

Parks and Arts Commission Meeting

Date: March 17, 2025

Time: 6:30pm.

Location: Meeting was held at City Hall 1 South Huron St. Ypsilanti, Mi 48197. It was recorded and hosted by City of Ypsilanti Staff Bonnie Wessler.

1. **Call to Order** 6:38 by Commissioner McAtee
2. **Roll Call** Present Commissioners Beu, Connor-Barrie, Merlos, Moore, Seagraves, Thorburn, Sweet, McAtee, Parker, City Employee Bonnie Wessler. City council liaison Patrick McLean via Zoom.
3. **Document Approval**
 - A. **Approval of amended agenda-** Moved by Commissioner Connor-Barrie
Seconded by Commissioner Merlos Passed
 - B. **Approval of Minutes** Moved by Commissioner Seagraves Seconded by
Commissioner Connor-Barrie Passed
4. **Audience Participation**-None
5. **A. Internal Commission Business**
 - i. **New Commissioner Introduction.** Anna Parker
 - B. Funding & Partnership**
 - i. **Funding & Partnership Handbook**
 - a. Can we build a repository/manual for best practice, record of successes & failures? Discussion around institutional memory. Anyone has experience with this working or a method to keep record.
 - b. Members reached out to artists for their experience. Commissioner Moore waiting to hear from people she has reached out to. Ms. Wessler suggested speaking with Code Enforcement and Historic District before creating a graffiti alley.
 - c. Centralized record of the City's history with grants.gov, State, Watershed Council. Ms. Wessler stated that there is a comprehensive list for state in the Master Plan but not for foundation or federal. Commissioner McAtee will connect with Ms. Wessler for more information.
 - ii. **Percent for Art Ypsi**
 - a. Reading and Discussion was led by Commissioner Merlos
 - b. Advance or Amend the draft resolution. Change cities to those more comparable to Ypsilanti and change to at least 1%. How does it get used? Council has already supported the old ordinance. Commissioner McAtee will see about getting a working session to discuss more.
 - C. Volunteer / Adopt-a-Park replacement program**
 - i. **Updates since February meeting**-none reported
 - ii. **Needs one or two commissioners to work with Ms. Wessler on public-facing specifics** M McAtee, Sweet and Thorburn. Ms. Wessler has asked for help with tree give away. Probably give away is on April 21.
 - a. Don't take DPW work, don't make more work for DPW, must be sustainable
 - b. Framework to partner with existing action networks for projects on city property

- c. Take inspiration from Washtenaw County's volunteer opportunity page
- iii. Possible project: Knotweed removal on May 17.**
 - a. Other shovel-ready projects down the road-none reported
- iv. Program needs a new name.**
 - a. It needs clarity of purpose & recognizability.

6. New Business

A. Jefferson St. Sound Barrier Project - M.A.N.Y. (Mutal Aid Network of Ypsilanti). proposal -Commissioner Beu reported on the proposal. Another possible project would be a meadow in Riverside Park. Riverside may be torn up as the park is managed. The hillside where the Japanese Knotweed is located could be replanted.

7. Reports

A. Commission Initiatives

i. Youth Poet Laureate - Commissioners AM Moore, A Seagraves

B. City Updates

i. Updates- Director Wessler

- a. Events policy draft – Wendy Estey will no longer be the event coordinator. Job is posted. Draft needs to be made user friendly. Ms. Wessler went through the draft. Ms. Wessler will take this to council on April 18th.
- b. Events Coordinator position posted- Hourly position currently.
- c. Signage for Mattingly Tot Lot schematic was shown. Color scheme will match other signs. Will cost around \$3,000. Many parks have missing signs or need updating.
- d. Other updates

Senior Center had a pipe burst. It sustained flooding. They will be closed for a while. Monica is reaching out to other community partnerships to see if programming can happen elsewhere.

Rutherford Pool-approving budget and will reach out to the city to start hiring process. Free swim lessons are still up in the air.

ii. Parks and Recreation Master Plan

- a. B Merlos - any Master Plan listening session updates None. Lawyers are still discussing things.

ii. Questions for staff:

- a. Riverside Grant for stormwater, accessibility, paths No updates.
- b. ReLeaf presentation and grant discussion occurred last week

C. Friends Groups / Facility Reports / Event Updates

Senior Center had a pipe burst. It sustained flooding. They will be closed for a while. Monica is reaching out to other community partnerships to see if programming can happen elsewhere.

Rutherford Pool-approving budget and will reach out to the city to start hiring process. Free swim lessons are still up in the air.

8. Audience Participation None

9. Adjournment 8:13pm

Next meeting: Monday, 21 April 2025, 6:30 pm

Whereas, it is the charge of the Ypsilanti Parks & Arts Commission to recommend to City Council projects and solutions that promote the arts in the City, and

Whereas, the Percent for Art Campaign is a national program, often found within ordinances or as stand-alone ordinances, where a fee, usually some percentage of the project cost, is placed on large scale development projects in order to fund and install public art, and

Whereas, any money reserved on a project can be used to acquire, commission, or restore art for all community members, residents, and visitors to enjoy, and

Whereas, public art is the hallmark of thriving, healthy communities, and

Whereas, the first Percent for Art program in the United States dates back to 1934, and

Whereas, Atlanta, Georgia; Charlotte, North Carolina; King County, Washington; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Phoenix, Arizona; Portland, Oregon; San Jose, California; and Tampa, Florida all have active Percent for Art Ordinances, and

Whereas, the City of Ypsilanti is preparing to revise its Community Benefits Ordinance to ensure all future developments or redevelopment projects benefit the community members and residents, and

Whereas, the City's current Community Benefits requires projects to include similarly community-minded benefits for projects such as those in Tier 1:

1. ... additional recreational activities, parks, open space, public service enhancements or public infrastructure improvements for the City of Ypsilanti and its residents. This includes public transportation services and infrastructure. OR
2. Incorporation of green or sustainable energy elements into the Project or the promotion of such investments throughout the City of Ypsilanti.

And for Tier 2 projects:

1. Providing or supporting educational and/or mentoring activities that provide or enhance employment opportunities for local residents and youth through the Ypsilanti Community Schools, Washtenaw Community College, or other educational programs, and

Whereas, a Percent for Art would fit within the scope of what is already required, and

Therefore, be it resolved the Parks & Arts Commission recommends updating the City of Ypsilanti's Community Benefits Ordinance to ensure that 1% of all new developments or redevelopments be allocated for public art.