



City of East Grand Rapids
Regular Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting
Agenda

YouTube Livestream:
<https://bit.ly/3s8WgQY>

March 23 , 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
(EGR Community Center – 750 Lakeside Drive)

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment by persons in attendance.
3. Report of Commissioners.
4. Minutes of the regular meeting held February 23, 2026 (enclosed – approval requested).
5. Special Event Calendar (enclosed – information only)
6. Consider request to approve Special Event Permits (enclosed – action requested)
 - a. 2026 HS Grad Party- Big Bob’s Parking Lot Request
 - b. 2026 Reeds Lake Trailblazer 5K
7. Waterfront Park Phase II Update (verbal- no action requested)
8. Historical Signage in John Collins Park Update (verbal- no action requested)
9. Report of Director
10. Communications

* * *

The City will provide reasonable auxiliary aids for individuals requiring them for effective communication in programs and services of the City. Notice must be made to the City five (5) days prior to the program or service requesting the specific auxiliary aid.

EAST GRAND RAPIDS
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
EGR COMMUNITY CENTER
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
6:00 PM
Monday, February 23, 2026

The regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held in the City Commission Chambers in the East Grand Rapids Community Center.

Patrick Parkes called the meeting to order 6:00 pm.

Present in Person: Paul Bratt, Michelle Brown, Ryan Burdick, Lauren Jacoby, Ben Smith, Lan Le and Patrick Parkes

Absent: Larry Fisher and Steve Krogman

Also Present: Parks and Recreation Director, Derek Melville and Sara Coffey

Guests: None

Public Comment:

None

Report of Commissioners:

Michelle Brown – Attended the Parks and Recreation GR Gold game, it was great to see the Parks and Rec staff there!

Paul Bratt – The community is excited about the grant and the upcoming art fair.

Ben Smith – Robotics teams from Lakeside and the middle school will move onto the national competition. Anticipate June groundbreaking for the school construction.

Ryan Burdick – The Department of Public Works (DPW) will be removing redundant water lines that are under the track.

Lauren Jacoby, Patrick Parkes and Lan Le – Nothing.

Review of minutes:

Minutes of January 26, 2026, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting were presented for approval.

MOTION to approve: Brown

SUPPORT: Jacoby

YES: Bratt, Brown, Burdick, Jacoby, Le, Parkes and Smith (7)

NO: (0)

MINUTES APPROVED

Special Event Calendar – FYI

Consider request to approve Special Events Permits:

a. 2026 Reeds Lake Run

Director Melville presented the Reeds Lake Run. This event is being held by the Parks and Recreation Department in June. Courses are out and back, which help reduce the amount of road closures, public safety members and volunteers.

Burdick: Is there an established alternative route for the 10K course, if it is flooded like it is now?

Bratt: This event is a fun organized event. Likes that it is family oriented and appreciates it being stroller friendly.

MOTION to approve: Bratt

SUPPORT: Parkes

YES: Bratt, Brown, Burdick, Jacoby, Le, Parkes and Smith (7)

NO: (0)

2026 Reeds Lake Run is Approved

b. 2026 Rhoades McKee Reeds Lake Triathlon

Director Melville reviewed the course map for the swim, bike and run courses. 700 plus participants are expected. The post-race celebration will be moved from Wege Plaza to Gerken Plaza. Alcohol will not be served this year, and awards will be in the same place as where the post-race food is served. The location change will not impact the racecourse.

Bratt: Will the school construction interfere with the race?

Melville: No.

MOTION to approve: Brown

SUPPORT: Parkes

YES: Bratt, Brown, Burdick, Jacoby, Le, Parkes and Smith (7)

NO: (0)

2026 Rhoades McKee Reeds Lake Triathlon is Approved

Middle School Athletics Registration Fee Discussion:

Director Melville presented this agenda item and is requesting feedback. In 2011 the city took oversight of Middle School athletics. The Parks and Recreation Department handles registration, organization and

budgeting of middle school sports. Vertical Alignment has made staff look at all areas, including pay for coaches. They are paid a flat fee of \$1,000-\$1,800, with the higher range being for sports that have more intensive time needs. Compared to other local schools we are on the low end of pay. Fall of 2026 coaches' stipends will be increased by \$1,000.

