

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

Monday, April 27, 2026

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
Bob Berkheiser
Laura Waterworth
Ron Krueger
Denise Vecellio

Absent: Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson (excused)
Krystal Schwartz, Secretary (excused)

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 Vecellio, seconded by Krueger, to approve the March 23, 2026, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Petsch opened to Public Comments.

Randy Kenny, 5275 Carroll Lake, Commerce Township – Just some discussion about the dog parks. They haven't been back to clean up any more of the stumps or anything. And then there's a lot of debris, like big cinder blocks broken in there and stuff. Some of the people I go there with are wondering if we could remove some of that. We don't want to get in trouble for doing it.

Director England – No, we will take care of that.

Randy Kenney – Okay because it's kind of a hazard and some of the dogs cut their paws.

Chairperson Petsch – What you need to do is call Emily at the Richardson Center in the Parks Department. The phone number is on the website. Make her aware of it and Mark will get his crew out there and it'll get taken care of. Thank you for letting us know. I'm sure it's some things that were overlooked. You haven't been cutting grass, so you wouldn't be seeing that yet, Mark, right?

Mr. Schoder – Well, we have been over there and we spent a lot of time taking stumps out.

Director England – I guess I do want to ask, where are there broken cinder blocks?

Randy Kenny – They're throughout the small dog park, and there's big chunks of concrete. There's still a pretty big size chunk of asphalt by the gate from the large dog park to the small dog park.

Chairperson Petsch – I mean if you see pieces of rock and stuff like that, you can just pile them up. That's no problem there and we'll get the guys in there to pick them up and haul them away.

Randy Kenny – People who go there appreciate that. It's a nice park and we just want to keep it nice. And if we needed to help, we would help.

Chairperson Petsch – Like I said, if you're seeing stuff, designate a little area by the side where they're piled up – if they're not too big to move. We don't want anybody getting hurt.

Randy Kenny – Yes, because I go through there a couple times a day.

Mr. Berkheiser – It would be good also if you take a couple of pictures.

Randy Kenny – I have some pictures too.

Mr. Berkheiser – You can email them to Parks.

Director England – parks@commercetwp.com.

Mr. Berkheiser – Just let them know. I know when I go there, I can't remember seeing cinder blocks.

Randy Kenny – Yeah, they're broken, they're not whole ones.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so that would help. As a matter of fact, I have pictures I took of a different park that I'm sending to them. That way, they know what they're looking for.

Randy Kenny – And every time I go, I probably pick up 4 to 5 pieces of glass too. I know it has been there, but ...

Mr. Berkheiser – Well, I know, but unfortunately ...

Randy Kenny – And then, were they going to put water in there too?

Chairperson Petsch – We're working on it, yes, sir.

Mr. Berkheiser – Call your County Commissioner.

Director England – We have the permit. We have it.

Mr. Berkheiser – We have been arguing with the State and the County to get permission to drill the well. It has been going on way too long.

Director England – We just signed it last week.

Randy Kenny – There's one other thing. Is the garbage company supposed to dump the cans? Because they have not been dumped since I don't know how many weeks now. The dog waste cans.

Mr. Berkheiser – They have the big green cans like you have at your house. That's what they dump.

Randy Kenny – They don't empty them.

Mr. Berkheiser – Well they're supposed to come in there. I went by there yesterday, opened one and it was maybe half full. I don't know what trash day is, but it was out by the side of the ...

Randy Kenny – Yeah, outside the fence. Because when they're empty, I'll bring them in so people don't have to walk out with their dogs.

Mr. Berkheiser – Mark, you're not putting them out on the road, are you?

Director England – Yes, they bring them out ...

Mr. Schoder – We bring them out ...

Mr. Berkheiser – They won't drive in and circle the parking lot?

Director England – They bring them into the parking lot. So, they have to come out of the dog runs.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, these were in the parking lot, right on the edge so they're easy to pick up.

Director England – Yes, that's where they have to be.

Randy Kenny – They haven't picked them up in over two weeks.

Mr. Berkheiser – Well, I can say yesterday, one of them was half so it wasn't full.

Mr. Schoder – They fill up quickly, Bob.

Mr. Berkheiser – Well, unfortunately they're dumping residential trash too.

Mr. Schoder – They get emptied on Tuesday, and by Wednesday or Thursday, they're half full already.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's residential, not dog park stuff. That means people are dumping there.

Mr. Schoder – Possibly.

Ms. Waterworth – It's dog waste.

Randy Kenny – Sometimes you have 50 dogs there. So, on the other end of the park, are those going to be soccer and baseball fields?

