

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

Monday, April 22, 2019

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Kast called the meeting to order at 7:00pm at the Township Hall.

ROLL CALL: **Present:** Rachel Kast, Chairperson
Tim Wichert, Vice Chairperson
Michelle Holmes, Secretary (arrived 7:02pm)
William Petsch
Barbara Garbutt
Bob Berkheiser
Absent: Linda Champagne (excused)
Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks and Recreation

COMMUNICATIONS:
None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Petsch, seconded by Garbutt, to approve the March 25, 2019, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS
None.

ITEM 1: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

Friends of Byers – Karen Schantz, Jim Meenahan

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee:

- The Easter Bunny event was last weekend. We had 290 people onsite and took 94 pictures. Berkman & Shapiro Orthodontics, our new local community partners, volunteered.
- Our WWAM cleanup is scheduled for May 5th.
 - We will knock out the concrete around the duck barn.
 - We will put pea gravel around the farmhouse, as there are no gutters and the rains splashes up, which is destroying the siding.
 - We'll also do the basic grounds cleanup.
 - There is a tree down on the duck barn. If it is not cleaned up by then, we will have it removed on May 5th.
- Dean will be starting the water. He will rent a trencher and trench from the well down to Granny's Pantry. That will be the first post to have running water.
- Then we will get into rehabbing the front or east wall of the barn, the side with the entrance. We have a local artist to pain the Byers Country Store sign for us.

- We have a new member to our group, Sarah. She lives in the Morrison estate. She is a geologist and also works in real estate, and has done land surveying. Her husband is an archaeologist. She has a lot of contacts. She will be working with Jim on the river watershed issues. She will be a good addition to our group and it's nice that she lives in a historical home in Commerce Township.

Interlakes Girls Softball – Tim Bailey

Mr. Bailey discussed the following with the Committee

- Opening games are being played as we speak.
- Our first tournament is May 4th and 5th.
- The park is in good shape. We had our cleanup a couple weeks ago. Emily, we've got about 50 yard waste bags out there.

Ms. England – We've been calling for a pickup.

CW3 Soccer – Todd Lamb

Mr. Lamb discussed the following with the Committee:

- We held our cleanup a few weeks ago.
- We've got one game under our belt, then the rain delayed us a little bit.
- We're getting ready for construction to start back up to finish off the field. We expect to probably have the rough grade by the end of next week. Once that is inspected, we can finish the sprinklers, finish grade and seed it. We hope to see grass for the 4th of July.

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

- Lakes Athletics
- Commerce Little League
- Lakes Area Hawks
- Michigan Mountain Bike Association

ITEM 2: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Ms. England stated that things are going smoothly at the Richardson Center, and discussed the following:

- We contracted our mowing services out this year for Maple Glen, Hickory Glen, Dodge Park, and the Richardson Center. It was a very good bid at \$1500 per week.
- We have the first food tasting for our caterer on April 29th. We're working on scheduling the other ones. The tasting committee consists of me, my girls, Missy Creech and Molly Phillips.

Mr. Berkheiser suggested the caterers hold a food tasting before the Township Board.

ITEM 3: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- Bill Petsch was reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee for another 4 years, through May 2023.
- Barb Garbutt was reappointed to the Library Board.

- We discussed the Horse Farm:
 - She did come in and make some payments and provided insurance.
 - We did make some concessions as she did some repair work. We also clarified that she needs to ask permission in the future when making repairs if she is seeking a rent credit in exchange.
 - We have set ground rules for us as landlords, but also for her as a tenant. We are working on drafting a new concession agreement with her. The payment scale may be adjusted.
 - She is doubling up her payments and will supposedly be caught up by June. I think she has paid a total of about \$85,000 in rent since she started renting.
 - We the Township have not really done much on the property. As we rent things, we've been trying to put money in for maintenance, as with the Richardson Center. That money needs to go to maintenance or upkeep for that facility. At the Horse Farm, we're looking at doing some repairs, fix the well, move electricity to the barn instead of the house, and then eventually tear the house down.
 - I don't know that we're super excited to be in the horse business, but we feel that it does provide a service to the community. There's a lot of kids that use it.
 - Once all that is done, and the agreements are signed, then more than likely it will be turned over to Parks. She is supposed to ask permission to hold events there and those types of things would have to be coordinated. I suggested that she show up to the Parks and Recreation Committee meetings each month and give us an idea of what's going on at the Horse Farm, so we can help support that and provide direction to her.
 - She has too many horses on the property. The number needs to be brought down to the appropriate amount, which is about 30-35.

Mr. Wichert – Does she have an official name of the business?

Ms. England – Windmill Horse Farm.

Mr. Berkheiser – The Board also talked about the mowing and the bids.

Ms. England – We sent him over all of our special event dates, including the leagues' tournament dates.

Discussion continued regarding keeping an eye on the parks and communicating maintenance concerns to Emily. She will relay to the lawncare contractor.

ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON UPDATES

Berkheiser - Wise Woods & Victory Park

- We are excited to be camping at Victory Park this weekend for the IFC event. Are we running a brush hog through there?

Ms. England – They did that last week, and they're delivering picnic tables and outhouses.

Mr. Berkheiser – Remind the Sheriff's Department that there will be 50 to 100 Scouts in there this weekend so that everyone is aware. Have we set rules on ground fires over there?

Ms. England – I believe that was set the first time they held the event. They had to be enclosed.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so they're not digging holes and burying it?

Ms. England – Correct. Right.

Petsch - Bicentennial Park

- We were at Bicentennial today.
- The trees all look like they're in good shape.
- We need picnic tables and grills.

Ms. England – We have them.

Mr. Petsch - The baseball diamond is just a field now. It's all covered in grass.

Discussion took place regarding soccer practice at the park, delivering grills, securing picnic tables and the types of picnic tables.

Mr. Berkheiser asked for an update on the tennis court. Ms. England does not have an update yet. It was put out for bids years ago.

Holmes - Byers and Mill Race

- Mill Race, I did contact the RCOC. The pylons along Farr Street are either falling into the park, and/or dried out and lost their reflectors. I went by there, and they had already been there to survey and paint each one that needed fixing.
- My concern is that if they put in the railing there, I want to make sure that they don't close off the entrance to the park or the fishing area. I put in for one side, but they marked it all.

Mr. Berkheiser encouraged Ms. Holmes to copy the County Commissioner on the email so that she can follow-up.

Ms. Holmes – The RCOC responds well to online submissions I've sent in before for washouts and potholes.

Kast - Dodge Park

- We did get the drawings back for the design of the restroom building.
- The current design is two fully accessible restrooms and then four changing rooms / restrooms.
- There's lots of people in the park all the time, every time I'm there.
- Tomorrow, my son's Cub Scout group is going to plant flowers.

Garbutt - Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- Long Park is pretty good.

- The parking lot needs some work. There's a pretty big hole there as you're coming in the entrance.
- There's going to be a new bench put in, close to where the river flows over the dam.

Wichert - Maple Glen

- Maple Glen was pretty busy today.
- We had games on Fields 4, 5, and 6.
- I'm concerned about some of the trees.

Ms. England – We just went through with the arborist last week. A lot of them are still alive. He gave us tips as to what to do. We will cut some of them down.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed an Eagle Scout project to reforest at Maple Glen. Outside of his project, the arborist had suggested that the Township consider purchasing protectors to place around new trees and shrubs to prevent deer from chewing them down to nothing.

Champagne - Hickory Glen Park

- No report in Ms. Champagne's absence.

ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Champagne discussed the following with the Committee:

- No report in Ms. Champagne's absence.

ITEM 6: LAKES ATHLETICS BYLAWS

Ms. England – Lakes Athletics has cleaned up the bylaws because it has been so long. They changed some of the terms that they don't use anymore.

Mr. Berkheiser – Does the Township Attorney have to look at this to make sure certain things are included in their bylaws, such as financing matters, et cetera?

Ms. England – Yes, that's listed in here. I don't typically send these over to him, but I can.

Mr. Berkheiser – Present it at the monthly meeting with the attorney, since it has been that long.

Mr. Wichert – You said we did have some money allocated for them. Maybe we can do one of these projects. I'd probably go with the parking lot.

Ms. England – I agree.

Mr. Berkheiser – The emergency exit is the first focus.

Mr. Wichert – I thought you said we didn't have enough money for that.

Mr. Petsch – We were just talking about putting in the culvert and gravel with a couple of metal gates and a lock. Emergency services would have the keys.

Mr. Berkheiser – Just an emergency thing.

Ms. Holmes – It's not the emergency access we had in our concept plan, but it is an alternative one until we can get to the second entrance.

Ms. Kast – Could that be added into the parking lot project?

Ms. England – Yes.

Discussions continued regarding getting the cost estimate from the engineers, the sub-committee, and quotes for clearing the front section.

MOTION by Wichert, supported by Petsch, to recognize and accept the Bylaws of the Lakes Athletics Association, contingent upon approval by the Township Attorney.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 7: BYERS HOUSE

Ms. England stated that the sub-committee had met regarding the Byers Farmhouse, and Karen Schantz was present at the table for Friends of Byers (FOB), along with Mr. Wichert, Ms. Champagne and Ms. Holmes. The group decided that the ideal use and scope for the house is to make it a working museum for educational purposes. Not for storage of artifacts, but for groups of children from the elementary school to tour. Making it structurally sound doesn't necessarily mean that the capacity will increase. Todd Martin will be consulted further in that regard to see if there's anything that could be done to increase capacity above the approximate 10 people it is anticipated to accommodate.

Use of historical funds was discussed. The Township Attorney did a lot of research in this regard, and Township Board has the final say, but there doesn't seem to be anything that states the historical funds cannot be used to restore this historic building. The fund is approximately \$100,000+. When use of these funds were brought up two years ago, there was some protest from the historical community. They felt this might not be the intent for the money.

