

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

Monday, August 17, 2020

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Kast called the special meeting to order at 4:30pm at the Ralph C. Richardson Center.

ROLL CALL: **Present:** Rachel Kast, Chairperson
Tim Wichert, Vice Chairperson
Sarah Henderson, Secretary
William Petsch
Barbara Garbutt
Bob Berkheiser
Absent: Linda Champagne (excused)
Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks and Recreation

ITEM 1. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ITEM 2: BUDGET DISCUSSION

- Mr. Berkheiser stated that the Board has asked each department head to provide an overview of what they want to do.
- Mr. Berkheiser and Ms. England discussed staffing for the Richardson Center. Ms. England would keep the budget the same as it was for 2020.
- Mr. Berkheiser discussed maintenance items and the need for a calendar of routine maintenance to be drafted, and shared with Ms. England.
- Open discussions took place regarding opening a path to the lake and putting in a fishing dock behind the Richardson Center. Mr. Petsch feels this is a great fishing lake, and Multi-Lakes has several rowboats on the bank for their members.
- Discussions took place regarding concerts, which come out of the General Fund.
- Ms. England proposed keeping the Programming budget the same at \$30,000. She also proposed increasing the Senior Center Programming due to costs for outsourcing.
- Mr. Berkheiser and Ms. England reviewed and discussed the Budget Report and the projected millage of \$849,120. They also discussed the Dodge restroom project which is underway at a cost of \$1 million that comes out of the 2020 budget. Costs for Phase I of Dodge were discussed, along with the dates on the Budget Report, fund balances and 2019 expenditures.
- Ms. England stated there should be \$1 million in the fund balance for 2021, and \$849,000 is projected to be captured in the spring.
- Discussion took place regarding the number of years left in the 10-year millage, which renewed in 2014. Therefore, 2015 would have been the first year, so 2020 is Year 6.

- Mr. Petsch and Mr. Wichert stressed the importance of using the community funds wisely.

1. **DODGE V – \$0**

- Mr. Berkheiser asked if anything else would be added to Dodge Park in 2021. Ms. England replied no and Mr. Wichert agreed.

2. **HICKORY GLEN – \$250,000**

- \$10,000 was spent on field-related issues in 2020.
- Mr. Berkheiser discussed the emergency exit. Ms. England stated she had not yet received any details back on that yet. She discussed her recommendations for the budget.
- Discussion took place regarding leaving the emergency exit drive as gravel. Ms. England added that during the walk-through, they decided on a small town park feel with parking pods where there is available space to avoid clearing trees.
- The new entrance was also discussed, along with costs, engineering, and RCOC requirements.
- Locations were reviewed for the emergency exit and the new entrance.

3. **MAPLE GLEN – \$50,000**

- Mr. Berkheiser asked if the league had provided input. Ms. England stated that Paul would like to see pavilions put up for shade, and potentially there's room for two pavilions
- Ms. England also noted that Commerce Little League wants to build another field in Maple Glen with their funds, and this actually fits into the Master Plan. It would almost make one of the cloverleaves. The size of the new field was discussed at length.
- The league would have to bring a plan, and they have roughly \$100,000 to spend on the park. They asked if the Township would be willing to put in pavilions to offer areas for people to sit.
- Discussions took place regarding potential locations and costs for pavilions, the shape and size, which should at least accommodate a team and could be octagon, along with picnic tables, concrete pads, metal roofs, et cetera. Pricing all depends upon the structure and building materials. Ms. England believed that the one built by the Eagle Scout at Dodge was \$60,000, including the donated concrete.
- Ms. England noted that everything would have to be engineered, including the new field, and to allow for the pathway area as was done with the soccer field at Dodge.
- Mr. Berkheiser brought up the aerial of Maple Glen on his tablet as the Committee reviewed the cloverleaf and park layout.
- Mr. Wichert and Ms. England discussed the girls' side of the park and how they would also benefit from the same pavilions and seating areas as proposed above.
- Mr. Petsch suggested that smaller pavilions be installed in each of the cloverleaf corners.
- Mr. Berkheiser noted that the pavilions are not on the plan. Signage and benches are on the plan. Ms. England stated that signage is necessary throughout all of

the parks and a separate budget is needed for that. Mr. Berkheiser suggested \$50,000 for two pavilions, or \$25,000 each. A rough estimate is needed.

