

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE

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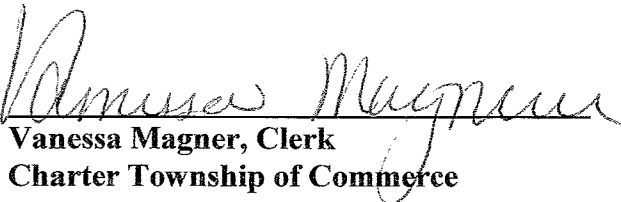
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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

- MEETING DATES:** Monday, October 7, 2013
- TIME OF MEETINGS:** 5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.
- PLACE OF MEETINGS:** Richardson Community Center
1485 Oakley Park Rd.
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390
- PURPOSE OF MEETINGS:** 1. Discussion on Capital Improvement Schedule
For the Master Plan
- SIGNATURE OF TOWNSHIP CLERK** 
Vanessa Magner, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce
- DATE AND TIME OF POSTING:** Wednesday, October 2, 2013 at 10:00 am

This notice is posted in compliance with PA 267 of 1976 as amended (open meetings act), MCLA 41.72a(2)(3) and the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

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

Monday, October 7, 2013

2009 Township Drive

Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairperson Pace called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm at the Ralph C. Richardson Center.

ROLL CALL: Present: Dave Schultz – Chairperson (arrived at 7:04pm)
Peter Pace – Vice Chairperson
William Petsch
Michelle Holmes
Tim Wichert
Bob Berkheiser

Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks and Recreation
Leah Groya, Planning Consultant, Living Lab

ITEM 1: MASTER PLAN DISCUSSION - Capital Improvement Priorities

Ms. Groya reviewed the handout of the draft for Capital Improvement Priorities. This was developed by reviewing the background of the last plan, along with the goals and objectives from the last special meeting. There are projects here that might not be just capital improvements, but actually are more sizeable planning efforts. We can start to understand this from a facilities standpoint and a timeline standpoint. We can start assigning them as short-term, mid-term, long-term and ongoing projects. She guided the Committee through the different parks to determine if there were any wording changes, additions or deletions, and asked that they also focus on the timeline for each item listed. Once these details are finalized and everyone is comfortable with the projects, she will then work to fill-in the magnitude of cost numbers and the potential funding sources.

Open discussion took place regarding where the ranger station used to be located in Dodge Park, which is past the cemetery, heading west, or off Commerce at the north entrance. The maintenance storage building is still there. Ms. Holmes stated that it is the only remaining building from the range house and it is coming down. Ms. England stated that she would discuss this with the maintenance staff as there are still a number of items stored in there. Ms. Groya discussed the potential demolition of the building. Ms. Groya discussed the Phase II improvements for Dodge. Mr. Wichert felt that the this should be moved ahead because of the concerts. Ms. Groya agreed, especially for the parking lots and related items, and she added that the next phases include the soccer ball fields, the amphitheater, the dog park, et cetera. She asked if anyone wanted to readdress the concept plan or the details of phasing. Mr. Wichert and Ms. England agreed that this could be left vague.

****Special** Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
October 7, 2013**

Mr. Berkheiser initiated discussion regarding putting a soccer complex in Maple Glen as opposed to Dodge. Ms. Holmes replied that soccer would not be completely eliminated at Dodge. Ms. England discussed options at Wise Park.

Open discussion continued regarding options at Dodge and Ms. Groya reviewed the original concept plan drawing in relation to what has been built and what remains to be done on the plans. Ms. Holmes discussed issues with tree removal to accommodate the fields and other attractions, and she addressed the historic plantings that were slated for restoration. She also mentioned issues with regulated wetlands and easements in the park.

Ms. Groya stated that she was under the impression that CW3 may want a different park to invest more money into. Mr. Petsch discussed the option of artificial turf as previously presented by CW3. Ms. England added that artificial turf would likely reduce their need for space from 10 fields down to just 5. She added that they would still use the Dodge Park fields as their championship fields.

