

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

Monday, February 25, 2019

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Kast called the meeting to order at 6:00pm at the Township Hall.

ROLL CALL: **Present:** Rachel Kast, Chairperson
Tim Wichert, Vice Chairperson
Michelle Holmes, Secretary
William Petsch
Barbara Garbutt
Linda Champagne
Absent: Bob Berkheiser (excused)
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 December 17, 2018, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes with a correction to the header on Pages 2-10. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

PUBLIC COMMENTS
None.

ITEM 1: PUBLIC HEARING: PARKS, RECREATION + TRAILS 5-YEAR MASTER PLAN

Ms. England stated that the draft 5-Year Master Plan has been out for review to the public for 30 days.

Ms. Groya delivered a slide show presentation and provided an overview of the Master Plan approval process. She explained the purpose of the Master Plan, its contents, the input process, the action program, goals and objectives, trail way connectivity plans, design challenges, priorities and next steps. She elaborated on grant eligibility, along with input received from surveys, workshops and the committee. She also noted that capital expenditures are identified as short-term, mid-term and long-term projects.

Ms. Garbutt and Ms. Groya discussed partnering with the State on capital expenditures to make connections at the Proud Lake Campground.

Chairperson Kast opened the public hearing.
No comments.
Chairperson Kast closed the public hearing.

ITEM 2: PARKS COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF THE PLAN BY RESOLUTION

Ms. Groya noted that if the plan is recommended for adoption tonight, the plan would be on the Township Board agenda for March 12, 2019. Once the Township Board adopts the plan, it will be filed with the Department of Natural Resources.

MOTION by Garbutt, supported by Petsch, to recommend, to the Commerce Township Board of Trustees, Adoption by Resolution of the Parks, Recreation & Trails 5-Year Master Plan.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 3: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT**Inter-Lakes Girls Softball – Tim Bailey**

Mr. Bailey shared the following with the Committee:

- I apologize I haven't been able to attend the last few meetings.
- We are in the process of creating teams.
- We will start in about 6 weeks.
- It looks like we will have about the same number of teams as last year, or maybe up one, so enrollment is holding.
- We have our park cleanup scheduled for April.
- I'll get more information to you as it becomes available.

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

Mr. Haney discussed the following with the Committee:

- Our annual cleanup is Sunday, March 31st from 1-4pm in Dodge Park. The backup date for that event is Sunday, April 7th.
- Our opening weekend at Dodge Park will be April 13th. The first event will be that Friday for the PeeWees.
- There will be activity in the park prior to that, but no actual matches.
- I will get with Emily on making sure we have extra portajohns. We are looking into the invoices and we'll get those paid up as soon as possible, during the first week of March.
- A construction update: We found a potential source for additional fill. If that pans out, and we don't have wet weather, we will have the fill delivered in the next week or two. Then the equipment will be out to do the rough grade. There's irrigation in Phase 2, so they need to trench the Field #3 area and install pipe. They will charge, pressurize and test in warmer weather.
- The target for opening Field #3 is possibly in September 2019, but to err on the side of caution, it might actually be April of 2020.

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz

Mr. and Mrs. Schantz shared handouts and discussed the following with the Committee:

- We held our election in January. Dean is the Chairperson, I will stay as Treasurer, and Mike [Helick] is now our Secretary.
- The 2019 draft event schedule is on the handout. Its our usual schedule with nothing new.
 - Pictures with the Easter Bunny, Sunday, April 13th, 12-5
 - WWAM Spring Cleanup, Sunday May 5th, 9-3
 - Ugly Duckling Vintage Market, Sunday, August 4th, 10-6

