

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

*Monday, August 2, 2021*  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Petsch called the special meeting to order at 5:34pm at the Ralph C. Richardson Center.

**ROLL CALL: Present:** William Petsch, Chairperson  
Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson  
Sarah Henderson, Secretary  
Barbara Garbutt  
Bob Berkheiser  
Krystal Schwartz  
**Absent:** Kathryn Duff (excused)  
**Also Present:** Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks and Recreation  
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director

**ITEM 1. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Bruce Houghtaling, Commerce Township – I am interested in pickleball. Basically, there's a group in Milford who started the What's Up app. They have 160 people who are actively playing. Milford relined their tennis courts. The reason I'm here is just to make sure that your focus is to have a planner who understands pickleball, so you don't line the course like Milford did. They put them east to west, but they needed to be north to south.

Wixom just wasted a beautiful facility and taxpayer's money. They just relined Gilbert Willis Park, and they put the lines 1' from the side fences, with 12' between the courts. We were there Saturday and you can't play.

I'm not here to be a critic. I'm an excited Commerce Township citizen, and pickleball is growing. I'll be involved however you want. I know several other people who have been involved in tennis and pickleball developments in subdivisions, and they have knowledge. I'm just interested in what I can do to help.

Chairperson Petsch – We're on it.

Ms. England – I talked to him beforehand. He knows the process now and that we have not done the design yet. We have his contact information, so we will keep him in the loop.

**ITEM 2: BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee.

**1. DODGE V – \$120,000 (Parking depends on Splash Pad Project location)**

- Ms. England stated that nothing was budgeted for Dodge Park last year.
- Discussion took place regarding \$17,000 for the pathways, to be completed this year, and reprogramming of CDBG funds.
- Mr. Berkheiser expressed concerns over parking and stressed the need to clean up visibility from the parking lot to the street where it is very dense. Discussion continued regarding brush hogging, estimated at up to \$20,000 in 2022.

Increased visibility promotes security. Once this is done, the hope is that Maintenance can keep up with it after that. Chairperson Petsch suggested that this could possibly be done in Fall 2021.

- Ms. England asked if there is anything else for Dodge. Parking has been discussed. Whatever road is chosen for the splash pad, that won't be until next year. Chairperson Petsch suggested gravel or millings. Ms. England stated that in 2021, Jason can draw up a plan to get the survey, get construction documents done and get an estimate to go out to bid. Chairperson Petsch noted that the Township Board feedback was that they'd like to see walkways that go through there instead of around, but he does not know the storm water situation. Ms. England discussed Option #1 which doesn't involve issues with storm water. Chairperson Petsch discussed a fountain to keep the algae down. Ms. England stated that Jason had estimated \$100,000 for the project in 2022. Discussion continued regarding the need for additional parking in Dodge. Mr. Berkheiser stated that it depends on which park the splash pad goes into. Ms. England agreed that will change the amount of parking necessary. Millings might not be much cheaper than asphalt. The timeline of the project was debated, and would need to coordinate with the splash pad construction, if it is in Dodge.

Ms. England – Let's go through each park, and then come back and set priorities. It's the way I presented it to the Board on Tuesday night. We set priorities 1-6. You want to try to reach the top 6, then if we can reach more, we will.

Mr. Berkheiser – Are we looking at security in the parks, since we're having so many issues?

Ms. England – We have cameras on the restrooms.

Mr. Berkheiser – There's parking lights in these places. If we put cameras up there, does that fall under the SAD?

Ms. England – No, that's General Fund. And, we have the ability to add four more cameras over there.

Mr. Walker – You hit a touchy line when you aim cameras at a splash pad for kids.

Mr. Berkheiser – No, I don't think so. It's a park. We have it at the playground too. We should have signs up saying this area is under 24-hour surveillance. There is no expectation of privacy in a public park. Technically, we don't have to post the signs, but I think signs are appropriate, "Smile, you're on camera."

Ms. England – They see the cameras on the restroom building now, and they'll see that they are in other places.

Discussion continued regarding recent vandals being caught on security cameras.

**2. HICKORY GLEN – \$260,000 (\$250,000 carry forward from 2021)**

- Ms. England still feels confident that 2021 projects will be completed this year, but there may be some spill over to adjust for. The survey has been started, and then the final cost estimate will come in and go to the Township Board asap. Mr. Berkheiser stated that the \$250,000 could be put into next year.
- Mr. Berkheiser suggested a cut-through to Log Cabin Road. Ms. England stated that it is a private road and could not be connected. She recommended that the Hickory Glen connection to the new subdivision could be improved.
- Mr. Berkheiser asked if there is anything else major in the park that might need to be addressed. Maybe another \$10,000 should be allocated for potential partnership projects if they match the criteria.

Mr. Berkheiser – At Dodge, they were going to do signs. Are we partnering on those?

Ms. England – Yes, but that will be 2021.

