FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, September 28, 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
Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson
Bob Berkheiser
Ron Krueger
Denise Vecellio
Mark Giromini

Absent: Krystal Schwartz, Secretary (excused)

Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks & Recreation, Maintenance Director
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Steve Vercellino, Maintenance Manager
Chris Hughes, Maintenance Staff

COMMUNICATIONS:
None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
MOTION by Krueger, seconded by Walker, to approve the August 24, 2026, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Chairperson Petsch opened to Public Comments.

Charlie Cosgrove, 8340 Golfside, Commerce Township – I'm here representing Pathways Connecting Communities. I'm looking for support from the board, as well as support from any of the community members and organizations. You can get a hold of me after the meeting if you'd like more information on ways you can help us. The last thing is, I'll tell you, the parks have never looked better. I'm around them all the time, even though I'm out of baseball, but I still appreciate it.

Chairperson Petsch – Me too, Chuck.

Charlie Cosgrove – Glad you're doing your jobs.

Chairperson Petsch – Thank you.

Charlie Cosgrove – Thank you.

Chairperson Petsch closed to Public Comments.

ITEM 1: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee.

- We are gearing up for our Halloween event, Boo-Bash, and beyond that, our Christmas event.
- We're doing tours of the farmhouse upon request.
- I want to contact Troop 308 to see if they want to do a late fall cleanup. That's on the agenda.

Silo Ranch – Dawn & Joe Raye

Ms. Raye shared the following with the Committee.

- We just finished up Silo Fest.
    - We had about 350 people. It seems to be growing every year.
    - We had a mechanical bull, face painting, caricatures, beer tent, music.
    - I think it went well. We had some good feedback.
    - We know how to make it better next year.
    - I think we just need to get out more advertising to get more people in.

Chairperson Petsch – That's a pretty good turnout, 350.

Ms. Raye – Yes, I thought it was pretty good. It was a little bigger than last year. But we're just trying to get more people to come in and see what's there.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do you advertise, for lack of a better term, like when we do concerts in the park? Do you have a table or a booth?

Ms. Raye – We passed out flyers at one of the concerts, and we were putting signs out around the Township. We did Facebook, and you guys advertised for us.

Mr. Berkheiser – I know you were doing pony rides, but did you have a booth or table at the Heart of the Lakes Festival?

Ms. Raye – Yes, we did, and we passed out flyers.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay.

Ms. Raye – Yes, I think it's getting out there. We just did an event for Milford this past weekend, and we passed out some stuff up there. Even that seemed kind of small for a turnout, but we put out flyers and people were taking pictures of our sign, so hopefully they'll sign up for that too.

Mr. Berkheiser – What do you have next? Do you have something in the winter or spring?

Ms. Raye – We want to try to do a winter festival, but …

Mr. Berkheiser – So, you don't do hayrides or anything like that?

Ms. Raye – No. We would like to do a haunted house for next year, but it's a lot to set up.

Lakes Area Hawks – Andy Graham
Mr. Graham shared the following with the Committee.

- We're just starting to wind down the season. We only have three games left.
- On October 10th, we will be doing our annual Pink Out Game. We partner with Shades of Pink. It's an organization, so we donate all the funds that we make that day to them, and they help breast cancer, anyone with medical needs, anything like that.
- I don't know if you saw the news, but in our league, we had a shooting at one of the fields in Pontiac. It was a little tense, but it's all been resolved. Parents are a little nervous, but Oakland County and the sheriff and the City of Pontiac is stepping up on that. I had to calm a few parents down. As a result, the other team that was involved, where they play, they were no longer allowed to play there, so I opened up our field to them so they could complete their home games.
- That's all I have for right now.

Chairperson Petsch – Thank you.

Motor City Mountain Bike Association – Mike Kearney
Mr. Kearney shared the following with the Committee.

