

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

Monday, February 22, 2021

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

Due to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services order, this meeting was held via Zoom, electronic video conferencing technology.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Wichert called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Tim Wichert, Chairperson
Rachel Kast, Vice Chairperson
Sarah Henderson, Secretary
Barbara Garbutt
Linda Champagne
William Petsch
Bob Berkheiser

Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks & Recreation
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director
John Padula, Meeting Moderator, Merge Live

COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. Henderson – I had a phone call from Dean Schantz of Byers, who mentioned that the plowing wasn't getting done at Byers or Mill Race. I don't know if that has been resolved since, but I thought I would let you know.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Garbutt, seconded by Petsch, to approve the January 25, 2021, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Garbutt, Petsch, Henderson, Wichert, Champagne, Berkheiser, Kast

NAYS: None **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Wichert opened to Public Comments.

John Padula – It looks like we have one caller in the meeting. If you'd like to make a comment, please press *9 to raise your hand. I believe they left.

Jim Lemon – Am I on the agenda or not? If not, I can speak first.

Ms. England – You'll be under Item 1.

Jim Lemon – Okay, thank you.

Chairperson Wichert closed to Public Comments and proceeded to Item 1.

ITEM 1A: LACROSSE REQUEST – WALLED LAKE GLADIATORS

Ms. England - Jim Lemon is present regarding the Lacrosse infrastructure I sent out to the Committee this afternoon. I'll let him give you more background. They are looking for a place to hold their meets and possible practices. I did talk to Chris Haney from CW3, just to be sure there wouldn't be any scheduling conflicts, because they use those fields for practice sometimes. He did not think there would be any conflicts. Originally, Jim asked about the Richardson Center. I didn't know if Bicentennial Park might be a possibility, or if he has even looked over there.

Mr. Lemon – This will be our 13th year running Gladiator Lacrosse for kids in the Walled Lake School district; a 3rd/4th grade team, 5th/6th, and 7th/8th. All these years, until this past spring, we've operated through Walled Lake Community Education. This past spring, after our first practice, Community Education shut down and they've been closed since.

We didn't have any games last year. In fact, the whole league shut down. This year, we'd like to keep the program going until Walled Lake hopefully opens up next year. They've managed it for 13 years and because they're closed this year, and Walled Lake Schools at this point has not given any access to any of their facilities, we're looking for a home to have our games, and perhaps some practices.

All of the kids are in the Walled Lake School district. It's community-based. We're in the Suburban Lacrosse League. Most of the programs in our league are community-based, with the exceptions of Novi, a middle school team, and the Cranbrook Academy. We play against the teams in our league; Waterford, Clarkston, Oxford, Lake Orion, Birmingham, Troy, Rochester, Shelby, and Macomb.

We start practice in March, and our season usually ends the last week in May. It's a non-paid program. I've been doing this since I started the program with Walled Lake Community Education 13 years ago. The coaches and managers, we do it just because we love the sport. Again, because we have no place to play this year, we're trying to find some fields so we can practice and play, and our hope is, next year when Walled Lake Community Education starts back up, which I hope happens, we can again be part of their program and they'll run everything for me.

The size of the field is similar to a soccer field, it's about 110'x60'. It can be adjusted as necessary. We're open, and we're looking for a central location because it's a pretty large school district. That's why we're looking at the Richardson Center and it seems like a really good place where the kids could commute after school.

That's what we're looking for, if there's an opportunity and whether there's a fee or not. If there's a fee, I'll just include that in our costing for the year. We're hoping to make this work.

Ms. England – I know you said you were looking at a possible practice field, but you had other locations you could potentially use. I am just concerned about damage, and compared to soccer, what is the damage? I know these are little kids, and I think you only have two teams, or are you adding a third team?

Mr. Lemon – We're hoping to add the 3rd/4th team, it just depends, and they only play on a half field. We've got permission to practice at West Acres, which is fine. My 3rd/4th, I don't know if that's going to work because most of the kids live in the western part of the community. The games we play are very similar to soccer. Games last an hour. You're playing on cleats, and instead of kicking a ball, you're throwing a ball. It's 10 vs 10. We're looking at four home games.

Mr. Petsch suggested Bicentennial Park, on Fisher behind the old Township Hall. The field is not used regularly and is definitely as big as a regulation soccer field. There would be no conflict and soccer used to be played there. Mr. Lemon was 100% open. He added that they would do their own lining with a regular paint machine.

Mr. Berkheiser expressed concern with any long-term plans for use of the Richardson Center, as that field might be pulled out and replaced with other things. He suggested an alternative might be the fields behind Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church, across from Central. He is unsure how those fields are used, but he is a member of the church and could put Mr. Lemon in contact with them.

Mr. Lemon was open to anything. He hopes it is only for one year, and that Walled Lake Community Education will then reopen. It makes it a lot easier because then he only has to coach. Now, he has to manage the money, get insurance and many other things, but he just wants to keep this going.

Mr. Petsch discussed Bicentennial field conditions and mowing with Mr. Schoder.

Mr. Berkheiser inquired with Mr. Lemon about equipment. Mr. Lemon stated that they do have all the equipment, they just need a field to play on.

Ms. Champagne suggested Clara Miller as an option, which also has bathroom facilities. He could contact the Wolverine Lake Parks and Rec.

Ms. England asked how many total games there would be. Mr. Lemon explained that, for the 7th/8th and the 5th/6th, they play four home games on the same day. They'll be one right after the other.

