

Duncan Park Commission – June 18, 2024; Regular Meeting; 6:00pm
Grand Haven City Hall, Council Chambers, Grand Haven, MI

CALL TO ORDER @6:00PM:

COMMISSIONERS:, Mike Poort, Georgette Sass, John Williams

ABSENT: Joe Middleton, Elizabeth Pool

CITY LIAISON: Timothy Price

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Request to amend the NEW BUSINESS portion of the agenda with two additional items (Discussion of the purchase of a native evergreen tree for Christmas festivities in the park and maintenance of the 8 picnic tables currently in the park) made by Port. Motion to approve agenda as amended by Sass, passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: *Members of the audience may address the Commission on any item, whether on the agenda or not. Those addressing the Commission are asked to provide their name and address and will be limited to three minutes of speaking time. The Commission will hear all comments for future consideration but may not have a response at this time.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve draft minutes of June 4, 2024 Duncan Park meeting sent by Port, passed.

AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Discussion** – The cost of an invasive species assessment from the WMCISMA (West Michigan Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) was estimated to be \$125. (My [email communications](#) with Murielle Garbarino who would be completing the assessment in October are posted to Google Drive and are attached to this agenda.) As pointed out in our June 4, 2024 Duncan Park Commission (DPC) meeting, we have had invasive species surveys in Duncan Park which have been used to target areas & species for removal. An updated assessment would be informal and would not include any detailed location information. **Outcome** – DPC will vote on whether to be included in the invasive species assessment and approve as an expenditure.

*Murielle Garbarino confirmed what could be provided by an assessment and indicated management suggestions would be shared. **Motion to support an expenditure of no more than \$150 for an invasive species assessment, passed***

- B. **Discussion** – Long term management of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) began with our initial WMCISMA partnership in 2019 which treated all hemlocks in the park (4,883 trees with a sum of 28,979 DBH inches treated). This is an ongoing commitment and will require we support with expenditures for future treatment. Murielle Garbarino (WMCISMA) submitted a grant to the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation for funds to cover the cost of a survey to identify current infection status and treat up to 10% of trees. (This limit was set due to considerations of the per acre; per year limits of the chemical used in retreatments). The grant request covered the 200 acres of Grand Haven forests encompassing Mulligan's Hollow, Lake Forest Cemetery and Duncan Park. Unfortunately, the grant was denied. I asked for an estimate of the cost for the DPC to move forward on this crucial component of our management of HWA and received an estimate of \$33,000. The development of a long-term HWA management plan that includes targeted assessment goals and support of associated costs will be discussed. **Outcome** – The Duncan Park Commission (DPC) will determine how to manage HWA infection in the park and vote on its expenditure.

After questions from commissioners were answered, it was decided that:

1. The \$33,000 cost for a complete survey and 10% treatment was not an option for the DPC at this time based on budgetary considerations.
2. The DPC would like to move forward with a resurvey of the park in 5-6 yearly increments that represent sections of the park starting with the highest potential need (perimeter). These could be retreated by WMCISMA as needed and per state guidelines.
3. The DPC asked that this survey include a health status.

4. The DPC has asked that the first partial survey and retreatment be conducted in the 2025 treatment year as this represents a 6 year point since our initial treatment in 2019. Murielle noted that she will have to determine whether Duncan Park can be scheduled for the Winter 2024/2025 treatment schedule.

5. Recognizing that the processes of a total resurvey or partial resurvey could potentially miss HWA infestation (in post-survey years or in off-survey years, respectively), the DPC asked that we and our stakeholders be trained in the identification of HWA. *(This could be part of our October events planned to celebrate the anniversary of the Duncan gift and our Old Growth Forest designation).*

6. On behalf of the DPC, and under guidance from WMCISMA and Dr Locher, Sass will write an HWA management plan for Duncan Park that reflects the approach outlined above.

7. The DPC would be part of a resubmission of any grant request to the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation - GHACF. *(This would hopefully be in October 2024 and could be in conjunction with the city or not as appropriate).* The inclusion of an HWA management plan and the DPC intent to fund will then remove previous concerns identified by the GHACF.