- Not a whole lot going on at the trail.
- We took out about 12 or 13 trees that fell during the last round of storms. It was the most we've had in a while.
- Overall, the trail is in good shape.
- As we approach the fall, unfortunately, ridership will go down because the park closes at dusk and with the time change, it makes it pretty inaccessible for anyone that works during the day. We will get less traffic from the bike community as we move forward.
- Pivoting with Michigan Scholastic Cycling; we are working with a community foundation for Southeast Michigan, which runs Project Play. It's an organization that puts together a lot of resources to support youth sports in Southeast Michigan. Back in 2017, they did a really good State of Play survey and put together a framework of how to improve youth sports and resources for youth sports across Southeast Michigan. One of the big things they identified out of that was coaching resources. The big thing was that everyone knew, coaches could step up and teach kids how to actually ride a bike, things like that, but how to actually be a coach, work with the youth, and work through all the other aspects of working with kids was something that a lot of people identified a need for. So, they've been doing a couple clinics and trainings. They're looking now to bring those to more organizations. We've been working with them to schedule something in this area. They're looking to partner with some of the communities. I think we were trying to use the Richardson Center, but unfortunately it has not been available for many weeks on Saturdays.

Director England – We talked to them today.

Mr. Kearney – Yes. I think we're probably going to end up looking at Novi to try to use their facility at Lakeshore, and work with them on that. But, it will be open to all the sports leagues here, and then elsewhere in the area and anyone else. We've done a couple good workshops with them. They're really good. Our coaches that have gone to those have taken a lot from it. We went from having one person working on coach

development for our league to five people stepping up because of the value and the doors it opened. Once we have something scheduled, we're looking for Saturday, November 14th. I'll pass that along to the other youth organizations if they have any interest in it.

Interlakes Girls Softball – Jeremiah Fick
Mr. Fick shared the following with the Committee.

- We have our Fall Tournament that we host every year this coming weekend. We will probably have over 40 teams at Maple Glen Saturday and Sunday, and there will probably be 600-700 people in the park over those couple days. Parking will be scarce.
- After that, we will be done until the spring. Has winterization been scheduled?

Director England – We were going to touch base with you today. We will take care of that. After this weekend, you're good to have it fully winterized?

Mr. Fick – Correct, anytime after this weekend.

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney
Mr. Haney shared the following with the Committee.

- (Talking to Maintenance staff) Thank you. If you could let me know when you have to shut them off, that way we can be prepared.
- The bollards that you guys did on the top of the hill of Field #1, fantastic, until the storm. I don't know if you'll be able to repair it or if you'll have to replace it. And then the tree that fell on it; I have 98% of all of the branches cut off and stacked for you on the parking lot side. Sometime this week, I'll get the rest of the tree out of there. Then whenever you can get around to the bollards, that would be great, but if it doesn't happen until spring, it's not a huge priority.
- Then Field #3 gate also got hit. I don't know if that's an insurance thing or if we need to replace it, we could do that.

Director England – It's not an insurance thing, it's too small. You and I can talk.

Mr. Haney – Okay.

- We will shut down the sprinklers during the last week in October and have them completely winterized.
- Our last game date is Sunday, November 1st.
- We will have some typical maintenance things done to the fields either that week or the following week.
- The signpost you left is too short.

Steve Vercellino – It was too short?

Mr. Haney – Yes. The sign you pulled out, the post was this high, plus what's in the ground, so probably a 9-footer. I don't know what length they come in, but probably 24 to 30 inches, so 7 or 8 feet. I put that one in the storage.
And lastly, don't forget about the phragmites mitigation at Dodge.

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

- *Lakes Athletics Association*
- *Commerce Little League*

ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser shared the following:

- At the September meeting, we passed the fire and police SAD, but we still have an opportunity, and hopefully we'll make a final decision at the next meeting as to the actual rate. At one time we had discussed decreasing the fire, now that we're fully up and running with all the paramedics. Everybody is paramedic trained and fully operational. So anyway, we're looking at those things.
- We approved the Dodge Park brush clearing. I think I heard they're going to start next week.

Director England – Tomorrow.