The 3rd/4th, most of them are jamborees, which would not be hosted this year. They've always hosted at Northern over the years, and had 30 teams there, but they will be going to other places this year. They may host two games, playing half the field, and those games last about 35 minutes with the little kids. It would be four home games for each team the same day. It would be either evenings, or a Saturday. They don't do anything on Sundays.

Chairperson Wichert and Mr. Berkheiser asked Ms. England what is needed for this request.

Ms. England – I would like a motion to move forward. Obviously, I can work with Jim on location, and keep Chris or anybody else who would be affected in the loop of what's going on. I agree with Bill that Bicentennial might be the better fit. I know it's not as centralized, but I think it's going to give them more options. I can meet Jim over there to look at it if he would like. We can also meet at the Richardson Center and look at that too, so he can do a comparison.

Mr. Lemon – Okay, I'm fine with anything you pick.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Petsch, to allow the Walled Lake Gladiators Lacrosse Teams to work with Ms. England to choose a field for their games for the 2021 season.

Discussion –

Champagne – Are those Saturdays?

Lemon – Most are Saturdays, and there's a few evening games too.

Champagne – Do you have problems with people using the Richardson Center, renting it right now, Emily?

England – We can't rent right now, so it would not be an issue.

Lemon – If there is a fee, I just need to know so I can include that in my registration price.

England – I think that it would just be that we put something in writing, if there was any significant damage. We can talk about that, and it would have to be pretty significant.

Lemon – I understand, okay. Every player and coach is going to be insured through U.S. Lacrosse. I can send you the policy that we're all going to have, but if there's anything else you need to protect yourselves, let me know. I want to make sure you guys have the right insurance.

England – The Charter Township of Commerce needs to be listed as additional insured.

Lemon – Okay, I'll make sure that's added.

Berkheiser – Is this something where we would have them sign one of the agreements that the attorneys have been working on?

England – It would not be that kind of agreement. It would be like the agreement we use for the concerts, a short-term agreement.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Berkheiser, Petsch, Champagne, Wichert, Henderson, Garbutt, Kast

NAYS: None **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ITEM 1B: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

Mr. Haney noted that he had turned in his written report to Emily for the sake of time.

Ms. England had submitted the report in the packet, and she read it into the record:

- *We're happy to be playing games again (indoors).*
- *Registration is ongoing for Spring 2021.*
- *Dodge Park "Features Signage" brainstorming session pending; Emily, Rachel, Chris*
- *Dodge Park Bathroom: walkthrough is pending.*

Ms. England – We're scheduling the Dodge Park walkthrough for next week. That is regarding use of the storage room by CW3 Soccer, and how they can help us maintain that building. I will give you an update next month on that.

Mr. Haney – Thank you, Emily.

Windmill Farms (Horse Farm) – Carrie Hancock

Ms. England read Ms. Hancock's written report:

- *We're getting ready for the middle school equestrian team season to start, and will post open-house information soon.*
- *We had a problem with some of the water lines freezing during the really cold weather, but everything is working now.*

- *We are thankful for the new hot water hydrant that has been installed.*
- *Please contact me if you have any questions.*

Ms. England – Her water lines did freeze. We replaced the outdoor hydrant. Mark has gone over there and left big barrels to fill with water for the horses.

Lakes Athletics – Josh Springer

Mr. Springer shared the following with the Committee, and submitted a written report.

- Our registration is two-thirds of the way through.
- We're starting to get all of our insurance and annual stuff renewed. Be looking out for that, Emily. I'll send that as soon as we get it.
- I do have a question about if there's any scheduling in regard to the parking lot.
- Also, you were talking about Shepherd of the Lakes Church. They still continue to allow us to play baseball there, basically for maintaining the grass. If you have questions, let me know. I can also try to get you in touch with them.
- Other than that, the season is getting ready to start and we're looking forward to it.
- *Opening day 2021 Spring Season will be Saturday, April 24th. Championship Day will be on Saturday, June 12th.*
- *The next phase of the Safety Improvement Program will begin once the weather breaks, and the diamonds on Field 3 and Field 4 will be regraded and reinforced around home plate and the bases to increase player safety.*
- *Our main focus right now is registrations, and season preparation.*
- *Registration Open through March.*
- *Insurance Renewal Certificates will arrive in late March or early April.*
- *We need a Parking Lot Update. Are there any tentative dates and/or times as to when work may begin? We will likely need to adjust schedules to facilitate these changes.*
- *Richardson Center: Hosting meetings in person at the Richardson Center would be fantastic.*

Lakes Area Hawks – Pete Lesner

Ms. England read Mr. Lesner's written report:

- *Registration is ongoing.*
- *We are planning on having a 2021 Season.*

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz, Janice Buchanan

Ms. Schantz shared the following with the Committee:

- We held a meeting on Tuesday, February 16th. Due to COVID fears, we had only 6 members out of 17 who attended. We are putting nominations of officers off until March.
- Dean has been relaying messages with Emily about Pictures with the Easter Bunny. We set a date for Sunday, March 28th upon approval of Commerce Township. Mike would be our Easter Bunny, as usual, in full costume with full head covering and he would wear a mask underneath. We would also schedule by appointment so only one family would be in the barn at a time. We would try to make it COVID safe, and again with all sanitization like we did for Boo Bash.
- Scheduling in the future, May 2nd we have scheduled a cleanup with Bob Berkheiser's troop. On that same day, we would have Kayla and her Eagle Scouts down at the startup of the butterfly garden.

