

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

*Monday, May 19, 2025*  
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  
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 Vecellio, seconded by Walker, to approve the March 24, 2025, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**MOTION** by Walker, seconded by Schwartz, to approve the April 22, 2025, Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes from the Joint Quarterly Meeting with the Township Board.

**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 – Karen Schantz**

Mrs. Schantz shared the following with the Committee.

- We just completed our spring cleanup yesterday. The pathways look stunning. The gardens are beautiful. We moved the old antiques back into the gardens like they used to be, getting ready for our 200<sup>th</sup>.
- The next couple of weeks will be cleaning; getting the farmhouse ready to show and have viewings. We want to stage it historically for visitors, like we used to for the second graders.

- The barn has been very busy. Walk-throughs have been amazing coming from all over.
- We are now advertising in Holly, White Lake, Hartland, Howell, South Lyon, Plymouth, Bloomfield, Birmingham, Rochester, Waterford, Auburn Hills and Lake Orion. That's just to bring people back who grew up in Commerce. It's working. People are coming back to visit.
- Other than that, we are gearing up for the 200<sup>th</sup>.

Chairperson Petsch inquired about issues with groundhogs at Byers. Mrs. Schantz replied that there are still issues, and there are also problems with muskrats. Discussion continued regarding improving building foundations to prevent access by rodents.

### **Silo Ranch – Joe Raye**

Mr. Raye shared the following with the Committee.

- Two weeks ago on Saturday, we had a Michigan country band come and film a music video in the wooden barn. It was a pretty cool experience for us to be part of. We had to dodge the holes in the floor. That's one of the things I'm planning to get done this summer.
- We have our annual spring Open House on May 31<sup>st</sup>. This year, we opened up the vendors to local businesses to try to promote. It's free for local businesses to come in, set up, pass out flyers. There are a couple different types of vendors; some are promoting, some are selling. We will have a food truck, and a snow cone. We are going to do pony rides and just let people come in and look around.
- The community garden is open. We have some people that have put weed fabric down. I don't think anybody has planted anything yet.
- We had a Girl Scout troop that visited yesterday. They did some lessons on basic horse stuff.
- We have charter school camps that start June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Chairperson Petsch – Do have anything submitted by Lakes?

Director England – There's a report from Lakes Athletics in your packet, and I just want to clarify on their needs from the Township. It says, *Tree Trim & Leaf Cleanup*. Mark has handled that. We do anything that is a safety concern, so that has been taken care of. They do have on here, *Field 2 Tree Removal*, *There is a large branch that has fallen near Field 2*. Mark, I don't know if you are aware of it or not.

Mr. Schoder – I was over there today but I didn't see it. I will go check again.

Director England – Okay. They are asking us to consider placing porta-johns for their Memorial Day tournament. I've explained to them over and over again that we do not provide porta-johns for their event, so I will reiterate that to them. And I did speak with them today about the garbage pickup; I explained that garbage is picked up on Tuesdays, but they need to pull the cans up to the road for pickup, and Mark will get in touch with the garbage company. They will typically come through and do a cleanup after one of their big tournaments so that trash isn't blowing around the park.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Do we charge them when there's extra garbage removal?

Director England – We don't get charged for it.

