

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

*Monday, December 17, 2018*  
2009 Township Drive  
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

**CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chairperson Kast called the meeting to order at 6:02pm at the Township Hall.

**ROLL CALL:** **Present:** Bob Berkheiser  
Tim Wichert  
Barbara Garbutt  
Rachel Kast, Vice Chairperson  
William Petsch, Chairperson (arrived @ 6:46)

**Absent:** Linda Champagne (excused)  
Michelle Holmes, Secretary

**Also Present:** Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks and Recreation  
Leah Groya, AICP, LEED AP, Living Lab

**COMMUNICATIONS:**  
None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION** by Garbutt, seconded by Wichert, to approve the November 26, 2018, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
None.

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

**CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney**

Mr. Haney discussed the following with the Committee:

- Just a quick update on Field 3 Construction:
  - Currently, we are on hold.
  - We need 200 more cubic yards of fill dirt, and we're trying to find it at the lowest cost possible.
  - If you know of anybody in the community that needs to get rid of 200 yards of anything from sand to clay, we'll make arrangements for them to be able to get out onto the field to dump it where it needs to go.
  - The connection for the new sprinkler system to the existing system has been made. We're on hold to install the rest of that part of the system on the new field space until we get the fill dirt and finish the rough grade. The excavator needs one day once we get that filled.
  - The holdup and the problem has been mother nature. It has been way too wet and way too soft to be able to drive large dump trucks and equipment out onto the field space without causing damage and getting stuck.

- I provided an update to Dave Campbell on these items.
- We are working to resolve invoicing problems with a contractor.
- Other than that, everything is up-to-date as it should be.
- The season ended the first weekend of November.
- We closed the fields the second weekend of November. Even though there were a few games that were supposed to be played, conditions were too bad for play and for preserving the quality of the fields.
- We will be hosting our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual CW3 Dodge Park V Cleanup. We will clean up the parking lot and pavilion areas, and the new and existing fields, like we did last spring; probably the end of March or first weekend in April. When I get that date, I'll be sure to notify you.
- There haven't been any incidents so far.

Mr. Berkheiser discussed connection of the sprinkler system with Mr. Haney, which was made in the east field space, at the southeast corner. It was trenched through the pathway in the woods to avoid disturbing any other trees. Connection of irrigation to the garden was discussed. Mr. Haney stated that the contractor is aware of the necessity to make this connection and extension. This is also delayed, along with the construction on Field 3. Mr. Berkheiser just wanted to ensure that this connection would be made. Discussion continued regarding Scarlet's Smile playground, along with potential locations for the sidewalks and bathroom facilities, which are to be determined and will impact the location for irrigation.

### **Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz, Janice Buchanan**

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee:

- On December 9<sup>th</sup>, we had our Christmas event.
  - We had 309 people in attendance, 166 of which were children.
  - We booked it solid and had to extend it another hour.
  - It went smoothly with no complaints.
  - We had 10 volunteers from our group.
- At our next meeting, we are going to compile a list of dates and events for the upcoming year.
- I think Michelle mentioned this a couple meetings ago, about removal of some mature trees that are right up against the Farmhouse and the Barn. They're at maturity. In the event of a windstorm, I'm afraid they would destroy the buildings. Removing them is something to think about from a budgetary standpoint next year.
- I discussed occupancy of the barn with Mark in Maintenance, which depends upon square footage. He will coordinate that with the Fire Department. They brought out the fire extinguisher. We also wanted to get an exit sign installed, and Mark will install that for us.
- At the next meeting, we will give you a list of all our events and volunteer sheets for the year.

Discussion took place regarding the Santa event at Byers. Taking reservations worked out well.

Mr. Berkheiser asked that Friends of Byers put together their list of prioritized projects for the upcoming year, as budgets kick-in in January. Discussions continued. Tree

removals and potential replacements were addressed, and the Forestry Plan was discussed; Byers should be looked at, along with several other parks.

### **Lakes Athletics – Josh Springer, Manager**

Mr. Springer discussed the following with the Committee:

- We opened up our registration.
  - We're currently trending the same as we did last year, which is an increase of roughly 35% over a few years ago.
  - We do a mass email campaign. We do a flyer drop to all the schools, Walled Lake Schools, as well as expanding into Huron Valley, to cover kids who live in Commerce.
- We are next in the queue for DTE to clear brush at Hickory Glen.
- The trash cans are full again, I just drove by. They did get emptied since last time. We will get that squared away.
- We are winterized and shut down for the season; the bathrooms are closed; the concession stand is locked up.
- Our next big event will be registration, then team assignments start in February, and practices start in March.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do you have the data for our 5-Year Master Plan? Your participation data and trends.

Mr. Springer – I will pull those numbers up on my laptop.

