shared pictures of the May 14 Consumers Energy/Michigan ReLeaf volunteer tree planting that occurred along Saginaw Road. Forty flowering trees were planted under utility lines to replace ash trees removed from emerald ash borer. The trees were selected because they are low-growing and will have minimal interference with the overhead lines. Staff is talking with Consumers about partnering next year on a similar project.

12) Old Business: Billotti asked the status of the BMX track. Murphy shared that the City will be maintaining it going forward.

13) New Business: Metevia thanked Kristen Bovid for her 6 years of service on the Commission as she has opted to move on to other opportunities.

There will not be a Commission meeting in July – the next scheduled meeting is in August.

Murphy shared that Park Supervisor Chris Hockaday will retire from the City on June 30. Hockaday's parting will certainly be felt as he takes with him years of experience and expertise that have helped to enhance and improve the parks system for the past five years. Staff will be interviewing candidates to fill this role later this month.

14) Adjourn: Motioned by Rankin, seconded by Steidemann to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 6 – 0. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Murphy  
Director of Public Services