

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

Monday, November 28, 2022

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Petsch called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: William Petsch, Chairperson
Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson
Barbara Garbutt, Secretary
Bob Berkheiser
Krystal Schwartz
Ron Krueger

Also Present: Laura Waterworth
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 Walker, seconded by Krueger, to approve the September 26, 2022, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

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

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

- Our last event at Dodge Park was November 13th.
- November 14th, we shut down the sprinkler systems.
- I have a couple more small details to take care of; taking nets off and removing goals for the winter.
- It was a good season and we had zero cancellations.

Interlakes Girls Softball – Tim Bailey & Casey Maybrier

Mr. Bailey shared the following with the Committee:

- We have closed everything up and winterized sprinklers.
- We just opened our online registration for next season. We are in the midst of doing that planning.

- As I mentioned to you a while ago, this will be my last official meeting.
 - Ms. Casey Maybrier is taking over my position. She has a long history with her family with Interlakes. Her mom played for Interlakes, and she coached. She was actually a liaison here; I think right before I was here.
 - I didn't tell Casey, but this is a 15-year position.
 - It has been a pleasure working with you.

Director England – Thank you, Tim.

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, on behalf of the board, thank you for all your service. Every time you've come up, you've given us efficient reports. You've done a great job with the league. Thank you again for all your hard work.

Mr. Bailey – Thank you, I appreciate it.

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee:

- We had a successful Halloween event:
 - We had about 425 patrons.
 - We had great weather, so that was fantastic.
- The following week, we participated in the Trunk-or-Treat at the Library. We always have extra candy for that; we had 600 bags we donated to that event.
- The next day, we had Boy Scout Troop 308 out to do a park cleanup. They did a great job as usual.
- The contractor is finishing up the farmhouse.
 - I think they did a fantastic job.
 - They shored up the roof.
 - We contributed to the flooring; tongue and groove red oak in the parlor and in the kitchen area.
 - Currently, we're waiting on the final word from Jay James. He had concern about the beam in the kitchen. Sam Moraco, the contractor, came out on Friday and shored that up. They're going to do a final inspection tomorrow.

Director England – That inspection is tomorrow at 10:00am.

Mr. Schantz – We're just getting our Christmas event going too, which will be on December 11th. We've had a lot of interest in that also. Things are moving along.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is the roof and painting all done, or is that springtime? Is the exterior painting all done?

Mr. Schantz – Yes, they painted and re-shingled.

Director England – Yes, the house is beautiful. The goal for Byers is they want to have their Santa event in the house. That's why Jay has to sign off on it. I know Jay was in contact with the contractor. It sounds like everything was done. Jay just wants to look at it tomorrow and they should be good to go so they can have the event in the house.

Discussion continued regarding Mr. Schantz finishing reinstallation of fixtures, taking final photos of the renovations, posting pictures on the website, and holding a potential opening ceremony as the project has been underway for about 12 years.

Chairperson Petsch – What date is your Santa event?

Mr. Schantz – December 11th.

Ms. Kennedy – Is it by appointment? That wasn't on the flyer. I can add it.

Mr. Schantz – Yes. I know our flyer had it on there. We do that because we don't want line-ups.

Discussion continued regarding the Pictures with Santa event.

Motor City Mountain Bike Association – Mike Kearney

- Nothing new to report.
- We've done some basic maintenance.
- Things are great going into the winter as far as we know.

Lakes Athletics Association – Jerry Stoddard, President

A report dated November 21, 2022, was submitted in the packet:

- *League Update – Spring 2023 registration opened November 1st, 2022. Goal is to fill and close registration by early March..*
- *Upcoming Dates & Information*
 - *Season Dates – April 2023: Spring Clean-Up and Opening Day*
 - *Monthly Meeting – Next scheduled Board meet is December 2022*
 - *2022 Capital Improvements – Sprinkler work is completed; LAA will work with P&R to schedule meetings for review and support of repair work invoices. Thank you!*
 - *LAKES has approved funding for replacement of the remaining 2 original backstops at HG Park. The tear-down process has already begun.*
- *Needs From Township*
 - *Flagpoles – Installed; will submit receipts for township approved reimbursement funding*
 - *Parking Lot Construction –Some modifications are in discussion I believe for functionality*
 - *SPRINKLERS – Repaired and renovated after many years of service. Map of the completed system is now in existence for future construction reference. LAA can schedule meeting with P&R to review and discuss next steps, and reimbursement for approved portion share.*