Discussion took place regarding issues of trash cans filling up repeatedly in Hickory Glen, Dodge, and other parks, despite usage of the parks being minimal at this time of year.

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

- Interlakes Girls Softball
- Commerce Little League
- Lakes Area Hawks
- Michigan Mountain Bike Association

### **ITEM 2: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Ms. England stated that things are going smoothly at the Richardson Center, and discussed the following:

- We are doing Christmas activities with the seniors.
- The Senior Center adopted two families this year. This is our first year and it turned out wonderful. The seniors brought in everything and we are getting it all put together and wrapped up. The Firefighters will be delivering.
- There was a break-in at the garage in Dodge park. Mark is fixing it up. Nothing was taken.

**ITEM 3: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT**

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- We had several board appointments for the Board of Review. Due to legal issues, they all come due at the same time. There were a couple Ordinances for liquor licenses and the marijuana ballot. There were questions and issues that needed to be dealt with. It's starting its way through the system.
- We reviewed meeting schedules.
- I did ask for a change; that we put Wise Woods and Victory Park instead of Wise Road Property.
- We had union negotiations. We came out of that with potential for a contract for the Firemen. We have another special meeting where we will talk about the two unions we have. Contracts should be done before the end of the year.
- We approved a tree removal here, but the rate was pretty low. Emily, please keep his name for future reference.

**ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON UPDATES**

**Berkheiser - Wise Woods & Victory Park**

- Every April, we have the Boy Scouts international meeting campout event at Victory Park.
- I reached out to them because I think we should consider having them do conservation work that we need to have done there. I'm not saying to have them dig up the whole park, but if it's a matter of a couple hours of work we can line things up that would be appropriate for 10-15 year olds.
- If they want to use the property, they can incorporate some time for these projects. I've asked them to look at their schedule.
- Maybe we can cleanup the area, at least initially, for the dog park. Several people have inquired about a dog park at the Township Board meetings. It seems to be the least expensive thing to do, with maybe some fencing for the dog park. The Scouts could clear the area and run a brush hog through it.

Mr. Wichert – That's a great idea, Bob.

**Kast - Dodge Park**

- Dodge has been pretty quiet.
- Everything has been covered.

**Garbutt - Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park**

- Things are quiet at the moment.
- People are still taking books out at the little library.

**Wichert - Maple Glen**

- I drove by today.
- I noticed there are blue ribbons at the main road and driveway. Emily, do you know what those are about?

Ms. England – No, but I will find out.

Mr. Wichert – Sunday, we had the fence company out to inspect the backstops on the boys' fields.

Mr. Berkheiser – It looks like they're raising it up to 20' to prevent foul balls.

Mr. Wichert – There's a big puddle near girls' Field #4, and now it's iced over. We might want to get more gravel out there or something.

**Petsch - Bicentennial Park**

- No report.

**Holmes - Byers and Mill Race**

- No report.

**Champagne - Hickory Glen Park**

- No report.

**ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE**

No report.

**ITEM 6: EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT – MAPLE GLEN PARK**

Mr. Berkheiser – There is a potential proposal. We discussed the area where we took out all the trees due to oak wilt. There's really just scrub stuff that's grown back there and it looks nasty. Our thought was to get in there and clean that out, then plant in the spring.

We're looking for somebody who sells seedlings or trees that are Michigan native trees. It sounds like a good Eagle Scout project. I do have one boy who was interested who is supposed to reach out to Emily. We will put him in touch with the arborist.

From a scope, I have no idea if we are talking 50 trees or 500, and also how much the trees are. We are in the planning and research phase of that project. Once they get closer to that, I'll have them come in and talk to the Committee with more information.

Discussions took place regarding free trees from DTE, along with options for tree replacements.

**ITEM 7: PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN REVIEW**

Leah Groya of Living Lab was present to review and discuss the Master Plan with the Committee.

Ms. Groya distributed handouts of the materials to be discussed.

Ms. Groya –The remainder of the front end of the document changed a little bit based upon our conversations. We still have a few blanks to fill in too, and a couple gold survey percentages that I need to track down. I will work with Emily on those.

Tonight, our focus will be reviewing the Action Plan section, which starts on Page 64.

First we can talk about the goals and guidelines, and then review the capital improvements listed for the parks as things to consider over the next five years, then flip back and focus on trail discussion. I have maps and a few slides to facilitate discussion. By the end of tonight, if you are comfortable in doing so, I look for you to set the public

hearing for the end of February. We will have a few weeks between now and mid-January to make additional edits. I will re-share some of this with Dave Campbell. He reviewed some of the trail information in particular with us so far. Then I can make any edits before it is released for public review around January 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. It will be open for about 30 days for public review prior to the public hearing.

The Action Plan is on Page 64. This is a guide to use during annual budget discussions, and it also establishes a lot of other goals that are unrelated to capital improvements.