Mr. Berkheiser -

- Just to be aware, and there was some disagreement among the board, but we now own a piece of property at Golfside subdivision, out on the road. I think it's going to fall under Parks. There was a donation, but it was bought as open space money. So, to me, as open space, you should just let it grow. But since we're required to keep it maintained, I would look at that as open space. There are some limitations on what can be done, but the thought in the future was maybe to use it as a trailhead or something along those lines, depending on what happens with trails.

Chairperson Petsch – Where is that at, Bob?

Director England – Union Lake.

Mr. Berkheiser – Union Lake and Golfside. I thought the homeowner's association should own it, but it did not go that way.

Chairperson Petsch – How big a piece is it, Bob?

Mr. Berkheiser – It's a normal lot. But there is some maintenance. The money that was donated is to take care of putting in some shrubs, but when it comes to cutting grass, that falls under the Township responsibilities.

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England discussed the following:

- As Bob said, the Board did approve the $10,000 bid for brush hogging, and that is the bid that received the work. They will be out tomorrow to start working. We had a lot of large tree damage with the storms that went through, so he is finally finished getting the trees that our crew couldn't get cleaned up. We had a large tree come down at Byers, several at the Library, one outside here, and I think Dodge got hit the worst; the Scarlet side and the Library side on the trails. And, one at Mill Race. So, working on that.
- Other than that, everything else is in my report.

Mr. Berkheiser – What is the plan for the kayak? We lost a tree there that took out the rack.

Director England – Maintenance is going to make that a winter project. We will pull it over and …

Mr. Berkheiser – Repair it?

Director England – Yes. And now we're just gearing up for our Trail or Treat on October 23rd, and our Howloween event at Mickie's Dog Park on October 24th. Then we will be onto our Tree Lighting event. Budget for Parks, Open Space and Maintenance is scheduled to be presented to the Township Board on October 6th.

Chairperson Petsch – We don't have a Maintenance report on here.

Director England – I include the Maintenance report now. You'll see that as one report.

Chairperson Petsch – Great, thank you.

ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- The well is in and it's ready. I know I saw you guys discuss potentially continuing to run the water fill station across the street. I guess they're saying that is still considered toxic, which I find hard to believe, but I don't think it's worth doing that.

Director England – Potentially contaminated.

Mr. Berkheiser – Personally I don't think we should do it, but we can discuss that later. Other than that, there's not much new.

Director England – Maintenance is going to be out to put some topsoil and seed down to try to get some of those grassy areas to rejuvenate. We let that center section of the dog park rest the majority of the summer, so now we will try to get that to grow. They're going to add some picnic tables near the back of those areas to give people a place to sit, and we're going to order some more doggie waste stations.

Chairperson Petsch – How often do we rotate?

Director England – It depends on the area. We only rotated once this year. The small dog section could probably use a rest. It is used probably the most, and big dogs go in there as well.

Mr. Berkheiser – The only thing I'll add to mine would be, I don't know where it is, but if you head east further from the dog park, there's that one area where people used to pull off a lot to cut back in there. I know we blocked it. I'm not sure if it's still blocked, but I have seen some cars pulled off in there.

Chairperson Petsch – It's where they used to take the dirt bikes off the trailers.

Mr. Berkheiser – It seems to be getting a little more use over there, so I'm not sure. We'll have another discussion later about possibilities for Victory Park. Maybe that would be an area to consider.

Vecellio – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- Nothing for Snowy Ridge.
- Long Park looks really good.
- Thank you for taking the old signs down.
- I gave a list of a couple miscellaneous things.

Director England – Just to give you an update, the pedestals are on their way. The new signs will be going up in the original spots here in the next few weeks.

Ms. Vecellio – Okay, great.

Director England – Then we're working on creating two different signs to go on those existing pedestals.

Ms. Vecellio – At least those old ones are down. Thank you.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- Nothing really to report on Bicentennial. It's still a busy park.

