

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORTY-FIRST COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN
WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025 BY MAYOR DEAN**

PRESENT: Councilmember Steve Baker
Councilmember Clarence Black (attending remotely from military duty)
Councilmember Gary Elrod
Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin
Councilmember Dennis Hennen
Councilmember Gregory Patterson
Mayor Bridget Dean

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Crystal VanVleck
City Attorney Lisa Hamameh
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell
Public Safety Director Matt Koehn
Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young
Parks & Recreation Superintendent Dan McMinn
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski
Communications Director Caitlin Flora

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve the agenda.
Seconded by Councilmember Black
Ayes: Black, Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker and Dean
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve the following Consent Agenda.
Seconded by Councilmember Baker.

Minutes of the 41st Regular City Council meeting on Monday, December 1, 2025, and City Council work session on Monday, December 1, 2025.

Warrant List No. 1417.

Declare items as surplus.

Ayes: Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black and Dean
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

Regular Agenda

RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS: Matter of receiving any recognitions or presentations from the Consent Agenda.

None.

PRESENTATION: Presentation of the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan draft from Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio.

Superintendent McMinn introduced the item and provided his contact information if anyone has any questions. He introduced Tyler Sprague. Mr. Sprague stated he would walk through the process.

- What is a five-year Parks and Recreation Plan?
 - A 5-year parks and recreation plan is a strategic document used to guide the planning, development, and management of parks, open space, recreation facilities, and programming.
- Why is a Parks and Recreation Plan Important?
 - Having a plan in place to guide future planning, development, and management will help the City better serve the needs of the community.
 - The plan is updated every 5 years to ensure it maintains its relevancy in terms of changing demographics, recreation trends, and community needs.
 - This plan will also allow for the City to pursue Michigan Department of Natural Resources grant funding.
- Parks and Recreation Plan Update Process
 - Inventory all parks and recreation facilities and identify any changes in level of service.
 - Research and update information such as demographics and recreation trends.
 - Develop and implement a public engagement process to understand current community needs.
 - Utilizing the updated information above, confirm, revise and/or develop new recommendations to guide the City for the next 5 years.
 - Draft a parks and recreation plan that meets all requirements identified by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- He reviewed the Project Schedule
- 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan Components
 1. Executive Summary
 2. Community Description
 3. Administrative Structure
 4. Recreation Inventory
 5. Planning and Public Input
 6. Goals and Objectives
 7. Action Program
- He reviewed the community description, land use and demographics.
- He described the administrative structure of the Parks and Recreation Department and organizations.
- He discussed the recreation inventory.
- Planning and Public Input
 - Planning Process
 - Evaluated Berkley's natural features and physical characteristics for recreational opportunities.
 - (Chapter Two)
 - Reviewed and evaluated Berkley demographics, including population and economic data.
 - (Chapter Two)
 - Gathered updated information on the City of Berkley's administrative structure. (Chapter Three)
 - inventoried existing parks, recreation facilities, and existing programming, and assessed the city's offering against comparable communities and national trends. (Chapter Four)

- Conducted a statistically representative survey in the fall of 2025. (Chapter Five)
 - Met with parks staff, stakeholders, and members of the public to hear their perspectives, experiences, and suggestions. (Chapter Five)
- Public Engagement Process
 - Public Meetings
 - Meeting No. 1: September 16, 2025
 - Meeting No. 2: October 23, 2025
 - Stakeholder Meetings
 - Older Adults
 - Youth Sports
 - Online Survey
- Public Meeting Feedback
 - The Community Center and its lack of adequate space and amenity to support the Community's needs was discussed at length.
 - Striped soccer fields and more basketball courts were mentioned as a need.
 - A dog park was cited as a desire for residents.
 - The addition of programming targeted toward teens as well as intergenerational programming opportunities was suggested.
 - Maintenance concerns were voiced. It is important to ensure improvements to parks are being maintained.
- Stakeholder Meeting Feedback
 - Older Adults
 - Parks and Recreation Facilities are well kept.
 - Program offerings and staff are great.
 - Current facilities lack space for programming.
 - Youth Sports
 - Ballfields are well used but Parks and Recreation Facilities cannot fulfill the needs of the youth sports organizations.
 - Improvements such as barrier nets and restrooms would benefit youth sports.
 - Lazenby Field was identified as a potential opportunity for a multi-use field.
- Goals and Objectives
 - GOAL ONE: Develop, operate, and maintain high-quality recreation facilities to meet the present and future needs of Berkley residents.
 - OBJECTIVES
 - a) Evaluate options for improving the Community Center complex to create a central recreation space that will better serve the needs of the community.
 - b) Continue to maintain parks and facilities in good working order to ensure the safety and enjoyment of users.
 - c) Improve and/or add recreation amenities as community needs evolve and as existing equipment reaches the end of its useful life.
 - d) Consider opportunities within parks and using existing sidewalks outside of parks to support a more walkable community.
 - e) Evaluate capital-intensive expenditures and develop a strategy to effectively communicate the potential scope of projects, anticipated short- and long-term costs, and ongoing maintenance requirements.
 - f) Building upon the success of the Dorothea Pocket Park pilot, identify locations for pocket parks to provide recreation opportunities in underserved areas of the city.
 - g) Identify and pursue potential public/private partnerships with other local recreation providers to provide recreation opportunities at a shared facility.
 - GOAL TWO: Develop and/or expand recreation programming to continue providing high-quality recreation experiences for Berkley residents.
 - OBJECTIVES