**Lakes Athletics Association – Jared Stoddard**

A report was submitted in the packet dated May 15, 2025

- **League Update –**
  - LAA Spring baseball is now underway with a total of 366 registered players.
  - LCB Legends baseball is also underway with a total of 223 travel ball players registered.
  - We recently held a day camp run by MLB players at Hickory Glen that helped bring exposure to the league and a valuable experience for those in attendance.
  - LAA will also be running weeklong summer camps to aid in the development of any players aged 5 - 10.
  - LCB Legends will be hosting their annual Memorial Day Classic tournament with many teams at ages 8U - 15U.
- **Upcoming Dates & Information**
  - **Season Dates:** Lakes Spring Ball: Hickory Glen fields will be in use all 7 days a week throughout the Spring and into the Summer.
  - **2025 Capital & Field Improvements**
    - Added turf in both batting cages
    - Purchased new flags and banners for the fields
    - Extensive infield work and park cleanup conducted by LAA and Legends teams over the last few weeks.
  - **Water:** Water was tested and approved by the County prior to being turned on for park use.
  - **Concessions:** New vendor has been hired and is currently operating on most weeknights and weekends to serve patrons watching the games.
- **Needs From Township**
  - **Tree Trim & Leaf Cleanup:** Brush clean-up and leaf removal around outfield fences of all fields at Hickory Glen.
  - **Field 2 Tree Removal:** A large branch has fallen near Field 2 at Hickory Glen. Please remove it for the safety of spectators and players.
  - **Additional Porta Johns:** Please consider adding additional Porta Johns for our Memorial Day weekend tournament (5/23 - 5/25). These should be added by Field 2 and Field 7. This would be a temporary addition but would help handle the large amount of people expected to attend.
  - **Garbage Removal:** Please ensure that garbage is collected before and after the Memorial Day weekend tournament. Coaches will be bringing all full garbage cans to the edge of the road for pickup.

Next Board Meeting: June 9, 2025

**Interlakes Girls Softball – Jeremiah Fick**

Mr. Fick shared the following with the Committee.

- Our Family Fun Night director has asked for permission to do an evening movie night on one of the fields. Since the park closes at dusk, it would be going on beyond that. They want to know if that is possible.

Chairperson Petsch – You need to present the date, the venue and your information. Is it free? Is it a fundraiser?

Mr. Fick – It's just open to the league.

Chairperson Petsch – Okay, then bring that to Emily.

Director England – Do you know when you're thinking?

Mr. Fick – Within the next 6 weeks, before our season ends.

Director England – With that being said, the Committee needs to put the parameters on what you would approve, then allow me to take it to the Township Board with details of the date and such.

Chairperson Petsch – Right, because we notify the Sheriff that you're going to be there. We need that information from you.

Director England – I would say you need to take action tonight if he wants to do it within the next 6 weeks, because I have to take it to the Township Board for approval. It will be going against our ordinance.

Chairperson Petsch – We have done this in the past and it's for an organization. It's not being charged to the public.

Mr. Fick – No. Some of the coaches have a screen and they want to put it out on the field and watch a movie after the late games end that night. I will get the date and times.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Do you need a motion?

Director England – Yes.

Mr. Fick – June 6<sup>th</sup>. That was quicker than I thought. So that is our Family Fun Night, Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>.

Director England – That's before the Township Board meeting. I can't make any promises, but if the Committee approves the idea of it tonight, I can at least take it to the Township Supervisor.

Mr. Fick – Okay. If not, understood.

Chairperson Petsch – We will make a motion to approve the event, then get the details to Emily so she can present it.

Ms. Vecellio – Do they need to have insurance?

Director England – They have it already.

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Krueger, to approve Interlakes Girls Softball league to hold their event on June 6, 2025, after hours, with a movie on the field at Maple Glen.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*No report from the following leagues:*

- *Lakes Area Hawks*
- *Motor City Mountain Bike Association*
- *CW3 Soccer*
- *Commerce Little League*

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

Director England provided the following:

- The Board approved a job description.
- I lost a full-time employee last week, so they approved for us to get that posted. It has been posted, and a few résumés are coming in.

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

Director England discussed the following:

- Everything is in my report.
- We're busy getting ready for the Bicentennial Celebration.
- We just held the M-5K.
- All of that is on here as an agenda item.

