

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

*Monday, July 22, 2024*

2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Walker called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**ROLL CALL: Present:** Johnny Walker, Chairperson  
William Petsch, Vice Chairperson  
Krystal Schwartz, Secretary  
Bob Berkheiser  
Ron Krueger  
Laura Waterworth

**Also Present:** Denise Vecellio  
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 Petsch, seconded by Vecellio, to approve the May 20, 2024, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Chairperson Walker opened to Public Comments.**

There were no comments.

**Chairperson Walker closed to Public Comments.**

**ITEM 1: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT**

**CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney**

Mr. Haney shared the following with the Committee.

- Our summer programs are continuing through August and they're going well, other than we did have to go inside once due to rain.
- Our two camps that we hold annually were well-attended; the same attendance we typically get for those camps.
- Our opening weekend of the Fall Season will be Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup>.
- How was your walk at Dodge?

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Good.

Mr. Haney – I was at the dentist.

**Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz**

Mrs. Schantz shared the following with the Committee.

- We are gearing up and getting ready for our Vintage event on August 11<sup>th</sup>.
- The barn:
  - The south wall is completely sided and we're starting to trim.
  - We got the little signs up.
  - Dean is just now completing the Byers Antique sign. He might hang it this weekend. I think he's done painting it.
- We have a question. We took the green gate off that sits against the barn. We don't want to put it back with the new siding. Can we take that gate, which is 10-foot 11.5 inches wide, and move it to where the porta-pottie is? We will mostly keep it open and chained to a post, but we will be able to close it off.

Director England – They wouldn't be able to service the outhouse then.

Mrs. Schantz – Yes, they would.

Director England – You would put it past the outhouse?

Mrs. Schantz – Yes and open it toward that tree by the outhouse. We will put another post there and chain it. Mark would have a key and we would have a key. Mike drew it if you want to see it.

Director England – I don't have an issue with it. Do you ever have issues with people driving right there? Did you use that gate to stop people from driving by the barn?

Mike – No, but when we have our events, I usually run a rope across it to keep people off because we have all the vendors in there. Once the event is over, I take the rope down.

Director England – Sure, you just have issues back there by the outhouse. I don't have an issue, as long as they can service the outhouse.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Mark, any problems for Maintenance?

Mr. Schoder – No, if they want it there I have no problem as long as I get a key.

Ms. Schwartz – I'm having trouble picturing it. Will emergency services be able to get in?

Mrs. Schantz – It will always be open. It's only closed for the event.

Ms. Schwartz – That's when we have a lot of people there, so that's my only hesitation.

Mrs. Schantz – It's not locked.

Ms. Schwartz – Last year, with the rope situation, it felt very closed off.

Director England – The rope situation is right where you walk in. Your concern is that if they needed to call emergency vehicles, they wouldn't have access because that back drive is roped off.

Ms. Schwartz – Yes.

Discussion continued regarding access for emergency services during Byers events, the purpose of the gate, and tracking of all visitors to each event.

### **Silo Ranch – Dawn Ray**

Ms. Ray shared the following with the Committee.

- We're getting ready for our event in September, the Silofest. We are getting our vendors and talking to the beer tent guy.
- We did some more fencing.
- They finished up the bathroom. It looks amazing. It works and the toilet doesn't shake. The flooring was improved.
- Next we'll probably be finishing up the floor in the observation room.

Director England – Silofest is September 21<sup>st</sup> and you're going to have a band.

Ms. Ray – Yes, multiple bands.

Director England – How many tickets are you selling and what time?

Ms. Ray – It's all day from 12:00pm-10:00pm. We're hoping to sell 400 tickets. The first part of the day will be vendors, food trucks and some music playing, and then there will be a ticketed concert event in the evening, with a couple of local-ish artists.

Director England – Tickets are selling?

Ms. Ray – Now that we have entertainment lined up, we're going to start promoting.

Discussion continued regarding vendors.

Ms. Waterworth – Are they redoing the parking area?

Ms. Ray – Yes, we are. We had a bunch of millings delivered on Saturday and again today. We're making more parking up top and adding a drive lane.

### **Lakes Area Hawks – Andy Graham**

Mr. Graham shared the following with the Committee.