Chairperson Petsch – It's in the plans for the other end of the park.

Mr. Berkheiser – There is a park master plan. If you're interested, get with the Parks office. The master plan does have fields over there that could be soccer fields. There's an open field, but there are no immediate plans.

Director England – Are you inquiring about what's going on over there currently?

Randy Kenny – Well, I walk that all the time and I was just wondering. I've heard several different things.

Chairperson Petsch – It's in the master plan.

Director England – What is happening currently was a safety issue, and you'll see that fence come down this week. The area will be opened back up to the public. That is not any type of construction. That was a restricted area due to safety issues, and now we have remediated those issues.

Mr. Berkheiser – The missile silos were caving in.

Randy Kenny – Okay. Were there any plans maybe to connect over by the cemetery, you know how they have that old bridge?

Director England – We don't own the property.

Randy Kenny – Behind the fire station?

Director England – We don't own it.

Discussion continued regarding the school property behind the fire station, and private property toward the Library. The Township attempted to buy the property, but the owner would not sell. The Township had hoped to put in a parking lot and make a connection. Director England clarified that the Township owns up to the cemetery, but does not have access to Commerce Road. She asked Mr. Kenny to send her an email and she would send him the aerial view with property lines for clarification.

Randy Kenny – Thanks for your time.

Nick Polson, 2847 Ravinewood Dr., Commerce Township – I'm here tonight to discuss Sauna, which is a slightly different type of aromatherapy than dog parks. I'm the owner of Steam House Sauna, operating as S&N Mobile Steam. I built a mobile sauna, which is basically a sauna inside of a trailer, a car hauler. I have some photos of it if you'd like to see. I almost brought it tonight, but I thought let's not get too presumptuous. It's basically a 20-foot black car hauler, all interiorly decked out with white cedar, sourced in Michigan, and there's a wood fire stove that powers the heat.

I'm part of a network of established Michigan sauna providers, and we just recently were featured at the Michigan Sauna Festival in Traverse City a couple weeks ago. I have been looking for an area to start hosting pop-up events in Commerce Township, something I want to bring to the community. I've identified the location of the Union Lake Kayak & Canoe Launch as an ideal spot to host pop-up sauna events, maybe one night a week, something like that. That would allow us to do contrast therapy, which is sauna, obviously in the sauna unit, and then people could then cold plunge into Union Lake, which is obviously a very beautiful body of water.

We're fully insured through the LLC. We could name the Township as an additional insured with a rider to remove any potential liability. We carry our own policy. We do not require any hookups. There's no permanent installation. We leave no trace. So, my ask is that I would like to try a pilot event just to demonstrate, maybe one time, a safe operation. We see how it goes. We open it up, figure out a way that it might work within the Township on whatever conditions you see fit. And I have a handout here with all the information that I discussed today. I can leave it with the Committee along with my contact information.

Chairperson Petsch – I'm sorry. Is this for-profit?

Nick Polson – It's a company, yes. It's a business.

Chairperson Petsch – That's where it won't fly. These are public parks owned by the community. We don't allow vendors to use the parks for profit unless they're involved in one of our events, like a contract vendor that pays us to bring in their food trucks and stuff like that. So, I don't know where we can go with this.

Nick Polson – Yes. So, I've worked with the DNR and also the State of Michigan, and a lot of the permitting that those municipalities are doing are similarly modeled to food trucks. So, there's a permit that we would apply for, for example, if we were doing this at a DNR park. It's getting quite popular on the west side of the state, obviously up north in Traverse City, like I said. I'm just trying to bring this to Commerce Township.

Director England – So, when he says food trucks, he means food trucks that the Township hires for their specific events. We don't allow any individual to set up and make money or create revenue off of Township-owned properties. It goes against our ordinance.

Nick Polson – Okay. Then if we were to, let's just say, do it for nonprofit, would there be a permitting process required?

Director England – There would be a user agreement between you and the Township, and it would have to be a free service.

Nick Polson – A user agreement.

Director England – Correct.

Nick Polson – Okay, and then who could I work with on establishing a user agreement?

Director England – You would need to come back here with a proposal of how that's going to benefit the residents of this Township.

Nick Polson – Okay, I think everything in terms of the benefits are outlined on this sheet, and there is nothing about trying to generate revenue on this sheet, it's just that we are. I'm not going to lie. We are a business.

Director England – It's a for-profit business, so that's the problem.

Nick Polson – Yeah, but in the case of something like this, where it would go against the bylaws of the Township ...

Director England – The ordinance of the Township.

Nick Polson – I could see it being something where we would at least get some promotion, which wouldn't be profit.