When budgeting for the following year, each program has their own budget within Parks and Recreation. Since 2011 we have always tried to break even in the end for Middle School sports. Having less participants in boys swim increases the cost per student dramatically when the added coaches' pay was factored in. Having a flat rate for all Middle School sports has its pros and cons as well. The extra money that comes in from track would help offset the higher cost of boy's swim.

Parkes: Asked if there is anticipation of salary increase to be based on intensive needs or sliding scale?

Melville: This will start with a one-time, big pay bump then increase by increments of so much per year as coaches continue to work for us.

Bratt: Prices of programs could decrease if the number of participants increases?

Melville: Yes.

Burdick: Would like to see the price even across the board. Doesn't want to see sports getting more or less participants due to cost.

Jacoby: Agrees with the increase in coaches stipend.

Brown: Where does the \$150 average come in?

Melville: It's weighted; some sports have significantly more athletes than other sports.

Jacoby: Where do gate fees go?

Melville: Back to the sport that brings it in.

Jacoby: Where do scholarships come from?

Melville: The school coordinates scholarships, not exactly sure where the money comes from.

Le: Is the city able to pass costs onto the families?

Burdick: Suggested the city could subsidize this cost. Noted \$250 is the same amount each high school athlete pays for sports.

Melville: In 2011 breaking even was agreed upon by the city and school. The City Commission would need to agree to subsidize additional costs.

Burdick: For consistency, it might be beneficial to fundraise each year, to cover these higher costs.

Le: Everything is getting too expensive; can the city work this out?

Jacoby: Has had conversations with parents, \$250 is far less than the cost of any club sport. Gate fees should be spread evenly over all sports.

Smith: Looking at the district, other schools are on scale option 2, which is one lever we can actually pull and doesn't promote lower participation in sports and prevent new sports from beginning.

Bratt: Agrees.

Parke: Wondered if we would lose athletes if some of the sports with higher participation, increase their cost?

Melville: Unsure, but there is a possibility that student would try other sports that they might not have before because the sports are all the same price.

Smith: Suggested keeping the current method for the next school year and educating families about the change to \$250 per sport that will come in the future.

Brown: Likes the idea that middle school and high school sports cost would be the same.

Jacoby: Asked if other middle schools have the same structure?

Melville: Was unable to find another school that runs their middle school sports through a municipality. EGR is very unique. One point from Commissioner Burdick about scholarships and fundraising to help offset the higher costs.

Burdick: It would benefit everyone.

Parke: Fundraising for sports to offset participation barriers, if there was extra it could go back to the sport that did the fundraising.

Melville: Some team members have experience with fundraising.

Smith: Suggested having a gap year and sending a survey to families to get their thoughts.

Burdick: Suggested advertising the cost change early and supports a year ramp up to the change.

Parke: Noted that nobody is excited about change and supports sending a survey out to families.

Le: Asked if we didn't increase the participation fees for 2026 would that impact the coaches?

Melville: We just finished the 2026/27 budget, and we are working in alignment for Commission approval in June of 2026. Ideally, we would like to secure higher quality coaches that could bypass us and go to better paying schools. We are lucky to have great coaches with so much experience.

Parke: Wonders if students don't participate in the high school sports because of the \$250 fee.

Melville: Families are paying more than that for all other sports.

Brown: When does a decision need to be made by?

Melville: Ideally in the next month or so, since some middle school sport signups are in the summer brochure.

Smith: Does middle school track have the same contract with GR Christian?

Melville: No, they don't have room for us.

Smith: Because track will need to be going elsewhere for practice, he would like to see cost subsidized specifically for track.

Jacoby: Will busing be provided for track? Will this cost be estimated too?

Melville: Unsure, at this time. Hoping to find out by spring break.

Parke: Is track the only sport impacted by the school construction?

Melville: Football and track are both impacted.

Smith: Has anyone reached out to Aquinas?

Melville: Yes, they have a long-term rental with other groups. We are on a waiting list.

Smith: Can we rent a track?

Melville: Yes, by the season or an annual fee.

Smith: Is the rental cost reflected in the cost of the sport?

Melville: No.

Le: Communicating costs to the community is important, so they know why costs are increasing.

Melville: The plan is to have proactive communication. Recruiting qualified coaches is important.

Jacoby: The Middle School Athletic Director Shannyn is at the school during registration and she is very helpful. She's great at communicating.