- We will be starting our football camp this weekend, which is the kickoff for our season, and then we'll be in the park the following Tuesday until the end of October, the end of football season.
- I did talk to Mark about moving some of the piles in the park for us, because that's our main entrance too, and if we ever had to get an ambulance on the field there, that's where we would pull it through.
- We are ready and excited to start the season.

**Motor City Mountain Bike Association – Mike Kearney**

Mr. Kearney shared the following with the Committee.

- I have not been on the trail for about a month or so as I have been out of town.
- All reports were that things are in good shape.
- We're due to take the brush hog through this year. We do it about every two years. I'll be looking to do that this fall, especially the two-track which gets pretty overgrown.

**Lakes Athletics Association – Jared Stoddard**

*A report was submitted in the packet dated May 13, 2024:*

- *League Update – LAA Summer season for 7U and SU is under way with a record 150 registrants over 14 teams! LAA FALL ball registration is now under way, and already at half capacity in a few short weeks. One thing to watch will be the park saturation on concurrent weekends with HAWKS Football, and accommodating any open field needs request for the football program, without sacrificing Fall baseball allocations.*
- *Season Dates – Lakes Summer Ball: Wed evening games July thru mid Aug  
Lakes FALL Ball: Friday evenings and Sundays Sept thru Oct*
- *2024 Capital Improvements – Ideas for improvements under discussion.*
  - *Overhaul bathroom amenities and plumbing*
  - *Net for F7 foul ball into neighbor property*
  - *Hot water tank replacement*
  - *Infields groundwork*
- *Needs From Township*
  - *Cement Bleacher Pads F1: the poured cement bleacher pads and ADA accessible seating area on Field #1; Township to provide updates*
  - *Tree Trim: Brush clean-up for outfield fence of Field #1 (impede into fence and play area)*
  - *Lawn Service Vendor – improvement, especially weed whip:*
    - 1) *Areas of HG park have opportunities for weed whip improvement by township vendor. Photos were shared in separate email.*
    - 2) *F? at far east of park has really bad weed whip and grass service treatment; please ask vendor to complete; if have time, please visit F?; a member of LAA Board would be happy to meet and walk together.*

Mr. Berkheiser discussed the Lakes report. They wanted something done with the concrete, and also with the grass.

Director England –

- The cement bleacher pads were done two years ago. They originally did not want us to do Field #1 because they were still doing some maintenance. Now, they are ready for us to Field #1. Mark will schedule it.
- The tree trim was completed before the season started. I need to address that with them to get it taken off.
- Weed whipping at Field #7 – similar issues to what we saw at Dodge and that has already been addressed with the vendor and they're taking care of it.

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

- *Commerce Little League*
- *Interlakes Girls Softball*

## **ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT**

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- At our last Township Board meeting, we had some discussion about our GFL contract. As everybody is probably aware, it rolled over to a new service provider on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Township is getting a lot of phone calls about pickup issues. There is information on the website. We just recently signed a new 5-year extension on the contract, so we're locked into the contract. I'm sure there's a way we could get out if we wanted to, but we're working with the new organization. The belief is that they are trying, but they just don't have the fleet yet. They were supposed to get a lot of the trucks from GFL, and they may or may not have gotten all the trucks they thought they would get to provide the services. We're still working through that.
- For those of you who may have known Jim Gotts, Chairperson of the DDA; he was on the DDA for many years and performed a lot of service for the community. He passed recently and the Township did a nice resolution for his family.
- We had a financial audit of the Township and that all came out looking good.
- We had an initial presentation from OHM Advisors, the company who does our road intersection surveys. Any time you're doing road work, you have to have a survey. We had a bunch of intersections surveyed. These are part of the things the Township would like to have fixed using our tri-party money. So, we got an initial evaluation of a lot of intersections that we have issues with. They made some recommendations, and they'll continue to follow up on that. These are not large intersections as those fall under the County.