Director England – It would have to be a special event, but I don't see it. It's still a for-profit business.

Mr. Berkheiser – I guess you can provide information to Emily, but I would suggest you talk to the Supervisor, Mr. Larry Gray, at the Township offices here. You'll have to schedule a time to talk with him. That would probably have to go through the attorney and they would look at our ordinances and that type of stuff.

Director England – So if you email me a formal request to parks@commercetwp.com, I can get you in touch with Larry Gray.

Nick Polson – Thank you. Okay. I've worked indirectly with him in the past, so I can hopefully reach out to him.

Mr. Berkheiser – I don't know how it would work, but you could consider reaching out to Multi Lakes. They have property on the lake. Maybe you can work on something with them. I'm just trying to think of stuff that's outside our property because it's not likely to fly on our property.

Nick Polson – I understand, yes. I love sauna brainstorming, so definitely, that's a good idea as well. Okay, well thank you for your time and I will send you an email with this information, and we can potentially talk about a user agreement.

Director England – Perfect.

Chairperson Petsch closed to Public Comments.

ITEM 1: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT**CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney**

Mr. Haney shared the following with the Committee.

- We started games two weeks ago on Field #1 and #2.
- We had to move games from the new Field #3 onto #1 and #2 both weekends because #3 is just too wet. But, I expect to be playing there this weekend.
- The sprinklers were turned on today. You probably won't see them running for at least a week or two from now. I plan to run them at night. The reason I am mentioning this is because I would love to run them during the day, but half of Scarlet's Smile empties out onto the field to play in the sprinklers, and it's dangerous. Those are golf course grade commercial sprinklers with very high pressure. I don't know how you might be able to communicate that to the public. In addition, they break the sprinklers. Even though they're commercial grade, they're just plastic. I will continue watering at night until we come up with something better.
- This is a statement and a question. I'm hoping we are getting really close to having at least the rules component for the Dodge Park signage, because the golfing, the e-bikes and e-cycles are getting out of control. I'm documenting everything that I find. There is one golfer who has taken at least 300 divots on Field #1. I sent an email to Emily and Allison.

Mr. Berkheiser – We replied to your email today. I made the comment in our discussion that I recall years ago, we had someone who was taking trees out of the woods to plant, and that is not allowed to be done. So, Emily will talk with the attorney. I believe the way it is written could apply to this as they are harvesting grass, uprooting and damaging it. The ordinance is posted, so having said that, we have your pictures and we will see if we can do something with that. I have not heard anything about e-bikes, so I don't know. Are they riding them on the fields?

Director England – He was having issues with e-bikes last year and he actually contacted the OCSO.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, because that's not allowed. That's already in our Parks rules.

Director England – We are getting a new security camera system over there. It's a much better one. Hopefully that will help. I emailed the attorney so I'm waiting to find out. It is already posted in the parks and the sheriff can act upon it. The issue is that they don't believe it's in the ordinance. If it's not in the ordinance, they cannot ticket the individual.

Mr. Haney – Well, I didn't dig very deeply, but I did do a cursory search for Michigan, and at least in State parks and recreation areas ...

Mr. Berkheiser – We have our own ordinance.

Mr. Haney – It's based upon safety. Thank you for making an effort.

- I met with Ron yesterday for a nice walk and talk, and we went over a few things.
- There are some phragmites that need to be mitigated sooner rather than later.

Director England – We do that in the fall.

Mr. Haney – Okay. There are a couple of dead trees that we identified. One of them, Mark, you're not going to be able to do. You're going to need a professional tree removal service to come out there with a crane. It's one of the white pines in that island on the north end of the parking lot. If it breaks in a storm, at minimum, it is going to take out the fence, and maybe somebody's car, not to mention other trees, part of the sidewalks.

Mr. Krueger – It's located just on the other side of the fence, on the north side of the parking lot. It's at least 100 feet tall.

Mr. Haney – It's a big one.

- Thank you, Mark, for the access mitigation you've been doing with the rocks. I noticed they delivered them to the north side of Field #2.
- We need to find something to do, and I think this goes beyond the soccer fields; you could drive a Mac truck from S. Commerce Road all the way into the parking lot, parallel to the north boundary of the parking lot where there is an easement that goes through the woods. I've seen trucks drive through there.

Mr. Schoder – That's where your lawn cutter cuts through, right?

Mr. Haney – That pathway is on the top of that hill on the southwest corner of Field #1. That's where we need to mitigate access.

Mr. Berkheiser – Can we put some bollards in there? Is it used for anything else, Emily?

Director England – No, but we've had issues.

Mr. Berkheiser – It's not for emergency purposes?