- Beyond that, we have May 16th which is planting day at Byers Park. The Friends of Byers will be planting perennials and new flowers, and we will help assist Kayla with anything that she would need during her final touches and planting of the butterfly garden.
- We set our dates for events and have preliminary scheduled times. We will review those at our March meeting when we vote officers. We will submit to Commerce Township Parks with our 2021 wish list of what we are planning to do.
- We're working on the year-end report right now, Emily. I will submit that to you via email when completed.
- Friends of Byers assisted with Kayla's bottle drive by allowing donors to drop bottles at the barn. We had 13 bags and cases dropped off. I know when I talked to her last, she had \$367 out of \$1100 last Sunday, prior to our pickup. She's doing pretty well and we're excited about the start of the butterfly garden.
- My last request, we are hoping that we can get a handicap porta-pottie. This is important for big family events that we have had, as elderly people with walkers and handicapped people can't get in the small porta-pottie.

Mr. Berkheiser asked Ms. Schantz if the cleanup and Kayla's project are scheduled on the same day. Ms. Schantz replied yes, she is starting that week. Mr. Berkheiser would inquire about the troop rules for required social distancing. Ms. Schantz stated that she would have Kayla come on Saturday, May 1st instead to avoid any issues.

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

- Interlakes Girls Softball
- Commerce Little League
- Motor City Mountain Biking Association

ITEM 2: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Ms. England discussed highlights from her report which was submitted in the packet:

- We finally did get approval from AARP to start taxes.
 - Today was the first day we were able to get started. I think we had a successful day. It was a little confusing in the beginning, but I think it all worked itself out.
 - It's new this year with a drop off system. They come in for about a half-hour process to meet and scan documents. They come back the following week and everything will be finalized.
 - I think we have about 330 people on our wait list and we have gotten through a significant amount with still some time left.
- As Carrie reported, we were dealing with some water issues at the Horse Farm. Hopefully, that's been resolved. We're going to move forward with our subcommittee on that.
- We had a meeting at the Byers house on Friday with Plante Moran and the Daly Company, who is working with us on getting construction documents prepared so that we can send that project out to bid. We're going to have one more meeting over there and then we should be ready to go on that.

ITEM 3: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- At our last meeting, we had a presentation from Plante Moran Cresa, the organization that is representing the Township's interest with the architecture and

contractors. They gave an update for the Fire Station on Welch Road. We're hoping to stay within budget. We're still under the approved budget, and we have a lower than normal contingency fee, but generally speaking the issues you have are below ground, especially when you're getting rid of a building and putting a new one up. Now that we're above ground, we're hopeful there won't be many issues.

- We approved our 2021 CDBG resolution so the money can be appropriated and used in our activities.
- We approved a couple condominiums. You may be aware, across from Township Hall, the old driving range, there are some housing units going in there. There's also the Reserve at Crystal Lake, off of Sleeth and Benstein, part of the old gravel pit area. That's key because part of that has to do with them extending water and sewer from roughly the Village area all the way to Lake Sherwood. We may see some of that starting in the summer or fall time frame.
- We also looked at and are slowly moving forward on the Lystek system, which hooks into the water treatment facility to convert sewage into fertilizer for animals. We are doing our due diligence with this new system. There is one being put in down near the Ohio border in another Michigan town. They're probably 9-12 months ahead of us, so we may be able to get information from them.
- The Maintenance Department came up and we approved another hire. I know Mark is working on that. We're working on either coverage for all 7 days, or an on-call system. This time of year it probably isn't as big of a deal, but certainly in the summer, Friday through Sunday, with Parks and at Richardson with rentals, we want to make sure we have Maintenance coverage.

ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON UPDATES

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- I know we've had some conversations in the past. I was down there a couple weeks ago and there was a washing machine or a stove that was dumped down there, and that has been pulled out.
- We've had tracks – not four-wheeler tracks, but they were big truck tracks that have gone over the logs and are out there messing around on the Victory Park side. We're getting some encroachment.
- On the Wise Woods side, we need to make sure our property is not being encroached.
- We had some pits that were dug on the Victory Park side for cycles or whatever they're doing in there.
- We need to get normal usage in there and hopefully, it will ease up the issues, so we need to move forward the parking lot project this year.
- There has been talk again on the Township Board side of sending letters to the people who surround our parks, not just Wise Woods, but homeowners who are encroaching on any parks property. You have the satellite views now, so you can see who is using what and whose stuff is on our property. We're not necessarily telling them to move stuff, but we're letting them know they're on our property. Part of that has to do with State law issues, and then some of it is, as we get ready to start doing things, we might want our property back.

Ms. England – Jay is working on those letters. Let's have a discussion about Wise Woods. We did prepare bid documents and actually sent the project out for bid for that

small parking lot on the north side, which is Wise Woods. We can send those back out and see what they come in at now. Last time, they were astronomical so we didn't move forward with it. We thought we would send that out to bid when we did the south side improvements. However, after discussions with the RCOC, it sounds like when we start work on the south side, the road improvements they're going to require out of us are going to be just as costly as the project itself. In my opinion, that's a grant project to help offset some of those costs.

My question is, do you want me to move forward with sending that out to see what the bids come in at? When we did do our budget, it was the 4th or 5th priority. I feel it is a priority and it has been put off for far too long. Let me know your thoughts.

Mr. Berkheiser – It doesn't cost us anything to put a bid out there and find out what it's going cost us to do a project. Let's at least find out how much. We're not looking for paved roads. We're looking for gravel.

Ms. England – Crushed limestone.

Mr. Petsch – Even on the Victory Park side, where we have the entrance now with the posts across, we can plan a drive back in there and some gravel parking. That would alleviate the traffic off the road.

