

**Duncan Park Commission – April 16, 2024; Regular Meeting; 6:00pm**  
Grand Haven City Hall, Council Chambers, Grand Haven, MI

**CALL TO ORDER:**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Mike Poort, Georgette Sass, John Williams (Elizabeth Pool-absent)  
CITY LIAISON: Ashley Latsch, City Manager

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Motion by Poort to approve agenda; second Williams; approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** *Members of the audience may address the Commission on any item, whether on the agenda or not. Those addressing the Commission are asked to provide their name and address and will be limited to three minutes of speaking time. The Commission will hear all comments for future consideration but may not have a response at this time.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion by Poort to approve minutes; second Sass; approved.

**AGENDA**

NEW BUSINESS:

A. **Discussion** – Velo Kids has submitted a Use Permit (on [Google Drive](#) and attached to email sent with this agenda). The activity requested in the park occurs July 8 – July 11, 2024. **Outcome** – DPC will discuss and vote on the Use Permit from Velo Kids.

Scott Przystas from Velo Kids attended the meeting to provide clarifications on the planned use of Duncan Park. He explained that there would be 30-40 campers being dropped off in the parking area (8:45 – 9:15am) and then picked up from this area (10:45-11:15am). The estimate was that there would be 15-20 cars using the Duncan parking area access road during this time. Scott agreed to accommodate regular users. He argued that Duncan Woods was preferred over Mary A White due to its access to the cemetery. DPC stressed the importance that bikes cannot be on trails or in the grassy area. Velo Kids requested a waiver of any fees to use the park stating that they are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The commission requested that in exchange we be able to ask attendees using the park for donations which would help us cover costs associated with park use. Motion was made by Sass to “support the use permit from VeloKids, waiving the typical fee in lieu of a presentation to the parents on the Duncan Park mission”; second by Poort; approved.

B. **Discussion** – We have discussed potential Duncan Park events in October related to the anniversary of Martha Duncan’s gift as well as our induction as network forest. It was also mentioned that we could use such an event as an opportunity for educational outreach about the need to protect our urban forest in Grand Haven. The Duncan Park Commission will begin planning such events as decided in discussion. **Outcome** – DPC will begin planning October events.

There was discussion about how to move forward with October events related to the anniversary of Martha’s gift and OGFN induction. It was agreed that we should move forward. Sass will discuss with Dr Ewing and the Tri-Cities Museum what the October 19 event could encompass. Sass will also confirm Oct 20 bird walk to provide clarifications on the planned use of the park.

C. **Discussion** – There have been recent reports of activities in the park that would not be supported either by the philosophy of protecting the natural state of the woods or by best practices for safe use of the park. We are currently awaiting information about the status of legalities associated with a specific activity. What role should the Duncan Park Commission take in monitoring these activities and actively address the oversight of recreational use of the park. **Outcome** – DPC will initiate discussions and identify any additional information needed.

Discussion first focused on whether the DPC should have a formal stance on the activities that are allowed in the park. It was noted that Duncan Park is already covered under the rules for all city parks. The DPC is still waiting legal guidance to determine whether additional signage or notifications addressing risks in the park are needed. After discussion regarding the many ways the park is used, it was decided that we should take a proactive approach on guiding users of the park towards sanctioned activities and to that end better

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trail management was recognized as very important. Sass agreed to follow up with the Eagle Scout on his plans to facilitate the implementation of this “carrot not a stick” approach.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A. DPC Internship/Fellowship follow up discussion.

Discussions are currently going on between the city and GVSU to establish.

B. Letter to City Council endorsement deer management.

Letter was read and agreed to be sent to the City Council via the City Manager’s office

C. Letter to Stakeholders related to recent communications about the park.

Letter was read and agreed to be sent to Mr. Duncan Myers.

D. Review upcoming planned events.

List of events to be included as an insert in the DP Brochure were reviewed. It was determined that all of our events can be placed on the Grand Haven Google calendar. We need to begin the transfer of this information via City Manager’s office.

E. Ethan Hoffmeyer’s Eagle Scout project – how to block access from Lake Street?

Requested again that we have access to road barricades. These are requested to be delivered ASAP to the Lake St gate.

**COMMISSIONER’S REPORTS:**

Our new lawn maintenance crew has completed their first clean up in the park and it was noted that it looked very nice! Poort and Williams will be turning on the water; Sass will let Krause know this is not needed but we would like the addition a faucet to the source at the front gate. Poort made a motion to add a faucet to the water source behind the Sheldon street gate ; second Williams; approved.

**CITY LIAISON REPORT:**

**TREASURER REPORT:** March financial reports were attached to email sent with this agenda and can be found on Google Drive.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**ADJOURNMENT:** 7:12PM

**NEXT MEETING:** May 7, 2024 @6pm

**APPROVED MINUTES RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:**

Elizabeth Pool



DUNCAN PARK COMMISSION