Ms. Groya briefly reviewed the Action Plan and the following items were noted:

- Page 65, Byers would be added to Task 7.2 for the Forestry Management Plans, and it was also noted that a big goal is to improve communication and awareness.
- Page 66, Scarlet's Smile was added to the list of organizations.
- Page 67, highlights are developing concept plans, long-term concept plans, park updates, and Item 8 regarding potential land acquisitions.

Mr. Wichert and Mr. Haney discussed Victory Park and the potential for future soccer fields. CW3 would like to remain active in these conversations. Mr. Haney noted that they have spent \$350,000 on the new Field #3 at Dodge.

Ms. Groya discussed utilizing Pages 65-70 when submitting grant requests to the DNR in the future, and showing how those projects meet these goals and guidelines statements.

Ms. Groya:

- Page 68, #7 was added to expand senior transportation services; partnering with adjacent communities is being worked on to seek funding for this. Also, #5, increasing the number of seniors served by the senior lunch program.
- Page 69, highlighted items were continuing to implement connectivity improvements along and between major corridors, increasing connectivity to Proud Lake State Park, generally improving the non-motorized conditions in the Township, supporting the development of the regional network, and wayfinding maps along the trails.
- Page 70, items noted were developing the annual budget, looking for creative funding sources, grants, et cetera.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do senior-related items appropriately belong in the Parks Master Plan?

Ms. England – That's common in a lot of communities.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay. I would also note that the Township is taking control of wetlands off Sleeth Road. The property was put up for taxes. In reference to Item #8 on Page 67, this might fit into that with maintaining the natural features. The site is about 10-15 acres and is being offered to the Township.

Ms. Kast – I noticed there are a couple of guidelines without any tasks associated with them. Can we put tasks for those? That way we know that there are defined actions. There's one each on Pages 66, 67 and 70.

Ms. Groya – Yes, Emily and I will brainstorm initial steps to those items.

Mr. Berkheiser – On Page 66, under partnerships and collaborations, we have Scarlet's Smile under the first one, but as far as creating programs, I'm not sure if there is something there for the one that is blank; with the Library and other things to create programs with them.

Ms. Groya – Okay. Let's flip ahead to Page 77 & 78 and talk through all of the priorities to be considered, and also make sure that it's correctly prioritized.

Ms. Groya reviewed the short-term, mid-term, long-term and ongoing priorities identified. She noted that a tree management line item would be added to Byers Homestead Park on Page 77.

*6:46pm, Chairperson Petsch arrived.*

Mr. Wichert discussed pickleball as noted on Page 77 for the Richardson Center. Ms. England stated that there has not been a concept plan done yet in this regard. Mr. Wichert also discussed having pickleball at Bicentennial. Chairperson Petsch stated that pickleball could be incorporated at both locations. He noted that it is just a matter of painting the court accordingly.

Ms. Kast inquired about drinking fountains for all parks, and noted that it is called out specifically for the Richardson Center. Ms. Groya agreed that it was not necessary to have that noted, as it is indicated under "other" on the following page under a general statement.

Discussions took place regarding Richardson Park/Center, rentals, pickleball, concerts, and overflow parking.

Ms. Groya proceeded to Page 78.

Mr. Wichert initiated discussions regarding making fishing more accessible at Long Park, the piers, issues with vegetation, treatments, protecting the habitat, and the potential for a kayak/canoe launch. Ms. Groya would add notes in this regard.

Ms. Groya noted that the next 5-Year Master Plan would be in 2023, which will be the year before the park millage expires.

Ms. Groya flipped back to Page 71 where text begins to address connectivity:

- This section of the document includes some general design considerations.
- A few things are highlighted, related to these different types of trails, side paths, et cetera.
- Challenges are addressed in detail, and implementing a connected system is definitely going to be a considerable financial investment.
- Our thought here is to develop a non-motorized system plan map. I'll show you a couple of graphics of the route we are starting down that would capture the long-term vision for a connected system, then we can discuss priorities within that longer term vision.

- We go into some detail about working with the RCOC to coordinate the system.

Ms. Groya flipped to Page 75 and reviewed Funding The Network Vision:

- Can you make sure you are comfortable with the language here?
- I think there will be a number of different funding methods.
- I have included 4 potentially primary funding sources.
- I talked with the Planner, Dave Campbell, about this; creation of some type of a developer funded connectivity program. This would be worked out with the Township Attorney. It would allow for a developer to contribute funding toward a program to complete nearby gaps in sidewalks and pathways that are a high priority, in lieu of building sections along their frontage where no segment is planned.

Ms. Kast – I don't know if this specifically calls out whether it is the Parks' job, or the Township's, to fund this?

Ms. Groya – It doesn't. Personally, I think it's probably a combination.