Director England – No, but we had issues at the Trail-or-Treat with people driving golf carts through there as well. We need to block it off somehow.

Mr. Haney – Maybe out by the bike path on S. Commerce Road so they can't even get into the park.

Director England – I think that's where the water line comes in.

Mr. Berkheiser – But do we need to leave it open?

Director England – No.

Interlakes Girls Softball – Jeremiah Fick

Mr. Fick shared the following with the Committee.

- Our leagues started games two weeks ago.
- Everything is going great.
- We had our health inspection last week from the County for the concession stand. We passed everything fine.
- We have not yet turned on the sprinklers. I will let you know when we do that.
- One other thing was some tree clearing we need to get done, and I've already talked with Mark about it.

Lakes Area Hawks – Andy Graham

Mr. Graham shared the following with the Committee.

- We turned the water on to the building.
- I have not turned the sprinklers on. We have a main valve to repair at Field #7.
- I'll be spending more time out there.
- We will paint the goal posts and freshen it up.
- We will also paint the two outbuildings.
- We are going to offer a free combine. I will get with Emily and Allison to get it out to anyone that wants to come out. It's for the kids and it should be a fun day.
- I also have an alumnus who is going to help. He wanted me to ask how you guys would feel about putting in a turf field up there.

Ms. Waterworth – To replace the existing grass?

Mr. Graham – Yes.

Chairperson Petsch – Everybody is going to it.

Director England – We would need a proposal that Hawks would bring in to make that type of improvement. You would bring a formal request here to get approval. Just know that once that investment is made, it becomes property of the Township.

Mr. Graham – Right. Okay, it's Dylan Raiola.

Director England – I think they would be interested in hearing a proposal.

Silo Ranch – Dawn & Joe Raye

Ms. Raye shared the following with the Committee.

- We have secured all of our music for Silo Fest. We will get the flyer out.
- We are finishing up the flyer for Horses & Horsepower. We will get that to you soon so you can advertise. Scooter's Coffee is going to sponsor the event.
- The handicap bathroom is finished and it looks awesome.

Director England – They will be picking up the outhouse soon.

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz, Mike Elick

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee.

- The Easter event went really well. We had 275 in attendance with 140 children.
- May 5th we are coordinating a walk-through with Commerce Library staff. It all has to do with the connectivity of the trailway from the Library to Byers. They want to get a historical perspective of Byers Park.
- May 9th we have the Scouts Troop 308 coming out to do a Park cleanup.
- We are also going to be starting the restoration of the west wall of the barn.
- We are waiting on the historical sign. I know we're going to talk about that later.

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

- *Lakes Athletics Association*
- *Motor City Mountain Bike Association*
- *Commerce Little League*

ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser – There were a few things that I think will be of some interest from our last meeting.

- The Pathway Plan has been talked about on several occasions over the last three or four months.
 - The purpose of the plan was just to give us all an idea of what's going on and keep everybody up to speed. There was some ranking. The engineer gave priority to the projects. So, they're ranked by different factors that were considered; not only use, but potential of getting them up and going and whether we had to go through a lot of easements and get approvals from people that happen to be next to it. There was no vote on it.
 - We also issued a bond counsel letter of engagement. Just to remind everyone, the pathway millage will go up for vote in November. If it passes, the plan for the Township is to bond for it so that we get the money up front and get it all done. This is as opposed to waiting each year to see how much we get and then trying to do it. That would just take too long and we wanted to just get it done. So, the bond counsel letter was issued. I guess you could say we're going at risk. There's a cost of about \$15,000 in there for that.
- The Richardson Center liquor license came up; whether we would sell it or keep it in escrow since we're not really using it. I think it was decided at this point to put it back in escrow. There are only so many in the Township, so we have one of them. We can sell it and it has a value to it. We wanted to hold onto it until we see whether we need it.
- We also talked about the Pathway Millage language. We talked about a millage rate of .5885. I think Mr. Weber and I would like to see .6000, but I'm not sure what was approved for the language.

Director England – So, there is no approval yet. The Trustees will be reviewing a couple different scenarios tomorrow night.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes. So, I know tomorrow night we will have several things on the agenda for the quarterly discussion session.

Discussion continued regarding details of the Pathway millage, which would also apply to the Village of Wolverine. That will go before the people for a vote. Mr. Berkheiser added that he is personally opposed to spending a bunch of money on something that is not yet known, but part of it is that if it passes, the Board wants to be ready to start. Therefore, they will get some of the groundwork going so if it passes in November, things can get going the following spring.