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

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- We've been working to get ready for the Bicentennial over by Byers.
- We're putting some crushed limestone down at the parking lot.
- We replaced some railings at Mill Race and put down woodchips.
- We delivered woodchips to Byers, and they put those down.
- We are redoing the sign behind 7-Eleven; new wood and a router.
- We are redoing the bottom of the bridge which is a little bit rotted, and we're repainting the whole bridge.
- We tried to clean up the graffiti from the pickleball courts at Bicentennial Park. I scrubbed it twice. It lightened up a little but it's still there. It will probably have to be repainted.
- Emily and I did a walk-through at the boat launch today. There are car ruts in there. We will put a couple more rocks down, and maybe a split-rail fence. We will get a price on that, and a couple picnic tables.
- We did a walk-through at Victory Park. We are pulling up the plastic stuff they put down for the grass. It's not growing and it's tearing up our mowers. We are going to do some landscaping up front and move some dirt so they can plant flowers.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Mark, on the kiosk we installed at Victory Park, there's two hasps for padlocks for you.

Mr. Schoder – We will put padlocks on, and I'll make sure Emily gets the keys.

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

### **Krueger – Dodge Park**

- Everything looks good at Dodge Park.
- There were lots of people.
- The fun part is, driving down S. Commerce, I can see between the trees and see all the people parked.

- I do have to say that so few of the handicap spots are being used, so whatever we can do on that.

Director England – Is that still the trend over there, they're not using them?

Mr. Krueger – No. The parking lot will be three quarters full and there would only be three cars in handicap.

Director England – Okay.

Mr. Krueger – And over by the Library, I've been seeing quite a few people using the old equipment and the pavilion.

### **Walker – Maple Glen**

- We walked through Maple Glen tonight.
- There are a couple of trees that Emily pointed out. One is going to be completely cut down. The other had a couple dead branches.
- The gravel lots are dusty, but that is the league's deal.
- Other than that, everything looked good today.

### **Petsch – Bicentennial Park**

- I know we had the graffiti damage on the new pickleball courts.
- I stopped over on the way back from Maple Glen. There was nobody in the park this evening. I was surprised about that.

Mr. Schoder – There were some people playing basketball earlier today.

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

- Long Park looked fine. No issues.
- Snowy Ridge Park also looked fine.

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

- Are we getting a new matching sign for the 7-Eleven entrance?
- Rob mentioned this at the quarterly meeting.

Chairperson Petsch – At the north entrance?

Director England – Yes, back by Leo's. There was always a smaller sign there that said parking. We will replace that so that people know there is additional parking back there. It will just say Mill Race parking.

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

- In Berkheiser's absence, Director England shared the following.
- Wise Park looks good. We had the Eagle Scout doing his project over there and unfortunately, once the holes were dug and cones were placed so he could put his signs up, people filled in the holes before he could do it. Then a week after he put his signs up, one of the emergency signs had been ripped out. We have implemented security measures.
- For Victory Park, I'll give an update under Park Improvements, but it looks good.

**Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park**

- No report in Waterworth's absence.

**ITEM 6: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE**

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- I talked to Laura today. Their meeting is tonight as well. She did not really have an update.
- We do want to thank Village of Wolverine because they are letting us borrow their cornhole boards for our tournament at the Bicentennial Celebration.

Mr. Krueger – I can also tell you that:

- May 24<sup>th</sup> is their 5K run, which is this Saturday
- May 29<sup>th</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup> they have their Village Wide Garage Sale
- June 3<sup>rd</sup> they're starting a Farmer's Market that will be at Clara Miller
- June 21<sup>st</sup> they're going to have a Dog Show

**ITEM 7: LITTLE FREE LIBRARY – WISE WOODS**

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- Walled Lake Northern Class of 2020 would like to donate this at Wise Woods.
- They put together information which was included in your agenda packet.
- It coincides with the others that are in our parks.
- They would do the original fill of the books, and then I'm sure the Friends of the Library will take this one over and monitor it as they do the rest.
- They have a maintenance plan, and everything laid out there for you, along with the donation amount. They're just looking for your approval.

Chairperson Petsch – Is that similar to what Barb does?

Director England – Yes, same thing.