Discussions ensued regarding the Parks' millage, segments of pathway connections and associated costs for completion, areas that benefit the parks that would be paid for by the millage, and other areas that would be the responsibility of the Township. In addition, joint efforts with adjacent communities were addressed. Mr. Berkheiser noted that the Township Board was seeking a recommendation from the Parks Committee with regard to priorities for connectivity, along with getting an idea of what the costs might be. Then there is the potential for a ballot initiative to decide if residents really want that. If they want it, they can approve an SAD.

Ms. Groya presented slides on the overhead of the Non-Motorized System Plan, the Long-Term Vision. She identified the existing system, the proposed system and potential trailheads.

Mr. Wichert inquired about the ITC Corridor pathway that had been presented and discussed at a previous meeting by Mike Powell. Ms. England noted that this has not moved forward since the initial proposal. Ms. Groya indicated the location of the proposed ITC Corridor on the map.

Ms. Groya continued her detailed review of proposed connections on the overhead map, along with potential priorities, trailheads and suggested amenities.

Ms. Kast noted an existing connection through a neighborhood, at the southwest corner of Clara Miller park, where they have a posted running trail around the north side of the lake. Discussion continued regarding existing connections, the designated bike/pedestrian path area along Glengary Road in Wolverine Lake, and the need to increase safety at intersections and roadways in this area.

Mr. Berkheiser inquired about who would oversee planning and building all of these connections and crosswalks. Ms. Groya explained that she works in pedestrian and bike mobility and safety planning. Once this gets into design, Living Lab engages an engineer to look at constructability issues. She added that this stage of the non-

motorized plan tries to establish the long-term vision for connections, provides initial thought on the location for these, and then as implementation begins, that drills down into another level of detail; walking the site, looking at wetland boundaries, roads, signage, sections that might need easements, et cetera.

Ms. Groya – We worked through the map with Dave Campbell. He had some excitement about it too because when developers come in, to redevelop or build new on their property, he is looking for a guide to show the segments, a tool to facilitate discussions and show priorities of connections as they install sections of this system as well.

Ms. Groya continued reviewing potential priorities.

Mr. Berkheiser inquired about the potential for Proud Lake State Park to contribute funds toward a pathway connection at the campground.

Ms. Groya discussed improving crossings, mid-block crossings, and various solutions for those areas, such as an island refuge, striping, signage, and solar flashing signals. An elevated design presence makes it safer for pedestrians.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding dangerous crossings, poorly located crosswalks and the need to have further conversations with the RCOC in this regard. Mr. Berkheiser noted that they won't put in a crossing that does not lead to anything. To have a crossing, you have to have sidewalks that lead somewhere.

Further discussion took place regarding the potential ITC corridor, connections to adjacent communities and the complications associated with the proposal. Despite the challenges, this would be kept on the long-term radar.

Mr. Berkheiser suggested that a sub-committee be formed to further address the priorities for pathway connections. They could also continue to work with Dave Campbell. Discussions took place, and Ms. Groya agreed that this is a lot of information. Chairperson Petsch noted that in the discussion of the Master Plan, continuance of trail ways is addressed. He felt that this should be attached to that and included as part of the long-term plan. There has been community support for improving and connecting trails. He also agreed with the formation of a sub-committee to go into greater detail on this review. Mr. Wichert was in favor of the list of priorities indicated. Ms. Kast and Mr. Wichert volunteered to assist in the group.

Ms. Groya discussed holding the public hearing at the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting for the overall 5-Year Master Plan, which will have the Non-Motorized System Plan Long-Term Vision attached. That means the complete draft plan will need to be published 30 days prior, by January 20<sup>th</sup> or so. Between now and then, she would like to meet with Rachel Kast, Tim Wichert, Dave Campbell and Emily England to get into more detail. Results of the meeting can be emailed to the other Parks and Recreation Committee members. Changes can still be made at the public hearing in February.

Mr. Berkheiser stated that he felt the proposed was sufficient for the 5-Year Master Plan. It can continue to be fine-tuned.

**MOTION** by Berkheiser, supported by Kast, to set the public hearing for Monday, February 25, 2019, for the Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ITEM 8: REVENUE & EXPENDITURE REPORT**

The Committee reviewed the report and had no comments.

**ITEM 9: AGENDA REQUESTS**

- Concerts in the Park – Richardson Center
- Butterfly Garden

**ITEM 10: OTHER MATTERS**

- Mr. Berkheiser discussed fine tuning of budget amendments. He noted that Maintenance items for Richardson should come out of Maintenance funds, and that was to be updated.
- Mr. Berkheiser also requested a line item be added for the rental income at Richardson Center, so this will be kept separated and can be applied back to the Richardson Center accordingly.

**The next Parks and Recreation Meeting will be Monday, January 28, 2019, at 6:00pm, at the Township Hall.**

**ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Garbutt, supported by Berkheiser, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35pm.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

---

Michelle Holmes, Secretary