



**CITY OF WALLED LAKE  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m.

**PLEDGE TO FLAG**

**ROLL CALL:** Fernandes, Johnson, Linihan, O'Rourke

**ABSENT:** Arnold, Robertson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Manager Whitt, HR Director Sears, Council Member Woods

**REQUESTS FOR AGENDA CHANGES:**

Chairman O'Rourke requested discussion on 2026 Walled Lake Parks & Recreation Goals be added under discussion tonight.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**P&R 01-01-26 APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 13, 2025, PARKS AND  
RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Motion by Fernandes, seconded by Linihan, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To approve the October 13, 2025, Parks and Recreation meeting minutes.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**DISCUSSION:**

1. 2026 Goals

Chairman O'Rourke said that one of the commissions goals this year is to host two of the summer concerts next-door at the Casey J. Ambrose Public Safety Campus. Mr. O'Rourke explained that it would be the first concert of the season on June 24<sup>th</sup> and the last concert on August 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr. O'Rourke said he has reached out to Oakland County Parks about renting their portable stage for these concerts. Mr. O'Rourke said the county sent the paperwork to him and asked if he should fill it out or if he should have someone from the city fill it out.

Recording Secretary Sears said that Mr. O'Rourke could send the paperwork to her and she would fill it out and submit it.

Chairman O'Rourke asked how the bands are normally selected for the concerts each season.

Recording Secretary Sears said it is done on a first come first serve basis. The bands that reach out first and that are within budget, have their first pick of a date.

Commissioner Johnson said that he feels the bands over the last couple years have lacked diversity and he would like to see some diversity in the music that is performed throughout the season.

Recording Secretary Sears said that she could send an email to the commission members with the bands that have reached out thus far and expressed their interest and the commission can decide on the bands for the 2026 season.

Chairman O'Rourke said the next goal is pertaining to the new park across from Mercer Beach. Mr. O'Rourke said that the commission should discuss the design and use of the park.

City Manager Whitt said that property is not a park. Mr. Whitt said the Downtown Development Authority purchased that property and they will determine what that property is utilized for.

Commissioner Johnson asked why the Downtown Development Authority purchased the property if they don't have a plan for it.

City Manager Whitt said the Downtown Development Authority board members were unhappy with several developers over the years, proposing building structures at extensive heights. Mr. Whitt said by purchasing the property, the Downtown Development Authority can decide what happens with the property.

Chairman O'Rourke said that he would like to do a park walk through this spring. Mr. O'Rourke said this is something we have done in the past but haven't done in a couple of years. Mr. O'Rourke suggested meeting at one of the parks for the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. O'Rourke said we can go to each of the parks and identify any improvements that are needed or can be made. Mr. O'Rourke gave an example of the wooden exercise equipment being removed from Sims Park a few years ago. Mr. O'Rourke said that the exercise equipment was not being utilized and was deteriorating, so the DPW removed it from the park.

Chairman O'Rourke said he wanted to provide an update on the 2026 Inside/Out program through the Detroit Institute of Art. Mr. O'Rourke said they had a meeting a few months ago and decided on the locations for the artwork. Mr. O'Rourke said that he has been working with a woman by the name of Stephanie. Mr. O'Rourke said she sent over some examples of some artwork that the commission members can pick from. Mr. O'Rourke

said he will send those over to everybody tomorrow. Mr. O'Rourke said, if everyone could get back to him and tell him what artwork they like for each park, that would be great. Mr. O'Rourke said there's two or three examples for each park and then also different sizes. Mr. O'Rourke said keep in mind the piece of should correlate to the location. Mr. O'Rourke said for example, maybe have some sort of artwork that has books and place it near the library or art pertaining to shells or sailboats and place that one at the beach.

## 2. Tree Lighting After-Action Report

Chairman O'Rourke said, even though Mr. Ladd is not here tonight, he would like to thank him and his crew for all the preparation leading up to the event and the decorating they did for the holidays. Mr. O'Rourke said the city campus looked great and the event went well. Mr. O'Rourke acknowledged the extensive planning that goes into this event and thanked city staff for all they do each year. Mr. O'Rourke also thanked everybody on the commission who helped out along the way.

Commissioner Fernandes said she was so sorry she couldn't be at the tree lighting ceremony this year. Ms. Fernandes said she was out of state for work. Ms. Fernandes said she did have a couple of people reach out to her with some suggestions. Ms. Fernandes said that it was brought to her attention that Wixom buys the Walled Lake band members pizza to participate in their annual tree lighting ceremony. Ms. Fernandes said maybe the commission can find a couple bucks to provide the band members with pizza, either before or after the event. Ms. Fernandes said another suggestion was maybe to provide the band members with a warming tent or somewhere to warm up for a bit. Ms. Fernandes said it's typically very cold out and the band members are there for a long time.

## 3. 2026 Schedule of Regular Meeting

Recording Secretary Sears said that the 2026 schedule of Parks and Recreation Commission Meetings was approved by City Council. Ms. Sears said a digital version was emailed on January 8<sup>th</sup> and a physical copy has been provided to each commission member tonight.

## 4. 2026 Schedule of Events

Recording Secretary Sears said that the 2026 schedule of events was emailed on January 8<sup>th</sup> and a physical copy has been provided to each commission member tonight. Ms. Sears said the egg hunt is always on the Saturday before Easter, this year the event is on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Sears said the Memorial Day Parade will be on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup> and the Walled Lake Fireworks are on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Sears said The Market Place will kick off on May 6<sup>th</sup> and is every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. until October 28<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Sears said the first summer concert of the series is June 24<sup>th</sup> and the following are on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>,

29<sup>th</sup>, August 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Sears said the tree lighting ceremony is always the first Monday in December and will be December 7<sup>th</sup> this year.

Commissioner Johnson asked who picks the Grand Marshal for the Parade.

City Manager Whitt said he has chosen the Grand Marshal in the past.

Commissioner Johnson said it seems like the same people have done it over the years and he would like to see some diversity. Mr. Johnson suggested asking a retired sports figure or an emerging artist from the Walled Lake area.

City Manager Whitt said he is open to suggestions as long as the individual is willing to commit and is of good moral character.

**P&R 01-02-26          ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM

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Miranda Sears  
Recording Secretary

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Dennis O'Rourke  
Chairman