

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

Monday, January 27, 2025
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Petsch called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: William Petsch, Chairperson
Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson
Krystal Schwartz, Secretary
Ron Krueger
Denise Vecellio

Absent: Bob Berkheiser (excused)
Laura Waterworth (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 Krueger, seconded by Walker, to approve the November 25, 2024, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Petsch opened to Public Comments.

There were no comments.

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've been getting a lot of visitors on Sundays. The ducks are a big attraction; we have about 200-300 ducks and they eat about 200 pounds of corn a week.
- We've had a lot of visitors at the barn also.
- We have our event dates set for the coming year, and we sent them to Emily for approval.

Director England – Those are in front of the Committee members.

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, I have it here.

Friends of Byers 2025 Event Schedule

- 1) Easter “Photos with Easter Bunny”, Sunday, April 13th, 11am-5pm
- 2) Spring clean-up (Boy Scouts Troop 308) Sunday, May 18th
- 3) Joint non-scheduled event: 200-year event, Saturday, June 14th, [*Bicentennial Celebration]
- 4) Antique Event, Sunday, August 10th, 11am-5pm
- 5) Halloween Event, Saturday, October 18th, 6:30pm-8:30pm
- 6) Christmas “Photos with Santa”, 11am-5pm, [**Sunday, December 14th]

[*Reference to event title added after Vecellio’s comment below]

[**Date was later added to the list submitted; Schwartz discussed under other matters.]

Mr. Schantz – The two additional dates; one is for the spring clean-up with Bob and the Boy Scouts. The other is the Bicentennial Celebration; we’re making plans for our end of it.

Director England – Does anyone have questions about their events?

Ms. Vecellio – The Bicentennial Celebration, when is that?

Director England – That is through the Township. I’ll give an update on that when we get to that item, but it’s June 14th.

Ms. Vecellio – So that’s Item #3 on their schedule.

Director England – Yes.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Schwartz, to approve the Friends of Byers 2025 Event Schedule as written. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Commerce Little League – Nikki Schaffer

Ms. Schaffer shared the following with the Committee.

- We currently have our registration open for spring.
- Our enrollment is about normal with 200 kids so far.
- Registration is open until March 1st.
- Little League did open their boundaries, so we are accepting kids between the ages of 4-7 outside of the Commerce/Walled Lake area. We are seeing a large intake of players coming from Waterford, Novi and South Lyon.
- Outside of that, our board recently approved the purchase of a field dragger so we can drag our fields without breaking our dads’ backs.

Chairperson Petsch – Is there any other additional charge for kids outside the area that participate in Commerce Little League, or is it just that they don’t have a little league?

Ms. Schaffer – So, they don’t have a little league. It’s part of Little League International to bring more kids back into the program. There’s no additional charge, but they do participate and pay our registration fee, do our raffle ticket, et cetera. We do not turn

anyone away; so if we had someone from Commerce who wanted to play, and we had another kid from Waterford, we would take both.

Chairperson Petsch – Thank you.

Lakes Area Hawks – Andy Graham

Mr. Graham shared the following with the Committee.

- We just started our weightlifting program at the beginning of January for our older kids out there, so we're out there Monday through Thursday.
- Not a lot to report right now.
- We will open our registration on February 1st for returning players, and then we will open it up to the general public to sign up after that.

Chairperson Petsch – Do you know, what was the first year that we played over there at Hawks' field?

Mr. Graham – I think it was 24 years ago.

Petsch and Graham reminisced about the Hawks' history and discussed the 25th anniversary. Mr. Graham would follow up at the next meeting.

Silo Ranch – Dawn Ray

Ms. Ray shared the following with the Committee.

- Tonight was our first night ride for the new equestrian team. We have 36 kids.
- We are now the official riding facility for the Girl Scouts to be sent to. We have girls scheduled to come in April.
- Emily and I met and talked about maybe having the Boy Scouts build raised beds for the garden.
- April 5th is our Easter Event.
- We have the dates for the camps. Emily has those.

Director England – Are you still planning on doing Silo Fest?