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Vecellio, to approve the Little Free Library installation at Wise Woods by Walled Lake Northern Class of 2020 students.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 8: PARK USE POLICY**

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- The Committee has already seen this policy and approved it to go to the Township Board.
- Upon approval and taking it to the Board, I realized that we were missing a piece in here. It had to do with organizations using Township property to raise funds.
- We wanted to address that and keep it consistent with the policies across the Township for their other facilities; Richardson Center, the Library and the Township Hall. You will see that language in here, redlined, so it is consistent with the rest of our policies, and it coincides with our current ordinances.
- I just need approval with the new language so I can take this to the Township Board and get it implemented.

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Vecellio, to approve the Park Use Policy as written with changes.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 9: PARK IMPROVEMENT UPDATES**

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- Mark went over some of this.
- We were at the Kayak Launch today and noticed that people have found a way to still back their trailers in and launch from the old boat launch. We are going to be putting signs up, as well as putting in another boulder that will prevent them from getting trailers through there.
- Upon looking, we noticed that once they take down the silt fence, there will be other opportunities. That's where the discussion came in about putting in a split-rail fence and then finishing it off with some picnic tables.
- The Kayak Launch itself is getting used quite a bit and that's great.
- At the Dog Park, we're waiting for the gates to come in. They were due in the end of last week. It looks like it's going to be the beginning of this week. Mark will be out there to do some of the finish restoration, along with pulling up the netting, some landscaping and finishing touches.

Chairperson Petsch – Did we figure out how we're going to regulate dogs in the park yet?

Director England – So, Michigan State law says they have to have their tag, which means they have to have their rabies shot. That's the only thing you have to prove. We did check into doing the key fob system. Every other community around us who has that hates it. I would say the majority of the communities around us do not do it. Instead, it's self-policed. So, we put the signs up and if you're not following state law, then the police handle that matter, and not us. That's how we're going to do this. If there's an issue, then we will address it when it comes up.

Discussion continued regarding policing of the Dog Park, guidelines signage, and plans for maintenance, which will be performed every Wednesday; the park will shut down from 8am-12pm.

Director England – The parking lot at the Richardson Center; they just came out to finish doing the survey for that. So, that's going to be going out to bid. That will be a fall project, which is great because then it will be after our concert series, so we won't be fighting construction and events. And then the same with the restroom facility. We're actually dealing with a different company right now and it looks like we're going to go with the stick-build instead of the prefab building. We're just waiting to get back final numbers on that. I'll bring that update back to you guys.

**ITEM 10: PARK EVENT UPDATES**

Ms. Kennedy discussed the following with the Committee:

- The M-5K was just this past weekend. We had 93 registered this year, which is our second largest. The very first one with the ribbon cutting was the largest one. Things went really well and very smoothly. We didn't have any problems.
- We have Bicentennial coming up June 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - I do have some signs over here for anybody that would like one if you want to take one home and put it in your yard.
  - The event listing for the day is on the Township website.



- Vendor sign-up is going well. We have a really good sponsorship turnout this year. Some new businesses that we haven't had in the past are sponsoring events.
- Things are coming together really well. The community seems really excited for that event. We're really looking forward to it.

Director England – There is a piece of this event that we're doing and it's going to be like a “Did you know?” campaign. So, Commerce Township is going to have a tent set up with “Did you know?”. George Weber is spearheading the project. It will be the hot topic items; 5 & Main, the pathway system, the greenspace, and a lot of those questions that we get asked. We want to put education out for people so they understand. Obviously development is always a big one as well.

So, George is looking for people to volunteer to man this tent. We're looking for two people for an hour time slot. If any of you are interested in doing that, let me know tonight and I will get your information to George and then he will reach out to you with a designated time slot; June 14th, from noon to 5pm.

