



CITY OF OAK PARK

Department of Recreation

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CITY OF OAK PARK

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING: January 21, 2026

- I. Meeting called to order at: 6:30 pm By: Juanita Bell, Chair
- II. Introductions:
Members Present: Carly Silverman, Carian Taylor, Theresa Lorick – Henderson, Ajai Tice
Alexander Simpson, Juanita Bell

Members Absent: Beverly Wiggins, Mickey Alderman

City Council Members Present: City Council Member Whitehead

Staff Members Present: Laurie Stasiak, Recreation Director and Brody LeBlanc, Recreation
Coordinator

Guests Present: Jennifer Szonye
- III. Approval of Agenda for **January 21, 2026**

Motion: Alexander Simpson Seconded: Carly Silverman
Approved: X
- IV. Approval of Minutes of Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting of
November 18, 2025.

Motioned by: Theresa Lorick-Henderson
Seconded by: Alexander Simpson Approved: X
- V. Council Comments:

About 56% done with the Event Hub and the City is working on updating their Master Plan.

VI. Recreation Updates:

Gift-O-Rama 2025: This event was held on Saturday, December 6, from 11 am – 5 pm. There were 17 vendors in attendance. Items for sale for the holidays included specialty foods, jewelry, African dolls, wreaths, leather goods, wearables and more. All the vendors seemed very pleased with the event and said they would love to return in 2026.

Winterfest 2026: Save the date: Sunday January 25 from 1 pm – 4 pm.

All amenities have been secured for this year's event: Horse and wagon, reindeer, Scottish Mini Moo's, ice carver, supplies for S'mores, face painters and volunteers for hot chocolate and donuts. Topp Dogg will once again volunteer their time to serve the chili. The Girl Scouts, Oak Park Library, ACDC will all be in attendance for "make and take" crafts tables. Motor City Cruise will be on hand to distribute the donuts.

Sponsors to date: Andrew Attisha from 9 Mile and Greenfield Shell station, RealTeam Real Estate and the Motor City Cruise.

Volunteers are still needed for the S'More area, face painting area, hot chocolate and general "Welcome Ambassadors".



Daddy Daughter Dance 2026: Save the date, Sunday, February 1. Time: 4 pm – 6pm

The flyers have all been dropped off at the Oak Park elementary schools the week of Jan. 5. Photobooth company, Topp Dogg and DJ secured for the event.

Volunteers (2) are needed for Photo Area, (1) greeter at the door, (1) floater for the dining area and assist with bussing tables.

Senior Activities:

We welcomed the seniors back to the community center after the 2 week "holiday pause".

On tap for this month:

Presentation at the **Outdoor Adventure Center**, Jan 15, (sold out) + lunch at Crispelli's,

Bianco Travel Show: Jan. 16 Meet with the owners of Bianco to see what exciting trips we have planned and to see what the community at large might like to experience.

Meadow Brook Theatre, Jan 21, to see the performance of "All Shook Up" includes lunch at Kruse and Muir.

S'mores N More:

Save the date! S'mores N More is back for its third year on Sunday, February 22 from 1-3 pm. New this year, this event will take place at the Community Center grounds. Join us for roasting s'mores, a kid friendly craft, and more winter activities!

The "Rooted in Community" Quilt Project hosted at the farmers market this year has won the Innovative Recreation Programming award from Michigan Parks & Recreation Association. Maralee and Erin will be accepting the award at the association's conference at the beginning of March.

Youth and Adult Sport Programs – Brody LeBlanc, new Recreation Coordinator

Sports

- **Basketball** – Basketball season is officially underway! Teams have been practicing for the last 2 weeks at Key and Pepper elementary. We have 56 total kids and 2 teams per Co-ed age group were formed. Games will begin this Saturday, January 24. (Weather permitting)

- **Soccer** - Soccer sign-ups have officially been opened for 2 weeks. In those 2 weeks we have 17 sign-ups between all the age groups. The goal is to have 90 sign-ups which would be comparable to the Spring of '25.
- **Flag Football (Goal of Fall '26)** – Looking to reach out to neighboring community alliances to bring flag football for kids starting in the fall of '26 or the spring of '27. This is a growing sport across the region, and I believe that it could provide a great opportunity to Oak Park youth.

Day Camp

- **Need an Assistant Director** – We were recently informed that our Assistant Director from last year will no longer be returning.
- **Need counselors** – We will need to hire a few more counselors for this upcoming summer.

Youth Programming

- **Hair Braiding** – Since my arrival, I have been reaching out to hair braiding businesses/people in efforts to partner with someone to provide a hair braiding class to the Oak Park youth. When I was with the City of Detroit, I saw this program draw 20 kids consistently with another 20 kids on the waiting list. It is a program that offers kids a valuable skill set and could potentially set them up with a career path in the future. This is a class that could be built upon. My vision would be for Oak Park to offer a beginning, intermediate, and advanced hair braiding classes soon.
- **TumbleBunnies** – I recently met with TumbleBunnies which is a company that provides youth programming opportunities such as gymnastics, karate, all sports programs, music programs and more. I am in the process of finalizing our partnership with them in efforts to bring karate, gymnastics, and “The all sports” program to Oak Park for young kids. Target audience would be kids ages 3-9.
- **National Guard Bootcamp Fitness program** – In a partnership with SSG Nick Ray, we are planning to rollout a 4-week program intended for high school aged kids starting in February. This program would be non-cost to the department and could be built upon as I try to build a relationship with high school. The program would be once a week and teach kids proper workout form for running, push-ups, sit-ups, squats, and more.

Shepherd Park updates and slides

Event Hub updates and slides

Community Center updates

VII. Old Business – Commission

a. **Dog Park:**

Save the date for 2026: Dog Day Afternoon Sunday, July 19 from 12-3pm!

Current Dog Park #'s:

Humans: 28 Dogs: 32

Oak Park: 25

Huntington Woods: 2

West Bloomfield: 1

VIII New Business – Commission

a. Resignation – John Stuyvenberg moving to another city.

b. Elections – Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary - scheduled for February meeting

IX Announcements - None

X Meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm

Motioned by: Ajai Tice

Seconded by: Carly Silverman

Motion passed: X

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Lorick- Henderson

Recording Secretary for the meeting