## **ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Director England discussed the following:

- Byer's Electrical got approved at the last Township Board meeting. I'm working with them to get that taken care of. They'll coordinate with Mark to get access to the house. The third bid came in lower than the other two that this Committee saw.
- Everything is going good at the Senior Center.
- We're still challenged with parking issues, balancing the pickleball courts and the Senior Center activities. I think we have a handle on it. We do have permanent signs up now designating which parking spots are for the senior center only and which can be available for pickleball. I can see a parking expansion coming in the near future.
- Concerts are going great and that's later on the agenda.
- Kayak launch – Those construction documents are being finalized and that should be going out to bid here soon.
- Victory Park – We're held up by issues with the well. We need to go back to the County and the Health Department and deal with that. They're telling us that the well has to be 100 feet away from the area of the dog park because that land is considered contaminated based on the aerials they're pulling. We have some

questions, but 800 feet puts in a spot that's not going to work for what we have going on.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – What's contaminated?

Director England – Exactly where the dog park is going to go. It has to do with where the old barracks were.

Mr. Berkheiser – They're saying that the ground is contaminated?

Director England – They don't know if it is, but it is shown on the earlier reports as a contaminated area.

Mr. Berkheiser – So it has nothing to do with the dog park.

Director England – No, it's because of what was there.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Didn't we already go through that situation with the government?

Director England – That's why we're going to sit down with the Health Department and ask more questions. We'll pull out those details and see if that changes their minds.

Mr. Berkheiser – Can we do samples?

Director England – I asked that very question today, if we could sample it to see the extent, and how long is it considered contaminated? Was it ever? Was there a sample that proves it? I will bring those answers to you.

#### **ITEM 4: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- The restrooms at the Silo Ranch
  - The joists were rotted, and the subfloor was rotted. We replaced the floor.
  - We centered the toilet.
  - We moved the sink to the opposite wall. There's a lot more room to move around in there now.
  - The crawlspace is leveled and insulated.
  - We dug a hole about 40" down to bury the water lines so they won't freeze again.
- Chipping and clearing continues at the Township. We did that last week at Scarlet's and the pathways.
- At Long Park – We added a step and two railings to the observation deck. The graffiti is off.
- On the Airline Trail, we are missing 13 rails and 4 posts. They moved further down.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed the Airline Trail Council's involvement with Ms. Vecellio and Mr. Schoder regarding replacing the fence and improving security measures on the trails.

Mr. Schoder – We have erosion issues between Haggerty and the bridge. We will need a seawall there eventually. We have been using concrete to hold back the water. It's swampy there.

Mr. Berkheiser – How long?

Mr. Schoder – 50-60 yards.

Mr. Berkheiser – I recommend that be taken back to the Trail Council. Maybe we can get someone to give us a recommendation.

Discussion continued regarding trail repairs, the seawall and EGLE permitting.

### **ITEM 5: PARK LIAISON REPORTS**

#### **Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park**

- Really nothing new to report.
- You've heard the issues we're having on the south side. We'll see what happens.

#### **Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race**

- For Mill Race, on the 7-Eleven side entrance; the wood chips look great back there and have done a great job of helping with the water.
- Last year we talked about the pond that's back there and whose responsibility it is to maintain it. About 3-feet out from the water, they've let everything grow up around it, all the way around. It doesn't look great. Last year, they maintained it all the way up to the pond. Then, there is also a bunch of downed brush in the water.

Director England – So they need to clean the pond out and maintain it.

Ms. Schwartz – Yes, it hasn't been maintained this year.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – That's a storm water retention pond.

Mr. Berkheiser – Arkan Jonna owns that.

Ms. Schwartz – Then the bridge, same thing; it's not holding up well. It bends when you walk on it. And the entrance signage needs to be repainted.

Mr. Berkheiser – We replaced the first bridge years ago. We might want to look at ...

Director England – I have some information on getting that second one replaced. I'll bring it next month. I want you to think about whether you want that to be a footbridge or do you want it to be able to accommodate emergency access?

Discussion continued regarding grant funding, emergency access, and maintenance.

#### **Vecellio – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park**

- Snowy Ridge looks great. It looks like someone just cut the lawn.
- At Long Park, the stands look great. Thank you for the steps.

- I noticed today that the farthest stand going from the bridge out, the right hand side is a little wobbly.
- Everything else is really nice. It's very clean and I appreciate that.
- Now, instead of graffiti, there's a couple of scratches but I don't think there's anything we can do about it.

### **Walker – Maple Glen**

- The park looks really good.
- There were lots of people there.
- Everything looked clean cut and there were no real big issues there.

### **Petsch – Bicentennial Park**

- I haven't been by in the last couple of weeks.