Walker – Maple Glen

- I went through the other day. It was pretty busy.
- Everything looked good. They're doing a great job.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- I drove through it yesterday and a little bit today. I didn't actually walk through the park, just whatever I could see from the parking lot.
- There are a few maintenance issues that I'll send you in an e-mail, but other than that, everything's looking pretty good.
- When I went to the Library, it was nice to see that huge tree that went down is gone and everything looks good.
- Actually, the playground at the Library is used quite a bit too. It's not just Scarlet's.

Giromini – Hickory Glen Park

- Hickory Glen is looking pretty good. I went through yesterday.
- It was very busy; baseball, football. It was a 0-0 for the football game both times I walked by. They looked like they were having a good time.
- The cleanup went really well. Not only the trails, which were pretty gnarly after the storm, but everything else in the park.
- Now that some of the foliage has dropped, I did see the beaver dam, or at least one of the beaver dams, that is causing some issues.
- It looks like maybe a couple of the newer trees may not have survived this summer. They look like they're dead, but we probably won't know until spring. The leaves may have fallen sooner because of the dryness.
- Other than that, the park really looked nice. It was a beautiful day to be out there.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- No report in Schwartz's absence.

ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Mr. Giromini discussed the following with the Committee:

- We had a blood drive today. When I left, I think we made about 7 donations so far. The next one is December 7th.
- The biggest thing we had, of course, was the corn roast.
    - Within that, we had our mural dedication with the DIA and the artist was there, so we had the ribbon cutting and all those kinds of things.
    - It was a very nice day. Turnout was definitely down from last year, probably by 150 or 200 people. I blame a lot of that on Michigan playing at noon at home and Michigan State playing at 3pm. Last year, Michigan was away and Michigan State was at 7pm. So, we're not going to win that competition. And then, of course, the yellow jackets didn't help. It's the worst they have ever been.
- The board has been working on creating a sponsorship structure for our events.
- There are three more weeks left in the Farmers Market.
- We have our Halloween decorating contest getting started soon. We are revamping that a little bit with how we select the winners
- A few of our members are working on welcome packets for new residents. That's something that kind of fell to the wayside. We're trying to pick that up to get more community engagement and things like that, especially with the board.

Mr. Berkheiser – Are you guys still doing your Halloween decoration competition and then also for Christmas?

Mr. Giromini – Yes, for Halloween and Christmas. We're giving away signs this year to the winners as well so they can put them in their yards.

ITEM 6: UNION LAKE/WISE DISCUSSION

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- I have included in your packet what the developer has shared with our Planning Commission, Planning Department, and the residents in the area.
- This is at the corner of Union Lake and Wise Road.
- This has been rumored for some time now that the developer wants to donate approximately 50 acres of land to the Township to remain greenspace/park land.
- It connects to our Victory Park.
- I met with them about 3 weeks ago. They asked what we want to see there. I told them the procedure we typically take to decide what we want to see in new greenspace, and it's not just this board's decision. We also ask for community feedback.
- There are going to be some restraints with this property. It's majority wetlands. When you look along Wise Road, there's not much area to add additional parking. So, the parking is going to have to be incorporated in the development. It's going to be along Union Lake Road. I did ask and they had no issues, at least at that time, with adding parking that could be designated to the park.

- In your packet on the slide of the development that was presented to us, you can see that they are diverting the creek in that corner, and they're having to create specific wetlands for the State's requirements. So, that's going to limit what we can do.
- We do want to give them an answer, sooner than later, of how we would like the property left. At this point, what we have is; we want it to be stable, restored, and in a safe, usable condition. So, if that means that the community and this board want to see walking paths, do you want the walking paths to be the same as the golf cart paths that are currently there? Do you want them paved? Are we going to pave them? Do you want them to be natural? Do you want native plantings and gardens? Do you want to see maybe a small play structure put in here, up near the development area where people are shopping so the kids will go play? Basically, asking for your vision at this point of what you would like to see. At least start the conversation.

Chairperson Petsch – All right. Which is the plan that they want to go with?