- WWAM Fall Cleanup, Sunday, September 15th, 9-3
- Boo Bash Halloween Event, Saturday, October 26th, 6-8
- Pictures with Santa, Sunday, December 8th, 11-5
- Also submitted is the 2019 FOB wish list with pricing estimates, which includes the following projects:
 - The siding on the East side main entrance of the barn, along with an artist to repaint Byer's Country Store.
 - The barn shed roof will be torn off, redone with plywood, ice/water shield and re-shingled. It was not done properly last time.
 - Water distribution from the well – We will start with one post. Irrigation will be run from the well for access to water the ornamentals. We'll have an 80' long hose and the well will have a timer on it, allowing pressure only during the day, which will prevent vandalism. This will allow us to get going with our gardening club.
 - The duck barn has a broken concrete pad. We did the walkway, and now we will break up the pad and re-pour the pad to eliminate trip issues.
 - We will also be painting all the outpost buildings.
 - We have three estimates on lumber. For barn wood, we will go with Iverson's again.

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Holmes, to approve the 2019 Friends of Byers Event Schedule. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Holmes – I did send information on the first meeting for the History Coalition for Oakland County. They're looking to do a calendar if you guys want to put this on.

Ms. Schantz – That would be great. It's posted on the web page and on our Byers Facebook page. I also put sheets in the barn.

Mr. Schantz – In addition, we cleaned the farmhouse after about a year and a half. It was filthy of course. The only mold I detected was on the ceiling joists. We'd like to schedule additional cleaning sessions, about every couple months, particularly the furniture. Also, during the summer, it would be a good idea to get a dehumidifier in there to keep the mold down. It should be checked monthly.

Ms. Schantz – Plus with keeping the heat at 60, one door is warping.

Mr. Schantz – The front door needs to be repainted and re-screened.

Discussions continued regarding maintenance and repairs at the farmhouse, and the lack of insulation.

Lakes Athletics – Josh Springer

Mr. Springer discussed the following with the Committee:

- Since the last meeting, we cleared out the brush in front of the parking area, out to the road. That was done by Wright Tree Service and DTE.
- We do have an agenda item to talk about the next steps for that project.
- Our registration has been a little below par with February.

- Walled Lake Schools has had like 5 or 6 days off, but the last few days, registration has picked right back up to where it was last year.
- We also have plans for the flagpole installation, signage, and park improvements for fencing and backstops. We can also talk about safety improvements for the diamonds.
- Our park cleanup day for Hickory Glen is April 12th.
- Our opening day is April 20th, the following Saturday.
- We sent in a list of key dates. We need to make sure that the parking lot is graded. We do have a Memorial Day Tournament where teams all the way from the UP come in and play on the fields. We want to ensure the park is in pristine condition.

Discussions took place regarding the brush clearing, increased visibility at the park, and details of the cleanup date, which is being held on Friday night, April 12th, from 4pm to about 8:30pm. Ms. Champagne discussed concessions for the cleanup crew with Mr. Springer.

Commerce Little League – Paul Theriault

Mr. Theriault discussed the following with the Committee:

- We are celebrating our 65th anniversary as a league. The majority of those years have been spent at Maple Glen. It's an exciting year.
- Our opening day will be Saturday, April 27th.
- The day after, we're hoping to hold our second annual 5K race.
- Our registration will be closing in a couple of days.
- We will probably have 50 teams and about 600 players in our house league, plus our Cobras and Warriors travel and tournament teams.
- Last year, late December, we finished up our backstop improvement project. That was funded mostly by a grant from Little League International, and partially from the Township Board. We've had some great support from the Township on the application.
- We're pretty excited that we've raised the backstops on three of our fields; Wrigley, Fogel, and Dodger fields. It's a pretty drastic improvement from a safety perspective.
- Our field cleanup day is on Saturday, April 13th, in the morning when we will also pass out uniforms.
- Opening day this year, we're doing something fun. We have the 25th anniversary of our State Champion Majors Team, so we're inviting all the kids back who aren't so young anymore to throw out the opening pitch and hang their banner. It should be a fun day with a lot of vendors, food and burgers. The Committee is more than welcome to come out this year.
- We appreciate your support.