Ms. Kennedy –

- After the Bicentennial will be our concerts.
  - We do have our bands and food trucks for all of those.
  - We only have 4 concerts this year, because July 4th falls on a Friday, so we're not having a concert that day.
  - Concert in the Park dates are as follows:
    - July 11<sup>th</sup> – Chris Canas, Blues
    - July 18<sup>th</sup> – Atomic Radio, Pop & Rock
    - July 25<sup>th</sup> – Lost West, Rock/Country
    - August 1<sup>st</sup> – Magic Bus, Woodstock Era Tribute
  - All of the information is online, and we will start to get all of that out.
  - We're focusing on the Bicentennial right now. So once that happens, then all of the concert information will go out after that.
  - Following that, we will have our Trail-or-Treat in October, and then the Tree Lighting Ceremony in December.

Mrs. Schantz – Are you having a band at the Bicentennial?

Ms. Kennedy – Yes, it is Power Play Detroit from 7-10pm.

Mrs. Schantz – What's on the stage during the day?

Director England – If you look at the event listing online, it shows what we have going on throughout the day.

Ms. Kennedy – There will be a kids' musician, a magician, and I believe all of that ends at 3pm. Then they will have music playing in the background during the cornhole tournament, which is roughly from 3-7pm. That fills in between the morning kids' activities and before the night band starts.

Discussion continued with Mrs. Schantz regarding the website, banners and promoting the event.

Ms. Schwartz – On the site, are we listing which roads are shutting down and when?

Director England – Yes. On the flyer that Allison made, there's a map and it shows where it will be shut down.

Mrs. Schantz – Are they taking the pylons out?

Director England – Yes.

Mrs. Schantz – Will there be an officer at the end of Polvadera?

Director England – We have five officers for the entire day. I don't know where they will be stationed, but we will have a volunteer at Polvadera. That is a station where somebody will be present.

Mrs. Schantz – Vendors are asking if they will be required to have identification to get their vehicle in.

Director England – They shouldn't, but if they are more comfortable having something, we can get that set up.

Mrs. Schantz – We have seven.

Ms. Kennedy – We have to get a pass put together for the vendors that we have coming. Once we have that, we can share it with you.

Mrs. Schantz – Okay.

#### **ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS**

Mr. Krueger – I just want to apologize to the Committee and anyone who was interested in the permanent lighting that I started to present. I didn't handle it properly at the combined meeting. I thought it was going to be tabled. I did not know that it was going to be presented under Other Matters.

The information that I can pull from the minutes, a lot of it was incorrect. It wasn't for the Richardson Center and Byers Farm; it was just Richardson Center. The lighting would cost approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000, not \$35,000, and there was no \$2000 annual expenditure anywhere in any of the work that I did.

I was prepared to provide some videos just to show what it was going to look like before the actual bids went out. And I feel that by not doing it, they didn't get a true idea of what the presentation really was. My question is, do we just leave it as such, or do we want to try to reenergize it and possibly present it again? I mean, how much support for it is there really?

That was my question to everyone, and especially Emily because it's the Richardson Center. It would be something that would be really nice, but it is expensive. And I was just concerned that when it was presented, it could have been presented differently. Had I known it was going to be presented at that time, I think I could have made a better presentation. I may have ended up with the same result, I don't know, but I wasn't there to determine what was actually discussed. My question is, do we leave it as is, or do we try it again?

Director England – I was instructed by the Township Board that they did not want to move forward with this because we have a lot of unknown expenses coming our way due to the issues that we are experiencing at Victory Park.

Mr. Krueger – Okay. So, it's possible that maybe we will revisit it in the future?

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, I think we should table it. We've got those issues, and we don't know what it's going to cost. I believe it's still a very good idea if we can bring it back at a future date.

Mr. Krueger – I was just concerned that they really didn't understand what we were trying to do. It wasn't Christmas lights that would be on all year. It's permanent lighting that's built into the-

Director England – Bob presented it correctly.

Chairperson Petsch – All right, we'll put it on the back burner.

**The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2025, at 7:00PM at the Township Hall after visiting Robert Long Park and the Sledding Hill.**

**ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Walker, supported by Schwartz, to adjourn the meeting at 7:36pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Krystal Schwartz, Secretary