
Chair

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**YPSILANTI
TOWNSHIP**

— WHERE YOUR FUTURE GROWS —

Park Commission

Commissioners

Edward Burnett

Gigi Jones

Ashley Agdorny Sanders

Ypsilanti Township Park Commission

Regular Meeting

Date: Monday, September 14th, 2026

Time: 6:30 P.M.

Location

1st Board Room

Ypsilanti Township Tilden R. Stumbo Civic Center

7200 S. Huron River Dr

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

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REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

MONDAY, September. 14th. 2026

6:30 P.M.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Determination of Quorum**
- IV. Approval of Agenda**
- V. Approval of Minutes from the August 3rd, 2026 Regular Meeting**
- VI. Citizens Participation**
- VII. Reports**
 - A. Staff Reports**
 - B. Commissioner Report**
- VIII. Unfinished Business**
- IX. New Business**
 - A. Approve Dates for 2027 Meetings**
- X. Announcements**
- XI. Recommendations to the Township Board**
- XII. Adjournment**

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Proposed August 3rd Meeting Minutes**Date:** 8/03/2026**Call to Order Time:** 6:34**Roll Call**

Burnett P
Creech P
Crosby P
Johnson P
LaFrance P
Sanders P
Jones P

Determination of Quorum Y**Approval of Agenda** Amended N Motion: Jones Second: Crosby Passed**Approval of Minutes** Amended N Motion: LaFrance Second: Sanders Passed**Citizens Participation****Name:** Craig Combs**Comments:** See attached**Name:** Linda Combs**Comments:** Need benches on dam at Bridge Road for walkers.**Staff Reports**

Hines: Community Center building – Locker rooms bids close Thursday. Goal is for contract vote to the township board at the August 18 meeting.

Clubview Park - Pavilion construction bid to Township board at August 18 meeting. Goal is fall 2026 construction. New pavilion to be located between the pickle ball courts and the play structures.

North Bay Park – Bid awarded and budgets signed for pavilion and bathrooms. To be presented to the Township board at the August 18 meeting. Design to be finalized soon.

Loonfeather Park – Preliminary engineering reports for dock replacement to be presented to the township board at the August 18 meeting. This will be a 2027 project and format of new dock will need to be discussed.

Hewens Creek Park – Parking lot expansion and improvements to be on 2027 budget with work to be done in the Spring or summer of 2027. Possible camera to be added to monitor lot.

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For 2027 schedule look into moved day of month and/or location of parks commission meetings.

Jazz fest has started Fridays in Ford Lake Park. They need volunteers.

Smoke from wildfires hampered Rowfest.

North Hydro Park – Bathrooms need cleaning and management. Possible signs for out-of-service.

Commissioner Reports**Burnett** - None**Creech** - None**Crosby** - None**Johnson** - None**LaFrance** - None**Sanders** - None**Jones** - None**Unfinished Business**

None

New Business

Motion to move November Parks Commission meeting from 11/2 to 11/9. Moved by Sanders, second by LaFrance, passed unanimously.

? Motion to move September meeting to second Monday 9/13. Moved by Sanders, second by Jones, passed unanimously.

Announcements

None

Recommendations to the Township Board

None

Adjournment**Time: 7:35 Motion: Burnett Second: LaFrance Passed**

A Resident's Concerns Re: Ypsilanti Township Parks

Ypsilanti Parks Commission Meeting - 3 August 2026

Good evening, distinguished members of the Board,

My name is Craig Combs, and I am a ten-year resident of Ypsilanti Township: a homeowner, taxpayer, and independent voter currently residing in West Willow for nine years. For me—as well as for my parents who are also homeowners in the Township—the Ypsilanti Parks System has become an invaluable part of our daily lives. With my father having had multiple heart surgeries since the Covid pandemic, my mother now in her late-70s, and my own chronic health issues, we have relied heavily on the local parks for our daily walks. I, personally, have experienced an 82-point decrease in my cholesterol levels in just seven months, merely by walking in the park every day and making simple changes to my diet, all without the intervention of toxic prescription drugs, which I personally cannot take. And, I could cite many more benefits, as well.

However, my primary purpose in attending the Ypsilanti Parks Commission Meeting this evening is to draw attention to some of the major deficiencies in our community parks and to demonstrate how the lack of judicious oversight and enforcement of our municipal laws, codes, and ordinances ultimately leads to the entrenchment of the already concerning racial and class divisions, not to mention a breakdown in the fabric of civil society, in general. I see or experience this incivility on my street, Nash Avenue in West Willow, nearly every day of the week.