Smith: When track information is communicated to families it would be nice if the exact same information was provided to middle school and high school.

Melville: Yes, this is part of Vertical Alignment.

Parke: Wondered if it was possible to get feedback from the community about this?

Melville: Today has provided good feedback and the finance committee suggested some great talking points. This information can be consolidated into a page or 2 of information. Any questions or comments can be directed to Input@eastgrmi.gov, all submissions are viewed and directed to the correct area. Thanked the Commission for their feedback.

Bratt: Supports stipend and likes the second option regarding middle school sports, feels it fits into vertical alignment.

Parke: Would like to see simplicity and predictability. High school parents are already familiar with paying a flat fee for sports.

Smith: Agrees.

Report of Director: Director Melville reported on the Parks and Recreation Department attending Parks and Rec night at the GR Gold Basketball night, EGR sold 70 tickets. Some Parks and Recreation staff had a booth at the Women's Expo at Devos as well. The department will look for unique ways to get out into the community.

Digital payments for middle school games is going well. It's nice to have an additional form of payment available to spectators. Another card reader will be purchased this year to get ready for fall sports.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 pm

Next Meeting: March 23, 2026

East Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation 2026 Special Event Calendar

Date	Event	Time	Participants	Approval	Closure	Ins.
3/14/26	Corewell Health Irish Jig	6:00am-11:30am	2500	9/22/25	x	
5/16/26	Revive & Thrive 5K	8:00am-12:00pm	400	1/26/26	x	
6/5-6/7/2026	EGR Fine Art Fair*	All weekend	4000	11/24/25	x	
6/27/26	Reeds Lake Run	8:00am-11:30am	2500	2/23/26	x	
7/4/26	Trailblazer Run/Walk*	8:30am-11:00am	500		x	
TBD	Taste of East*	5:00pm - 8:30pm	2500		x	
8/2/26	EGR Gaslight Criterium	9:00am-5:00pm	200	11/24/25	x	
9/12/26	Reeds Lake Triathlon	7:30am - 12:45pm	900	2/23/26	x	
9/25/26	East Grand Rapids MS Regatta	6:30am - 4:00pm	700	11/24/25		
TBD	EGR Harvest & Beer Festival*	10am - 3pm	1000		x	
TBD	Kisscross Cyclocross (Sunday)	8:00am-4:00pm	70			
11/26/26	Gobble Wobble Run	8:00am - 11:00am	1400	1/26/26	x	
11/27/26	GVBA Tree Lighting*	4pm-8:30pm	1500		x	
12/31/26	BCBS Resolution Run	3:30-4:45pm	800		x	
* events denoted with a * do not count towards the 8 road closures allowed each year.						
Non-Special Event Permit Applications						
<u>KDL Parties in the Park</u>		<u>TIME</u>	<u>TABLES*</u>			
		9:30am-12:00pm				
	6/16 Park Party	"	2			
	6/23 Park Party	"	6			
	6/30 Park Party	"	6			
	7/7 Park Party	"	2			
	7/14 Park Party	"	2			
	7/21 Park Party	"	2			
	7/28 Park Party	"	6			
	8/4 Park Party	"	6			
* Grounds crew provides tables						



CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

750 LAKESIDE DRIVE SE • EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506
(616) 949-2110 www.eastgrmi.gov

DEREK MELVILLE
PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

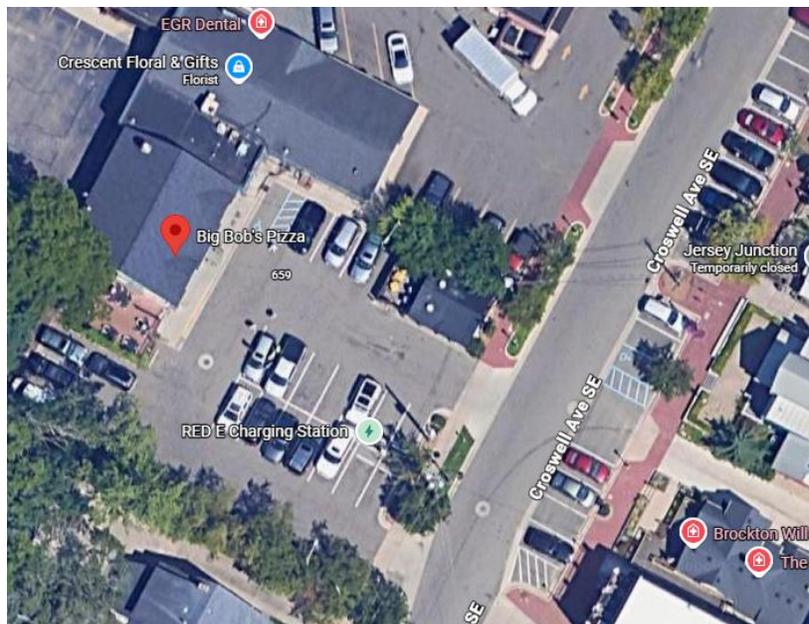
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Derek Melville, Parks and Recreation Director
DATE: March 19, 2026

