



Natural Features Protection Review
Board Minutes
May 7, 2026, 4:00p.m.
City Hall, Commission Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Director Hollander, Director Fredrickson, Director Bassett, Director Stemple, Director Munchow

MEMBERS ABSENT: Directors Murgia and Rowe

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Nolan Bergstrom

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

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

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

B. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

C. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 24TH, 2026

The board reviewed the meeting of March 24, 2026, minutes. Several corrections were noted

1. Spelling of Kalamazoo Recovery Project
2. A correction was made regarding tree health and bat habitats; it was clarified that nine trees identified as potential habitat were not necessarily Oak trees and their poor health was distinct from Oak wilt concerns.
3. ATSI was requested to be corrected to ASTI

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

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

E. BOARD COMMENTS

None.

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. 1617 N Drake Road – Youth Sports Complex Phase 2

Director Fredrickson recused themselves from the new business item being connected to the project professionally.

This project previously appeared before the board for variances and Phase 1 (woodland clearing). Phase 2 covers the full site plan including building, construction, parking, landscaping, and stormwater management. The board recommended approval with three conditions

- No work until full site plan approval
- Filling of required state/federal permits
- Maintaining tree protection fencing

The board discussed the removal of nine dead trees that served as potential habitat for the Indiana bat and Northern long-eared bats. A suggestion to require the planting of nine replacement trees (Elm, Maple, or Ash) was debated but ultimately not added as a formal condition, as members felt preserving 25% of the woodland and installing bat boxes provided more immediate habitat value. Concerns were also raised regarding the use of White Pines near the parking lot due to their sensitivity to salt. The applicant agreed to move them as far from the curb as possible. The board also noted the removal of the Frontier Elm from the planting schedule. There was a brief discussion regarding why certain endangered plants were not in the landscape plan, the applicant cited aesthetic and maintenance considerations for the parking lot environment.

A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE PHASE 2 SITE PLANS FOR THE WESTGATE SPORTS COMPLEX WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS LISTED ABOVE, MOTION APPROVED VIA ROLL CALL VOTE (4-0)

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Director Munchow shared the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) 2040 Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan was a resource for the aligning NFP goals with broader climate initiatives
- Staff are working on an NFP Guide to serve as a resource. The board discussed the challenge of balancing stewardship and sustainability goals with the need for predictable regulations for developers
- It was noted that the city is currently drafting a new Master Plan, which will influence future sustainability and land use goals

G. STAFF REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Imagine Kalamazoo - staff reported on recent downtown walking audits and the high participation in Imagine Kalamazoo events
 - Bikes in the Zoo – Nolan announced the Bikes in the Zoo vintage bicycle show happening downtown alongside the Mac and Cheese Mayhem event

1. ADJOURNMENT

Director Fredrickson adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.