We all have eyes to see and ears to hear how our divisive legacy media personalities and radical and extremist elements within our political parties and among our elected officials—on the right and left, and at the federal, state, and local levels—continue to harness residents' personal anger and frustration in order to weaponize their authority against those of us with whom they politically and ideologically disagree; which, in turn, can lead to the subversion of the voices of dissent who would dare to expose the constant barrage of propaganda and speak out against their establishment talking points; in a concerted effort to maintain the

status quo, their institutional power, and even their own elite status and job security—oftentimes, at any cost.

With all of that said, I would like to enumerate a few personal examples of the lack of government oversight, local patrol, and law enforcement presence; the selective enforcement of our township laws, codes, and ordinances; and the lack of consideration for the residents whose property taxes actually pay for the land to build our parks, the maintenance of our parks, the enforcement of our laws, and the salaries and stipends of our elected township officers and board members, whether they run competitively or unopposed.

I believe my concerns can be summed up with these three overriding principles: 1) Clean parks, 2) safe parks, and 3) healthy parks.

When it comes to park cleanliness, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to hire maintenance workers and contractors who consistently adhere to the strict removal of trash, waste, and debris throughout the parks. Like I said, I walk our parks—most often North Hydro Park—nearly every day, and I cannot count how many times I have encountered overflowing waste bins, pavement walk paths covered in goose feces, food-littered pavilions, and toilet facilities smelling like some third-world latrine. [By the way, both bathrooms at North Hydro Park have been closed and out of service for over a week now, with signs posted on the doors.]

This begs the very question of and manner in which such maintenance contractors are hired, and who is approving them. In addition, there appears to be a real problem at North Hydro Park with the lawn maintenance contractors who do a horrible job at keeping the grass mowed to a consistent height. With the DTE gas pipeline project going on there, there's actually much less to mow, but they seem to constantly miss whole strips and sections of grass almost every time they mow, and it often appears as if they are mowing with dull blades. That's just unacceptable. There are too many hard-working lawn maintenance crews in our township who do an exceptional job at maintaining both residential and commercial properties for us to accept this level of incompetence.

As for maintaining healthy parks, I am speaking generally of providing an environment for all of our township's residents to take part in the peaceful enjoyment of our community together, which can only be achieved with a fundamental adherence to the principle of mutual dignity and respect. This bullet point should also include the most basic concept of clean water, air, and soil by which everyone should be surrounded when they visit our parks and other communal facilities.

With respect to the DTE gas line project in the the Hydro Parks, I have personally been exposed to fumes, gases, and chemicals such as hydraulic, boring, and injection lubricants and adjuvants that are toxic when humans come into contact with them. I know, because I used to work on oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, and have also been exposed to toxic fumes emanating from a sewer main replacement project on my own street just a year or so ago. The EPA actually had to be called out to hold those contractors accountable for using chemicals that were not properly labeled, nor were they being properly vented away from our residential homes. This is documented with the YCUA administration.

I believe we must expect this same level of scrutiny and accountability with respect to Corbyn Energy Services (CES) contractors working for DTE Energy who are potentially exposing residents in our parks, roads, and common areas to such harmful and toxic chemicals. I, for one, have Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Syndrome, and am probably in the highest risk category of any of our residents because of it. But, that is not to say I am the only one who needs to be that vigilant. This goes for anyone who is chemical sensitive, young people, and the elderly and infirm. They use our parks, too. Just think of the lengths to which our politicians went during Covid to enforce lockdowns, segregation, and physical distancing.

And with respect to park safety, the biggest problems I see in the Ypsilanti Parks these days are 1) people bringing their dogs either unleashed or letting them off the leash to run wild while they're visiting the park; 2) drug trafficking between individuals in the parking lots and restrooms, under pavilions, and even out in the open, often in front of children and young people; 3) wooden boardwalk planks out at North

Bay Park that are totally unsafe; and 4) certain members of the population who are either under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, or who are too mentally unstable and, thus, unfit for public interaction. In other words, people who are unreasonably aggressive or otherwise physically or verbally abusive committing hate crimes and the like.

Let me share a personal example of the latter. On Sunday, July 19th around 2:00 PM, I was on a walk at North Hydro Park. I was on my first of what is usually five or six laps per visit, when I came upon a white woman with no front teeth sitting on a picnic blanket with her purse and assorted smoking paraphernalia. She had a medium-sized, light-brown, wiry-haired dog with her that was not on a leash. As I approached the turn to make another lap, I had to pass by her, and her dog came up to me and growled, showing its teeth and would not allow me to pass by her. I waited for a minute, and then she said to the dog, "Oh, leave him alone." As I finally maneuvered around the dog and passed by her, I said in a very calm and soft voice—so as not to draw attention to her in any way—"You know, there is a leash law in this township," to which she immediately replied, "Oh, really?"

