

MINUTES
PARKS & TREES COMMISSION
August 11, 2026

1. Chair Bradley called the meeting to order at 5:03pm in the City Hall Conference Room.

2. Roll Call:

Present: Pickett, Bradley, LaDuke, Green, Redder, Lakamper

Excused: Nieuwenhuis

3. Approval of Minutes:

A motion by Green, seconded by LaDuke, to accept and place on file the Parks & Trees Meeting Minutes of the July 14, 2026 regular meeting. On a voice vote all voted in favor. The motion passed.

4. Public Comments: None

5. Chairperson's Report:

Chair Bradley discussed the need to adjust the new meeting time and date. This can be decided without approval from another commission or council. It will be addressed in item 7. C. in today's agenda.

6. Park Reports:

General Update – No report.

Sherwood Park Maintenance Report – Terry reports that it is being well used with activities such as fishing, basketball, and Dean's Ice Cream being well attended. Not much use of the exercise pad.

Pell Park Maintenance Report – Cathy reports that a "missing" picnic table has been replaced. It was actually a new one whose base had been poured recently. Marsha Keeler has donated several of these new picnic tables in various parks.

Hicks Park Maintenance Report – Matthew reports that shade in Hicks Park is great. Bunny's ferns continue to grow in strong under trees where it was once bare.

Thurl-Cook Park Maintenance Report – Cory reports that they (DPW) have started to put in the new playground equipment. It is currently fenced off while they work. They'll eventually add wood chips once everything is set.

Kenyon Park Maintenance Report – Terry reports that Kenyon Park could use some trees and picnic tables. He has started to clear some brush from the North end of the park in order to have a nice walking/nature trail. Apparently, an uprooted tree needs to be dealt with. Could we fund-raise for Kenyon trees, picnic tables and trail development.

Darrow Park Maintenance Report – Bunny reports that Darrow still has erosion. It needs plants? Stairs? Something!

Riverwalk, Band Shell, & CBD Maintenance Report – Cory reports that it all looks good from the bridge through the CBD. Weeds have been mowed (maybe by Koestner's). Sedge Grass would be nice (from Main St. Bridge to beyond the Band Shell). According to Bunny, we may have talked about this before. Bunny also stated that the Purple Loose Strife (invasive/illegal) is getting thick again and needs to be removed.

7. Recommendations and Reports:

- A. Master Plan – Review and Discussion **Tabled** until next month.
- B. Recreation Plan – Review and Discussion **Tabled** until next month.
- C. Chapter 15: Parks and Trees Commission from the Code of Ordinances – Review, Discussion, and Amendment.

- We adjusted the wording of chapter 15. Please see hard copies with changes. Discussion ensued regarding the required number of commissioners. 7 members? Is an odd number necessary? Do we currently have two open seats?
- After discussion, **Cathy motioned that we would meet on the second Wednesday each month at 5:00 pm. Cory seconded the motion. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. The motion passed.**

D. New Orchard Tree Selection:

Justin announced the grant from Consumers' to plant 40 trees in the city. A non-profit group, "Releaf Michigan," with two staff arborists met with Justin and Bob (DPW) to identify two locations in the city in which to plant up to 40 trees...to be highly visible and to repair some of the storm damage. They selected downtown (17 trees) and New Orchard (23 trees) on the North end of town. We get to choose up to three species for New Orchard and the DDA will give input on the species for downtown, to which they responded, "no berries, fruits, or ornamental." Downtown trees are routinely replaced every ~10 years. Note: there is no "cofeffe" tree on the list. Bunny promoted the idea of choosing the best native trees for pollinators. Matthew suggested "shade" trees. Cory did an AI search of all the trees on the list. After good discussion, we decided on our top three species choices: 1. White Oak, 2. Red Oak, and 3. Common Hackberry. "Cofeffe" failed to make the top 3.

Justin also mentioned that it will be a volunteer event. Therefore, we will need a "Volunteer Coordinator" and, as a committee, decide on the date for the event. Five possible dates were mentioned. We chose October 10th. Matthew was selected to 'act' as the volunteer coordinator and will talk to the (PHS and Renaissance) principals and Fall coaches, while Terry will contact the Boy Scouts and the VFW, and Bunny will talk to Chula Vista. We might contact local businesses for donations of water and snacks.

8. Public Comments: None

9. Staff Comments: None

10. Commissioners' Comments:

LaDuke – Could Justin bring in AV equipment to next month's meeting for us to use while we review the Recreation Plan?

11. Adjournment:

A motion by Cory, seconded by Terry, to adjourn the meeting at 6:00ish pm. On a voice vote all were in favor. The motion passed.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 5:00 pm

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by: Matthew Bradley