Windmill Farms (Horse Farm) – Carrie Hancock

Ms. Hancock shared the following with the Committee:

- As you know, my contract has been terminated. There has been no change in the status of that.
- Last time I was here, I was looking for a recommendation to address that. You had asked me to wait until I met with Larry.

- I met with Larry. He wanted me to create an exit strategy, which I have. He also informed me that they are working on a new RFP for services for the property, and that I could bid on it.
- My exit strategy would be a plan that has services in place until a new RFP is completed, where I would have the opportunity to bid on it. If I'm chosen, we would continue with whatever it is that this new RFP is looking for. If not, there is also transition time so there's no gap in services to the public, which is consistent with what I was informed by this Committee, procedures into how you continue services so there's no gap to the community.
- I know of no reason why to not continue services. There hasn't been complaints. There isn't anything going wrong over there at the farm. It's just people are very concerned about not having access to ride.
- I would like to see a recommendation from this Committee to follow a transition plan that keeps services in place until a new RFP has been completed and there is an implementation plan.

Mr. Berkheiser – This Committee hasn't seen a transition plan. Have you sent that? I'm not aware of it being put on the agenda for this, so I would think it would be hard for this group to ...

Director England – It was sent to the Township Board, correct? You sent it to the Township Board.

Ms. Hancock – Yes.

Director England – And it was sent to Larry, but Larry did not accept that plan. That is why it's not here before the Committee.

Ms. Hancock – I did not know Larry did not accept it, because it's my understanding according to my contract that it's a Board decision. We had asked to be on the agenda. It was never publicly discussed. That's one of those issues in my contract that there seems to be a misunderstanding or a miscommunication of contract requirements. The other thing that's in my contract is the importance of this Committee to my operation. I don't know if you're aware of that as citizens, but it's very integral to my contract and the services we provide, keeping updated, making recommendations. This termination never came through this Committee as well. Anyway, here we are with it.

Mr. Berkheiser – Carrie, let me ask then, if you submitted your plan, you just submitted that. To my knowledge, it was a week or so ago, is that correct?

Ms. Hancock – No, it was about ... Larry had about 10 days before the last Board meeting, so plenty of time to get it on the agenda.

Mr. Berkheiser – So what have you done so far to prepare, because once your contract was terminated you had 120 days or 90 days, I don't remember exactly what it is. Have you done anything to prepare for exiting, because I think you were done near the end of December, next month, is that correct?

Ms. Hancock – That is correct. Yes, some of the programs are downscaling, but what's interesting is with the publicity taking place over this, we're actually getting a lot of new riders coming in, so we're continuing services. We have people that are interested in continuing services and are concerned that they can't get an answer as to why the Township feels this is in the community's best interest to shut it down.

Mr. Berkheiser – But you haven't gotten rid of any horses?

Ms. Hancock – Yes, we've moved horses off the property. We've moved programs offsite. You know, you have to go to White Lake and Fenton now to have access to some of our good instructors.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so how many horses are you down to now? You were somewhere around 50.

Ms. Hancock – We have 39 on the property right now.

Mr. Berkheiser – 39.

Ms. Hancock – It's winter, I mean people move horses indoors this time of year. It's difficult to find any type of indoor housing. And also, to feed the horses, it takes fees from the riders to pay for them. We were going full steam, right into September, we're the busiest we've been post-COVID, doing about 400-450 riders a month. And, having the livestock and the personnel in place to support that, and then we suddenly have a termination out of nowhere. So, we've got a large program now we're downscaling, plus accommodating people that want to come in and ride because we're still there and we have to feed the horses.

Mr. Berkheiser – So you just said you had a whole bunch of new people coming in.

Ms. Hancock – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – You're accepting new people?