Ms. Ray – Yes, Silo Fest, we're trying to lock down September 13th for that. I also wanted to talk about the electricity. We had DTE come over today. We had an \$1149 electric bill this month. I need them to come over and maybe insulate better in the viewing room. We have a propane heater for it. Instead of running electric, I'd like to run propane if you have a way to get it hooked up. The \$1100 bill was a shocker.

Director England – I'll touch base with you on that.

Ms. Ray – Yes, and maybe some insulation in the observation room. I bought all of the tiles for the rest of the roof.

Chairperson Petsch – How is it heated now?

Ms. Ray – Electric baseboard heat. Like I said, DTE was out today. We clicked everything off to try to figure out where it was drawing from. Every time we turned on a heater, it was running like 2.0 kilowatts an hour. They said an average house is

between .5 and 1.0 kilowatts an hour, and just one of our heaters was running at 2.0 kilowatts an hour.

Chairperson Petsch – Is that how they're rated? Do you know what the ...

Ms. Ray – I don't know if it's just because they're old.

Mr. Schoder – They're old, really old and they're not efficient at all.

Chairperson Petsch – Yeah, I guess not, with drawing that much ...

Ms. Ray – We're trying to keep it on because we don't want the pipes to freeze under the bathroom. I know they have a heater running under there and he said that was running at 2.0 also I think.

Discussions continued regarding the testing done by DTE today, the heater running nonstop set at 55 degrees, and potential solutions for the issues.

Chairperson Petsch – For the Girl Scout program, is that where they can earn a merit badge?

Ms. Ray – Yes, and we will be the official riding facility that they recommend.

Director England – They're also going to be participating in the June 14th Bicentennial Event.

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

Mr. Haney – It's the middle of winter and we have nothing to report.

No other reports were submitted, and no representatives were present at the meeting for the following leagues:

- *Interlakes Girls Softball*
- *Lakes Athletics Association*
- *Motor City Mountain Bike Association*

ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

In Mr. Berkheiser's absence, Director England noted the following.

Director England – I wasn't at the last meeting, but I know that Johnny Walker was reappointed to the Parks & Recreation Committee. I heard it was a short meeting.

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England discussed the following:

- The majority is on my written report that was included in your packet.
- We are starting the AARP tax service again. I think we're down to 2 days left for appointments. They start February 3rd through April 14th. They are at our place every Monday, with the exception of February 17th. So, if you know anybody, a senior 55 and up, looking to have their taxes done, you can send them our way.

- Allison has been working hard on creating new and exciting day trips for our seniors, utilizing the People’s Express bus. She has some of those listed there for you to see.
- We’re continuing to work on our community programming.

Chairperson Petsch – Tell me about those adventure trips that are out of the country.

Director England – Those have been great. That’s through Premier World Discovery and they do everything. You sign up with them and they book your airfare, they take you to the airport, they pick you up from the airport. We’ve had people sign up for every one of those trips we’ve offered, and they come back to sign up for more.

Chairperson Petsch – Those look like fun.

ITEM 4: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- As Chris said, there's not a whole lot going on in the Parks.
- We have been wood chipping when it’s not so cold out.
- Otherwise, I have the guys inside painting.
- We do our routine checks in the Parks, and everything seems to be good.
- The sledding hill has a lot of broken sleds and lost gloves.

Chairperson Petsch – What do you think it would take to put in an ice skating rink in Bicentennial?

Mr. Schoder – Not much.

Chairperson Petsch – We have water and stuff there right, to flood the pond?

Mr. Schoder – Yes.

Chairperson Petsch – Any comment on that, Ms. Director?

Director England – Yes, I do, under Item 11.

Chairperson Petsch – Okay.

ITEM 5: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- Nothing to report

Vecellio – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- Long Park looks good. It looks like there are fishermen out there.
- The sledding hill looks good too. It looks like it has been used a lot.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- Nothing to report.
- We will discuss under Other Matters.

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- Nothing to report.

Walker – Maple Glen

- I drove through there last week.
- There was only one person with a dog. Other than that, it's pretty much empty.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- I saw two cars in the parking lot on Sunday.
- Other than that, I didn't really go in, so nothing to report.

Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park

- Nothing to report.

Mr. Krueger – There's a lot of people that park at the kayak launch and do ice fishing out on the lake. That little parking lot gets filled up.

Chairperson Petsch – Good, as long as we're not having any problems with it.

