

CITY OF BERKLEY
PUBLIC NOTICE
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
7:00 P.M. March 12th, 2026 AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

Present: Mike Kerby, J.D. Otto, Melissa Hammond, and John Nicolai

Also, present: Dan McMinn and Greg Patterson

Unable to Attend: Betty Smith and Andrew Boring

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion to approve by Melissa Hammond and supported by John Nicolai

APPROVAL OF 2/12/26 MINUTES: Motion to approve by Mike Kerby and supported by J.D. Otto

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments

BOARD BUSINESS:

1. Winterfest

- Winterfest was a strong success with an excellent turnout. Amanda handled setup very well.
All full-time staff attended, along with five part-time staff to help run events. Operations ran smoothly throughout the event and many great photos were shared on Facebook.
- There were 200 pre-made s'mores kits, and those were popular at the event.
- Weather conditions were ideal, staying in the high 30s to low 40s. Due to the warmer weather, the skating rink was not possible so a last-minute "blue lagoon" magnetic fishing pond was created instead, and attendees enjoyed it.
- The ice sculptures were also highlight, with the Berkley marquee sculpture being a favorite.
- Overall, the team was glad they made the decision to move to a later date this year. Although the event has traditionally occurred the first Saturday in February, they will be considering moving it later in the month in future years to avoid early-February cold snaps.
- Mike Kerby noted that moving the event time was likely a good decision and agreed it may continue to make sense in the future.

2. Steelers 2026 Season

- The Berkley Steelers reached out regarding use of Lazenby Field as Tyler Park will be under construction for a new softball field, leaving them without a practice space. Lazenby Field was identified as a potential multi-use field in the 5-year plan, making this a potential suitable use case.

- Dan McMinn gathered information from the Steelers, including information such as how many families are involved in the program, whether they are Berkley residents, and whether the request is for one year or longer.
- The Steelers indicated they were informed they will be able to use the turf field outside the new complex once construction is complete, making this a one-year request.
- Dan McMinn reviewed the fall schedule (which included adult kickball, a women's softball league, and SOCS on weekends) and made the decision to provide field access for Berkley youth.
- The adult leagues have been notified of the change.
- Steelers practices begin in August, Tuesday through Friday. SOCS will continue to use the field on weekends for soccer.

3. Program Updates

- Some of the Parks & Recreation Staff (Dan, Josie, and Amanda) attended last week's Parks Conference in Lansing. Josie focused on planning and inclusiveness, and is interested in starting chair volleyball for Seniors. Amanda attended sessions on communications, marketing, and events. Dan attended budgeting and leadership sessions and is hoping to test a new in-office communication app. The app includes a dashboard similar to Trello, where notes can be posted.
- Senior Events/Information:
 - Seniors recently attended *The Lion King* at the Opera House, followed by a stop at Dutch Girl Donuts. The next outing is scheduled for late March to the Museum of Illusions.
 - AARP has been onsite providing free tax-aid services for seniors. Demand has been high, with appointments fully booked for several weeks. An additional day was added; appointments are now offered on Mondays and Thursdays, with 20–25 appointments per day. The service includes collecting information, entering it, and submitting the tax return. The program is open to everyone, not just Berkley residents. Tax filing assistance began on February 7 and continues through the Monday before Tax Day.
- Spring Break Camp begins in a couple of weeks. Campers will go on a trip each day. 29 of 35 spots are currently filled.
- The Bacon Park enhancements discussed at the last meeting were approved by Council on March 2. Updated security features for the concession stand were also approved, including access-control cards to open doors, transitioning away from traditional locks and keys, and adding cameras.
- The Spring/Summer Program Guide is in its final stages and will be available online soon. A postcard will be mailed to households notifying them that the guide is available and directing them to view it online.

4. Board Business

- At the last meeting, there was discussion about creating a proclamation in support of the work being done at Bacon Park. As similar items come up, the goal is to get them on the agenda in advance whenever possible.
- Greg Patterson agreed this would be helpful moving forward.
- J.D. Otto inquired whether a template exists for this type of proclamation. Greg Patterson noted that nearly every meeting includes a proclamation that could serve as a template.
- Dan McMinn to email the group a previously used Proclamation template as a baseline.
- The board discussed potential updates to the bylaws, including adding language to hold board officer elections in August. There was interest in adding expectations for members who need to miss a meeting (e.g., required steps or notifications). Dan McMinn previously sent the Board a copy of the library's bylaws and the sections related to the purpose, membership, officers, meetings, rules, and the code of ethics were generally well-liked by the Board.
- Melissa Hammond to start a draft for the Board to review at the next meeting, using the library's bylaws as a guide. The draft will be sent along with the completed meeting minutes, so they will be ready for review/discussion at the next Board meeting.
- Dan McMinn noted that the terms for Melissa Hammond, Andrew Boring, John Nicolai, and Betty Smith all expire this year and it will be necessary to re-do applications for the board.
- Mike Kerby reminded the Board that if anyone wants to add anything to the agenda, to please send it to him a week ahead of time.
- Melissa Hammond suggested adding a recurring "Board Goals" item to the agenda, potentially on a quarterly basis. Including this item will help the Board maintain clear alignment with its annual goals. The goals previously identified were:
 - Create and define bylaws.
 - Recommend the 5-year master plan for approval.
 - Actively engage community members to help reform the Friends (of Berkley Parks & Rec) group.
 - Strengthen relationships with city council and city management.
 - Fill the vacant board position.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Melissa Hammond expressed appreciation for the programming, noted she was glad the city was able to find a practice location for the Berkley Steelers, and offered best wishes for Betty Smith.
- John Nicolai expressed agreement with Melissa's comments.

- J.D. Otto shared that Winterfest was impressive and it was great to see the space so actively used. He noted that much of the area was utilized and expressed interest in seeing more activities held there in the future.
- Greg Patterson noted:
 - Budget season begins the week of the 23rd.
 - He is always thinking of Betty Smith and wishing her well.
 - The Dad's Club donated a much-needed scoreboard, which was recognized as a very generous contribution.
 - Council approved repairs to a crumbling DPW wall.
- J.D. Otto inquired what "budget season" entails. Greg explained that all department directors present what they need and why. Dan added that the process began back in November or December. Staff review the budget line-by-line, outline their requests, and project revenue. At this stage, everything has been balanced. Directors present any major changes and capital projects as part of a three-year budget, though adjustments can be made as needed. In recent years, departments have begun providing a high-level overview of major requests and anticipated changes to inform Council. This year, the Parks & Rec department's major capital request is funding to repair the tennis courts. Dan McMinn is working with a court-resurfacing company to determine whether resurfacing is sufficient or if reconstruction is needed. The school district has already expressed interest in contributing financially. Dan also shared that the 5-year plan was officially accepted by the DNR. Beginning next year, the department will start applying for grants to help offset project costs. The fitness court discussed at a prior meeting could be one such project—part could be included in the capital plan, with grant funding sought for the remainder. Greg Patterson noted that council only approves one year of the budget at a time, with a two-year look-ahead. Dan McMinn noted that the Finance Department and the Communications Director are working on a budget document that help present the information.
- Dan McMinn shared that the 5-year plan was approved and expressed appreciation that the process is complete. He thanked everyone for their comments and for their support of the department's work.
- Mike Kerby offered his best wishes to Betty Smith and expressed appreciation for the support received from Council.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:06 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: April 9, 2026