



Natural Features Protection Review
Board Minutes
March 24, 2026, 4:00p.m.
City Hall, Commission Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Director Hollander, Director Fredrickson, Director Rowe, Director Bassett, Director Stemple, Director Martin

MEMBERS ABSENT: Director Murgia

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Nolan Bergstrom

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Director Fredrickson called the meeting to order at 4:01p.m.

DIRECTOR BASSETT MADE A MOTION TO EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS, SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR MARTIN. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

DIRECTOR BASSETT MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA, SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR HOLLANDER. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 24th, 2026

DIRECTOR STEMPLER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 24TH, 2026, NATURAL FEATURES PROTECTION REVIEW BOARD, SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR MARTIN. MOTION PASSED.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

E. BOARD COMMENTS

None.

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. 1617 N Drake Road – Youth Sports Complex Phase 1 DIRECTOR FREDRICKSON RECUSED THEMSELVES FROM PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE 1617 N DRAKE ROAD NEW BUSINESS ITEM.

The board reviewed a proposal for Phase 1 of a youth sports complex specifically focused on woodland clearing. The project was previously reviewed in December for variances. The ZBA Board granted a slope and slope setback variance, but they denied a woodland variance.

The applicant updated the plan to meet the 25% minimum preservation requirement, now proposing to leave 27.2% of the woodland onsite. Phase 1 is limited to woodland removal motivated by potential bat habitat on-site.

The applicant had a bat assessment completed by ASTI which identified nine specific trees in poor health as potential habitat. These nine trees were removed as regular maintenance activities by the landowner. The applicant is working toward full site plan approval to remove the remaining trees by mid-April to avoid bat season. Members of the NFP board discussed the necessity of removing stumps to prevent the spread of Oak wilt. Board members also questioned site circulation and the potential for a future northerly roadway extension requested by Oshtemo Township.

DIRECTOR HOLLANDER MADE A MOTION THAT THE NATURAL FEATURES PROTECTION BOARD APPROVE THE PHASE 1 SITE PLAN FOR THE WESTGATE SPORTS COMPLEX PROJECT AT 1617 N. DRAKE ROAD WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- **NO WORK BEGINS UNTIL FULL SITE PLAN REVIEW APPROVAL**
- **IF REQUIRED, A COPY OF ANY REQUIRED PERMIT OBTAINED FROM A STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE CITY.**
- **TREE PROTECTION FENCING IS IN PLACE PRIOR TO WORK BEGINNING**
- **CREATION OF A BOND FOR THE PROJECT THE TYPE AND AMOUNT TO BE ESTABLISHED BY CITY STAFF:**
 - **REMAIN CONSISTENT WITH OTHER PROJECTS**
 - **CONSISTENT WITH CITY COMMITMENT TO INTENT OF NFP ORDINANCE**
 - **DUE TO PROJECT BEING SPLIT INTO TWO PHASES**

THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY DIRECTOR BASSETT. THE MOTION

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. NFP Board Member Application Recommendation

The board interviewed Sarah Munchow for a full three-year term. Munchow is an architect by profession and is also the sustainability manager, with experience in building development, are a member of the Kalamazoo Area Wild ones and have an interest in native plant species. They provided background to NFP Board members about who they are and why they are interested in serving on the NFP Board.

Members of the NFP Nominating Subcommittee provided feedback to the rest of the NFP Board members on the candidates' qualifications and the answers from the applicant interview, feeling that the candidate is a good fit for the NFP Board.

DIRECTOR BASSETT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF SARAH MUNCHOW TO THE NFP BOARD FOR A FULL TERM OF THREE YEARS. THIS MOTION WAS SECONDED BY DIRECTOR STEMPLE. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A ROLL CALL.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. STAFF REPORTS AND UPDATES

- NFP Guide

Nolan presented the current draft of the NFP Guide, designed to assist developers and residents in navigating the ordinance and finding qualified consultants.

- Development Process

The board discussed refining the Development Process graphic to clarify that it represents the entitlements process and includes disclaimers regarding case-by-case costs and complexities.

- Board Training

There is interest in future training sessions on ethical responsibilities, social impact, and joint board sessions with the ZBA or Planning Commission.

I. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Imagine Kalamazoo - Master Plan meetings recently concluded across 15

neighborhoods

2. **Two- Way Conversion** – Gas work by Consumers Energy is currently underway downtown as part of the preliminary steps for the conversion project
3. **Kal Recovery Project** – a groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for April 14th at 1:30 PM

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Director Fredrickson adjourned the meeting at 5:24 p.m.