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England – So everything is in my written report. Obviously, I've been spending a lot of time working on this Pathway Millage and Plan, as well as getting everything ready for the Heart of the Lakes Festival. That's about roughly 6 weeks out now. So, I think we're in good standing and excited.

ITEM 4: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder – We're into cutting grass right now. There's a lot to do. We just got 28 pump stations added to us to cut and take care of, and 44 acres for the water treatment plant that we have to cut. And, behind Station #1, the water tower, we have to cut around there now.

Mr. Berkheiser – So is that all new?

Mr. Schoder – It's all new because WRC used to do that. And then since the Township took it over, we cut it now. We've done it once. It takes a while.

Mr. Berkheiser – I know, so my point would be, should that be something that the Township considers contracting out? If it's infringing on other stuff that we need to have done in the Township, I think our contractor can look at subcontracting it out.

Mr. Schoder – We will get some bids on that. Right now, we're pressing forward for the June 1st pole barn set up. We are waiting on DTE.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, I'm just commenting that it might start messing up other things that need to be done in the Township. And since most of that at this time of the year is in the Parks, then we need to have a discussion with the Supervisor about maybe contracting out some of that. Some of our grass is already cut by a contractor.

Director England – Even if it's just the wastewater treatment plant, and maybe you guys keep the pump stations.

Mr. Schoder – Yes, the pump stations are small enough. We're trimming trees and cleaning up the old parking area and cutting around that.

Director England – How many acres is it?

Mr. Schoder – The water treatment plant is 44 acres.

Chairperson Petsch – That's a lot.

Mr. Schoder – Yes.

- The fence at Snowy Ridge, that's all cleaned up. We got inside the fence and cleaned up the debris and weed whacked it.
- At Long Park, three garbage cans were stolen. We are going to have to chain those up now. We're down to one.
- The dead trees at Byers were removed today.

Director England – Mark, before you get prices for the trees at Dodge and the big tree, I have a few more trees that we want to include.

Mark Schoder – Yes, I will call a couple people.

Director England – Okay.

ITEM 5: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- Victory Park; I went over there. There's a ton of dogs using it, and we just got a good download on what's going on.
- I was going to complain about the water, but I guess we're finally moving forward. Hopefully we will get that well taken care of and get water at that park, and also across the street at Wise Woods.
- I know we've had some issues at Wise Woods.
- I don't know if we have anybody truly looking at it, but as I drive by, the canoe launch is getting used. I believe it is mostly getting used as a launch point into the lake. We had some scuba divers off the canoe launch. So again, these are some of the things we discussed, but there has been some use over there.

Ms. Waterworth – Can you remind me about the dog park with the bathroom for Victory Park?

Director England – So the bathroom was not part of this phase. That will be in the future.

Mr. Berkheiser – It's called an outhouse.

Ms. Waterworth – No, that's fine, but other people ask me about it.

Mr. Berkheiser – And we needed water. I believe what we were looking at required water into a vault. So maybe, now that we will have a well, we can service that type of thing.

Vecellio – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- Long Park, as of Saturday, needs dog bags again.
- I also sent a picture to Emily of the stand that's right before the covered bridge. It has two holes in front of it where the land is eroding.

Mr. Berkheiser – So you can get there now? I haven't been over there.

Ms. Vecellio – This is as you come into the park and walk toward the bridge.

Mr. Schoder – It's washing away?

Ms. Vecellio – Yes.

Mr. Schoder – Okay, we have a plan for that. We are going to put in concrete and stone over it.

Ms. Vecellio – Okay, perfect.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- We were at Bicentennial today so that's covered.

Mr. Berkheiser – I took some pictures there of dead trees today. I sent them to you, Mark, and to Emily. Some are hanging over the playground equipment. There are some pretty big trees over there. I copied you, Ron, on the email to ask you to go look through Bicentennial. There are some dead trees and limbs over there. I thought you could help Mark on your jaunt through the parks.

Also, there is the split-rail fence that we put in a while ago. It abuts the housing development.

Mr. Schoder – That was put up by the builder. We didn't do that.

Director England – You did not do it. The Township did it.

Mr. Berkheiser – But it's our fence, right?

Director England – Yes, we paid for it.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, I believe they put it up, but we worked something out. One of the rails is broken but I didn't look at the whole thing. Take a look and see if something needs to be done on it. We might need to get a tree service on some of those trees, so you might want to add that to the list.

Director England – And there's a tree at Hickory Glen to add to that, Mark.

Mr. Krueger – Do I get to go through Hickory Glen too?