Mr. Schultz reiterated a previous discussion about doing two adult ball fields at Dodge, with the outfields to also be used for soccer. Ms. Holmes felt that the parking lot and the building would service a lot more people. Open discussions continued regarding the configuration as it exists at the park and what may be able to be accommodated there in the future with the remaining space available.

Mr. Schultz concluded that at some point, the Committee would likely need to go back to the drawing board and create a different master plan for Dodge Park instead of looking at the current one for another nine years. Ms. England provided her opinion with regard to Dodge, which also incorporated the input of residents from concerts and general, everyday use. She feels that it is a good family park where people can go to do a little bit of everything. It is not specific to any one activity, and this gives the community what they want. Maple and Hickory will be specific. Soccer could be added in Maple as it is already an active sports park.

Mr. Berkheiser asked what the hold-up would be for proceeding with Maple Glen for CW3 fields. Ms. Groya stated that it would only accommodate five additional fields. Mr. Berkheiser stated that he can't see adding ten. Ms. England discussed the spray park or amphitheater and other passive attractions that may be at Dodge. She doesn't think the fields should be there. Ms. Groya stated that she would pull the language from Maple Glen regarding soccer on page 1 and move it to page 2 under the category of Other, with revised language referring to the implementation of a soccer complex.

Mr. Berkheiser asked if that would be happening within the next two years. Ms. England replied that CW3 is ready to proceed now and their contract is currently in the Township Attorney's office for review. Debate continued as to which park CW3 should be directed to and discussions included Bicentennial, Dodge, Maple Glen and Wise, along with the positives and negatives associated with each situation. Ms. England noted that if the fields are done in Maple Glen, CW3 will outgrow them in a very short

****Special** Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
October 7, 2013**

time. She added that they wanted "one home" for their teams, a complex where they could all play together. Mr. Petsch initiated discussions on additional configurations at Dodge Park which would accommodate adult ball fields and the use of the outfields as soccer fields. The space necessary to accommodate each field was addressed, along with clearing and land balancing.

The Wise Park master plan was discussed. Ms. Holmes stated that it would be processed in 2014. Ms. Groya indicated that on page 2, Wise Park shows an estimated cost of \$10,000 to \$15,000 for developing the concept master plan. Options for Wise Park were discussed such as the dog park, soccer fields and lacrosse. Ms. England stated that the nice thing about soccer fields is that people can still walk their dogs across them. The grass is well-maintained and the fields do not limit other park uses.

Mr. Berkheiser felt that the master plan for Wise Park should be moved up on the priority list. Ms. England stated that it had not yet been budgeted for. Mr. Berkheiser discussed matching funds that may be available through CW3 for the master plan, and if available, the Board may approve funds to move the item up and make it a priority. He added that the master plan was a requirement of the purchase, so money has to be available somewhere for it. Ms. Holmes stated that a concept plan needs to be developed first. Mr. Berkheiser felt the Wise master plan should be completed before the end of 2014.

Mr. Petsch asked Ms. Groya if she had previously worked on a park of this size, going from raw dirt to a 500-acre park, that involved similar restrictions. Ms. Groya replied yes and stated that almost all properties have different requirements. She added that the Township had a huge, detailed eco-study performed on the Wise property. There is a lot of information there in terms of the environmental areas, and that's kind of what the agreement was based upon. It was all done two or three years ago.

Mr. Schultz inquired about the dog park at Wise and asked if anyone was 100% certain that it could not be done there in partnership with Oakland County. Ms. Groya responded that she is pretty sure the north side will be all passive. Mr. Berkheiser asked where the idea came from that it couldn't be done. Mr. Schultz stated that he heard it at the last meeting, and other members agreed. Ms. Holmes explained that they would have to remove an awful lot of trees to do it. Mr. Berkheiser wanted confirmation and explanation as to why the dog park couldn't be there. Ms. England would follow-up to confirm and determine the reasoning behind this.