Vice Chairperson Walker – The last one.

Director England – This has not been presented to the Township Board, so nothing is finalized yet.

Chairperson Petsch – Okay, so we're looking at …

Mr. Berkheiser – Look at Slide 13 or 14.

Chairperson Petsch – That's where I'm at, I'm just trying to envision how much of this land back here are they donating to us?

Mr. Berkheiser – For the most part, it's the golf course part. Now, how far out towards Sally's and the driving range … Some of that is buildable. I know we had entertained at one time disc golf, although we haven't really heard much from disc golf people. So, this would be pretty easy.

Vice Chairperson Walker – I think that would be cool.

Mr. Berkheiser – It would be low maintenance. If we decided to do something later, disc golf is pretty easy to take down because it's not really permanent structures. I think the thing that we seem to struggle with is parking. So, we may want to think about not just having parking there, but maybe that section where I was just complaining about people parking. In the past, when developers are required to put in sidewalks around a development, if it just doesn't make sense, they will put it in elsewhere, or donate money to have it put in elsewhere. So, that may be something we could discuss, like the spot we have over on the Wise Woods side. Something like that could be further east of the dog park area so people could park and access the middle part of Victory Park. And then there could be something behind their grocery store, sort of like we have at Leo's, even though it doesn't get utilized.

Director England – It can be designated.

Mr. Berkheiser – Those are some thoughts. I think we need to look at wrapping it into our Master Plan.

Director England – Absolutely.

Mr. Berkheiser – Maybe form a group of 3-4 of us and Leah.

Vice Chairperson Walker – I'm guessing the donation is contingent upon us allowing them to build the retail development.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, that's what they've talked about. If you look through, you'll see the retail and a high-end grocery store. If you watched the news, you saw one of the things that I think was non-negotiable is a car wash. I guess that must be a money thing. I'm not sure what the other two buildings are. It has not been presented to the Board, but what we've heard is that at least one of them is a restaurant.

Director England – A shoppette and …

Mr. Berkheiser – Those were roughly in the front part of the development. All that can be worked out, and they wanted to donate the rest of it. I'm sure there are some tax advantages.

Vice Chairperson Walker – It's also probably not buildable.

Director England – It's very wet.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Two things I'd like to see worked into the plan are more parking for the park, and disc golf would be really cool. But I would want to see some restrooms. If they're going to be doing the buildout there …

Director England – We did ask that, and obviously we don't know who the tenants are. We can have that conversation.

Vice Chairperson Walker – We can build our own bathroom that we can utilize, but just give us the water and sewer taps. Since you're already building, it's not a problem to add them for us. We can build the building, but give us what we need for it, electricity, etc. That makes it easier. But also, designated parking would be a big one. I think it's set up for a 12-hole golf course. That would not be hard to turn into a 9-hole disc golf.

Director England – Parking will be the issue with disc golf as it attracts a lot of people.

Vice Chairperson Walker – They can put in a retail store that caters to the disc golf people too. Holden's in Milford makes a killing off disc golf. I would love see more parking with restroom facilities. I have no problem with it. It's nice to keep it a park.

Director England – I'm going to make a suggestion. I think that some of you should volunteer to be on a work group with myself. I don't want to let this sit. They are eager to get approval, and I don't want to miss our opportunity to have them help us make this the greenspace that we want to see it be. Maybe we can meet with the developer and visit the site.

Mr. Berkheiser – I think two from this group, and then maybe one from Planning, so we can link all that together, and then you and Dave. That way, we won't be thinking one way while they're getting further down the line.

Discussion continued regarding the property. Director England would send out an additional map. Mr. Berkheiser and Vice Chairperson Walker volunteered for the work group.