Ms. Hancock – Absolutely, I have to feed the livestock.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so you're not having any issues feeding the livestock?

Ms. Hancock – It is becoming increasingly difficult as there's transition in place. There's a lot of uncertainty there. People don't like to connect themselves to controversy. Our operation has been exactly what my contract has required me to do. We've followed the contract, gone above and beyond, provided all these services. I was told, this was in the Board minutes when it was terminated, that we're just serving a subset. That was my job, to provide services to people that want to ride horses, just as baseball parks provide for baseball.

Mr. Berkheiser – In all honesty, you were asked to provide expanded services so that we had more visibility and more potential use from the Township, whether that be

birthday parties and scout programs. We've talked about this in multiple minutes. So, how many people have you had to any of those?

Ms. Hancock – Yes, and we offered that and we provide that, birthday parties and stuff like that.

Mr. Berkheiser – We've also asked for you to send us a rolling 3-month list of activities of when things are. We never got that.

Ms. Hancock – Actually, and I can give you a copy if you don't have it, but the last one I gave you ran through September, our September planning. We have a ~~(market and)~~ **marketing** strategy that ran through the entire year. So, there was three documents that were turned in early in the year; February, March, April, that had our calendar and our plan for the year. If you didn't get one, I can certainly provide that.

Mr. Berkheiser – If it was in the minutes, we would have gotten them, and they weren't. What I also wanted to say was ...

Ms. Hancock – Bob, I'm sorry, but it is in the minutes. And if there's something that I can provide you from the minutes, because I've gone all through them very carefully, those are ...

Mr. Berkheiser – We also asked about a website where that was posted. I haven't seen any of that.

Director England – I will make clarification. Carrie did turn in a marketing plan, but there was nothing concrete in that plan with dates, what we could advertise, what we could put on our website. It was a strategy plan.

Mr. Berkheiser – There were also multiple times when you had horse shows, and we didn't find out until after the fact. A lot of that we wanted ahead of time to try to help publicize that. You had open houses; I know we had a discussion at this meeting that you had an open house and another one scheduled. I asked you to advertise that so we could see if there was a difference in people. We never saw that it was advertised.

Ms. Hancock – Okay, so I'll talk about both of those things.

Mr. Berkheiser – I guess-

Ms. Hancock – No, let me address it, please, because that's misinformation-

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay. I'll let you address it, but-

Ms. Hancock – You've mentioned that before, but if you look back in the documented information, the horse shows were announced ahead of time and again, these are not public horse shows. These are for ... they're schooling shows and they're for the kids to practice in front of family and friends. So, Emily was notified and the Parks and Rec Committee, depending on your schedule when you'd come in, that these were taking

place. But it's not something you advertise to the public. It's a schooling show. It's not an open horse show for public viewing, and we've discussed that before.

So, all of those were notified ahead of time. Now, my contract reads that, and we changed the language in it specific to that because, if you're having an event, you prefer 90 days' notice or as soon as possible. Some of those are put together on short notice, and again, I've explained this earlier in the minutes, if you can find it, because it's in-house, so it can be put together on short notice. Many of them you know about ahead of time. Again, it's in the minutes and it has been announced here.

Mr. Berkheiser – What's the purpose of the open houses then, if they're not advertised to the community to try to get them to come in?

Ms. Hancock – We do advertise those to the community. We advertise them at Concerts-in-the-Park. We advertise them on our local websites, the Commerce Township Mom-to-Mom site. There were two or three sites that we did advertise those on. Now keep in mind, the open houses, and we had this discussion before, you have to gauge how many people we are able to accommodate at this time on the property. That was in our strategic plan.

I have not discussed the strategic plan from earlier in the year because it's a broad outline, but to talk about what some of these items on it mean. One of the things we talked about were structured visits. That means accommodating an appropriate number of people at an appropriate time. We've turned in a 14-page ... it was telling about what we do at the farm. There were pictures on it, and I'm sure you saw those pictures at the Board meeting, that there was an open hole where they dug out the water and the water lines for the farmhouse. That hole was put there in June, and it was there until August 31st. You've got an open hole on the property.