Ms. Groya redirected the conversation back to page 1 and Dodge Park. Ms. England stated that she would check on the status of the maintenance building with staff. It was also agreed that Phase II will be more succinct and there is the potential for adult softball fields there. Ms. England discussed Phases II and III, and clarified that the restrooms are part of Phase II. Ms. Holmes stated that there is a need to modify and implement the phases. Open discussion continued and one suggestion was to build the restrooms with a maintenance shed off of the building.

****Special** Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
October 7, 2013**

Ms. Groya addressed Hickory Glen and explained that she was thinking these improvements would be over a 5-year time frame.

Ms. Groya proceeded to Maple Glen and a review of the phases for that park. Again, she would relocate comments regarding soccer to page 2 in the Other category. She also noted that Phase III for Maple would be a long-term item. Mr. Schultz inquired about involvement of the leagues for Maple Glen and wanted to ensure that they had an opportunity to provide input and receive information about the improvements for the park. Ms. England stated that they had participated in the discussions. Ms. Groya stated that their feedback was not too far off from the concept as proposed, which considered the topographical survey, the wetland delineation and shifting of the internal roadway and trail. It is not significantly different from what it was before, but meetings were held to review the plans with Township folks, Kathleen Jackson, maintenance staff and the leagues. This will be finalized and presented at the regularly scheduled October Parks Meeting.

Mr. Schultz discussed comments and concerns expressed regarding access to distant fields for older people. He explained that any complex does not have parking near the main field, however it could be near the concession stand. Construction, staging, tournaments and major events were further addressed.

Ms. Groya reviewed the priorities for Bicentennial Park. Ms. England noted that the play equipment had been replaced at Bicentennial. Open discussion also took place regarding the possibility of pickle ball here, and at other parks. This could be a short-term improvement in some parks. The game of pickle ball typically appeals to people over 40 and it's similar to Ping-Pong, tennis and badminton combined. It is played on a mini court which is about half the size of a tennis court. The necessary space to accommodate pickle ball was addressed, and the Richardson Center was a favorable location also. Mr. Schultz noted that it is the #1 growing sport right now in Florida.

Ms. Groya proceeded to a review of Byers Homestead. Ms. England was in agreement with the verbiage provided. Ms. Groya noted that these priorities were listed as ongoing as it sounds like a couple of things are done each year at the park. Mr. Wichert indicated that there is still a need for a bathroom in the building. Mr. Pace asked if it would be in the house, and Mr. Schultz thought it would be in the barn.

Ms. Groya outlined Mill Race Park and noted that items were repeated from the Byers comments. Ms. Holmes noted that this should say "Replace bridges" (plural), and she discussed issues of erosion in relation to the river. She also inquired about painting as it seemed to be done annually. Ms. England stated that, thankfully, there had been no graffiti at the park this year.

Ms. Groya discussed the Ralph C. Richardson Center. She removed community gardens as the Committee was not in favor overall. She would add pickle ball to this list. Additional parking was still necessary and would be retained on the list. Mr. Wichert discussed the cross country area, and Mr. Berkheiser mentioned connection of trails in the area.

****Special** Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
October 7, 2013**

Ms. Groya reviewed Robert H. Long Park on page 2. Ms. Groya stated that these items are short-term as they have been budgeted for. Mr. Wichert discussed dredging of the lake. Ms. Holmes talked about water quality and the need to revisit the issue, along with the concept plan. The previous plan addressed fluctuations in the water level and the hydrology issue needs to be considered. Ms. England added that the water had been very low this year. Ms. Groya discussed providing a connection to the M-5 Trail. Mr. Berkheiser stated that there really isn't much to do on that item as it's only about 100 feet. Ms. Holmes stated that it's actually a little farther, but she agreed.