Ms. England – Years ago when we met with the RCOC, they told us, as soon as we start construction on that side of the road, they are going to require a lot of road improvements. I am working with Jay James on getting a meeting set up with the RCOC to determine what they will want and the cost estimate.

The DNR has upped the Land and Water grant. It used to be a \$200,000 grant with a 50% match. It's now a half-million dollar grant. This is the perfect project for that, it's just going to put it off another year. That doesn't stop us from putting in a parking lot on the north side, which would give people a safe place to park and utilize the park, instead of what they're doing now.

Mr. Petsch – We're not talking about having people park on the north side and walk across Wise Road to get into Victory Park, are we?

Ms. England – They can still use that little gravel lot at Victory. We can probably make that a little nicer. I have to talk to the RCOC before moving forward with anything on the south side. I don't want to trigger anything with them until we have that discussion.

Mr. Wichert – I agree with Bob. Let's get the bid.

Ms. Garbutt – I do too.

Ms. England – Okay.

Kast – Dodge Park

- Dodge Park is good and quiet, not much going on.
- When I've been there in the past several weeks, there have not been a lot of people there, probably because of the weather.

Henderson - Byers and Mill Race

- Dean raised concerns about the plowing. I just want to make sure that's getting taken care of. I don't know how many people are going to Mill Race right now, but with all of the events coming up and how it snows in Michigan, I want to make sure we have a plan.

Ms. England – We can talk about that now. Is Karen still on? Maybe she can clarify for us because Mark is on.

Ms. Schantz – I'm on.

Ms. England – As far as Mill Race goes, what is plowed for the entrance to Mill Race is going to be the parking lot located behind Leo's. They don't plow the front section of Mill Race.

As far as Byers, what is not being plowed that needs to be plowed? Is the road or is it just the parking areas?

Ms. Schantz – The parking area, but we get a lot of complaints. They do utilize the park; they want to utilize the bridge and they're trying. They're wading through four feet of snow. Sunday, I had 12 people come through the barn and ask how to get to the bridge to cross over. I had them drive out and park in front, but we still have walkers. They walk their dogs and that's the path they want to go. They want to walk Mill Race Park with their pets every day. You can tell where they've plowed their way through.

Ms. England – All right, here's what we can do. You're not talking about the road.

Ms. Schantz – I'm talking about coming up alongside the barn, through the middle of the property, and crossing over the bridge, going to Mill Race. They try parking there. There were four cars there Sunday parked off Commerce Road. Do you want me to forward them behind Leo's?

Ms. England – As far as Mill Race goes, yes. As far as the pathways in Byers go, let's work on that together with Mark.

Mr. Berkheiser – We don't generally plow pathways. Some of that is a legal reason, and some of it is that it's on dirt. I can see pushing snow in the parking lot by Byers, but it's not reasonable to think that we're going to plow a walking path so they can get to the bridge. If the snow is that deep, it's essentially closed.

Mr. Schantz – I want to make a comment about parking. At Byers particularly, there's a side parking area, just enough to accommodate 4-5 cars. My observation over at Mill Race is, I know they want to park near Leo's, but also if they put two slices of the plow over where the historical sign is at Mill Race, they could park there too.

As far as the trails are concerned, maybe down the road, if they want to store a snowblower, if I get a chance I can go down there and do a couple passes so they can access the river and feed the ducks, or even approach the bridge at some point. I think you're right, when you get into plowing out paths, it gets pretty labor intensive.

Ms. England – I agree with Bob, it's a legal thing.

Mr. Berkheiser – I think we need to talk with the attorneys. There's some sense that if we plow pathways, and they become icy and people are walking on them and slip and fall, it now becomes our liability. Whereas when it's not done, then it's sort of obvious that they're taking their own risk at it. I understand, and we don't generally get this much snow at a time that it becomes an issue. I would ask at this point, not to snow blow the paths, and let Emily contact the attorneys to see what our liability is.

Mr. Schantz – Yes, it's just basically the side parking area for photographers and people who want to feed the ducks, or patrons during the week. I think Mark also plows up where the porta-john is too, so they can empty that each week.

Mr. Schoder – Yes, we've done that twice already, so you've been clear the last two snows.

Mr. Schantz – Yes, Mark's really great about that. I call and he's down there to take care of it.

Garbutt - Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- Long Park is still closed off.
- Snowy Ridge has gotten a lot of use during the recent snow, but today was too warm.

Mr. Petsch – We got a little news coverage that Snowy Ridge is one of the bigger hills in the area for sledding. They called it more of an older kids hill. It was nice we got some press.

Ms. Garbutt – I have one more thing. Down at the bottom of the fence, at the bottom of the hill, there's all kinds of trash around the barrel, which is full. It looks pretty bad and it looks like plastic.

Mr. Schoder – We do that once a week. We've caught people dumping their home garbage in there.

Petsch - Bicentennial Park

- Nothing to report.
- It's snowed in over there and not a lot of action.

Champagne - Hickory Glen Park

- Nothing to report, unless Josh has something.

Mr. Springer – Nothing that I'm aware of.

Wichert - Maple Glen

- I drove through there today and I was kind of worried I might get stuck like another guy did.
- The east end was plowed, but the western entrance was full of snow and big ruts. It's hard to get through. I don't know, Mark, do you just do the one side?

Mr. Schoder – That's all we were asked to do is the one side and the handicapped parking, in and out. Otherwise, kids go there and trash the place.

ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Champagne had nothing to report.