You've got pictures in what we presented of water pouring through the roof. Those pictures were taken on our open house days. I'm giving pony rides and those were taken at 4:30 in the afternoon. Our open house was 3-5. There's water pouring like a faucet. Do you really want to showcase that property when it looks like that? Now, we'd be more than happy to have more people out, but it's when it's appropriate. It's not appropriate to have a large number of people wandering about the property, and that's what people do at open houses, they wander around, and it's not ready for that. So we have open houses to a manageable amount of people and it showcases what we do. We always have people show up. We have activities and pony rides available at those, our trainers are there to meet and it's an effective open house. But it's structured to an amount of people that we can accommodate.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay.

Ms. Hancock – So, about this recommendation for a transition plan so there's no gap in services. We had an extensive conversation with this Committee, February of this year, about why an RFP was done. It was only a year into my contract, and an RFP came out. It was explained to me, well, there's going to be something new; it allows for activities to take place so there's no gap in services for the public. So, why wouldn't that apply in this case? This is a well-loved, well-used facility. Why not keep the services in place until something new is available? I am looking for a recommendation that services remain in place until something else is in place on the property.

I will tell you this; to leave that property sitting vacant is a liability to the Township. When I came on, that property had been empty for two months. The barn doors were swinging in the wind. Kids were running around the arena on dirt bikes. Things were being stolen, the gates, the jumps. I was moving new equipment on and it was being stolen as fast as I could get it on there. You don't want a piece of property sitting empty. Why choose an empty piece of property that's a liability over the high-quality service that people love and take advantage of, and there's nothing else like it in the area? What is the benefit? That's what I'm not clear about with this whole termination. So I'm looking for a recommendation to keep services in place until something else is available for the property.

Director England – I just want to clarify one thing. Larry did respond to the email, with the latest exit plan, that it wasn't an acceptable plan and he told you that your date was still December 30th. The day that you did send it to the Township Board was actually the date of the Township Board meeting, and that is when Larry told you that you would need to speak during public comments at that time, which you did do.

Ms. Hancock – Well Larry received that plan 10 days prior to the Board meeting.

Director England – And he replied to you, because he copied me on that email.

Ms. Hancock – Right, but again, it's a Board decision, according to my contract. Again, that's where there's a difference of interpretation. And, I have yet to meet with Emily and Larry both to review my contract. I'm out there operating on a contract that, I'm working on it exactly as I see it, and exactly as it reads, and I cannot meet with the people involved to give me guidance on anything different.

Mr. Berkheiser – So if your contract has been terminated by the Township Board, they supersede anything that would be done here. This issue you have, I mean I understand you feel you have to come here to provide information to the Parks and Rec Committee, but your situation is really being handled at the Township Board level.

Ms. Hancock – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – In my opinion, you need to address this at the Township Board.

Ms. Hancock – I have.

Mr. Berkheiser – Well, you've done it through public comments.

Ms. Hancock – Because I could not get on the agenda.

Mr. Berkheiser – Well, because you didn't answer your email until the day of the Township Board, and the agenda goes out 5 days before.

Ms. Hancock – It was requested 5 days before from part of our group that the Horse Farm be put on the agenda, because the farmhouse on the property was also on the agenda.

Mr. Berkheiser – That’s right, because it’s being demolished and that has been in the plans for two years to be demolished. That was a different issue.

Ms. Hancock – Okay, right. It was related to the property, but either way, it was requested 5 days prior to have it added. The other thing, things can be added to an agenda the day of the agenda, the moment of the meeting. Larry had told me the agenda is full, but things were added to the agenda at the meeting. I don’t understand why this couldn’t be added to an agenda as important of an issue as it is to this community, when other things could be added.

Mr. Berkheiser – I wasn’t able to be at that meeting, but in general, the Trustees on the Township Board would like to have all the information ahead of time so they can read it, ask questions, and be prepared for the meeting. Things that get added at the meeting are usually quick and easy type things that need to be acted on quickly. Yours is not a quick, easy thing. It’s a rather extensive plan and, to be honest, your plan is something that’s just kicking the can down the street. You’ve made no effort to do anything from when the termination was done, you’re not changing anything.

