

# RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

121 N. Church Street, Hudson, MI 49247

## REGULAR MEETING

Minutes of September 15, 2026

The Recreation Advisory Board meeting was called to order by Bruce VanWieren at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Bruce VanWieren, Kimberly Adams, Michelle Bauer, Sara Schudel,  
Sierra Sandahl and Richie Wheaton

Absent: Roger Clark

Others Present: Erika Borck, Devin Sandahl, Deputy Clerk Samantha Gerig, City Manager Jeremiah Davies,  
City Clerk Jeaniene McClellan.

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### **ORDERS OF THE DAY:**

#### **Excuse absent members:**

Motion by Richie Wheaton, seconded by Sara Schudel to **excuse Roger Clark from the meeting**, CARRIED by voice vote.

#### **Minutes:**

Motion by Richie Wheaton, seconded by Michelle Bauer to **approve the minutes of August 18, 2026, and place on file**, CARRIED by voice vote

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Discuss Surveys – Grant Projects:**

Key Takeaways:

- We received 76 responses, with 84% coming from City residents. This is useful community feedback, although it should be treated as guidance rather than a statistically representative vote.
- Residents generally view the park system positively. Approximately 87% rated the overall condition of the parks as average or better.
- The walking trails are our strongest asset. They were the most-used facility and were repeatedly praised for their accessibility, connectivity, cleanliness, and convenience.
- Respondents also appreciate having parks throughout the community, maintained grounds, ballfields, pavilions, and family-friendly spaces.
- At the same time, there is a noticeable difference between general satisfaction and concerns about specific facilities. Respondents repeatedly mentioned bathrooms, playground equipment, courts, parking, lighting, accessibility, and older furnishings.
- Bathrooms were the most frequently identified maintenance or safety concern, followed closely by playground equipment.

- Nealy 40% of respondents indicated they have avoided using a park because of a concern. Comments cited deteriorated equipment, locked or unclean restrooms, poor lighting, insects, parking, accessibility, and personal safety.
- Several concerns may require prompt inspection rather than waiting for long-term planning, particularly missing hardware, playground fall surfaces, deteriorated equipment, court conditions, restroom access, and ADA-related issues.
- There is strong support for investment. About 81% of respondents supported or strongly supported grant applications or future park improvements.
- The most requested future amenities were:
  - Restroom improvements – 54.8%
  - Splash pad – 49.3%
  - New playground equipment – 45.2%
  - More community events – 37%
  - Dog park – 35.6%
  - More youth programming – 32.9%

The comments reveal an important tension: some residents strongly support a splash pad or other new amenities, while others believe the City should improve and maintain existing facilities before adding anything new.

Programming is also a significant theme. Family events, outdoor recreation, summer programs, youth activities, and adult recreation all received interest.

The largest barriers to participation were not cost or transportation. They were a lack of offerings and residents not knowing what programs are available. That suggests communication and programming improvements may be achievable without major capital investment.

### **Michigan DNR Rec Passport Grant Info:**

- Provide funding to local units of government to build new public recreation facilities or fix old ones.
- Grants range from \$7,500 to \$150,000 per project.
- Applicants must provide at least a 25% match of the total project cost.
- Local governments like cities, villages, townships, counties, and official regional or trail authorities.
- Must own, lease, or have a perpetual easement on the project site, plus hold a DNR-approved 5-year recreation plan or capital improvement plan.
- Routine maintenance, administrative overhead, and professional sports stadiums do not qualify.
- Applications must be submitted through Recreation Passport Grants – State of Michigan by April 1 each year.
- Must have a current 5-year creation plan.

Other comments by the board members were;

- How much money to re-seal the walking paths
- ADA – playground equipment
- Tennis courts, basketball court – redone

### **Co-Chair Person:**

Bruce mentioned when he leaves for Florida on November 5<sup>th</sup> and if we need to have a meeting after he leaves, we need to have a co-chair person to run the meetings.

Motion by Sara Schudel, seconded by Richie Wheaton to **approve Michelle Bauer as the Co-Chair person.**  
CARRIED by voice vote

**VISITORS BEFORE THE BOARD:**

No further comments were received.

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

*The next meeting will be October 6, 2026 at 5:00 pm.*

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Adjourn the meeting at 5:43 p.m.**

ATTEST:

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Jeaniene McClellan, City Clerk