Motor City Mountain Bike Association – Mike Kearney

Mr. Kearney discussed the following with the Committee:

- Tim Slabaugh has stepped down, and I will be taking over.
- I'm working on sending over our year-end reports to Emily.
- Last year, our organization logged 2,600 volunteer hours; 221 of those were direct volunteer labor hours at Hickory Glen for trail improvements, including

about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of added trail on the east side of the property, repair of several features that were deteriorating with age, and some signage repair/replacement.

- Looking ahead to 2019, we'll have a trail day setup in April.
- We will continue looking at the water and wetlands crossing from the east side of the property. We're still trying to secure the engineering resources that the Township requires for the boardwalk or wetland crossing. Hopefully we can find the resources that will be willing to work within our budget.
- We will do additional feature repairs and upkeep.
- We have a new map, so we are getting that put up in the kiosk in the spring, with some kiosk improvements at the trailhead.
- Then general trail sustainability measures on areas of the trails that wash out from erosion.
- You were talking about connectivity during the Master Plan session. The only event that we host at the MCMBA is the Milford Bike Fest. We assist in maintaining the mountain bike trails that connect from Milford to Commerce Township, which pass through and bypass the Proud Lake Campground. We have about 50/60 riders. It's our largest fundraiser for the year.
- From our overall chapter, we are up to 13 trails now.
- Settlers Park was added recently.
- Hartland Township approached us recently looking for us to build some trails.
- The Northville Psychiatric Hospital was demolished, and we can go ahead with building trails on that property.

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

- Lakes Area Hawks

ITEM 4: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

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

- We are in the process of finding our vendor. I'll keep you up to date.
- Taxes have started with the AARP free tax service. The spots filled up pretty quickly so we have a waiting list.
- We are moving forward with the process for Scarlet's Smile in Dodge Park and the restroom facilities.

Mr. Wichert – How far along is Scarlet's Smile now? Are they about two-thirds of the way there? How did their fundraiser go?

Ms. England – Yes, she is confident that they'll have everything. They want to start building in August. They raised \$75,000 at the fundraiser.

ITEM 5: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

No report in Mr. Berkheiser's absence.

ITEM 6: PARK LIAISON UPDATES

Berkheiser - Wise Woods & Victory Park

No report in Mr. Berkheiser's absence.

Champagne - Hickory Glen Park

- My park has been handled very well by the gentlemen out there today.

Garbutt - Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- They've been on the sledding hill.
- I haven't been out to Long Park lately so nothing to report.

Wichert - Maple Glen

- I did not go out today.
- Tim, did we lose any trees?

Mr. Bailey – I haven't been out there in a few days.

Ms. Holmes – I'd be surprised if we didn't.

Ms. England – Mark has been out cleaning up trees.

Kast - Dodge Park

- Dodge Park is good.
- I did not visit yesterday, but I'm sure some trees probably fell.

Holmes - Byers and Mill Race

- The river is really high.

Petsch - Bicentennial Park

- Nothing to report.

ITEM 7: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Champagne discussed the following with the Committee:

- We have a new administrator starting next week. He came from Clawson. You may have read about him in the Spinal Column. He's a young guy and he was the clerk in Clawson.
- St. Patrick's Day bus trip is March 10th. I emailed the flyer to Emily to put up at the Richardson Center. It's a fun event. They also do the parade downtown, and a pub crawl.

ITEM 8: COMMERCE LITTLE LEAGUE 5K RACE

Mr. Theriault discussed the following with the Committee:

- Last year we did a 5K and one-mile fun run fundraiser. We had 150 people come out for the race. We had quite a few sponsors.
- It was a good fundraiser for us and we hope to do it again this year, the day after our opening day, on Sunday, April 28th. The course starts at Maple Glen and runs through the park, past the Fire Station, into Gilbert Willis, and then back around to Maple Glen again. It is a timed event. The one-mile is less competitive, and the 5K is competitive for prizes. There's food and snacks, et cetera.

