

NEWS RELEASE

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Ebony Bagley elected chair of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission

First Black Commission member to lead Oakland County Parks' governing board

WATERFORD, MI – Jan. 24, 2024 – The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (OCPRC) elected officers at its Jan. 24 regular meeting.

The OCPRC unanimously elected **Ebony Bagley** to serve as its new chair. In the 58-year history of Oakland County Parks, Bagley is the first Black Commission member to serve as chair and the first woman to hold the role since 1973. Bagley has served on the OCPRC since 2019 and most recently served on the executive committee as secretary. She is a senior communications strategist and has a passion for serving her community. Bagley is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated and the National Congress of Black Women. She lives in Novi with her husband and two children.

"I am deeply honored to be appointed as chair of the Parks Commission," Bagley said. "Stepping into this role, I am inspired by the legacy of my predecessor, Gary McGillivray, and the dedicated chairs who came before me. I am looking forward to the work ahead of us, to ensure that we continue to cultivate a vibrant and inclusive environment that caters to the diverse needs of Oakland County, ensuring a positive future for all."

"Ebony embodies the core values of Oakland County," said Oakland County Board of Commissioners Chairman David T. Woodward. "She understands that access to robust recreational opportunities is vital to fostering thriving communities. We are all confident in her ability to lead and look forward to working with her."

J. David VanderVeen, a designee of the Oakland County Executive, was re-elected vice chair. VanderVeen served as the Director of Central Services for Oakland County until his retirement in 2022. He has served on the OCPRC since 1998. VanderVeen lives in Independence Township with his wife.

Andrea LaFontaine, who has served on the OCPRC since 2018, was elected as secretary. LaFontaine is the executive director of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance and a former state representative. She lives in Birmingham with her husband and two children.

The Commission welcomed three new members recently appointed by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners (BOC), including Oakland County Commissioner **Ann Erickson Gault** (D-Troy), **Lola Banks**, a resident of Oak Park, and **Shanell Weatherspoon**, a resident of Pontiac.

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Continuing their service on the Commission are Water Resources Commissioner **Jim Nash** (D-Farmington Hills), Oakland County Commissioner **Yolanda Smith Charles** (D-Southfield), Oakland County Commissioner **Christine Long** (R-Wolverine Lake) and Road Commissioner **Nancy Quarles**, a resident of the City of Novi.

The OCPRC was established in 1966 under Public Act 261 of 1965. The 10-member Commission is made up of six elected officials and four members of the public: Oakland County Executive or designee; Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner or designee; one member of the Road Commission for Oakland County; three members of the Oakland County BOC; and four members of the public appointed by the BOC.

The OCPRC is responsible for planning, developing and operating parks and recreation facilities; making rules and regulations for the parks system; establishing a fee structure; and approving budget expenditures. The Commission is also responsible for recommending acquisition of new parkland, acceptance of grant funding and entrance into use agreements, all of which require BOC approval.

The OCPRC generally meets the first Wednesday of the month at 2 p.m. at the Parks Administrative Offices, 2800 Watkins Lake Road in Waterford. Meeting agendas can be found online at OaklandCountyParks.com.

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