The matter is up to the Township Board, and they were looking to the Parks and Recreation Committee to come up with a plan for the Farmhouse. The use has been decided. Now a plan and a timeline will need to be developed. Making the building structurally sound is a priority, but it is not the only goal. Ms. England is working with the structural engineer and Jay James is also willing to help with the project. Once the plan is developed, it will be taken to the Township Board with FOB to show what the potential uses will be.

Ms. Schantz reached out to Walled Lake Schools to determine their interest in having elementary students participate in this educational resource. Ms. Schantz discussed preservation of a civil war dress that will be dry cleaned and stored on display in the house in a glass case to prevent dry rot. She also mentioned that the FOB group continues to work on bringing back the historical register for Byers.

Ms. England will bring this item back to the Committee with an updated cost estimate and specs before it is taken to the Township Board.

ITEM 8: CONCERT IN THE PARK

Ms. England stated that the list of bands for each concert will be sent out via email tomorrow to the Committee members. The food vendors have been selected and all have agreed to come. Kickstand Brewery has asked about providing their own draft beers. She told them that would be something separate, as the food is one thing and a beer tent would have to be another, with the idea that some of that profit would come back to the actual event. She had checked with the attorneys and it is possible if a concession agreement is executed in order to utilize the license.

Discussions took place regarding use of the liquor license at the Richardson center, alcohol at these family events, 501c3 organizations getting permits to hold fundraisers, details of the concession agreements, and coolers being brought into the events.

Mr. Berkheiser initiated conversation on the new banners, and putting up a banner across the road in front of the Richardson Center to advertise the new venue.

ITEM 9: BICENTENNIAL / RICHARDSON

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- We've held discussions regarding Bicentennial and the tennis court. I think it has been 2 years since we got the pricing on completely redoing the tennis court which was \$100,000 and it is truly what needs to be done.
- We went through this Master Plan process. The people who use Bicentennial park came out to speak, and they want to see that park improved.
- I've put in here the estimate to do a concept plan, \$18,500. The Bicentennial plan would be geared toward the users in the surrounding neighborhoods. They could come in and participate in providing input to give that park what the community wants.
- We've also had several discussions regarding the Richardson Center with the parking issues. If that remains the home park for concerts we'll need to address that.
- We've all had discussions about pickle ball also. I think everybody agrees that should be at the Senior Center.
- I also put in there a price to do a concept plan for Richardson, \$16,500.
- I think Bicentennial takes priority.

Discussions took place regarding increased interest, activity and accessibility at Bicentennial Park.

Mr. Berkheiser – When you envision a concept plan for Bicentennial, what do you see changing? Do we really need a concept plan?

Ms. England – It let's us know what the community wants.

Ms. Holmes – Not only what the community wants; it will give us more direction.

Mr. Berkheiser – They had the opportunity to participate in the Master Plan piece.

Ms. England – They did.

Mr. Berkheiser – I just thought that sounds like a lot of money for a concept plan.

Ms. Holmes – Is the concept plan needed to qualify for grants there?

Ms. England – They do provide professional renderings.

Discussions continued regarding using the \$16,500 to fix up the baseball field instead, and to create a decent soccer practice area with the help of CW3. Grading, raking, leveling, seeding and irrigation were mentioned as necessities for the fields. There is a well on the site as it is connected to a building there.

Ms. Kast inquired about utilizing the feedback from the Master Plan, and discussed implementing volleyball with Ms. England as an inexpensive option.

Mr. Berkheiser still felt something should be done with the tennis court; resurface and repaint the lines. Ms. England explained that none of the companies that bid the project would guarantee it for more than a year. The cracks are so deep it will heave again from the frost. Resurfacing the basketball court was also discussed, along with related costs.

Ms. England could bring back more information next month.

Pickle ball was discussed for the Richardson Center. A concept plan will be necessary there for planning senior activities, and for the parking issues to be addressed also.

After much discussion, pickle ball would need to be tabled for now as Bicentennial is a priority.

ITEM 10: AGENDA REQUESTS

Ms. England stated that she would put Bicentennial on the agenda, along with other items from tonight's agenda to carry forward. Ms. Holmes requested that Farr Street be addressed.

ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS

- Mr. Berkheiser discussed Victory Park and Wise Woods, and maybe mapping out the potential dog park area. He would like to work with the Scouts troops to put up a fence as that should not be a big deal.
- Grills were discussed for Dodge Park North.
- Discussions took place regarding moving the playground and the swing set at Dodge. Ms. England felt it was quite expensive to have moved, therefore, she may wait until next year.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting will be Monday, May 20, 2019, at 7:00pm at the Township Hall, after the park tour at 6:00pm at Maple Glen Park.

ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Wichert, supported by Holmes, to adjourn the meeting at 8:07pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Michelle Holmes, Secretary