Mr. Schoder – There's a lot of trees that have to come down. We're just waiting to see which ones are budding or not.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- Chris already mentioned quite a few things.
- The white pine near the playground; we've talked about them in the past. All they really need is to be cut down and grass put over the top. They don't necessarily need to be replaced, but the one big one at the north end of the parking lot is definitely one to look at.
- We discussed a lot of things yesterday, the phragmites, and you mentioned that's already being taken care of.
- I've looked at the boxwood moths and controlling the damage there. I found out that I can't do anything legally, because I'm not a direct employee of the Township. But I will make recommendations and I will stop by to see if there is any activity going on, because I'd really like to save the boxwood if we can.
- We had a nice discussion about the signage, but that's being worked on already.
- The only other thing that's also being worked on is reducing the handicap parking.

Director England – Yes, we reduced some a year ago, so we probably need to reevaluate it again.

Mr. Krueger – I don't know the actual regulations, but I drive in there a lot. When the park is filled with people, I rarely see more than 6 or 8 of the handicap spots actually being used. That would definitely help with the parking.

Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park

- We visited Hickory Glen today.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- No report.

Walker – Maple Glen

- No report.

ITEM 6: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Waterworth discussed the following with the Committee:

- Wolverine Lake Village is having their 5K Run/Walk on May 23rd. It starts at Clara Miller Park. You can go to their website to sign up.
- The Village Spring Garage Sale is May 28th-30th. It goes from 9am to 6pm.
- The Village Farmer's Market will start up on May 19th. It goes until October 13th. That's every Tuesday from 4pm to 8pm.

ITEM 7: BYERS BRIDGE & BOARDWALK

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- Bob and I, and George and Jason met the contractor over there to see what we can do.
- We have a few solutions.
- We can upgrade the panels to a 9-gauge mesh and install it on the boardwalk. That would cost \$25,425. That involves removing the spindles and putting a black mesh, similar to the metal that's on the current bridge so you can kind of see through it.
- We can replace the decking and handrail on the existing bridge; make the existing bridge look new to make it blend better. They would install the same handrail profile. That would be \$13,159.
- Or we add a 2x6 with a 2x8 cap board on top of the existing bridge along with height modifications so it would taper. That would be \$2,327.

Mr. Berkheiser – The recommendation, I think, should be that we want the bridge – How long has the bridge been there, 10 years?

Director England – Probably 15.

Mr. Berkheiser – It needs some repair. There are boards on the bottom that need repair. They have holes in them. I believe the \$25,000 she quoted was also having to do with the bridge over by the Library. That's how I understood it from the email. So, the recommendation was to take the bridge down to just the bridge and put the railing up so that everything matches, so that it looks nice and clean all the way across with the meshing.

Chairperson Petsch – Are we talking about the bridge that ...

Director England – It's going through the park.

Mr. Berkheiser – The bridge to nowhere.

Chairperson Petsch – Are we talking about the walkway bridge?

Mr. Berkheiser – The walkway at the Byers Farmhouse. There have been multiple complaints, some by Board members, that the spindles block everything and you can't really see the park behind it. That is a County standard when they build bridges, so that's what the contractor pulled and that's what we got. For whatever reason, it's done and over. Moving forward, we want it to be like the bridge that has this wire mesh on it so you can see through it. The costs Emily gave were to replace the spindles with wire mesh that will allow you to see through into the park as you drive by. We want to make the actual bridge match up to what the new boardwalk will look like.

Mr. Krueger – When they designed this walkway, why didn't they take the existing bridge into consideration and make that part of their cost?

Mr. Berkheiser – Why is the sky blue? There's stuff that was brought up and I can't answer why. This was a package done outside of Parks. I don't know if it was really even the Township. It was part of the State and part of a grant.

Director England – A State grant, yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – So, a lot of it was done outside of the Township, and certainly outside of Parks. They used the County standards.

Ms. Vecellio – And if we change it, the cost is borne by Parks?

Director England – No, there's contingency in the million dollar grant.

Mr. Berkheiser – There was contingency money in there for issues.

Director England – Anything above and beyond that dollar amount that we received for the grant then would fall upon Township dollars, correct.

Mr. Berkheiser – And probably pathway money.

Director England – It could be.

Mr. Berkheiser – Because that is technically part of the pathway.

Mr. Krueger – And what are we waiting for in order to be able to use that bridge?

Director England – It's not finished yet. The whole pathway needs to be finished.

Mr. Berkheiser – It could have been finished. We held it up because we wanted it changed so it would look right. Part of the costs are not just changing the mesh on the Byers Park side, but it's also changing it on the Library side of the road. We're catching it early for one, and late for the other.