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Holmes, to recommend approval and support the Commerce Little League 5K Race and One-Mile Run on Sunday, April 28, 2019. Discussion took place regarding the registration date for the event.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 9: LAKES ATHLETICS IMPROVEMENTS (HICKORY GLEN)

Mr. Josh Springer and Mr. Jim Doyle distributed handouts of photos, and Mr. Springer discussed the following with the Committee:

- Jim Doyle is our Field Director. He has been coordinating with DTE and Wright Tree Services to get the clearing done.
- The most important task for us is the second opening, the connection with Glengary for parking. I know it's a more long-term priority, but it's definitely something that is most important to us. I'm not sure what steps we take, or how we go about approval, funding or drawings.

Ms. England – Where are you looking to put this?

Mr. Springer – The second entrance? It would be somewhere on the east side of the park.

Ms. England – Where we've already done it.

Ms. Holmes – Are you talking about relocating across from Laguna?

The Committee reviewed the plans presented by Mr. Springer as he identified the 30' clearing near the concession stand where he was proposing a second entrance.

Extensive discussions took place regarding creating a second emergency exit in the area identified, consulting with the Village of Wolverine as they own the road in this area, and the prior concept plan for a second entrance which was to be located farther down by the path. Ms. England encouraged Mr. Springer and Mr. Doyle to consult with Jay James regarding the curb cut for an emergency exit as proposed. Mr. Petsch clarified that the emergency exit could only be used for emergencies, not for regular ingress/egress. Discussions continued regarding the concept plan, the master plan for the park, the second entrance along Glengary, traffic flow and safety. A berm or split rail fence was mentioned for the emergency exit area, along with discussion of maintenance of the area. Ms. Champagne suggested that a split rail fence could possibly be a Boy Scout project.

Mr. Springer – Our next project is to update the inbound signage in the park, along the right hand side, the 1963 Champs and the boards. We'd like to set up a foundation for four flagpoles; the US flag, our Lakes Athletics flag, the Legends Travel Team flag, and then we're trying to also incorporate the Hawks Football Team. We could also put the Commerce Township flag under the US flag. We need to understand what that approval looks like.

Mr. Petsch – Look at the Master Plan. Let's do this all at once. It's a great idea, but we don't want to have you spend a bunch of money putting in flagpoles and concrete if it does not coincide with the Master Plan.

Ms. Holmes – As Leah said though, it's a concept plan. We can work on it.

Mr. Springer – Right, if we're going to move the driveway 50' to the east, there's no reason to leave that right there.

Mr. Petsch – Let's look at what we've got because that might not be the spot to put it.

Ms. Holmes – In the plan, wasn't there one more field?

Ms. England – You were going to relocate and reorganize.

Mr. Petsch – That was to redo the whole thing in cloverleaf style.

Mr. Springer – Is that in the plan too?

Mr. Petsch – Yes.

Ms. England – The plan covers the entire park.

Mr. Petsch – Review the Master Plan, and then come back to us.

Ms. Holmes – There's always joint fundraising and grants. Also talk to your national associations.

ITEM 10: DODGE PARK PLAYGROUND RELOCATION

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- I need your recommendation.
- These are just ideas, and the areas shown are not the exact locations for relocation of the old equipment.
- We have to consider potential expansion of the Library parking.

Discussions took place regarding potential locations for moving the equipment, issues with certain areas where it may distract from Library programming, the Library drop box, et cetera. Ms. Garbutt noted that a lot of parents expressed the desire to have the playground by the pavilion so that they could take the kids for lunch there and sit in the shade. Ms. Kast and Mr. Petsch noted that it shouldn't be too close to the main road, or near the running trail, or too close to a heavily wooded area for safety reasons. Mr. Wichert suggested putting a fence around it.