ITEM 6: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- The parks have been slow, especially with the last snow.
- If we have seen four-wheeling and snowmobiles going over the bridges, we put in barricades that slow down the activity, but they don't stop people from walking. Once the snow melts we will pull those back.
- At Mill Race, we had a person that had a tent and was camping out. We called Wendy. I don't know what she did but we found the mattress and the tent over there. We have them at the shop, they're brand new. I told Wendy we have it if he comes back.
- I cleared the spots at Byers that Dean asked about.
- As Bob said, we're trying to work on getting 7 days of coverage to make sure all the parks are clean and everything looks good for Commerce and the residents.

ITEM 7: BYERS EASTER BUNNY EVENT

Ms. England – I'm going to ask you to approve the idea of the event, but I sent this over to Hans, Township Attorney, to review. He does have concerns about the way the current Executive Order reads. It's non-residential indoor gatherings of 10 or less, with no more than two households, which is where the issue comes in. If the Easter Bunny and the Byers are present in the barn, that's two households. He has concern. We are the Township and we don't want to break any Executive Order rules. I want to see this happen for them, and things can change daily as we've learned over the last year. I would like you to approve their idea of the event, with them working with me and the Township Attorney to figure out a way to make this work for them.

Mr. Berkheiser – Where was this happening?

Ms. England – In the barn.

Open discussions took place regarding what is technically inside and outside, garages, tents and other enclosures were discussed, along with canopies.

Ms. England – They proposed 5 minutes in between families and I don't think that's enough time to properly sanitize according to the CDC guidelines. I would do at least 10 minutes to make residents feel more comfortable. I want to see this happen. I'm tired of telling people no and cancelling events, but we need to make sure that we, as the Township, are following the rules as set forth.

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Champagne, to approve the idea of the Byers Easter Bunny Event, tentatively scheduled for March 28, 2021, and to allow for Ms. England and the Township Attorney to work with Friends of Byers regarding guidelines for the event.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Petsch, Champagne, Berkheiser, Garbutt, Wichert, Henderson, Kast

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8: PATHWAYS (DODGE PARK, RICHARDSON)**Dodge Park**

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- The first map you have in the packet is of Dodge Park.
- These pathways were proposed by Giffels Webster when we relocated the Dodge Park play equipment.
- This is a project eligible for CDBG money, and we have monies we can spend, I just need to reprogram that money. Before I do so, I want to make sure this layout makes sense to you.
- They're calling this removal of architectural barriers. Currently, it is not ADA accessible to get from the sidewalk to the pavilion or to the playgrounds themselves. We would be putting in pathways to connect these, and we would include ADA accessible picnic tables and grills.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is this all covered under the CDBG? Do we have an actual cost?

Ms. England – Yes, and the pathways are estimated at \$20,000.

Mr. Berkheiser – When you say pathways, they're just sidewalks, right?

Ms. England – Yes. I've been trying to say pathways. I just wanted to have discussion and make sure that this layout makes sense. Sometimes other sets of eyes help if I have missed something, or if Jason has missed something.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed the pathway coming down the road. Is that going to be a true sidewalk, abutting the curb? Ms. England replied yes. Mr. Berkheiser discussed issues with maintaining the grass on either side. He encouraged moving it to the curb. Ms. England explained that it was lined up with what is currently there, and it could be widened there to eliminate some of the grass. Vice Chairperson Kast would prefer to see it separated from the road to keep little kids safe, and grass makes a clear separation between where families should be walking and where cars should be driving. Mr. Berkheiser stated that maybe it shouldn't be put in at all and discussed alternative connections with Ms. England. Ms. Garbutt felt it was important to put in a path because most days, there are a lot of old people walking there. Ms. England would take another look at this area for the connections to the pavilion and playgrounds.

Richardson Park

Ms. England –

- We don't have a pathway on the side of the building at Richardson Center to make that deck ADA accessible.
- Now that we're having our concerts there, it needs to be ADA accessible.
- Running it along the building was going to be more costly than doing what we're doing here. This actually goes along with what you have not seen yet, but will soon, which is the concept plan we have developed for the Richardson Center.
- We did send this out to bid late fall last year and we didn't get any bids. We'd like to send it out now, and we have a couple of other projects in the Township that we can partner up on and hopefully get a better deal.
- What are your thoughts on this? We had the engineers look at it and this seemed to make sense, especially with where we're doing the handicapped parking for the concerts. It's going to connect right to that ramp on the back deck.

Mr. Berkheiser and Ms. England discussed access to the deck and the need for a ramp, along with the terrain and the high cost to connect the two decks with a pathway. It did not make sense to do that, so a safe landing point is needed which would be the deck. Mr. Berkheiser suggested a path going all the way around and connecting on the west side. Mr. Petsch inquired as to why the path wouldn't go all the way around the building to get access to both sides. Ms. England noted that the deck is not ADA accessible yet from outside of the building. Mr. Berkheiser asked if the deck needs to be accessible from outside when there is access from inside. Ms. Champagne stated that the building is closed during music in the park.

Ms. England reiterated the landing point and extending the pathway to connect between the two decks. She would have Jason look at this again and get a price on it.

Ms. Henderson – When we're coming up with designs for pathways, do you have a consultant?

Ms. England – Yes. We had Living Lab and Giffels Engineers and their Landscape Architects look at this, which is why the path comes in from where it does. The easiest answer was to try to run it along the building, which just isn't going to work. We quit looking behind the building because we thought it would be costly due to the terrain, but we will look at it again. The bigger the pathway, the less it's going to cost. They don't like to bid small jobs.