RE: Special Event Permit Request- Big Bob's Parking Lot Use

Requested Action: Review of the requested use of the City parking lot adjacent to Big Bob's pizza and consideration of issuing a Special Event Permit for the scheduled event.

Background:

The parking lot in front of Big Bob's Pizza is owned and operated by the City of East Grand Rapids. The lot is used by patrons of the restaurant and other Gaslight Village businesses, and a few spots are designated for Big Bob's staff.



Recently a few East Grand Rapids residents have been working with Big Bob's staff to plan a High School graduation party on Saturday, May 23, 2026 at the restaurant. The event organizers have reached out to the City to request permission to reserve the parking lot between 8am and 4pm on the day of their event to allow for a tent to be put up for general gathering space and in case of inclement weather. Big Bob's will be closed to the public during the event due to the expected attendance of the graduation party and will reopen in the evening.

Use of City property for special event purposes is required to go through the Special Event permit process, which requires an application to be submitted, review by City staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission for compliance with the Special Event Permit process, and payment of a \$250 permit fee.

Based on a review of the Parks and Recreation Special Event Permit Policy, this request meets the following criteria:

- The event does not require a road closure.
- The requested date falls within a timeframe where permit availability remains open in May (currently 1 permit has been issued, and 2 permits each month are allowed to be issued).
- Big Bob's Management has indicated support of this request. A copy of the letter from Big Bob's is included with this memo.

Appropriate event management measures will be required as part of the permit conditions, including maintaining emergency access, ensuring proper waste disposal, and adhering to any other applicable regulations.

City staff are seeking review and consideration of this Special Event Permit application.

Print

Special Event Permit Application - Submission #16953

Date Submitted: 3/2/2026

Permit Fee

Applicant must call the Parks & Recreation Department at 616-949-1750 to pay the permit fee before the application will be processed. Your event date will not be secure until payment is received. We accept AMEX, Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Office hours are M-F 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

This permit must be completed and submitted at least 60 days before the scheduled event. The Parks and Recreation Commission will review permit applications and are responsible for final approval.

Name of Event*

Date of Event*

2026 Grad Party

5/23/2026

Organization Sponsoring Event*

Parents of Grads

Event Start & End Time*

Event Website Address

08:00 AM

—

04:00 PM

Purpose and description of the event to be placed on City website for the general public to view.*

2026 Grad Party

Event Contact Email Address*

aliday2406@gmail.com

Representative First Name*

Last Name*

Ali

Day

Address1*

939 Lakeside dr se

City*

East Grand Rapids

State*

mi

Zip*

49506

Daytime Phone*

616-826-0482

Cell Phone*

616-826-0482

Email Address*

aliday2406@gmail.com

Alternative Representative First Name*

Leanne

Last Name*

Mauriello

Daytime Phone*

401-218-5733

Cell Phone

111-222-3333

Email Address*

Leanne.mauriello@gmail.com

Will you have a medical service provider onsite?*

- Yes
- No

Running and other competitive events MUST have medical personnel onsite during the event.

Dan Fechtner

Name of medical service provider?

Estimated Number of Participants*

6

Estimated Number of Spectators*

450-500

Number of staff onsite during the event?*

10-12

Estimated Number of adult volunteers on duty?*

12

Event Location*

Big Bobs Pizza

Describe the location of the event and/or start and finish area if it is a race.