Director England – What we’re looking for from this group is a recommendation of what you’d like to see so we can take this to the next Township Board meeting in May for approval.

Ms. Waterworth – I would recommend that we do strip it down and make it look like the rest of the bridge, make it uniform and make it so you can see through because it is a preserved historical site.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, and the bridge needs to be repaired anyway.

Ms. Waterworth – Yes.

Director England – So, roughly \$40,000 to replace the spindles with the mesh and redo the existing bridge.

MOTION by Waterworth, supported by Krueger, that the Parks Committee recommends moving forward with repairing and upgrading the bridge at Byers, replacing the spindles with mesh, and removing the existing railing and decking off the existing bridge to make it uniform with the bridge that’s going in by the Library.

Discussion –

Krueger inquired about the retaining wall and whether there would be a railing. Director England would get an answer.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8: BYERS HISTORICAL MARKER PLACEMENT

Director England – We’re just looking for your approval. There is an aerial in your packet. I met with Dean onsite. The area circled in blue is actually where the current informational sign is. We all thought that would be a good place to put the marker.

Mr. Berkheiser – So we’re going to move the informational sign. I think we’re moving it over to where that picnic table is, but that’s up to you guys to decide.

Mr. Schantz – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – We felt that the historical sign is the center of the area. It’s the one that would be most apt to be seen by people. We had some discussion about placing it near the road, but since you can’t really park there, you would not see it. We didn’t want people standing near the road to look at the sign. So, that’s what we all agreed upon.

Director England – So we’re just looking for approval tonight from the Parks Committee to place it there.

Chairperson Petsch – Are you guys happy with that?

Mr. Schantz – Yes.

MOTION by Krueger, supported by Waterworth, to place the Byers historical sign in the location as determined and designated.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 9: MEMORIAL BENCH

Director England – You have an application in your packet. Allison has been talking to her the most, but she was in last week to pay for the bench. Allison is working on the plaque with her. It is here for approval to be put in that park, and the Committee selects the location within that park.

Mr. Berkheiser – This is the first bench we have done in a while.

Director England – Since Barb Garbutt’s, yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – What does the plaque say? I don't see any wording in here.

Ms. Kennedy – I will pull it up.

Mr. Berkheiser – And she’s from White Lake, donating in a Commerce park?

Director England – In honor of her grandmother. Is the family from Commerce?

Ms. Kennedy – I know that the person who applied, the donor, is from White Lake. Now whether or not the person the bench is for lived in Commerce, I don't know. I haven't had that discussion with her.

Director England – I know it has butterflies on it.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do we have to approve wording, or you guys are good with it?

Director England – We’re good with it.

Ms. Kennedy – It reads; *May you always have an angel by your side, Virginia Murray, Grandma in Pajamas, 1942-2026.*

Director England – So, I just need approval for the bench to go in the park and we need to select a location. So, once we get the plaque, Mark can install it. He already has it assembled.

MOTION by Vecellio, seconded by Krueger, to approve the memorial bench to be placed in Byers Park.

Discussion –

Berkheiser – Dean, did you guys choose a place for this bench?

England – They don't know about it yet. If the Committee is okay with it, Mark and I can work with Byers.

Berkheiser – That’s fine.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 10: PARK SECURITY CAMERA RFP

Director England – We did get a good response. We got 8 proposals. We met with 4 of them. Between Ben and I, we have narrowed it down to our top 3. We had a demo today from one of the companies. We are setting up demos with the other two companies.

Chairperson Petsch – Is there any reason why the price variance is so great?

Director England – Only one of those that are super high actually visited the parks, and they are a union electrical company that dabbles in security cameras, so they're paying prevailing wage. The low bid, they did not actually visit the site. If you look at their proposal, they've missed some of the areas. Their per camera cost is \$57,000 to \$60,000, so they're really not as low as it looks on here. As well as the fact that they're still wanting to do the NVRs, which is what we have at Scarlet's now, which requires a temperature-controlled building. So, the cost of their equipment is going to be lower than the cost of the some of the others.

So, I put the top proposals in here for you. We had budgeted \$60,000 for this project and I think we're close enough for you to make a motion to request an amendment to our budget to cover the cost of the total project, let Ben and I go through our demos and take it to the Board.

Chairperson Petsch – Instead of us raising the budget, have you said, we have \$60,000. Can you guys move in this direction?

Director England – No, we don't do that.

Chairperson Petsch – We don't negotiate?

Director England – No, we don't do that. That's not the way we presented our bid.

Mr. Berkheiser – So we need a motion to amend the budget for our Parks Security Cameras, not to exceed \$80,000 and to allow Emily and Ben to finish evaluating, and then she will make a recommendation to the Board.