Ms. Groya proceeded to a review of the Wise Road Park Property, which had also been discussed in detail earlier, and she explained that Non-Motorized Improvements were listed in a separate category as they are a Township-wide development in partnership with the Planning Commission, to be implemented along the Commerce-Walled Lake-Wixom Trail (the former rail corridor). The document showed Novi, but Ms. Groya would correct it to reflect Wixom instead. Mr. Schultz asked if the trail was being handled by a different group. Ms. Groya replied yes, but this list of priorities would be used during grant applications also. Discussion of the trails continued regarding bike access, connections and the need to improve pedestrian crossings, such as at Mill Race and Byers.

Ms. Groya then addressed the final category for Other priorities. She explained that this section was a place to capture any ideas that weren't park specific, such as items related to feasibility, security, maintenance, signage, et cetera. Open discussions took place reviewing the various items in this category as follows.

- Mr. Berkheiser stated that signage had been approved and was paid for. Ms. Holmes replied that there were still additional interior signs planned for the parks. Ms. England agreed that way-finding signage would be added.
- Mr. Pace inquired about landscaping around the signs. Ms. Groya responded that she had pulled that item through from the last list of capital improvements, and there was an idea that there should be some coordination of the landscaping at each of the park entrances. Mr. Pace added that there would be volunteers to accommodate that, but that the item should be left in.
- Ms. Groya discussed restroom facilities, play equipment, and water for irrigation. Mr. Berkheiser discouraged use of the word "fresh" here in reference to the water. Discussion ensued regarding well water, potable/drinking water, and water used for irrigation. Ms. Holmes stated that it doesn't have to be identified. Mr. Wichert added that a drinking fountain needs to be added at the Richardson Center.
- Ms. Groya reviewed the priority to install sheltered picnic/gathering areas. All Committee members were in support of this continuing.
- Ms. Groya stated that this is the section where soccer will also be addressed. Mr. Berkheiser and Ms. Groya further discussed CW3 and what their space requirements are for soccer fields.
- Mr. Pace inquired about the item addressing public waterfront access. Ms. Groya explained that if there is ever an opportunity for Parks and Recreation to purchase property, this will allow for it.

****Special** Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
October 7, 2013**

- Ms. Holmes noted that Snowy Ridge was not on the list, and a warming hut is a priority for the park. Ms. Groya would add this and noted that it would be a mid-term priority. Mr. Pace felt it should be right away and thought the lighting may be longer term. Mr. Pace suggested that the warming hut may possibly be an Eagle Scout project.
- Ms. Holmes felt that software was a necessity to Ms. England's office for scheduling league field time, rentals for the pavilions, and other purposes. The Committee discussed this at length. Ms. Groya added that this may come out of the study of the department structure which will determine just how big the department should be. League scheduling could be on a secure website as a master schedule with limited access.
- Mr. Berkheiser discussed the Byers pavilion with Ms. England. She will provide an update soon.
- Ms. Holmes asked if rentals at Byers were being dropped, which had included suggestions of canoe and bike rentals. She felt that the bikes would be beneficial. Mr. Berkheiser was not comfortable with the idea of renting bikes, especially considering the heavy traffic in the area.
- Mr. Wichert asked if tree maintenance and the forestry management plan was ongoing. Ms. England replied yes, it was budgeted for this year.

Ms. Groya stated that she had also made edits to the goals and objectives and requested feedback. She added that her intention is to provide a complete draft plan at the October meeting, which would then be set for the public hearing. The state requires the public hearing be held 30 days from the time the plan is released for public viewing, which would likely be scheduled in November or at a special December meeting. At that meeting, the Committee would take public commentary and pass a resolution recommending adoption of the master plan, then forward it to the Board for approval. The timeline was further discussed along with the potential for a special December meeting.

ITEM 3: OTHER MATTERS

Ms. Holmes stated that she attended the Library Strategy Planning meeting and she attempted to match up their goals with those of the Local History Project so that they would be in-sync. She added that the Library will also be distributing a survey for their master plan this Friday.

The next regularly scheduled Parks and Recreation Meeting will be Monday, October 28, 2013 at 7:00pm.

ITEM 2: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Pace, supported by Holmes, to adjourn the meeting at 6:04pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Peter Pace, Vice Chairperson