Does this event require road closures?*

- Yes
- No

Will you require Public Safety Officer involvement for your event?*

- Yes
- No

Special Event Permit Guidelines

[Click Here](#)

1. Map or layout of the event must be submitted before the application will be considered for approval.

Highlight the course, route or location of the event on a map and upload using the link below.

File Upload

Big Bobs parking lot.jpg

2. All runs must have a lead and trail vehicle. Lead vehicle must have roof top signal with lights and a trail vehicle behind last participant.

3. All events requiring road closures must alert residents along the route or race course at least one week in advance of the event.

The information can be conveyed by going door to door, mailer, postcard, flier etc... The information should include name of event, contact person, date, start and end time, location, course map and a short description of the event. A copy of the information must be submitted to the Parks & Recreation Department for our records.

3. Applicant must submit proof of insurance in the following amounts at least 10 days prior to the event:

Automobile public liability and property damage for owner and non-owner vehicles in the amount of (\$300,000) per occurrence for personal injury and (\$500,000) per occurrence for property damage. b. Public liability insurance with a minimum combined single limit of personal injury and property damage liability coverage: (\$1,000,000). c. All insurance must name the City of East Grand Rapids and East Grand Rapids Public Schools as an additional insured.

4. The permit holder shall agree to clean the route or event site of any litter and trash caused by the event. If the permit holder fails or refuses to properly clean the site or course, thus requiring City Staff to perform further clean up; additional charges will be billed to the permit holder for services.

5. If additional Public Safety or E-Unit personnel have to be called in to cover the event, charges will be billed to the permit holder for these services.

6. If additional equipment or services are requested from one of the City Departments, a separate charge will be billed to the organizer. Permit holder should contact the specific department for individual department charges.

Items may include barricades, road closed signs, cones, etc...

7. When submitting a Special Event Permit application, a fee of \$250 payable to the City of East Grand Rapids, must be paid before your date will be secured and your request placed on the Parks & Recreation Commission agenda. In the event this application is not approved the permit fee will NOT be refunded.

8. A disclaimer statement is required on your registration/application form. Releasing the City of East Grand Rapids and East Grand Rapids Public Schools from all liability. Either by special reference to the City of East Grand Rapids and East Grand Rapids Public Schools or by a general disclaimer statement that would exclude the City as a host organization. A copy of your registration/application form, which contains the disclaimer statement, must be provided at least 10 days prior to your event.

Agreement*

Signature Box

Permit applicant hereby releases the City of East Grand Rapids, its officers, agents, and employees from all liability and waives any and all rights and claims for any and all injuries or damage to person or property, possible exposure to and illness from infectious diseases including but not limited to MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19 and accidents which may occur as a result of the use of City facilities. While particular rules and personal discipline may reduce this risk, the risk of injury, serious illness and death does exist. In addition, applicant agrees to indemnify the city, its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, judgments, losses, damages, demands, and legal proceedings arising out of or resulting from the use of City facilities. I understand that all information submitted to the City of East Grand Rapids is considered public information and subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. I, as the permit applicant, have read and agree to the above regulations and the Special Event Permit Guidelines. I understand that all information submitted to the City of East Grand Rapids is considered public information and subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The City of East Grand Rapids reserves the right to cancel Special Events due to weather, unforeseen conditions or other valid reasons including COVID-19 Executive Order restrictions. Permit holders would be notified promptly if issues arise concerning the event.

Date Application Received

3/2/2026

Reviewed By

Derek Melville

Date Reviewed

3/6/2026

Permit Approval

- Approved
- Denied
- Pending

Approved By

[Empty signature box]

Date Action Taken

mm/dd/yyyy

Reason

[Empty text box for Reason]

Comments

Copies sent to

- City Manager
- Public Safety

Items

- Permit Fee Paid
- Permit Fee Waived
- Insurance Received
- Confirmation Letter Sent
- Map Submitted or Verified
- Calendar Listing

Derek Melville

From: Rob Lutz <lutzy922@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 4:20 PM
To: Derek Melville
Subject: Grad Party

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Team at Parks and Rec.