4. BICENTENNIAL – \$100,000

- Mr. Petsch discussed park needs, including picnic tables and grills, and brought up photos he had taken to share with the Committee.
- He spoke to park users and neighbor's bring their dogs to the park.
- There are kids playing basketball on the court. New hoop nets are needed and are inexpensive.
- One of the tennis court nets is completely torn down. Maintenance should take that out as it's a hazard. The other net is usable. The surface had no weeds; there were just cracks.
- Discussion took place regarding sealing versus replacement, and a lack of guarantee by the contractor for sealing. Mr. Petsch felt a minimal amount should be spent to seal the courts.
- Ms. England discussed potentially putting in pickleball courts at Richardson. That would also include a tennis court, as you stripe it for both activities. This made sense at the Senior Center, so when the walk-through was done for the concept plan, that was confirmed. She questioned, why spend the money to have the courts completely redone at Bicentennial, then turn around and build new ones at Richardson also? She discussed re-purposing of that area at Bicentennial, such as a skate park. She has quotes and a simple skate park could be put in for roughly \$25,000. Chairperson Kast discussed liability.
- Mr. Petsch stated that the playground is in good shape and the beds are full of mulch. He would like \$5,000 for the baseball diamond in the back, just to get the diamond redefined. Baseball and soccer leagues, along with other unorganized teams, use the field for practice. The field needs to be graded with the back blade, which is already there, and sand needs to be brought in. This could be done by maintenance or a contractor. The fences are good and there's a set of bleachers there. Mr. Petsch could request pricing from contractors.
- Mr. Petsch also noted that the volleyball courts are in great shape but they're not being used.
- There are no porta-potties at the park. Ms. England explained that they're only in heavily used parks due to COVID.
- Mr. Petsch felt that a small pavilion would be nice in the park, near the back entrance. Grills and picnic tables can then be anchored to the pavilion, and maintenance could install the grills. It's a beautiful area and the entrance from the subdivision is well-maintained. The path is worn and the park gets a lot of use.
- Pavilion design was discussed at length; a universal design needs to be established for the parks. Ms. England explained that Dodge has blue roofs and the benches and picnic tables were specked at Scarlet's, so the plan is to carry those through the parks. They're all ADA accessible, they match and can be anchored down. The ADA compliant aluminum picnic tables are roughly \$800 each.

5. BYERS – \$100,000

- Ms. England recommended keeping this at \$100,000 for the Farmhouse.

- Mr. Berkheiser discussed a walk through at the Farmhouse with the consulting firm that is currently overseeing the Fire Station project. They keep everything on track and within budget. The intent was to put the Farmhouse out for bids at the same time as the Fire Station, but it did not work out that way. They're still putting it together to have work done on the Farmhouse to secure the structure which would allow for student groups to go through. Ms. England added that once bids are received for the Fire Station, they will offer the Byers Farmhouse project to the respondents, as well as other contractors. Mr. Berkheiser stated there may be some economy of scale with this plan.