**3. MAPLE GLEN – \$125,000**

- Ms. England stated that \$50,000 was designated in 2021 to install internal signage and benches.
- Commerce Little League reached out as they have funds they want to spend and they want to do a partnership. And, Scarlet's Smile is getting a price on putting a pavilion there, exactly like the one that is in Dodge.
- Ms. England suggested \$100,000 to work on the partnership with CLL.
- Mr. Berkheiser added that there is a need for grills with all of the pavilions. Ms. England replied that they will get the ADA accessible grills, to be installed with concrete.
- Discussion continued regarding available space for pavilions, the potential for an additional field being added by Commerce Little League, which coincides with the concept plan, and readjusting parking.
- Mr. Berkheiser added that the bathrooms are a big issue to be addressed, including floors and fixtures. There was speculation on the square footage and related costs, possibly up to \$25,000. Mr. Berkheiser and Ms. England discussed responsibility and control of the bathrooms which lies with the leagues. Ms. England would add this to the agreements.
- Ms. Kennedy noted that Tim Bailey had asked about bleacher pads for the park. Mr. Berkheiser inquired about budgeting for bleacher pads. Ms. England stated that will come out of Building and Grounds Maintenance. Ms. England would get a price from Maintenance.
- Discussion took place regarding payment for labor and materials and work done by the Maintenance Department.

**4. BICENTENNIAL – \$100,000**

- Ms. England suggested leaving the budget at \$100,000 as it was for 2021. Mr. Berkheiser noted that nothing has been done at the park. Chairperson Petsch noted that the gazebo was painted. Ms. England added that it is #3 on the list.
- Chairperson Petsch asked if the grass was ever killed at the park for the baseball diamond. Ms. England explained that she has not been able to get a contractor out to prep the site, but she has someone to do the work for the diamond. She will write bid specs and put it out for quotes. Discussion took place regarding the requirements for certifications to spray in a public park.

- The \$100,000 was for resurfacing the tennis courts. The focus would be refinishing or re-purposing the tennis courts, restoring the baseball field, basketball court and adding more picnic tables and grills.
- The skate park was discussed. Ms. England may get in touch with Rachel's recommended contact. Chairperson Petsch reiterated that the courts can be resurfaced, but they do not need to be torn out.
- Ms. England encouraged an online public survey be conducted, targeting nearby residents to get their feedback. Mr. Berkheiser encouraged providing specific choices on the survey, such as the skate park, basketball, roller hockey, et cetera.
- Chairperson Petsch explained that the park, where it connects to the neighborhood, is all brushed up and it's very pretty back there. You've got tall trees, the baseball fields and volleyball courts are there, the gazebo area is being painted, and you'll have more tables there.
- Ms. England stated that picnic tables and grills will be purchased for Dodge North when the pathways are put in. Money is budgeted and this could be added to the order to get a better shipping rate cost. Mr. Berkheiser discussed the need to mount grills and secure the tables to prevent theft.
- Mr. Walker discussed the potential for pickleball. Mr. Berkheiser explained that the feeling has been that pickleball should be at the Senior Center. Ms. England and Mr. Houghtaling added that the Milford Group has 160 active pickleball players, and over half are Commerce Township residents.

#### **5. BYERS – \$100,000**

- Ms. England stated that the work to stabilize the Farmhouse and make it more secure was approved. She awaits insurance information. She will keep the \$100,000 as a placeholder.
- Mr. Berkheiser noted that including the contingency, it was about \$140,000.

#### **6. MILL RACE – \$25,000**

- Chairperson Petsch wondered if an RFP could be put out to brush hog and clear it out, or if they can even get anything back there. Ms. England noted that Wynn Berry stated there are giant black walnut trees that could be pulled out to open up the canopy and dry up the ground. Chairperson Petsch agreed; there is no sunlight coming in. Wynn also suggested that the walnut trees could be sold to a lumber company.
- Discussion continued regarding access to the park. It is narrow off of Farr Street. Chairperson Petsch encouraged putting in some sort of ingress/egress to allow access to do the work. Mr. Berkheiser agreed and also suggested a 3-car parking spot near the school. Anything to open the park up and get more people walking through there to cut down on the issues. You can't get in from Commerce Road, or from behind the store due to the storm water retention pond.
- Ms. Henderson asked if there are additional limitations because that is considered historical Commerce Village. Can they pave, or do they have to maintain the historical aspect?
- Discussion continued regarding challenges at the site for access with any type of construction equipment, the saturated ground, visibility issues, the road washing out, and potential park improvements.

- The Committee reviewed plat maps of the park, adjacent neighborhoods and potential roads and road widths for accessibility. Ms. England suggested meeting with tree contractors to see if they had any ideas for access.

#### **7. RICHARDSON CENTER – \$250,000**

- Ms. England proposed keeping the same \$250,000 budget with the same goals.
- Expand parking
- Tennis/pickleball courts, Relocate soccer field
- Clear path at lake, fishing dock
- This will hopefully be matching funds for grant funding to expand parking and put in the pickleball courts.