ITEM 9: OAKLAND COUNTY TREE SALE PROJECT

Ms. England – Allison has been working on this. It was Bob's idea. We all know Oakland County has their tree sale every year. We included that information in the packet and I'll let Allison take over as to her thoughts on this.

Ms. Kennedy – The question would be, which parks do you think would best be utilized for this? And then looking to set a date. We'd have to decide which parks and then which trees you'd want to use. We do have to submit this by April 6th if we want to move forward with it this year.

Mr. Berkheiser –

- Let me give a little history, or a reason why we're doing this. We had a Boy Scout/Eagle Scout project that reforested over at Maple Glen, although these things are little sticks. They're not trees really. I was disappointed as it didn't look like that many of them made it, and it may be worse once winter is done. Emily did say that only 30% are expected to live.
- We spent time and money putting together a forestry plan where they marked trees and we had commented where we wanted to replace trees with deciduous. My thought was, if we wanted to do that, maybe we get in on this Oakland Conservation project and get some of the trees through that program.
- We can enlist the Boy Scout troops, the one I work with or Kayla's, or any troops looking to do conservation projects. They could do the planting, but we would have to tell them where we want it and the types of trees. That's the idea I brought up and that's why it's on tonight's agenda.

Mr. Petsch – Allison, I did not see in there what the caliper of the trees are. Are they just seedlings?

Ms. Kennedy – Pretty much, yes. It would say on the size, 10-18". That is only the height. Honestly, it's like a pen or a pencil.

Ms. England – We might have to invest in the sleeves.

Mr. Berkheiser – They are a stick with four leaves. Some are pine, or red cedar, and they've got a little more green on them. The maples and oaks that were planted, and recommended by the forestry guy, they're sticks.

Mr. Petsch – Mark, let me bring you in on this. If we took these trees and developed someplace where we could nurture them, like where the old garage was in Dodge, and get them to a 1-2" caliper, then we could move them where we need them, and they'll have a chance to live.

Discussions continued regarding growing trees from seedlings, the need to mulch and water regularly, the role of the Maintenance Department in the reforestation project, and the cost of full grown trees versus seedlings. A somewhat shady nursery area would be needed to avoid heat and drought, such as the fertile ground at Dodge, and a water source needs to be convenient. The most difficult part would be the planting. Mr. Berkheiser inquired about a gardening group at Richardson, and Ms. Kennedy stated she could look into the idea. Ms. Champagne suggested an adopt-a-tree program.

Ms. Schantz suggested that trees could be planted at Byers behind Granny's Pantry. The well pump is nearby and seedlings could be watered regularly when the gardens are watered. It's an area obscured from the public, but sunlight does come through.

Mr. Berkheiser – Emily, I think we need to decide what kind of trees. I don't know what the forestry guy recommends, but maybe you have your discretionary funds, \$50, and get some things to get it started to see how many live.

Ms. England suggested Barb could assist with picking the correct species. Ms. Champagne stated that evergreens did the best. Mr. Wichert suggested doing deciduous trees in one area, and coniferous in another.

MOTION by Champagne, supported by Garbutt, to spend \$50 on the Oakland County Tree Project.

Discussion –

Berkheiser – Do we have somebody we can call to tell us what we need to buy? We had the forestry plan done.

England – I have it.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Champagne, Garbutt, Petsch, Henderson, Wichert, Berkheiser, Kast

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 10: REGINA MUSIC BOX - LOCATION FOR DISPLAY

Ms. England – I don't have a lot on this, but I wanted to keep it on the agenda because we are still working on it. We did tour the Library with Alyson and we identified some areas where we could put it.

The next step is to look at what kind of display it would be in. We don't want the display to take away from the actual item. The main concern is people touching it and harming it. It definitely will have to be enclosed.

Discussion took place regarding roping it off, which was not advisable. It needs to be kept safe, and Township Board agrees. During the tour, the conversation grew into potentially displaying other Commerce Township historical items in the Library.

ITEM 11: PARK AND RECREATION BYLAWS REVIEW

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- The small changes that Bob went over last month are now included, which is the meeting start times, and a couple others.
- The comment about how many Township Board members are on the Committee; they didn't feel that it needed to be changed because it wouldn't impact anything.
- There is the remote electronic meetings which you saw last month, and it makes us compliant for holding Zoom meetings. All Committees are approving that.
- We did have the discussion at the Township Board regarding residency of members. The Township Board made the decision that the primary residence of the person needs to be located in the Township, which is located in Article III, Membership, Section I. It says: *Members appointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee shall be residents of, and their primary residence must be located in, Commerce Township, with at least (1) member who shall be a resident of the Village of Wolverine Lake.*
- That wording is going to be consistent amongst all of our Boards and Commissions, where it legally can be, because I believe it is different for DDA and possibly the Planning Commission.

Mr. Wichert – How does that affect Rachel right now?

Ms. England – Her primary residence is not located in the Township.

Mr. Wichert – So is this her last meeting too?

Ms. England – It would not be her last, but we would move forward with the process. The Bylaws have to go to Township Board for approval in March.

Ms. Champagne – Then you have to post an opening?

Ms. England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – This isn't really a job interview. This is something that's done by the Supervisor. He doesn't have to post it as a job. If he knows people, he can reach out to them. It's really the Supervisor's discretion on who he recommends, not just to Parks, but to Library and wherever he recommends people, and the Township Board does the appointment.

The Board did take into account what the Committee said regarding residency, but they still felt strongly that folks who are making recommendations to spend Township taxpayer money should have their primary residence in the Township.