As the Committee came to a consensus, Ms. England added that she would also consult further with the engineers.

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Champagne, to recommend Relocation of the Dodge Park Playground, with instructions to the engineers to put the playground equipment on the north side of the park, as close to the existing playground and pavilion as possible, without interfering with the potential expansion of Library parking.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 11: CONCERT IN THE PARK

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- The dates are scheduled every Friday night at 7PM, July 5th through August 9th, for 6 weeks.
- JAG is working on making the entertainment selections and they are working on sponsorships. They will keep us updated.
- The Richardson Center deck is the stage.

ITEM 12: BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Ms. England briefly discussed details of the project with the Committee for clarification on the design. She inquired about the gate, rounded corners, the fence height, and discussed pricing.

Mr. Wichert preferred a gate. Mr. Petsch and Mr. Wichert stated that the fence/gate should be 3.5' high. As for rounded corners versus alternatives, Ms. Kast suggested comparing pricing on the bids.

ITEM 13: BYERS

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- I'm hoping that Michelle can help with this.
- I was asked to put this on the agenda after the last discussion meeting with the Township Board.

Ms. Holmes – The Township Board sounded receptive. They need to be refreshed on the original plans and options for the park of all the things that it could be.

The Board Members are all new since then, and they need to see the report. We need to repackage the information with updates and present it to them.

Ms. England – We can pull the structural engineering reports also.

Extensive open discussions ensued; the Ron Campbell report was mentioned, along with discussion of the property history, suggested uses for the park over time, which had included the library, museum, educational uses, et cetera. As to the farmhouse in particular, restoration versus structural stability was addressed, and the capacity of the building was discussed.

Ms. Garbutt noted that there are phragmites in the stream at Byers. Ms. England noted that they have been treated.

Ms. Holmes reiterated that Byers should be an agenda item again next month, and the reports should be reviewed and updated to present to the Township Board.

Ms. Schantz inquired about the timeline, as this project has seen significant delays. Ms. Holmes explained that the Township Board wants direction in the form of a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Committee.

ITEM 14: HORSE FARM

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- We had a long discussion with the Township Board about the Horse Farm property and what we might like to do with it.

- The property is located at the corner of Wixom and Charms.
- Currently, the renter operates a riding stable for trainers and there are 63 horses.
- You might remember that we looked at the property years ago for soccer fields.
- Bob would like to see the site remain with its purpose as a horse farm, but there is repair work that will need to be done by the Township as owner of the property.
- Other thoughts have been to keep the property as greenspace.

Ms. Holmes – Because we own the land, the landlord incurs the costs of the repairs.

Ms. England – Absolutely.

Ms. Holmes – There were drainage issues with the site.

Ms. England – The Township purchased the property through the tax sale.

Ms. Champagne – Could the property be sold?

Ms. England – Yes.

Discussions continued regarding the current use as a horse farm, equestrian teams (a club sport, but not a school sport), leasing of horses to equestrian team riders, other services provided at the farm, the old house on the site that needs to be demolished, the possibility of selling the property, draining and excavation issues, et cetera.

The Horse Farm would be on the March agenda for further discussion. Ms. Champagne suggested meeting at the Horse Farm on March 25th, prior to the next Committee meeting. Ms. England agreed and would send out an email reminder to meet there at 5PM.

ITEM 15: AGENDA REQUESTS

No new agenda items were requested, however Ms. England and Ms. Kast noted carryover items from this agenda, such as the Horse Farm, Byers, Hickory Glen, the Butterfly Garden, and maybe the Dodge Park Playground.

ITEM 16: OTHER MATTERS

Ms. Holmes discussed the first meeting of the Historical Coalition of Oakland County, and addressed potential support for Byers. She will provide additional information when available.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting will be Monday, March 25, 2019, at 6:00pm, at the Township Hall.

ITEM 17: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Wichert, to adjourn the meeting at 7:36pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Michelle Holmes, Secretary