6. MILL RACE – \$25,000

- Ms. Henderson suggested a light and a crosswalk at Mill Race to connect to Byers. Ms. England explained traffic regulations and that the RCOC won't allow a crosswalk there. Mr. Berkheiser discussed Long's crosswalk which was later allowed, but Long's paid for it. He felt that the trail connection should allow a light to be put in. Ms. Henderson inquired about signage, which is also not permissible on the roadway. Ms. England added that Dave Campbell and David Scott had met with the RCOC repeatedly over the past several years and have been told the same with regard to crosswalks.
- Chairperson Kast suggested improving signage and trails to get from the front of Mill Race to the back side, and then get people to the corner to cross at the intersection across Commerce Road. A sidewalk could then be added over to the other side of Byers. Ms. England added that the Planning Commission is also looking at finding solution to these issues, along with connection to the library. Discussion took place regarding the Township land owned at the corner next to Byers, but that is not park land. Alternate routes and connection points were further considered as proposed by Chairperson Kast. Ms. Henderson discussed the ultimate goal to have sidewalks along the road in Commerce Village.
- Ms. Henderson has heard from community members regarding graffiti and issues with the concrete at the back of Mill Race. She asked if the concrete could be removed. Ms. England replied that it cannot. Mr. Berkheiser explained that it's part of the mill.
- Discussions took place regarding addressing the graffiti. Ms. Henderson shared photos, showing that the graffiti is not just on the concrete; it's mostly on rocks and trees around the park. The anti-graffiti paint isn't going to solve the issue as it's on things you can't paint over.
- Ms. Garbutt stated the berm should be cut down to open up the park by the bench. Ms. Henderson didn't feel anything was too overgrown at the park, however, she never saw any benches so they must be hidden.
- Ms. Henderson also shared a photo of a slippery log on a pathway, on the back side by Farr Street, along the river. The log needs to be removed. Ms. England noted that the area is always wet back there. Mr. Petsch added that tree canopy needs to be thinned to allow sunlight in there, and scrap trees need to be removed. The forester needs to come into the park.
- Ms. England suggested increasing the budget to \$25,000 which would allow for the forestry to be addressed, along with additional benches.
- Ms. Henderson discussed resurfacing of bridges. Mr. Berkheiser stated that the Boy Scouts had updated one of the bridges about 5 years ago. It has lasted longer than they thought it would. Another bridge was replaced previously. Ms.

Henderson noted that it is just the flooring that needs attention, and there is also graffiti on the bridge also.

- Ms. Henderson initiated discussions on graffiti prevention, such as signage, “Under Surveillance”, along with solar powered motion sensor lights; anything to deter the vandalism at minimal costs. She felt that lighting was needed, such as lampposts at the park entrance. Ms. England explained that lighting gives the impression that the park is open at night.
- The Committee members explained that cleaning out and opening up a park will increase usage, and with increased usage, there is typically a decline in vandalism.
- Discussions took place regarding what type of materials to use for replacing the decking on the bridge.

7. RICHARDSON CENTER – \$250,000

- Mr. Berkheiser stated that the walk through had been done. The purpose was to look at expanding the parking lot just to meet capacity for the building. There would be no curb, which would allow for grass parking for big events, such as concerts.
- It was noted that the soccer field area is flat, so it would be wise to put in the tennis/pickleball courts there, then relocate the soccer field. Discussion took place regarding usage of tennis courts at schools.
- Mr. Berkheiser also discussed clearing a path at the lake and putting in a fishing dock, as discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

8. LONG PARK - \$50,000

- Ms. Garbutt stated that the parking lot still needs work. It has holes in it and the entrance is bumpy. Mr. Berkheiser and Mr. Petsch discussed how the lot cannot be expanded. Ms. England said that maybe it could be reconfigured with angled parking. She suggested contacting Mark Rousseaux to get a bid for grading and filling the parking lot. She explained that redoing the lot would require review by the engineer.
- Ms. Garbutt noted that the dock and fishing platform has still not been taken care of. People cannot get out there. Ms. England stated that will be done by the end of next week.
- Ms. Garbutt suggested that the two bridges need to have a new finish on the walking areas. The wood is not looking so good. It needs to be preserved.
- Ms. Garbutt stated that she would communicate with Mark on maintenance items. She noted that when the park was dedicated in 1997, the paths had weed barrier. If you walk those trails, you can sometimes see that barrier; it looks black and lacy. Mr. Petsch explained that it actually prevents erosion. Ms. Garbutt added that the two paths that go to the west need attention. Ms. England stated that Mark was getting the materials to build up the path again, and he had the dock on his list also.
- Discussion took place regarding where the paths lead, which is to the nearby condos. Mr. Berkheiser suggested contacting the condo association to see if they want to put in a boardwalk.
- Mr. Wichert inquired about dredging of the lake. Ms. England stated that vegetation control has to be done; phragmites and aquatic control. Discussion

continued regarding vegetation control and DEQ limitations, which only permits removal of 25% annually. Grants have not been offered in recent years for aquatic overgrowth issues.