Mr. Wichert – Makes sense.

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Champagne, to approve the Bylaws as presented.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Petsch, Champagne, Garbutt, Henderson, Wichert, Berkheiser

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Kast

MOTION CARRIED

ITEM 12: PARKS DONATION POLICY

Ms. England – I'm going to turn this over to Allison. She has been working really hard on finding alternative bench solutions.

Ms. Kennedy discussed the following with the Committee:

- I looked into granite versus having concrete poured for the bench we looked at last time. I found that is going to cost anywhere from \$1500 to \$2500, which I think would put that completely out of range.
- We came up with other options. I reached out to John Hensler, Trail Manager for the Michigan Airline Trail. In your packet, the first bench with the circular ends, that is the bench or style that they will be using on the Airline Trail for their benches and memorial benches.

Mr. Berkheiser – Are these Trex deck and maintenance free?

Ms. Kennedy – Yes, it's recycled plastic. With this bench, you can choose different colors. This is just an example of the bench style.

Mr. Petsch – Did we have an idea of the cost for a concrete slab?

Ms. England – Our new maintenance worker has a background in concrete, so he can actually teach these guys to pour our own slabs. Allison spent a lot of time looking at benches trying to find a solution for the pathways that are not easy to get to, where we can put a footing in the ground so they don't necessarily need a slab.

Ms. Kennedy – These first two options do not require a slab to be utilized when you're securing them, even though the picture shows it that way. It has a different options so that it can be embedded with a cement footing.

Mr. Berkheiser – Does that present an issue for grass cutting around it? Where do you envision these to go?

Ms. England – I would think it would come to Parks for location. A lot of people want to do a memory bench in a specific area for a reason. They're going to come to the Parks Committee for approval, and then we can have that discussion. If the concern is the maintenance issue along pathways, and we don't have the means to put the slab on the pathway, then they can't go on the pathway. We have to put them somewhere within the park. All of the pathways typically run through a park. The location will ultimately fall on the Parks Committee, but we can work with the Maintenance Department and the donor, if it is a pathway solution, to see if there's an area on the pathway that won't create a huge maintenance issue. Those are all key aspects that we need to look at.

Mr. Berkheiser inquired about pricing. Ms. Kennedy stated that the 6' bench is \$1035. They also have an 8' bench choice, which is \$1145. A memorial plaque can be attached

to the backrest. Ms. England stated that medallions can be attached to the armrest. Ms. Kennedy explained that the Michigan Airline Trail logo will be on their medallions. Commerce Township could have the Township logo in the medallion, but that adds \$350 per medallion and Ms. Kennedy did not feel that cost should be passed onto donors. Ms. England agreed.

Ms. Kennedy reviewed another option, a slatted bench without armrests, which comes in 6' and 8' options. The 6' in this model is \$579. Ms. Champagne was concerned with skateboarders jumping on the armless bench. Mr. Berkheiser agreed, but noted that if it was on a dirt trail, there wouldn't be skateboarders in those areas. Ms. Kennedy also discussed armless benches without a backrest, but that style was not desirable as it would not accommodate a plaque. Discussions continued regarding consistency, bench locations, options, offering two choices of benches, and slabs versus anchoring or footings.

Mr. Berkheiser – What is the Michigan Airline Trail charging for their bench placement?

Ms. Kennedy – I think they're still working on their policy. Last I talked to John, they didn't have it in place yet.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed suggested pricing of \$1000 and \$1500 for the two bench options, and working to try to match the Airline Trail's pricing. Ms. England noted that the bench the Airline Trail is using is coming from the same company that supplied the Scarlet's Smile playground equipment, and the Township has a history with this company. They stand behind their product.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed bench color choices. Ms. England listed options but encouraged consistency once a color is chosen. Mr. Berkheiser suggested sticking with just the 6' size. Ms. Kennedy brought up the color chart on the screen. There are 10 different colors for the circular metal armrests, along with 4 color options for the recycled plastic.

Ms. Garbutt felt it would be nice to use cedar, considering the fact that a lot of these benches will be close to green grass. Ms. England and Mr. Wichert agreed. Mr. Petsch stated that the display was cedar, and Ms. Kennedy confirmed. Ms. Kennedy showed another example with blue armrests with gray recycled plastic, which also had the medallion in place. Ms. England preferred the green armrests over the blue, but she was not opposed to the neutral brown. Mr. Berkheiser like blue, but could go with green or brown too.

Mr. Petsch requested that Ms. Kennedy bring up the rendering showing anchoring of the bench, and slab versus footings were discussed.

Mr. Berkheiser – Allison, do we order a bench and they send it to us in a week, or do they make it and it takes 3 months? Do we have to buy 5 at a time?

Ms. Kennedy – If you purchase more of them all at once, then it will be a little bit cheaper. I don't know if that's something you want to look into, so you have them and you're not waiting. I have not heard from Lance about how long it takes, once you order one, for it to come in.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do we have 10 people on a list of requests?

Ms. Kennedy – We had 3 or 4 people within the last 2 months that have called and asked about it. I do have the names of 2 people who are waiting for this to be approved so that they can look at the option of completing and purchase once the policy is in place.

Ms. England – I would say the Township, the Parks Committee, would buy them and put some of them in, but maybe keep a couple on hold for people who want to do memorial benches.

Mr. Wichert – Good idea. Should we buy 8 or 10?

Ms. England – We did budget for benches this year. Let me review that number.