- a) Identify potential partnerships with other local recreation providers to give residents access to a wide variety of cost-effective programs.
 - b) Continue to evaluate and adapt program offerings to support the changing needs of the community.
 - c) Evaluate opportunities to utilize outdoor park space for program offerings.
 - d) Develop events and programming that encourage intergenerational activities and foster community unity.
 - e) Develop a marketing strategy to effectively communicate recreation program information to the community.
- GOAL THREE: Provide recreation opportunities that ensure equitable access for all community members.
 - OBJECTIVES
 - a) Expand the type and scope of recreation offerings available based on community needs.
 - b) Continue to evaluate and improve park and recreation facilities to ensure that all park amenities meet or exceed accessibility standards.
 - c) Encourage intergenerational recreation through design of facilities and programs.
- GOAL FOUR: Seek, identify, and manage financial resources to support the continued operation of the parks system and facilitate expansion of existing facilities and programs.
 - OBJECTIVES
 - a) Pursue grants and other sources of funding to sustain and improve the city's parks and recreation facilities and programs.
 - b) Explore potential funding opportunities to allow continued operation of park facilities and programs independently of general fund resources.
 - c) Explore sources of funding for the development of the Community Center complex.
- GOAL FIVE: Seek opportunities to collaborate with a variety of partners to ensure the efficient development, operation, maintenance, and stewardship of Berkley parks and to enhance the health and well-being of the community.
 - OBJECTIVES
 - a) Work with neighboring municipalities and local organizations to fill gaps in Berkley recreation services.
 - b) Collaborate with outside organizations, both public and private, to enhance programming, park development and maintenance, shared technical knowledge, and stewardship opportunities.
 - c) Expand opportunities for volunteer participation within the park system.
- GOAL SIX: Bolster community climate resiliency through sustainably-designed parks and recreation facilities.
 - OBJECTIVES
 - a) Design capital improvement projects using sustainable, long-lasting materials, including recycled materials where possible.
 - b) Incorporate green infrastructure and native plantings into parks where possible and applicable.
 - c) Engage community members and park users in the stewardship and care of parks to highlight sustainability initiatives and provide opportunities for education.
- Next Steps:
 - December 2025 / January 2026
 - 30-Day Public Review Period
 - Public Hearing
 - Final Revisions and Supplemental Information
 - Plan Adoption
 - Submittal to MDNR prior to February 1, 2026 Deadline.

MOTION NO. M-118-25: Special land use request from Berkley Entertainment, LLC to occupy 2960 Twelve Mile Road with a private assembly space/live theater use in the Downtown District with the following findings:

- a) The building is an iconic part of our downtown and been present for over 80 years, thus the use is designed and constructed in a manner harmonious with the character of adjacent properties and the surrounding area, as compare to the impacts of permitted uses;
- b) The Master Plan calls for continued and increased entertainment options in our downtown, thus the use is compatible and in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan;
- c) The theater was originally operated with a similar capacity. Based on the traffic study conducted and subject to condition (a) of this motion, the use is located and designed in a manner that will minimize the impact of traffic;
- d) As an existing building that was originally operated in a similar manner with no service deficiencies, the use is adequately served by essential public facilities and services;
- e) The use has been found to be designed, constructed, operated and maintained to comply with all applicable ordinance standards;
- f) There are no proposed site layout changes, thus the use does not unreasonably impact the quality of natural features and the environment when compared to typical uses;
- g) The factors in Section 10.03.H of the Zoning Ordinance have been considered and conditions are found satisfactory;

And with the following conditions:

- a) The applicant must coordinate with the City on any events expected to increase the occupancy of the building beyond 550 persons in order to establish a parking and egress coordination plan. The applicant will finalize details of this plan with City staff prior to the Certificate of Occupancy being granted.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Motion No. M-118-25

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black, Elrod and Dean

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

MOTION NO. M-119-25: Application for issuance of a new on-premises development district liquor license under the Michigan Liquor Code, specifically, MCL 436.1521a(1)(b) and MLCC resolution.