#### **8. LONG PARK – \$50,000**

- Ms. England stated that Long Park was not one of the top 6 priorities last year.
- The goals were to repair the covered bridge, aquatic vegetation control, and resurface the parking lot.
- Ms. England would be on a call tomorrow for a possible grant to create a better habitat.
- Mr. Berkheiser asked if 14 Mile Road has reopened. Chairperson Petsch replied no. Discussion continued regarding repaving by the Road Commission, and the potential to improve the park entrance and the parking lot. Ms. England would keep it on the list to resurface.
- Discussion took place regarding cell towers on park land, and funding that should be allocated to the parks.
- Mr. Berkheiser stated that the pavilion pad needs to be patched. Ms. England stated that Keith is aware of the issues.
- Mr. Berkheiser discussed the fishing pad at the back which has been inaccessible. It is still under water. Maintenance will put more stone in there to help with accessibility.
- Mr. Berkheiser initiated discussion on park issues, signage, enforceability and security measures.

#### **9. WISE WOODS & VICTORY PARK – \$350,000**

- Ms. England stated that this would include \$300,000 that was just approved for next year, for parking on the Wise Woods side.
- As far as the south side goes, Victory Park would be a 2023 project. The grant would be decided at the end of the year. This includes the dog park and pavilion in Phase II. An additional \$50,000 would allow for these construction documents to be done.
- Discussion continued regarding park signs, project signage, issues in the Wise Woods parks, accessibility and parking.

#### **10. SNOWY RIDGE – \$10,000+**

- Mr. Walker asked if the lighting could be done at Snowy Ridge this year. Chairperson Petsch asked if that was lighting for the hill, or just the parking lot. Mr. Berkheiser thought the hill should be lit. Chairperson Petsch noted that the park closes at dusk. Discussion continued regarding potential changes the ordinance rules for one park.

- Mr. Berkheiser noted that there was also a firepit discussed for the park. Chairperson Petsch agreed, it is a place for a gazebo and a firepit. Mr. Berkheiser encouraged a pavilion, grills and a firepit, after consultation with the Fire Marshal. Ms. Henderson suggested that a fire hydrant would be necessary within so many feet with a firepit.
- Ms. England stated that the budget could be kept at \$10,000 in 2022, and some of the items could still be done in 2021. Mr. Berkheiser asked about the cost of the pavilion and pad. Ms. England would get a price.

## **11. TRAILS – \$0**

### **ITEM 3: OTHER MATTERS**

Mr. Berkheiser inquired about the property for sale, across from Dodge Park, next to the cemetery. Ms. England thought that it sold, but Mr. Berkheiser said the signs are still up.

Ms. England – With nothing in the trails, and \$10,000 at Snowy Ridge, we're at \$1.4 million. Our fund balance included this year is \$1.5 million. Our cash balance is \$2.1 million, and we should gain another \$700,000 next year, so we can accomplish all of these tasks.

Chairperson Petsch – We've always talked about the need to keep the reserve.

Ms. England – We can still budget for trails, or we can just do miscellaneous projects.

Mr. Berkheiser – Our next meeting is here at the end of the month?

Ms. England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – Are you going to give us recommended priorities, and show it to us at the meeting?

Ms. England – Yes, because it won't go to the Board until September. We don't line item anything until we get the concept and the design plans, so the first step is to get pricing, cost estimates for design, survey work, construction documents, et cetera. We then send that out to bid and review the line items with the contractor.

Ms. England and Mr. Houghtaling discussed the 2022 budget and timeline for the Richardson Center. Ms. England explained that grant funding is being sought, and the build timeline depends on which grants come through and when. It should start next year, but may not be completed in 2022.

Ms. Schwartz – I had one question I had from the Township Board meeting. We were discussing possibly having a ranger, or somebody working in the parks. Would that fall under the parks budget?

Ms. England – Yes, but General Fund, not millage.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, we should still talk about that.

Chairperson Petsch – Don't we need to talk about that at a regular meeting?

Mr. Berkheiser – It's still part of the budgeting process for the parks.

Ms. England – I have a meeting next week with HR and Larry. I have a proposal. Let me have that discussion and see what the complete intent of the Township is. We can then discuss that at our August meeting.

Mr. Berkheiser – I just think that since we're doing parks budget review, we should talk about it. We've discussed having a couple maintenance guys assigned just to the parks.

Ms. England – It's not going to be enough. That's my fear.

Discussions continued regarding staffing in the parks, reporting, part-time vs. full-time, reservations for pavilions, and park developments planned for 2022 and 2023.

The Committee discussed plans and the timeline for the splash pad, and working with the Starr family.

The Committee also discussed the upcoming annual picnic.

**ITEM 4: ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Berkheiser, supported by Walker, to adjourn the meeting at 6:44pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Sarah Henderson, Secretary