On my second lap around, as I approached the same woman, she had the dog still off its leash and was playing fetch with a stick into the river. When I got around the track to where her blanket and purse were, she yelled out at me, "Don't be looking at my shit!" At first I let it go; then, she yelled it again, only this time she started walking toward me with the dog, and yelled out, "You fucking faggot! Have you ever had your ass beat by a woman before. Well, you're about to find out what it's like. And I told you, don't be looking at my shit. Get the fuck outta here!"

I backtracked and said to her, "I'm not looking at anything, but I am certainly not taking orders from you." That's when I took out my phone and started to dial 911, but when I consciously thought through how that scenario often turns against the victim in favor of the criminal—especially when the victim is a white male, and the criminal a woman or minority—I chose the most reasonable option to deescalate and cut my workout short and leave the park. I kept the phone in my hand until I got to my car, fearful I would be accosted from behind by this unhinged lunatic.

This is exactly what happens 1) when there are no surveillance cameras, rangers, or law enforcement presence to deter this kind of behavior in the parks; 2) when the rules are bent or ignored for certain classes of individuals who feel laws and ordinances do not apply to them; and 3) when people in general buy into the class and racial divisions perpetuated by the legacy media, hate-mongering politicians, and misguided community leaders. For the record, in the nine years I have been frequenting the parks in Ypsilanti, I have never once seen or encountered a Park Ranger.

This brings me to my last grievance for tonight with respect to the Ypsilanti Parks. When I left North Hydro Park and went looking for another park to finish my workout, I went down Textile Road and turned onto Huron River to Ford Lake Park. I knew they didn't have a proper walking track, per se, but I knew it was a big enough park to get my walking in for the day. When I got to the gate, I was asked to pay an additional \$10 on top of all the other fees and taxes I'd already paid for access to this park. I was told there was a rowing competition that was going on for ten days, during which every person would be charged \$10 regardless of the reason for their visit. The woman at the gate also informed me that there would be five consecutive Fridays in July and August where I would be charged \$20 to visit that park because of a Jazz Festival.

My question to you, the distinguished members of the Board, is very simple: Who signed off on this contract with the Rowing Championship organization and the City of Ann Arbor to require us taxpaying residents of Ypsilanti to also pay the additional \$10 entry fee to the park for those ten days? Nobody I know in this township has any interest in rowing. Just consider this: My property taxes pay to procure the property upon which our parks are built; my property taxes pay for the maintenance and upkeep of our parks; my annual membership fee (car window decal) pays for me to access all five or so parks in Ypsilanti Township; and yet, you still want to deny me access to these parks because someone on your board or at the Township Office level signed off on an undisclosed contract that would not even exempt us taxpaying residents from that additional \$10 or \$20 entry fee for these extended events, despite my

only reason for visiting the park being for my own health and safety? This is totally and utterly unconscionable.

That is why the following day, Monday, July 20th, I called the Ypsilanti Township Office, on the advice of the gatekeeper at Ford Lake Park, to file a formal grievance about this policy. I did just that, speaking at length with Jane in the Code Enforcement/Ordinance Department, who said she would escalate these valid concerns to Brenda Stumbo's Office and to Belinda, the head of Code Enforcement, saying that someone would get back to me.

As is almost always the case, no one in either office ever called me back. I even called and left a message for Ranger Bob, per the advice of Greg, the gatekeeper at North Hydro Park, to whom I had filed my complaint about the unleashed dog problem that was getting worse in all the parks. So a week later, on Monday, July 27th, I called back to the Ordinance Department, but this time spoke at length with Daisy, who listened to all of my concerns, graciously apologized for the actual hate crime I had been subjected to with the toothless woman and her unleashed dog, and escalated my concerns once again.

This time, however, someone did actually call me back. Lori Lutomski, the Community Resource Coordinator for the Township called me on Tuesday, July 28th, with whom I once again discussed all my grievances concerning the parks and the selective enforcement of the law as it pertains to noise and blight violations in West Willow, at large. She advised me to come to this Parks Commission meeting tonight, so that other residents who may be reluctant to air their concerns publicly might otherwise have me as a voice of accountability among the greater Ypsilanti Township community. According to Robert's Rules of Order, I respectfully move to submit the full transcript of my comments into the public record and the minutes of this meeting. [Board approved.]

I thank you all for your time and patience in listening. Have a great evening.

Craig A. Combs -
Homeowner, West Willow, Ypsilanti Township

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2027 Proposed Park Commission Meeting Dates:

1. January 11th (Delayed due to Holiday Closure)

2. February 1st

3. March 1st

4. April 5th

5. May 3rd

6. June 7th

7. July 12th (4th of July observed on July 5th)

8. August 2nd

9. September 13th (delayed due to Labor Day)

10. October 4th

11. November 8th (Delayed due to Election)

12. December 6th