ITEM 6: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

No report in Ms. Waterworth's absence.

ITEM 7: RICHARDSON CENTER IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 2

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- In your packet there's information from Giffels Webster regarding extending the parking lot. You'll see the concept.
- In addition, there's information on adding a restroom facility. This would be like a prefab restroom facility. We would be responsible for putting down the concrete pad, and hooking it up to water, sewer and electrical. Those costs are all included in the price that's listed.

Mr. Krueger – Is that the way it's going to look? I was looking at it to maybe make it match the building.

Director England – We can tweak it. This is just from their catalog to get an idea of the style we were looking at, with two restrooms and a storage area. We can tweak colors and style when it comes time.

Chairperson Petsch – The \$390,000, is that considered fair and reasonable?

Director England – Yes, that's based on current bids that were received. So, everything here, including the east pathway extension, which they didn't do when we re-paved the existing pathway in front of the Richardson Center, falls under the budgeted amount for Phase 2 at the Richardson Center. You had budgeted \$1 million.

Chairperson Petsch – Do we need to take action on this, Emily?

Director England – I would so we can get it out to bid.

Vice Chairperson Walker – So you're just looking for a motion to bring it to the Trustees?

Director England – Yes, it has to go to the Township Board. I wanted to make sure you are comfortable with this. Like I said, with contingency and everything, this falls under the budgeted amount for this project. So, we need a motion if the Committee is comfortable moving forward, so I can take it to the Board next month.

MOTION by Krueger, seconded by Walker, to move forward on the Richardson Center Improvements Phase 2, which includes three projects; \$390,000 for the parking lot extension, \$390,000 for the restroom & storage facility, and \$144,000 to extend the pathway from the driveway to Richardson Road.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8: LONG PARK SIGN PHOTO CONTEST

Director England shared a presentation on the overhead and discussed the following with the Committee:

- The Committee approved this back in September.
- We had to wait because the Township was having a Township-wide photo contest.
- Allison and I have been working hard to make sure that this program works.
- The idea is we want to start the contest tomorrow, so we will start pushing it on social media, the website and email blasts to get it out to people.
- The contest will run for picture submittal until February 25th, and then we will open voting on February 28th to run through March 17th. Then, the Committee can make selections at our March meeting so we can get the signs replaced at Long Park.

Mr. Krueger – Are these pictures of the park itself?

Director England – Correct. We want color pictures from any time of the year.

Mr. Krueger – So if somebody had some old pictures, because we're not going to have time to do anything in the spring.

Director England – Correct. People are over there taking pictures all the time so I'm sure we will have a lot. This was our trial run on the program and Allison submitted a lot of pictures today to make sure this works. This is what people will see when they go to it. You click to add a photo, fill this out, enter an email address, and then it gives us the ability to see who enters it. You can see, those are the ones that were entered. Along with that email address, then we can reach out to those people to let them know when voting opens. We'll send out a mass email. It will be the same link, it will just give them the ability to vote instead of adding a photo. Where it says "best here", that's the one Allison had voted for. If you are comfortable with that time frame, I think we're confident we can pull this off.

Chairperson Petsch – Looks good to me, Emily.

Ms. Schwartz – Did we decide how many photos we need?

Director England – Currently, the one that has the Redside Dace on it; we're going to have to get a stock photo. I think we can do whatever we want. I think there's three signs over there currently, but we can add to that.

Ms. Vecellio – How many submissions did they get for the last photo contest? It seems like there were a lot.

Director England – For the Township-wide one; I don't know the number offhand. We don't do that one. The Library Director handles that.

Ms. Kennedy – I thought she said there was a couple hundred.

Vice Chairperson Walker – How are we voting?

Director England – They vote right on the same program, and we have guidelines set up so that somebody can't keep voting. It's one vote per device.

Chairperson Petsch – And we will get the top selections to review?

Director England – Yes.

Mr. Krueger – And when we're voting on the pictures, there's no identification as to who took it?

Director England – Correct. We have that, but it will not be made public. So, are we good with that?

The Committee members collectively agreed.

Director England – Okay, then we will move forward.