ITEM 7: 2027 MEETING DATES

The Committee briefly discussed the dates as presented and had no changes.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Krueger, to approve the 2027 Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting Dates as written. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ITEM 8: PARK EVENT UPDATES

Ms. Kennedy – Emily provided most of those updates. I will say in our department report, I had the date and location wrong for Howloween at Mickie's Dog Park. That's the 24th. So that's the date after the Trail or Treat at the Library.
We've already got our new decorations purchased for this year, and we're starting to get our candy. As of today, I think we were at 36 booths or local organizations set up to come out and hand out candy at the Trail or Treat. If any of you guys are interested and aren't already signed up, let me know. Andy, I'll send it over to you. You had already asked.

Chairperson Petsch – How many did we have last year, Allison?

Ms. Kennedy – I think last year we had 32. We have more signed up this year.

Director England – We have room along the S. Commerce trail where we can put people.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do we still partner with Multi Lakes on this?

Director England – No. We partner with the Library.

Ms. Kennedy – Something a little different this year; we will have three starting points. Hopefully that will help with the flow. The Library will also be doing a fun activity.
And then the Tree Lighting event will be the first Saturday in December.

Mr. Krueger – How many trick or treaters did we have?

Director England – About 1,500 kids last year.

Ms. Kennedy – Also, we are doing Stargazing at Victory Park on Friday, October 16th from 7:00-10:00pm.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do you have contacts for the astronomy group?

Ms. Kennedy – Yes, I can get those to you.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'm interested that it might be an opportunity for a couple of the Boy Scout troops to do the astronomy merit badge. Part of that requires stargazing. I'm not as knowledgeable on the requirements, but I thought I would reach out to somebody.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Are you looking for people to help with the Stargazing event?

Ms. Kennedy – We don't really do much with that. The astronomy group brings everything. Really, we're just there to host and have a representative there.

ITEM 9: OTHER MATTERS

Director England – We've had a lot of discussion at this committee regarding e-bikes. And so obviously we all know e-bikes are becoming a major concern, not just within our community, but across the State of Michigan. The Oakland County Sheriff has started an initiative where they're putting officers out on the pathways and they're stopping everybody who has an e-bike. At this point, it's just going to be an educational effort to teach the kids and the parents. From that point on, they'll start ticketing, because they are not allowed on our pathways.

Mr. Berkheiser – Sgt. Leggat sent a summary e-mail to the Board on this process with the Airline Trail, but then they also went to some of the neighborhoods that they've been having issues with. So, I guess I'll say, if you are having issues in your neighborhood, please call the sheriff and let them know. A couple have shown up on Bogie Lake and Duck Lake and neighborhoods out there. Total, at least when this e-mail was sent, they've addressed 40 to 50 people on the trail. Three were riding e-bikes that are not allowed on the trail, and two were e-motos, so motorbikes. Those, when they saw the police over there, they turned around and went the other way, so we didn't catch them. But then they also had nine folks in neighborhoods that were riding e-motos with ages of 8 to 17. And they went back to parents' houses and explained. I mean, most parents just really don't understand. It seems cool, but then you have an eight-year-old out there that's doing 30 miles an hour or more down the road.

Chairperson Petsch – Seriously, back when you had mopeds, I mean, my son had to go to class, he had a licensed sticker on it and everything else to be able to ride.

Mr. Berkheiser – I happened to be in New Jersey a couple weeks ago, and I sent Emily what their state has done as far as restricting e-bikes and requiring licenses for the kids. I don't know what we can do at the local level. I suppose we can institute an ordinance, but if it's inconsistent across different jurisdictions, it becomes an issue. Anyway, we're working on it, at least at this point.

Discussion continued regarding kids on e-bikes flying down roadsides and sidewalks, disrupting traffic, accidents, enforcement issues, et cetera.

Director England – I just wanted you to know, they are out there trying to enforce. If you see them, obviously they're focusing on Township property, but if there are neighborhoods with issues, let us know. We can pass that information onto them when they're out doing patrols.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed the three millages that appear on the ballot for the upcoming election.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2026, at 7:00PM at the Township Hall, with a park visit at 6:00PM at Wise Woods Park.

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Walker, supported by Krueger, to adjourn the meeting at 7:51pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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Krystal Schwartz, Secretary