- Ms. Garbutt also noted that where the lake level has dropped by the sign, from there to the first path, it needs to be cleared out along the lake. She will meet with Maintenance at the park. A lot of what needs to be cleared is dead, or shrubs that need to be trimmed.
- Ms. Garbutt noted that the pavilion seems to be in good shape.
- Ms. England felt that the budget should be increased to \$50,000 if the vegetation control is necessary.
- Mr. Berkheiser noted again that the decking and boards on the bridge need attention.

9. WISE WOODS & VICTORY PARK – \$100,000

- Mr. Berkheiser and Mr. Wichert discussed the trailhead that was not completed this year.
- Discussion took place regarding the road construction on Wise Road.
- Mr. Petsch discussed the deceleration lanes and other requirements by the RCOC for the park entrance. Ms. England recommended that the focus stay on the Wise Woods side, and in that case, the RCOC then agreed that the additional lanes would not need to be added at this time. Once Victory Park is addressed, the RCOC will require additional lanes.
- Ms. England stated the construction documents are done for the entrance and trailhead. She would just need to bid the project out again. It would be a spring project.
- Mr. Berkheiser discussed the gravel entrance and new information kiosks, which could be done by the Boy Scouts.
- Deed restrictions for these park properties were discussed.

10. SNOWY RIDGE – \$10,000

- The Committee discussed lighting options for the sledding hill, along with potentially changing the ordinance to allow for the park to be open later in the winter for sledding.
- Ms. Garbutt noted that phragmites are growing on the hill and it's very strange.

11. TRAILS – \$65,000

- Ms. England and Mr. Berkheiser discussed the remainder of the budget.
- The remaining \$65,000 was designated to trails.

ITEM 3: OTHER MATTERS

- Ms. Garbutt noted that a small pavilion would be nice at Richardson.
- Mr. Berkheiser inquired about signage. Ms. England stated that would be "Other" and she felt it needs to be done as a whole for all the parks. Discussion continued regarding signs, to simplify them, add the addresses, and to include the leagues and organizations. Mr. Berkheiser suggested electronic signs at Byers and the Library to allow for advertising.
- Ms. England stated that there might not be an agenda for the 8/24 meeting next week, and therefore it may be canceled. She would keep the Committee posted.

- Mr. Berkheiser shared the following letter sent by the Boy Scouts to the Township Board with regard to their camping event at the Richardson Center:

Hi Township Board,

Troop 308 would like to thank Commerce Township for graciously allowing us to use the Richardson Center to host our make-up Summer Camp. Our Troop was very disappointed, but understanding, when our "normal" Summer Camp was forced to cancel due to the pandemic. Once BSA released rules for meeting and camping, we wanted to put together a local event that would involve some camping and a lot of Scouting opportunities. We ended up camping for two nights and had day camp activities for an additional three days. While at camp we followed strict distancing and mask rules. We had a check-in and check-out procedure for wellness.

While at the Richardson Center, the boys performed roughly 10 hours of service in beautifying the volleyball court. It was a bit of instant gratification when a group showed up that same night to play volleyball, and seemed to be really enjoying themselves.

We had many boys that were able to camp for the first time away from their parents, and five boys slept in a shelter that they made themselves.

Over the course of the week we had the following accomplishments:

- *12 full merit badges earned*
- *52 partial merit badges, where the boys have just a little bit of homework to do before completing*
- *There was one rank advancement, and six boys just need a board of review at a Troop Meeting before they advance in rank.*
- *18 boys and 7 adults attended regularly, with a couple additional adults that helped out for a session or two.*
- *8 boys completed their youth leadership training*

More importantly than those stats, a good time was had by all. There was a lot of bonding between the boys, and growth as citizens and leaders. We are grateful for the use of the Richardson Center. This helped solidify our unit, as we saw how quarantine was taking a toll on the unification of the boys. Thank you for allowing us this opportunity. It was very much appreciated.

*Brad Stetson
Scoutmaster, Troop 308*

ITEM 4: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Wichert, to adjourn the meeting at 6:18pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Sarah Henderson, Secretary