ITEM 9: PARK IMPROVEMENT UPDATES

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- For the dog park, that is pretty well complete. We still need the fencing put up, and that's a significant part. We have to wait for the winter weather to clear so that we can do that.
- The kayak launch is done with the exception of the actual launch itself. It's been purchased and it just needs to be installed when the weather clears.
- And then, we're just bidding out these projects and getting moving.

Chairperson Petsch – Emily, is that a rolling removable launch?

Director England – Yes.

Mr. Krueger – Did we come up with the rules for the dog park?

Director England – We did. They were approved by the Township Board already. Signs have been ordered and will be coming in soon. Once the weather breaks, the signs will be installed, along with benches and dog waste stations. It's almost there.

ITEM 10: PARK EVENT UPDATES

Ms. Kennedy discussed the following with the Committee:

- In the department update, we had all of our events for 2025:
 - April 5th – Easter Egg Hunt
 - May 17th – M-5K
 - June 14th – Bicentennial Celebration
 - Summer Concerts – We are only doing 4 this year because we did not want one on July 4th, and we always stop the first weekend in August so we're not competing with Milford Memories.
 - July 11th
 - July 18th
 - July 25th
 - August 1st
 - October 24th – Trail or Treat
 - December 6th – Tree Lighting
 - Pickleball Tournaments
 - June 7th
 - August 2nd
 - October 4th

Chairperson Petsch – Mark, I'm going to make a request right now for the Trail or Treat that we have a gator over there.

Mr. Schoder – Yes, we'll get it over there for you. We'll put lights on it.

Chairperson Petsch – I just got that on record.

Director England –

Just to go over the June 14th Bicentennial Event:

- That coincides with the Library's Summer Reading Program kickoff. We will start the day with their activities for the kids.
- We are going to do a 5K that morning, which is going to be mirrored with a pancake breakfast. Runners can participate in that, or if they're waiting.
- There will be kids' activities and vendors.
- We are going to work with Byers. They have some great ideas to do over there, and they'll have stations set up about the history of the Village area.
- There will be a petting zoo and food trucks. Larry Gray will be reaching out to all of the businesses right there if they want to be involved in it. We're obviously going to give them the first option to get involved, the restaurants and such, before we bring in food trucks.
- There will be a band in the evening and a beer tent.

Mr. Krueger – Where is all of this going to be at?

Director England – They're actually closing the road down between S. Commerce and Broadway.

Mr. Krueger – Will there be anything in Dodge Park, at Scarlet's Playground or anything?

Director England – Not at the playground, but we will allow people to park there and then we will shuttle people. We will be working with People's Express to shuttle people to get them safely up to where the road is closed.

Ms. Kennedy – That's where all the Library programming will be.

Mrs. Schantz – Is there is a time?

Director England – It's going to be all day.

Ms. Kennedy – We have the 5K and the pancake breakfast starting at 9am. I think kids' activities are 10-12.

Director England – The vendor event is 10am-6pm, and Friends of Byers can do whatever you're comfortable with doing.

Mrs. Schantz – 10am to midnight?

Mr. Haney – What date is that Emily?

Director England – June 14th.

Chairperson Petsch – So, the parking lot by Byers, that will be closed off, right?

Director England – That's where the beer tent and the stage will be set up. We're nailing down the fine details and I would say we're 95% done. We will start making that public and we will be meeting with the user groups that are going to participate. It should be a good time.

Mr. Krueger – It's Flag Day, and the day before Father's Day.

Director England – We planned it that way.

Mrs. Schantz – The only things we haven't found; we are looking for an old fashioned candle maker and a blacksmith.

Ms. Kennedy – Kensington has that village where they do all kinds of stuff like that. I don't know if they have a candlemaker there, but maybe reach out to them.

Chairperson Petsch – Emily, what were the streets? Will it be closer to S. Commerce?

Director England – S. Commerce to Broadway.

Ms. Kennedy – It will be in front of Byers.

Director England – In front of Mill Race and Byers.

Mr. Krueger – Will there be a craft show?

Director England – Yes.

Mrs. Schantz – Can we plan some sort of clean-up for the riverfront by the parking?

Director England – Yes.

Mr. Schantz – We can work that out with the Scouts.

ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS

Director England – Bob sent an email, and he wanted me to bring up these items and have you put some thought into it so we can have discussion next month. One idea was an ice rink. He mentioned getting a vendor to run an ice rink for residents. He was at another local community where they had a vendor come in and set up the rink and they rented skates. He didn't really specify a park. I think he was thinking Victory Park. Bicentennial is an option, and there are a lot of other options. So, put some thought into that.

Chairperson Petsch – As I discussed with Mark, I was thinking the volleyball court. To make a skating rink, just to get that level, it's already sand. So, grade it flat, lay down some 7 mil Visqueen with a few side boards and flood it, and you've got an ice rink.

Mr. Schoder – I don't know how thick we're going to go, but once it melts ... the grass goes dormant. We could put it over the grass.

Chairperson Petsch – I understand, but that's right by the parking lot. It's an area that isn't used. To do anything else over there, you've got to have pretty level ground. We used to always build one in our back yard.

Mr. Schoder – There are three poles, so there is a pole in the middle.

Chairperson Petsch – Oh, I thought they were just on the edge.

Director England – There are two courts there.

Mr. Schoder – But, over by the baseball field is pretty level.

Chairperson Petsch – That's a spot that would work too. I wasn't thinking of it with a vendor, but just something we could put together. It's not that difficult.

Mr. Schoder – Even over on the north side, that's level too and more up front.

Discussion continued regarding finding a level site and parking.

Mrs. Schantz – The hill at Byers.

Director England – We've always talked about Byers actually for this specific thing.

Mr. Schantz – In the flats?

Mrs. Schantz – We call them flats. It's all flat and it would be perfect to string lights.

Director England – There are a lot of areas and that was just something that he put on here too. Everybody put some thought into it.

Ms. Kennedy – Milford's is really pretty.

Director England – Did they do it on their volleyball court?

Ms. Kennedy – That's how they did it before, and it was a disaster. Now, it's right up front where the boardwalk is in that flat area. They made that part flat specifically for the ice rink to go there. When I'm there tomorrow night, I'll take pictures of it. I would say theirs is an 8" tall board and it's portable. I want to say Christian said it's about \$5,000. They just have a plastic liner that goes inside of it. The Fire Department floods it, but they don't maintain it. The people that use it are the ones that shovel it.

Chairperson Petsch – Right, but we would occasionally flood it and shovel it.

Ms. Vecellio – Are we talking about this for this year?

Director England – No. I mean, possibly for the end of this year, but not this season. By the time you get approval, you will see this go to the Township Board in March.

Chairperson Petsch – Why would we need approval for that?

Director England – You're adding an activity and I'm sure they'll want the attorney's opinion on this.

Mr. Krueger – You might want to look at liability.

Director England – Yes.

Vice Chairperson Walker – You're going to have tons of signs.

Chairperson Petsch – Skate at your own risk.

Director England – Listen, I love your enthusiasm, I really do. However, I can't change how this works.

Mr. Krueger – I used to build a 40x110-foot rink in my backyard every year. It was 2x6's and you can buy Visqueen at the local nursery. It makes a nice little rink.

Director England – Perfect. It sounds like Ron is ready to build.

Discussion continued regarding the construction of an ice rink. It has to be thicker than plywood. They have to be 2x6 or 2x8 to enable staking and to hold the pressure.

Director England – So back to Bob’s list. Mark, maybe this is more for your department. At Victory Park, the driveway and the parking lot; people are back there doing spinouts. I think they’re doing them at Scarlet’s too. I don’t know if you plow that, but maybe that’s a discussion we need to have.

Mr. Schoder – I was told they salted back there. I was there today and they only salted the drive in and one little patch.

Director England – Well, they salted, just not efficiently. We can talk about that. And, Bob said he saw a lot of people doing cross country skiing. He thought maybe we could put in groomed cross country ski tracks, or try to find a local group or organization to partner with.

Ms. Schwartz – On the Friends of Byers schedule, there isn’t a date for the Christmas event, Photos with Santa.

Mrs. Schantz – *December 14th, 11am-5pm.

*[*Page 2 reflects this additional information]*

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for February 24, 2025, at 6:00PM at the Township Hall. (No park visits before meetings from November to March)

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Walker, supported by Krueger, to adjourn the meeting at 6:42pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Krystal Schwartz, Secretary