Applicant: Berkley Entertainment LLC, 2990 & 2960 12 Mile Road, Berkley, MI.

Councilmember Patterson moved to approve Motion No. M-119-25

Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gavin

Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black, Elrod, Gavin and Dean

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

MOTION NO. M-120-25: The City of Berkley updated Overnight Parking Policy.

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve Motion No. M-120-25

Seconded by Councilmember Baker

Ayes: Patterson, Baker, Black, Elrod, Gavin, Hennen and Dean

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

MOTION NO. M-121-25: Adoption of various Zoning Ordinance amendments to Amend Article 2 Definitions, Article 5 Use Based Districts, Article 6 Site Design Based Districts, Article 8 Specific Use Provisions, Article 9 General Provisions, Article 13 Exterior Lighting Standards, Article 14 Off-Street Parking, Loading and Access Standards, Article 15 Site Plan Review Procedures and Requirements and Article 16 Nonconforming Lots, Uses and Structures of Chapter 138 Zoning of the Berkley Code of Ordinances to add definitions for medical office and outdoor service areas and to clarify the definition for carports, to remove egress windows as projections, to match two-family site layout approval processes in the RC district with the approval process for a two-family use, to include regulations for residential street

types in the Downtown, Gateway Corridor, Woodward Corridor and Flex districts, to prohibit gun shops within 1,000 feet of an existing child day center or child group day care home, to clarify setback requirements for accessory structures on corner lots, to prohibit properties from outlining windows and buildings with LED or similar lighting in any district, to provide dimensional requirements for compact car spaces, to clarify that a sketch plan is required for site plan review and to clarify requirements for non-conforming lots in site design-based districts.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Motion No. M-121-25

Seconded by Councilmember Elrod

Ayes: Baker, Black, Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson and Dean

Nays: None

Motion No. M-121-25 Approved.

MOTION NO. M-122-25: The City of Berkley Purchasing Policy with the following amendments:

- all references to "Purchases over \$7,500" should read "Purchases \$7,500 or more",

- all references to "Purchases more than \$3,000" should read "Purchases \$3,000 or more"

- and repeal any previously adopted purchasing policies by the City.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Motion No. M-122-25

Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gavin

Ayes: Black, Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker and Dean

Nays: None

Motion No. M-122-25 Approved.

RESOLUTION NO. R-21-25: Resolution of the 41st City Council Rules and Order of Procedure.

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve Resolution No. R-21-25

Seconded by Councilmember Elrod

Ayes: Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black and Dean

Nays: None

Resolution No. R-21-25 Approved.

MOTION NO. M-123-25: The 2026 City Council meeting schedule and the tentative 2027 City Council meeting schedule.

Councilmember Elrod moved to approve Motion No. M-123-25

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black, Elrod and Dean

Nays: None

Motion No. M-123-25 Approved.

COMMUNICATIONS:

COUNCILMEMBER HENNEN

- The Tree Board has received our annual Tree City USA and the Growth Award.
- Stated that he has a new dental cap. It's only a couple hours old that the anesthetic came off during reading one of those.
- Wished everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

COUNCILMEMBER ELROD

For the Environmental Advisory Committee and the Beautification Advisory Committee:

- The accomplishments for EAC having been published with those from the BAC forthcoming.
- Said that he wanted to alert everyone that there is a luminary project. There is a sale going on. It's a little different than what was tried two years ago; you are sponsoring a higher quality luminary, so you're not taking possession of it. You are actually going to the library, purchasing a tag. It's numbered, so that we can provide you an order or a basic description and layout of where to find yours. If your child or you as an adult want to write a holiday-themed message, a nonsecular-themed message, and find that, that is going on until they actually put those out on

the 21st. The tags are \$2.50 per tag or five for \$10. It all goes to purchasing as a group shrubs, things like that we use for plantings and park cleanup. Please shop local if you can.

COUNCILMEMBER BLACK

- Thanked everyone for providing some humor this evening. He said that it has been a very rough week. For those that have not seen, unfortunately a civilian contractor to U.S. service members was lost; stated that he wants everyone to understand this holiday season there are people hurting. Please extend your prayers for them.
- Stated that as a city, he wants everyone to understand that he sees people who give an arm and a leg for the things that we call problems. It doesn't make them flip, and it doesn't mean that you don't feel, but he wants everyone to have some perspective that there are a lot of people who don't live where you live who are suffering, suffering with a capital S, and would trade places with what you call problems in a heartbeat. Understand that there are men and women who wear the uniform, get up every day, and put their lives on the line so that you all have the freedom to get online and bash our city and bash the people who volunteer for this job. Said that he would humbly ask that before you go online and make accusations of corruption or lack of transparency or all these things, just take a step back and remember who gave you that right to do that, because he can tell you right now there are security families and soldiers who died to give you that right.

COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON

- Thanked Councilmember Black for his service.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals met and their only agenda item was their meeting calendar.
- For the Parks and Rec Advisory Board:
 - They asked to be utilized more as an advisory board.
 - One of their goals for 2026 that was tossed around was becoming better partners with city council and finding their mission and what they are needed for.
 - They recommended the adoption of their five-year plan.
 - Berkley Parks and Recreation wishes everyone a happy holiday season and looks forward to seeing everyone in the new year.
- Merry Christmas and happy holidays. Wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

MAYOR PRO TEM GAVIN

- Thanked Councilmember Black for all that he does and the message he shared.
- Stated that it was a thrill to be at the first Berkley Chamber of Commerce meeting as a liaison.
 - The 2026 Berk Perk cards are available for purchase at the library, at Woodward Corner Market, and the Chamber website. If purchased through the website, a higher portion goes to the Berkley Education Foundation, a win-win for everybody. You can use them now and start saving at over 30 locations.
- The next meeting of the Library Board will be January 13th at 6 PM at the Library. The Library Board's next meeting will be January 21st at 7 PM at the Library.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays. He said that it is a privilege to be able to do what they do and to serve the residents of Berkley. He said that he doesn't think that's lost on anybody, and he looks forward to doing it in the new year as well.

COUNCILMEMBER BAKER

- Thanked Councilmember Black. Stated that his words and service matters.
- For the Historical Committee:
 - Thanked everyone who visited the Museum as part of the Holiday Lights Parade festivities.
 - They are wrapping up their list of 2025 accomplishments and their list of 2026 goals and objectives.
 - New holiday ornaments remain on sale at the Museum, City Hall, and the Library. For more information, please visit berkleyhistory.com.

- The Downtown Development Authority wishes to thank everyone who rode on the Jolly Trolley as it made its way through downtown this shopping season. Many had the opportunity to serve as an honorary conductor. It was a great time and wonderful to talk with folks as they enjoyed downtown, getting on and off at different places.
 - They're working on the next budget cycle, revisions to the façade grant program and mural grant programs, and already starting to think ahead to some spring events. For more information on the DDA, visit downtownberkley.com.
- Finally, it was Desmond Tutu who once said, "Do your little bit of good where you are. It's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." This holiday season is complicated. There is joy, yet many struggle significantly this time of year. Please be alert and aware of your own state of mind, and know that it's okay if you're not okay. Take care of yourself. Do what you can to be kind to others, especially during the holiday season. As Archbishop Tutu said, lots of little acts of kindness go a long way.
- Wished everyone happy holidays. Please hug somebody you love, and maybe even Santa if you're lucky.

CITY MANAGER VANVLECK

- Wished everyone Happy Holidays and said that she will see everyone in the new year.

CITY ATTORNEY HAMAMEH

- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

MAYOR DEAN

- The annual Holiday Lights Parade was last weekend; thanked the Juniors for their hot chocolate, for putting up and decorating the tree in the gazebo so that we could have a tree lighting, the Holiday Lights Parade Committee for their work in organizing and wrangling volunteers, the Department of Public Works, Public Safety, City Manager VanVleck, and Deputy City Manager Young for their coordination efforts. There are so many moving parts to this parade and event and so much that happens behind the scenes.
 - Gave a heartfelt thanks to Aric Klar of Quality Roots on 11 Mile Road. Not long after he opened his dispensary, he reached out for a meeting. One of the things he said was, "I really want to be a good community partner." When she called him regarding the parade, because it costs money to continue this tradition, she asked him for \$10,000, and he did not hesitate. It is truly because of his donation that this parade happened.
 - The last thing she always says before giving Santa the key to the city is: Have you made wise and loving choices this year? Have you been kind when it would have been easier not to be? This year, four little girls were right in front of the gazebo, hanging on every word. It really encapsulated what the holiday spirit means.
- Wished everyone Happy Holidays and a Merry Christmas and said that she looks forward to seeing everyone in the new year.
- Congratulated Councilmember Patterson for receiving his Doctor of Nursing Practice.
- Congratulated Lieutenant Hadfield for 25 years of service with the Berkley Department of Public Safety. She said that Berkley is fortunate to have him.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:51 PM

Seconded by Councilmember Baker

Ayes: Baker, Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson and Dean

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Approved.

Bridget Dean, Mayor

ATTEST:

Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk