

**FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, October 25, 2021

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Petsch called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: William Petsch, Chairperson
Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson
Bob Berkheiser
Barbara Garbutt
Krystal Schwartz
Kathryn Duff

Absent: Sarah Henderson, Secretary

Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks & Recreation
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Garbutt, seconded by Schwartz, to approve the September 27, 2021, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Petsch opened to Public Comments.

There were no comments.

Chairperson Petsch closed to Public Comments.

ITEM 1: LAKES AREA ROTARY – RICHARDSON CENTER

Ms. England – They are not asking for a waiver request. I put this on here because they do plan on selling raffle tickets and holding a small auction. According to our policy, they need approval from the Parks Committee to do that. They're not technically raising money, but they are covering the cost of their event. The date is good and everything else is in order.

Mr. Berkheiser – They're renting it for the full amount?

Ms. England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – They're doing alcohol. How is that working?

Ms. England – They're going through our vendor.

Discussion continued regarding the required approval for this activity at an event.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Garbutt, to approve the request for the Lakes Area Rotary event, scheduled for Friday, February 25, 2022, as presented.

Discussion –

Berkheiser – They're renting for the full day, but they're only holding the event from 6:30 to 10:30?

England – Yes, they want the whole day for set up.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 2: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

Lakes Area Hawks – Pete Lesner, President

Mr. Lesner shared the following with the Committee:

- We had a great season and everything went back to almost normal.
- We had more cheerleaders this year than we have had in the past 4 years.
- It has been great working with Lakes Baseball and the guys that run that league to make the park better. It's a good relationship we have.
- We're going into the playoffs right now. I think only one of our teams will be in the playoffs. We will be hosting the first round of playoffs at our field this Saturday, and that's the end of our season. I cleared that with Lakes Baseball and they don't have much going on.
- As far as improvements, we painted all of our buildings.
- All the water is working well and everything is going great.
- The Hawks are in good shape financially.
- We're looking forward to next year.

Chairperson Petsch – What age groups are playing on Saturday, and what time do the games start?

Mr. Lesner – The Freshman JV and Varsity, between 8 and 13, basically 3rd grade to 8th grade. Game times are at 11am, 1pm and 3pm.

Interlakes Girls Softball – Tim Bailey

Mr. Bailey shared the following with the Committee:

- We're already planning for next year.
- Registration will open in 2-3 weeks.
- We are looking at potentially having a high school division. We will see if there is enough demand for it.

Chairperson Petsch – Are there other organizations that you could play, outside of Commerce Township, that would have teams with that age group to come in and play?

Mr. Bailey – Typically we haven't, but it's something we can look at. It will be fun for them because these are the girls that aren't playing at the high schools. The other thing we're redoing are the dugout roofs with paint or varnish.

Mr. Berkheiser – Did you do the winterizing of the bathrooms?

Mr. Bailey – No, that's the Township. We winterize the sprinkler system, which will be done on November 4th.

Ms. England – Mark has everything scheduled to be winterized as of November 1st.

Mr. Berkheiser – So there will be no restroom at Dodge on November 1st?

Ms. England – Correct. We do Scarlet's and we do Maple Glen's restroom because we own it. The other two are responsible for their own.

Mr. Berkheiser – Are you putting outhouses at Dodge then?

Ms. England – Yes.

Discussion continued regarding use of Scarlet's Playground in the wintertime.

Motor City Mountain Biking Association – Mike Kearney

Mr. Kearney shared the following with the Committee:

- The trail is open.
- Work continues on clearing fallen trees. The one trail that was detoured is now open as of Saturday.
- As far as Wise Road, we're working on onboarding another volunteer to help take the lead on developing a proposal.

Lakes Athletics – Jerry Stoddard

Mr. Stoddard shared the following with the Committee:

- I guess we are the competitor of the Maple Glen little league organization.
- We are seeing incredible numbers now, compared to the 2020 season where we had to actually cancel and our house team was completely kiboshed. We've now nearly doubled our numbers looking back, year over year.
- We had roughly 475 across our travel division and our house division for spring and summer. We also had a late summer league that ran for certain divisions with approximately 150 kids. Then we had another 125-150 for our fall season.
- Things are going very well.
- Our season is officially over as of yesterday.
- Banners will come down.
- We are in the process of winterizing the park and the buildings. I am curious who the Township uses for those services. Traditionally we have sponsors who will donate their time, but it would be good to have someone lined up.
- A big capital expenditure was allocated and approved by the board, nearly \$40,000 to completely rebuild our backstops on Fields #2 and #5. This will improve the overall park experience, but also park safety.
- The bleacher pads have all been poured. The bleachers have yet to be anchored.

Ms. England – You're talking about anchoring the bleachers to the cement?

Mr. Stoddard – Yes.

Ms. England – Once Mark has some free time, I'll send him over.

Mr. Stoddard – That would be outstanding. As far as parking lot construction, we noticed there are a lot of survey sticks and things are being detailed and outlined for the secondary entrance and exit, et cetera. I talked to Emily briefly and it sounds like that is something that will be deferred until 2022.

Ms. England – Yes. We're still looking at options. We have had it surveyed and laid out. We looked at the impact on the trees. We met with Wolverine and Mike Powell, who is their engineer, numerous times. We've gone back and forth about the location of a second entrance because there is a sewer line there. We're waiting to find out the depth of that line and utility poles.

As of right now, we're moving forward with it being across the street from the Wolverine Village office entrance. As soon as Jason Mayer, Township Engineer, gets all of the information on the sanitary sewer, he will let Mike Powell review that again, and then we will move forward on getting the permit for the entrance. So it will be a 2022 project.

Mr. Stoddard – Very good, thank you. In addition, as we all experienced damage from the storms this year, Fields #1 and #7 had trees fall and experienced damage. Is that something that the Township would be able to assist with?

Ms. England – Mark, do you have an update on that?

Mr. Schoder – The only thing that was damaged was the fence on Field #1.

Mr. Stoddard – Okay, the outfield there?

Mr. Schoder – Yes. We're going to replace the pole.

Mr. Stoddard – We have included this in our reports for the past few months. We've asked for support from the Township. We would love to see some flagpoles installed in our park, maybe 3 different poles that are well lit.

Chairperson Petsch – Do you see those by the concession stand, in that area?

Mr. Stoddard – I think the vast majority of the board would like to see them in the area where the park is at, the play structures. It's open and has the best vantage point from all fields.

Ms. England – This was presented to us a year or two ago. They asked us to go in with them on this project financially, and it was something we supported at that time.

Chairperson Petsch – Jerry, do you have any idea what the cost would be?

Mr. Stoddard – I don't have anything precise. I did receive quotes previously.

Chairperson Petsch – Could you provide a sketch of where you want them on the site plan with the 3 poles at different heights? That way we will have a good idea of exactly

what we're talking about. We can drive by and take a look at it. Also provide an idea of the cost please.

Mr. Stoddard – Absolutely.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Are you going to leave the flags up all the time, or just raise them for the games?

Mr. Stoddard – They would fly at all times.

Vice Chairperson Walker – So you're going to light them?

Mr. Stoddard – Yes.

Vice Chairperson Walker – So you'll have to run power?

Mr. Stoddard – Yes, there are lots of different requirements for flags, as you all know. We may be able to solar power some. I will talk to the vendors about different options through installation.

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz, Janice Buchanan

Mrs. Schantz shared the following with the Committee:

- We had our Boo-Bash on Saturday. We had 400 trick-or-treaters and it was a big success. We had no complaints, just praise.
- This weekend, we are going to participate with the Township Library in their Trunk-or-Treat, Saturday from 11-1. Dean and Pat Hildebrand will represent Friends of Byers to hand out candy there.
- Moving into December, our next big event is Pictures with Santa. That's on Sunday, December 12th from 11am to 5pm.
- The Barn east wall, which I call the front entrance, has been postponed until next spring due to the high cost of barn wood, along with an extremely rainy season.
- We're asking for a recycle bin for the grounds.

Discussion took place regarding availability of recycle bins.

Mrs. Schantz –

- After the storm damage, Dean helped Mark remove the tree.
- Do we have any updates on the Farmhouse?

Ms. England – Yes, as of last week, we got a contract back from the Dailey Company. That contract is being reviewed by our Attorney, and then Larry can sign it. Once it is signed, I should have a schedule. I'll send that out as soon as I get it.

Mrs. Schantz – So it's probably in the spring?

Ms. England – I hope not. I hope it's quicker than that.

Mrs. Schantz – Are we holding off on tree removals?

Ms. England – We're holding off on tree removals.

Schwartz – For Pictures with Santa, are you scheduling that as well, as you did with Boo-Bash?

Mrs. Schantz – Yes. We do a sitting every 5 minutes for 5.5 hours.

Vice Chairperson Walker – When can we sign up?

Mrs. Schantz – I can email you.

Mr. Schantz – It will be posted in a couple weeks.

Windmill Farms (Horse Farm) – Carrie Hancock

- We just finished up with our high school equestrian meets. As I mentioned before, we had two of our teams competing at regionals.
- We're looking at starting the middle school equestrian teams earlier this season as we're getting a lot of first time riders, primarily 5th graders. We have to get them ready to go to a horse show in just a few months.

Mr. Berkheiser – How did the teams do?

Ms. Hancock – They did well and it was a good experience.

- We had a high turnout with the pony rides we did at the Wixom Panther Hunt. That was busier than they've ever been.
- We have a couple of our first horse shows scheduled for the winter season; we have two out of the four that we normally do in our winter session. One is November 7th and the other is December 12th.
- We continue to hold lessons 7 days a week, and every week we are getting more students. So, we're also doing some daytime lessons on the weekdays as well because we have a lot of home schoolers interested. We have 5 instructors there now. It's really increasing.
- We had a couple new horse donations which have turned out to be great horses. They will be in the horse show as well.
- We've had many projects ongoing. We were unable to meet some of the deadlines on them. Some stuff is not in my control, but everything is moving forward little by little. We're looking to get other resources to get these projects finished. We had members of the Committee out on Friday, and there were a lot of good suggestions. I followed through on quite a few of them.
- I talked to Rousseaux to do the fence, parallel with Wixom Road. He will come out this week to take a look at it, then let me know the plan and cost.
- We have been cleaning out and reorganizing the barn. We filled another dumpster.
- I talked to Mark about Emily's suggestion that some of the Maintenance guys might come out on their days off. Friday is a good day for us to get moving if we can get the extra support.
- We have continued working on the fence in the parking lot. The wood portion of it is complete. Probably by Wednesday we can get it painted.

- We are anxious to get the roof finished up. It looks like I'm going to be responsible for the additional work that has to be done, other than the observation room.
- I did talk to the roofer who is coming out to do the observation room. When he comes out, he will look at the rest of it and give an estimate. We need it done before winter, so he will see what he can do.

Ms. England – Can you give an update on the trailers too?

Ms. Hancock – I think a date was arranged at Friday's meeting. I believe November 9th was the new scheduled date for the company to come in and remove those. We will work to have those ready to go by then, as long as everything goes as planned.

No representatives were present at the meeting for the following leagues:

- Commerce Little League
- CW3

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Ms. England discussed the following:

- Things are rocking over at the Senior Center. We're adding activities and our numbers continue to climb. We're still serving lunches. Our trips have come back. We planned our first long trip with Diamond Tours for next year. People are excited about that.
- League agreements have been updated. We took the existing agreements, along with the short form proposed to us back in 2019 by the Township Attorney, and the recommendations the leagues had submitted to develop a document that I think everybody will be happy with. Since then, Phil, our Township Attorney, is not reviewing them at this time. It is Hans, so he is going through to do a complete review of the language. Hopefully I will have those back this week, and once I do, I will send them out to the individual leagues, and then it will come here, and then final approval will be by the Township Board. We are looking to do 5-year agreements this time.
- The Dodge Park pathways got pushed back to November 15th.
- The reprogramming paperwork has been submitted for the Richardson Center pathways. We await approval from them, but the documents are ready to go out to bid for a spring project.
- We've been dealing with the Oakland County Arborist on the trees at Maple Glen, as well as at Hickory Glen. There are some diseased trees. We also spoke with him about Mill Race and he is 100% against removing any trees over there to thin out the canopy, but he will come over to look at it and provide recommendations.
- We had a successful M-5K with 65 registered runners and walkers. We're looking forward to next year and we have a couple new ideas that we will bring to you.
- The RFP for the liquor license, the proposals are due on Thursday.
- We've reached out to some fencing companies to get quotes on redoing the split rail fence at Byers.

ITEM 4: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- We've had multiple meetings since last month, most were budget oriented. The budget has not been officially approved, but I think that is planned for the November meeting. We met with the departments and have a tentatively approved budget.
- Specific to Parks, we approved another part-time staff member, and the goal would be to hire someone in January.
- We made an appointment to the Library Board to sit in for a remaining term.
- Halloween hours have been officially approved from 6-8:30pm on Halloween.
- We did send out an RFP for the real estate that the Township is looking to sell. We have 10-20 buildable lots out there. In case you get asked, there are some folks that have received letters. If you happen to be next to a piece of property that the Township owns, you're being offered the opportunity to purchase that property. The Township usually acquires these properties through tax issues. If you purchase the property, it would be merged with your property with a deed restriction that you cannot split the lot later.

Ms. England – Those are typically properties that are considered not buildable standing on their own.

Mr. Berkheiser – The idea is to try to get things back on the tax roll and make it as easy as possible.

The only other thing that came up is the pocket park. I think you're aware we purchased the old boat launch from the State and that will roll into parks property. Be thinking of how you want to operate that.

ITEM 5: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- Everyone was there today in the rain.

Ms. Garbutt – I was there this afternoon and somebody was walking their dog. She said, "This is wonderful."

Mr. Berkheiser – The parking lot?

Ms. Garbutt – In the parking lot.

Mr. Berkheiser – Was it open?

Ms. England – It's not open yet.

Ms. Garbutt – I don't know if they took down the cones, but it was that way yesterday too.

Mr. Berkheiser – I will also say over the weekend, there were folks that parked across the street and walked across carrying skateboards. At some point, that will get opened up.

Ms. England – We just have the final grading, landscaping and striping to finish.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- Byers looked great for Boo-Bash and there was a ton people there.
- Everything looks like it is all cleaned up.
- I have not been to Mill Race since the graffiti, so I don't know if it's cleaned up, but before that, everything looked good.
- Back by 7-Eleven and Leo's, there was a significant amount of garbage but it seems to have been picked up.

Ms. England – I know that the individuals who did the graffiti have been identified and are being dealt with.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- I took a ride through the park. Everything looks the same back there.
- I'm looking forward to getting something done with the old tennis court area.

Garbutt – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- At Long Park, 14 Mile Road is still kind of messy, but there are still lots of cars at the park.
- I went by there at approximately 6:30pm tonight and there were still people in the park. It gets used constantly.
- The water is up.

Ms. England – I have a meeting tomorrow with Dave Campbell and the Ralph C. Wilson Legacy Foundation. We're proposing a project to connect the M-5 trail down 14 Mile Road and into Long Park. That will make a trailhead and connect people into the park, but also connect them into the Airline Trail. I'll keep you updated.

Chairperson Petsch – Do we have enough parking for that?

Ms. England – We're looking to increase parking, but we have budgeted for that.

Ms. Garbutt – Do you think the new signs will be up before winter?

Ms. England – I hope so. I have them on order.

Walker – Maple Glen & Windmill Farm

- I drove through Maple Glen last week. The parking lot was a little rough.
- They were still playing baseball and there were a lot of people in the park.
- Everybody seemed to be having fun and everything looked pretty good.
- We talked about the Horse Farm. We visited there on Friday and things are looking good. We talked about a few things.

Duff – Hickory Glen Park

- The park looked great on Saturday.
- I've been walking there every week.

- The only question I have is about the river that runs through there. I noticed by the bridge, there are a lot of sticks building up there. It's still flowing, but I wasn't sure who is responsible for cleaning that out so that it does not start to back up.

Ms. England – We can go take a look at it.

Dodge Park

- Mr. Berkheiser – We have not talked Dodge yet.
- I was there this weekend, soccer games and whatnot. The parking lot was not full, yet we still have cars parking on the side. My guess is that they're looking for easy access to Field #3. This was Saturday around 1:00.
- My comment would be to ask the soccer folks to send a message to their teams to tell them about the overflow parking at the Library lot. But the parking lot was half to two-thirds full.

Ms. England – I'll send them a message.

Mr. Berkheiser – There needs to be a concept or thought about how we want to look at expanding parking over there in the spring.

ITEM 6: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Duff discussed the following with the Committee:

- They just finished doing the Halloween decorations and they're going to vote on that tonight for the homes in the Village.
- They're preparing for our Snacks with Santa in December.
- We put a mailbox out at Thanksgiving for Letters to Santa and that will be there through Christmas.

ITEM 7: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- Some items were already talked about.
- The pine tree is gone.
- The Horse Farm; the stud wall is up for the well room. We're waiting for the electrician and the well company to come in.
- At Hickory Glen, people are starting to dump stuff. We picked up a bunch today. We asked for patrols from the Sheriff's Department.
- The willows were trimmed at Long Park.
- The bleacher pads; we will be anchoring them before winter.

Discussion continued regarding security measures in the parks.

ITEM 8: SMOKING IN PARKS

Ms. England and Ms. Kennedy discussed issues with smoking in the parks, littering, signage and enforcement with the Committee. Clarification might be sought from the Township Attorney.

Chairperson Petsch noted that most people go to their cars and stay away from the kids during games. He could see it being posted as "No Smoking" under the pavilions. Ms. Kennedy stated that all calls she has received have been regarding smoking near the

Scarlet's Smile Playground. Ms. Garbutt felt that was an appropriate place to have a sign. Chairperson Petsch agreed, as someone is being very inconsiderate. Mr. Berkheiser agreed with "No Smoking" in the pavilions across the board. Mr. Bailey stated their rules state, "No Smoking within 50' of any playing field." Ms. England would research what other communities have put up in their parks.

ITEM 9: TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Ms. England – We received an email complaint about people riding mountain bikes on the trail behind the Richardson Center. They want the Parks Committee to put a trail etiquette policy in place.

Discussion took place regarding the trails being multiuser and that they are open to any non-motorized function, such as walking, running, biking.

ITEM 10: LEAGUE CONTRACTS

Ms. England – I updated you on this earlier in my Parks & Recreation Department report.

ITEM 11: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. England – I always put this on the agenda a month early to prepare you. You have to make a decision next month.

ITEM 12: 2022 MEETING SCHEDULE

MOTION by Walker, supported by Schwartz, to approve the 2022 Parks & Recreation Meeting Schedule as presented, with changes with proper notice.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 13: HORSE FARM UPDATE

The report was provided earlier by Ms. Hancock.

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Ms. England – I did put the Revenue & Expenditure report in the packet for your review.

Mr. Berkheiser – Emily, as far as the race is concerned, you were looking at doing it with Oktoberfest. You ran out of time this year for doing that. Do you want to put that on the agenda?

Ms. England – Yes, we're going to call it Harvest-fest.

Ms. Kennedy – We changed it from Oktoberfest just so people don't come thinking there will only be German food or music.

Mr. Berkheiser – So you're still doing the race at the same location, but then the festival at the Richardson Center?

Ms. Kennedy – We're not doing the same date for the two events.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so when are you doing that?

Ms. Kennedy – It was decided to have the festival in September, and then the race is the second Saturday in October.

Chairperson Petsch – How are we doing on concerts in the park?

Ms. England – We are good. I've already reached out to JAG regarding scheduling.

- **The next Parks and Recreation Meeting will be Monday, November 22, 2021, at 6:00PM.**
- ***No park tours are scheduled from November through March, so meetings now begin at 6:00pm at the Township Hall during the winter months.***

ITEM 15: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Garbutt, supported by Walker, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Sarah Henderson, Secretary