This is Rob Lutz at Big Bobs Pizza. We understand there is a request in for the use of the city lot in front of our place of business. We are in support of whatever your team decides but know we will be busy that day as a result of the graduation party. We understand there to be a tent on site taking up a bit of the lot and that time is designated from 8-4. We appreciate your work with us and the families involved for a successful event. If there are any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Rob Lutz
Big Bobs Pizza
616-828-8127

Print

Special Event Permit Application - Submission #17016

Date Submitted: 3/19/2026

Permit Fee

Applicant must call the Parks & Recreation Department at 616-949-1750 to pay the permit fee before the application will be processed. Your event date will not be secure until payment is received. We accept AMEX, Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Office hours are M-F 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

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Name of Event*

Date of Event*

Reeds Lake Trailblazer 5K

7/4/2026

Organization Sponsoring Event*

East Grand Rapids Community Foundation

Event Start & End Time*

08:00 AM

—

11:00 AM

Event Website Address

www.reedslaketraiblazer.com

Purpose and description of the event to be placed on City website for the general public to view.*

5K Walk/Run to raise funds in support of East Grand Rapids Community Foundation.

Event Contact Email Address*

lparmenter@eastgrmi.gov

Representative First Name*

Lori

Last Name*

Parmenter

Address1*

750 Lakeside Dr

City*

East Grand Rapids

State*

MI

Zip*

49506

Daytime Phone*

6169491750

Cell Phone*

6169491750

Email Address*

lparmenter@eastgrmi.gov

Alternative Representative First Name*

Derek

Last Name*

Melville

Daytime Phone*

616-949-1750

Cell Phone

616-949-1750

Email Address*

lparmenter@eastgrmi.gov

Will you have a medical service provider onsite?*

- Yes
- No

Running and other competitive events MUST have medical personnel onsite during the event.

AMR

Name of medical service provider?

Estimated Number of Participants*

500

Estimated Number of Spectators*

100

Number of staff onsite during the event?*

3

Estimated Number of adult volunteers on duty?*

100

Event Location*

750 Lakeside DR SE

Describe the location of the event and/or start and finish area if it is a race.

Does this event require road closures?*

- Yes
- No

Will you require Public Safety Officer involvement for your event?*

- Yes
- No

Special Event Permit Guidelines

[Click Here](#)

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File Upload

No file chosen

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Derek Melville

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Permit Approval

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Approved By

Date Action Taken

mm/dd/yyyy

Reason

Comments

Copies sent to

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CITY OF EAST GRAND RAPIDS

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(616) 949-2110 www.eastgrmi.gov

DEREK MELVILLE
PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Parks and Recreation Commissioners
FROM: Derek Melville, Parks and Recreation Director
DATE: March 19, 2026

RE: Director's Report

2026 MPARKS Conference

Last month Parks and Recreation staff attended the 2026 Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MPARKS) annual educational conference in Lansing that included training on sports programming, seasonal staff recruitment and retention, program marketing strategies, opportunities to network and collaborate along with sharing new programming ideas. The year was the most attended MPARKS conference in history with more than 650 Parks and Recreation professionals in attendance. One highlight of the conference was the celebration of the 50-year anniversary of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant program. In total, more than \$1.4 billion in parks acquisition and development projects have been completed because of the program which the city has benefitted from in the past for a variety of projects.



Middle School Winter Athletics

The girls Middle School basketball season wrapped up recently after a successful season that included two undefeated teams on the season. Through our vertical alignment efforts, each player will receive an end of season evaluation from their coach, each coach will be evaluated, and a post-season meeting will be held between Middle School coaches, the Varsity coach, and Parks & Recreation staff to help guide program enhancements for the future. The photo below captures the final moments of the last game for the 7th grade team that went undefeated.



Women's Sport & Health Expo

Parks & Recreation staff hosted a booth at the Women's Sports & Health Expo to promote the Reeds Lake Triathlon and other programs and to make connections with other community organizations. The Triathlon will include a "superhero" theme this year, which explains the superhero related items in the photos below and our event marketing.



Middle School Spring Athletics

Spring sports practices for Middle School teams started this week and next week. Participation numbers continue to be high, with girls' tennis having the highest participation levels in the last 7+ years.

7/8th Grade Baseball- 25 participants

6-8th Grade Softball- 20 participants

Coed Track- 79 participants

Girls Tennis- 59 participants

Fred Bunn Trail Improvements

The repairs and improvements to the Fred Bunn Trails that were recently approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission are scheduled to take place in May, weather permitting. TrailSense, the company that originally built the trails will be completing the work after they complete another trail project this spring.