Director England – I have an update for your park. They are repainting the courts this week.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Are we going to have pickleball paint on there too?

Director England – Yes, two courts.

### **Krueger – Dodge Park**

- Everything is looking great over there.
- That's where we walked today and went over a lot of things. We discussed what needed to be done.
- There were just a few minor maintenance things. I talked with Emily about those.
- Other than that, it's being well used and there are lots of people having fun there.
- If you come in from the Library side, it looks terrific.

### **Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park**

- I have not been there because of the mosquitoes and the weather.
- I drove by today because I saw their report about the weeds. Did they also include the weeds on the fence at Field #1?

Director England – That would be the back fence.

Discussion took place with Ms. Waterworth, Director England and Mr. Schoder regarding cleaning up vines and brush in the park, especially along fence lines. Director England clarified that the Township is responsible for the outside of the fence.

### **ITEM 6: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE**

Ms. Waterworth discussed the following with the Committee:

- The Village is pretty busy in August.
- Their garage sale is August 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 9am to 6pm.
- On August 10<sup>th</sup>, they have a catch-and-release fishing tournament on the lake.
- On August 13<sup>th</sup> is Tuesday in the Park. I was just reading the flyer. If you have kids, it sounds exciting. I want to do this. They have an inflatable obstacle course and a pirate ship slide.



Ms. Kennedy – That inflatable obstacle course will be at the concert this Friday as well.

**ITEM 7: MEMORIAL TREE DONATION**

Chairperson Walker noted that this item is tabled until next month.

**ITEM 8: KAYAK LAUNCH**

Director England – The park needs a name.

Discussion ensued regarding items being launched at the site, parking, potential park names and park rules.

**MOTION** by Waterworth, supported by Vecellio, to name the park, “Commerce Township Kayak & Canoe Launch”. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 9: HOLIDAY LIGHTING**

Director England – I wanted to start having this discussion about Byers House and the Richardson Center so that we can get the lighting lined up and installed earlier this year. We have a company who always donates lighting the tree for the Christmas Tree event. We will reach out to them to see if they will do the Richardson Center. I know last year we talked that we wanted more lighting on the Richardson Center. I think we were happy with what was at Byers.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Remember we talked about remote controlled permanent lighting?

Director England – I have not looked into that yet.

Mr. Berkheiser – You were the only one who talked about it.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – The discussion was that it could be something used during the concerts and other events. They’re LED lights, they’re multicolor and multifunctional. They would function throughout the year.

Mr. Berkheiser – For events in the park, by the time they’re done it’s dark. The lights wouldn’t go on until after the concert. My concern with that is just a maintenance issue. If we’re going to investigate it, we need to see what-

Vice Chairperson Petsch – That’s what I’m saying. It’s something we should look into if we’re going to pay to have it done every year. They are used in other communities.

Chairperson Walker – It would be cool to do them for the 4th of July and Halloween, different holidays.

Mr. Berkheiser – When you start getting into fall and spring, I wouldn’t disagree, but summer stuff, by the time you turn it on it’s 10:00 at night.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Not necessarily. They would still be illuminated, and you would see them. They’ll be brighter in the dark, but it would still be an LED light, and they are pretty bright. It would be festive for a concert. We should look into it.

Director England – Only for the Richardson Center?

Chairperson Walker – You could do the fence along the road at Byers.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – I don't know the feeling of the Byers group. It really looked very pretty last year.

Mr. Berkheiser – The only thing about the fence is that sometimes we have sections that go out. It would be nice to have the installers look at putting that up because they are responsible for issues. They come out fairly quickly and fix them all and replace as needed. I'm personally biased to more lights. And more lights on the tree too.

Director England – He did add more last year. We still told him we want more. At Byers, we're looking at the house and the fence. At the Richardson Center, do you want the whole roofline?

Vice Chairperson Petsch – What did we do last year?

Mr. Berkheiser – We just did the roofline. I felt we could have outlined more of the building itself.

Mr. Krueger – With today's landscape lighting, that's all considered permanent lighting. All you have to do is find the manufacturer and find what you like. There are so many things out there; color changing LEDs and computerized systems where you're running the whole thing off your phone. Even when you go to Costco to get string lights, you can connect those together. There are so many options ...