- C. **Discussion** – The DPC-hosted October events celebrating the anniversaries of both the Duncan Park gift to the citizens of Grand Haven and the Old Growth Forest dedication are under development. A historical lecture on this gift from Robert and Matha Duncan by Dr Wallace Ewing will be held on October 19 at the Tri-Cities Historical Museum. There will be a display in the museum to highlight the historical aspects of Duncan Park and the lecture could also be complimented with refreshments. An initial discussion with Ellen Paulin of the Tri-Cities Historical Museum and Dr Ewing led to additional suggestions such as hosting a panel of experts discussing forest health in Duncan Park on a day prior to the lecture. The DPC is also hosting a Fall color Drive, a birding walk by the local Audubon chapter and a volunteer event in October. **Outcome** – DPC will discuss the planned October events, identify specific tasks to be completed by commissioners and vote on any associated expenditures.

Sass shared that the Tri-Cities Museum has agreed to host Dr Ewing's lecture on the history of Duncan Park in the evening on October 19, 2024. Dr Ewing indicated that his focus will be on Robert and Martha Duncan. It was agreed that refreshments will be served – an anniversary cake from Rykes and local coffee. Additional events during the month of October include an Audubon-led walk in the park accompanied by Old Growth Forest activities (October 12), Fall Color Drive (October 26) and a Volunteer event. Sass will contact the Bookman about a possible table of readings related to Old Growth Forests.

- D. **Discussion** – DPC will choose a tree to be used seasonally in Christmas decorating festivities.

Poort will identify a native evergreen to be used for this purpose and determine cost, location and planting schedule to be voted on at the next meeting.

- E. **Discussion** – DPC will address maintenance of the picnic tables and replacement of the current wood with composite material which would allow tables to remain in place throughout the year.

It was decided that modifications to the existing tables would begin with the ADA compatible table. Poort will identify costs associated with this change and Sass will recruit an Eagle Scout for the broader project of modifying all tables in the future.

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OLD BUSINESS:

A. Duncan Park Newsletter – Discussion and vote as necessary

Access to the current in progress newsletter was shared. Sass requested commissioners share any photos they have and make editorial comments on the existing copy of the newsletter.

B. Duncan Park Commission letter of outreach to the community – Discussion and vote as necessary.

A letter is still under development and method of distribution still under discussion.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS: *These should be limited in scope, representing a report of activities relevant to Duncan Park and DPC.*

*However, discussions or actions that require detailed consideration or a vote should be placed as an agenda item under **NEW BUSINESS**.*

- *Completion of the gate restoration was noted by commissioners along with a discussion of formal thank you messages to be sent to those involved. It was noted these should go to all who participate in beneficial activities in the park.*
- *Eagle Scout Trail maintenance project is still under development.*
- *There was a discussion on returning our meetings to the third Tuesday of every month rather than the current first and third Tuesday arrangement that was agreed upon at our 15 August 2023 Duncan Park Commission meeting. This was brought to the commission as a request from our current city liaison. It was noted that this may increase the length of the meeting and various strategies to prevent excessive discussions were discussed. **Motion to return the DPC meetings to a frequency of once per month on the third Tuesday, passed.***

CITY LIAISON REPORT:

TREASURER REPORT: May financial reports can be found on Google Drive and were attached to the email sent with this agenda.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE:

June 17 – City Council; Harbor Island Future Use Update (Impacts deer population affecting DP)

June 20 - Forest Management Subcommittee meeting (6pm; Loutit Library, Program Room B)

June 25-27 – Chelsea and Andrew Stavis of Stavis Film are shooting a documentary of Grand Haven Urban Forests and interviewing individuals from the community (*specifically those on current commissions as well as the mayor*).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

ADJOURNMENT: 7:38PM

NEXT MEETING: July 16, 2024 @6pm

DRAFT MINUTES RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

Georgette Sass



DUNCAN PARK COMMISSION