Director England – And that is from the Parks General Fund budget for Capital Improvement, not the millage fund, not the open space.

Ms. Waterworth – In that general budget, you actually have money in there to have us do this?

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, we have money allocated by the Township for Parks.

Ms. Waterworth – Yes, I know, but did you plan to use it?

Director England – The Township Board has to approve the amendment to the budget, so you're talking General Fund dollars.

Mr. Berkheiser – General Fund is Township money.

Ms. Waterworth – I know, but you still plan to spend it. I know where the money comes from. What I'm saying is, has all the money been allocated for the year?

Mr. Berkheiser – No.

Ms. Waterworth – Is there actually a buffer?

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, there is money there in the Township General Fund.

Ms. Waterworth – As long as there is money there, I will make a motion.

MOTION by Waterworth, supported by Krueger, to amend the budget, not to exceed \$80,000, for Parks Security Cameras RFP, and to allow Emily and Ben to finish their evaluation and make a recommendation to the Township Board.

Discussion –

Berkheiser – It's Township money, not Parks money. It will not affect what we do with the Parks.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 11: FISHING DOCK AT KAYAK LAUNCH

Director England – This is a placeholder.

ITEM 12: PARK EVENT UPDATES

Ms. Kennedy – Okay, so our next event coming up will be the M-5K, coming up here in a couple of weeks. Registration is still open. We're accepting registrations for that. So hopefully we'll start to see that pick up a little bit here in the coming weeks. Most of our registrations usually come closer to the event.

After that is our Heart of the Lakes Festival. We're coming along pretty well on that, getting things all set up. You should start to see the banners going up within the Township probably within the next week or so to start advertising for that. All of their activities are planned.

Mr. Berkheiser – If we have volunteer organizations, they're not selling anything, and they would like to volunteer manpower, and put up a booth, hand out water, et cetera, are we charging them to do that?

Director England – They're being reviewed on a one-on-one basis. So, if they meet the definition of a community group that serves the needs of the Township and they're like a non-profit, you know, then absolutely.

Mr. Berkheiser – Well, Boy Scouts, church groups, things like that.

Director England – Correct.

Ms. Kennedy – They can reach out to us and then we can create a vendor discount code so when they register, then they don't get charged or they get a discounted fee, whatever it might be. What else for Heart of the Lakes? I think everything's coming right along.

Director England – It's coming fast.

Ms. Kennedy – Yes, it will be here before we know it. The rest of our events are in here. Concerts are all booked, planned, everything is good for those.

Pickleball tournaments; pickleball ladder league starts next week. Our classes start next week. Our first tournament is on June 6th, so registration for that is out there. Mark, we have some of those black and yellow containers I had you take over to storage with all of our pickleball stuff. If you could just bring that over before the end of the week, that has stuff in it for our league manager and for the instructors.

Mr. Schoder – Will do.

ITEM 13: OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Berkheiser – We've had an initial person come out and look at taking out a lot of the underbrush. Well, I know Mark's been working on some of it at Dodge Park, and we may have some other areas to put a bid together and send that out to get it all done and taken care of, to open it all up, and then hopefully it'll be easier for our Township employee folks to keep up with it. Hopefully once it's done, it'll be easier to do, even if we just did it every two or three years.

We had somebody come out and give us a partial at Dodge Park. He did from the parking lot, the entrance north, basically to where Mark probably stopped. So, there's more to be done to clear out a lot of that brush to open it up, probably down to that easement.

We talked a little bit today about trying to clear out some of the stuff from the parking lot at Hickory Glen and go east on that. I know we have a neighbor out there that thinks some of that property is his, so we need to try to address that. I don't know if brush clearing will help or make it worse.

Anyway, there are certain areas in the effort to open the parks up so that we can see in there and hopefully decrease vandalism or other issues that we have, especially as it turns green and you can't see through. We're going to put together an RFP to send out and see what kind of costs we're even looking at.

Chairperson Petsch – On that note also, we've got to look at what trees we're planting along Glengary Road. We planted pine trees and they're blocking the vision. Why are we doing that when we brushed it out to have view into the park? Let's make sure that doesn't continue to happen.

Mr. Krueger – And plus pine trees are much harder to keep watered than planting deciduous trees, not that that makes any difference.

Chairperson Petsch – And also, when you plant pines, they get big and bushy, and you don't plant them 5 to 6 feet apart.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2026, at 7:00PM at the Township Hall, with a park visit at 6:00PM at Maple Glen.

ITEM 15: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Krueger, supported by Waterworth, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Krystal Schwartz, Secretary