Chairperson Walker – I think the best idea is to talk to the guy that did them last time and see what kind of permanent options he can offer us for both of those properties. Let's see what kind of pricing we can get, and we'll go from there.

Director England – Right, but what do you want at the Richardson Center? What am I scoping here?

Chairperson Walker – The roofline on the front and sides.

Mr. Krueger – I think we should challenge them to find out what they feel.

Director England – It's not their job. We need to give them a scope.

Chairperson Walker – I would say the roofline for starters. That would keep it classy, clean and neat.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'll register my concern again; anything permanent falls onto our maintenance folks. I'm concerned anytime we add work to them.

Director England – I will get some prices for temporary. That would be like November 1<sup>st</sup> through mid-March, that timeframe?

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, I think it came down at the end of February or March time frame; mid-November to mid-March.

Director England – I will bring back temporary prices, and I will check into some permanent lighting options and the long-term maintenance issues that would come along with that. I'll bring it back next month.

Mr. Berkheiser inquired about Item 7, tree donation. Vice Chairperson Petsch noted that it was tabled. Director England explained that she has some issues to review for that.

### **ITEM 10: BUDGET**

Director England – Our budget is due by August 15<sup>th</sup>. I included all the budget materials for you in the packet. I do not expect to have this discussion tonight. I would like to set the budget workshop meeting for August 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm at the Richardson Center.

The Committee members were in agreement.

Director England – I know we have some new members on the Committee which is why I provided the information in the packet. Please look that over. If you have any questions prior to that, please reach out to me so we can make sure we are all on the same page when we get to the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **ITEM 11: PARK EVENT UPDATES**

Director England – I'll let Allison take this over. We've already completed three of our concerts and have two more to go.

Ms. Kennedy –

- The three concerts we've had were very well attended. Our Magic Bus concert two weeks ago might have been the biggest concert to date at the Richardson Center. This week we have Steve King & the Dittilies and the food truck is The Burger Joint from Milford. We also have Chaos & Commotion, the inflatable obstacle course, and the face painters will be there. The last concert is on August 2<sup>nd</sup> with Sunset Blvd. They're an 80's cover band. The food truck will be Impasto.
- We are gearing up for the Trail-or-Treat event, which will be 6-8pm, October 25<sup>th</sup>. We met with Alyson at the Library. We will go onsite to review; we're trying to expand it. Last year, it was tight and cramped for the amount of people we had there. We will try to extend it around the Library, and they want to have a haunted house inside the Library.
- The Christmas Tree Lighting event will be on December 7<sup>th</sup>.
- We have a pickleball tournament scheduled for August 3<sup>rd</sup>. We are doing our final push to get people registered for that. I think we had 23 as of this afternoon, and 40 is our maximum.

Mr. Berkheiser – Karen, when is Boo Bash?

Ms. Schantz – October 19<sup>th</sup> I believe. We did it the weekend before.

Director England – We have also started having discussions internally about the Village’s Bicentennial Celebration for next year. We tentatively have a date of June 14, 2025. We are working with the Library and local businesses. Obviously, Byers is right there. Any other community group that is here, if you want to be involved or help in any way, please let us know. We plan to shut the street down and have an all day celebration.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed relocation of the bounce house at the concert events with Director England and Ms. Kennedy. He also discussed having at least two food trucks at events to reduce the wait for ordering food. Discussion continued regarding food truck costs. Mr. Berkheiser recommended Committee members and staff wear Parks shirts to the events.

**ITEM 12: OTHER MATTERS**

Director England – Next month’s regular meeting is at the Richardson Center and will be our potluck. A sign-up will be emailed.

Mr. Berkheiser – Mark, do you have a maintenance schedule for Parks? If there is stuff we need to think about repairing, since we’re coming up on budget, get Emily a list of preventative things.

Mr. Schoder – Yes, like the bridges. Okay.

Discussion continued regarding preventative maintenance and capital improvements.

Mr. Berkheiser – Have we gone any further on the e-bike matters?

Director England – I’m still waiting for the State results.

Mr. Berkheiser - The last thing I had was AED’s.

Director England – Yes, I need to get with Stacy and get that taken care of.

**The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for August 26, 2024, at 7:00PM at the Richardson Center, after the park visit at Richardson Park.**

**ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT**

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

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Krystal Schwartz, Secretary