Mr. Petsch – I don't think we were looking at spending that much per bench in our original budget, but we could always just buy with what we budgeted.

Ms. Champagne – Find out what the discount is. At the Village, we just wait until someone wants to buy one, and they pay the price.

Ms. England – I still think we should move forward with getting some for the Township and then people can see it. We do need benches, but I'm not opposed to what you've said, Linda. I was thinking we would buy 5 because that's where the discount is. Discussion took place regarding putting a plaque on a bench that has already been purchased or is already in place. Consistency is also important when it comes to the plaques. Ms. Kennedy added that this company has plaques as part of their program.

Ms. England – If everybody is in agreement with that bench, we can continue working on the policy based on that. Do you want the second bench as an option, or just one bench?

Mr. Wichert – Just the one bench.

Ms. England – We will move forward on getting pricing nailed down. We'll have communication with John Hensler again to see where they're at with their policy, and hopefully bring back a draft policy to you next month.

ITEM 13: PARK EVENTS

Ms. England discussed the following Tentative 2021 Event Dates with the Committee:

- April 6 – Tree Sale Deadline
- July 9 – Concert
- July 16 – Concert
- July 23 – Concert
- July 30 – Concert
- August 6 – Concert
- September 18 – Oktoberfest
- October 9 – M-5K
- We are working with JAGG again. They are working on getting bands lined up for us. We're not looking for huge concerts this year. We want more of a community

feel. Since we weren't able to have one last year, we want to give the community something to do. Our plan is to move forward as if this is a normal year.

- We're looking into face painters, bounce houses, and the same activities we've always had.
- Concert dates are listed. They have not nailed down the bands yet, but I will send those out as soon as we get them.
- We discussed doing something new this year, Oktoberfest. We're throwing around the idea. Oakland County has different mobile recreation units. One was ax throwing, they have a climbing wall, and all sorts of different stuff. It could be open to have art vendors, a beer tent, just something different and fun.
- We were not able to have the M-5K last year, but we do want to move forward with that this year on October 9th. Allison will go before the Airline Trail committee to get approval on that date next month so we can start working on pulling the proper permits.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed a movie in the park, maybe during the first week of school. Ms. England stated that Parks has a projector and a transmitter that she and Mark would work with to see if it works, or if a company would need to come in.

Ms. Kennedy stated that there is a need to add a designated cause for the M-5K. Previously, it was stated that it was *To raise funds for Parks & Recreation for upcoming events*. This could be narrowed down to be more specific. Suggestions discussed were: ADA accessible picnic tables in the parks, making playgrounds more ADA accessible, or to start as a collection toward the dog park that is hopefully in the works at Victory Park. She asked the Committee for ideas and suggestions. Ms. Kast would like to see funds go toward improving the trails or running paths in the community. Mr. Berkheiser suggested that each Committee member think about this and email Emily.

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Wichert – I'd like to make an announcement. My appointment expires on February 28th, and I have been told that I will not be reappointed. I have enjoyed working for my neighbors in Commerce Township these last 20 years. I consider it a high honor to have served. I think the world of Emily England and I know the Parks & Recreation Committee will be in good hands as I pass the baton to the next appointees. Some of my highlights that I remember is getting the Parks Millage passed so we could finally improve our parks and purchase new land. I had the privilege of introducing former representative Thaddeus McCotter when we dedicated the playground at Richardson Center. I also remember helping get Scarlet's Smile playground off the ground and up and running, as well as many other park improvements at Maple Glen, Dodge Park, Snowy Ridge, Byers, Hickory Glen, Long Park and Bicentennial. I also took pride in helping to name our two newest parks, Victory Park and Wise Woods.

At this point, I'd like to nominate Bill Petsch as Chairperson to take my place. I know Rachel will still serve as Vice Chair until the Bylaws have passed, and Sarah will continue on as Secretary. Thank you very much.

Ms. Champagne – Thank you.

Mr. Petsch – Thank you, Tim, for all your hard work. You're going to be missed, all your expertise and time that you've spent. We've worked together and I remember when you

first got on the board, and when you got appointed to your first round as Chairperson. It was fun. You're going to be missed by me for sure, looking for input on all the things that we've accomplished throughout the years, and all the memories that you have on the things we did. It's going to be tough; as we lose our veterans on the Parks board, the more difficult it becomes for us.

Mr. Wichert – Well, hopefully you'll get some new people and it will change things up.

Mr. Petsch – You never know, Tim, we might have you back. Who knows how this thing will go. I hope so.

Mr. Wichert – I would be happy to serve again if I am reappointed.

MOTION by Wichert, supported by Champagne, to appoint William Petsch as Chairperson of the Parks & Recreation Committee.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Wichert, Champagne, Garbutt, Berkheiser, Petsch, Henderson, Kast
NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ms. Henderson – I'm sure you are familiar with the Bill Lesner family, with all the work that they've done at Hickory Glen and with the Hawks association. They're in my neighborhood. I talked with Emily earlier and she'd already heard about it. Their house caught fire, weekend before last, and they're going to be displaced for about 6 months. Our neighborhood is doing everything we can to support them. If anyone wants to contribute, or learn more about how to help them through this difficult time. I helping to organize what they might need. Give me a shout if anyone is interested in donating anything. We'd be happy to have help.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting will be Monday, March 22, 2021, at 6:00PM.

ITEM 15: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Garbutt, supported by Petsch, to adjourn the meeting at 7:57pm.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Garbutt, Petsch, Wichert, Henderson, Berkheiser, Champagne, Kast
NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Sarah Henderson, Secretary