Ms. Hancock – That’s an incorrect statement, Bob.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, then tell me where it’s different.

Ms. Hancock – Because I just told you, we’ve already moved programs offsite and moved horses offsite. That’s exactly what we’ve done.

Mr. Berkheiser – So that is I think what Larry would look for; to say by this date, I’m going to be down to 40 horses, and by this date, I’m going to be down to 30 horses. Whatever it is.

Ms. Hancock – We had dates, yes. We did, we had a timeline with dates and I can provide that.

Mr. Berkheiser – I think that’s what we’re looking for, is to show that you’ve met those milestones.

Ms. Hancock – Yes, that is in the transition plan, and also, Larry received that approximately 10 days before the Board meeting, but again, it sounds like he did not forward it. Again, it is a Board decision, not Larry’s decision.

Mr. Berkheiser – He replied to you and had some questions and comments, and you didn’t answer him until the Board meeting. We did get it, but it was the day of the Board meeting.

Ms. Hancock – Right, because Larry didn’t forward it. I mean, I would think he-

Mr. Berkheiser – Because you didn’t answer the email and answer his questions, or comment on his questions. What would he be able to pass onto us?

Ms. Hancock – No, I did. But again, Bob, we have to look at documented information to clarify inconsistencies because you and I have these conversations where there are inconsistencies. Documented information will clear that up, and I'd be more than happy to meet with you on that, but these are some of the issues that we've had with misinformation.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay.

Ms. Hancock – So again, I'm looking for a recommendation that services stay in place at the Horse Farm.

Mr. Berkheiser – I would recommend that we don't make a recommendation. It's already being handled at the Township Board.

Chairperson Petsch – Carrie, we don't have that power to make that recommendation for you.

Ms. Hancock – I'm sorry, I think it-

Chairperson Petsch – This is now in the hands of the Township Board. I read their minutes from the last meeting. All that information is in there. It has basically left this Committee, and we have put out RFPs to try to find ... if it's you, or another vendor, to come in and take over that property for whatever venue the Township Board has sent the RFP out for. At this time, that is all we can do. You have to continue. If you want to get on the Township Board meeting, or go back to Larry, I think that's where you go. There's nothing more that we can do, nor do I recommend that we do make that because it isn't in our power, so we cannot.

Ms. Hancock – Okay, so that's not how I interpret it in my contract, and also, even-

Chairperson Petsch – Carrie, we make recommendations on a program that you bring into us. If it's something that we feel we'd like to see, we'd make a recommendation to the Board to allow that event to happen. But to make a decision on whether you stay open, or closed, or in a transition period between when your exit strategy is, until we fill the RFP, is not a decision that is made here. We do not have the power to make that recommendation.

Ms. Hancock – I imagine you could make any recommendation that benefits the recreational opportunities for the public, according to what I read.

Chairperson Petsch – That would be against what the Board of Trustees has already issued, so I don't think we're going to do that.

Ms. Hancock – A recommendation? Okay. Any other questions? One thing you did mention last time, I'm working on this manure management plan; you had talked about me not having equipment to spread manure. When I talked about spreading material, it means ... you have to understand that what's there, because we are slowly over the years removing the old built-up compost, which is now topsoil, ~~(4)~~ **40** years of accumulation, which is good land management planning for that property, removing

that, which the berm is primarily made up of what's topsoil now. So when I talked to you about spreading it, that means we have heavy equipment come in, bulldozers and loaders, and move that onto areas that would benefit from topsoil. So it doesn't mean whether I have a manure spreader or not, we don't spread it with a manure spreader. It's heavy equipment that comes in and moves it into an areas where it would be of benefit, to answer your comment from last meeting. Any other questions? All right, thank you.

Chairperson Petsch – Thank you, Carrie.

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

- Commerce Little League
- Lakes Area Hawks

ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- Obviously, you've heard a lot of the Horse Farm stuff.
 - You heard some comments about the farmhouse demolition.
 - There were some contracts approved. I believe Larry was given approval to have that done, but we did have some folks that might have been interested in the property in general, and asked us to hold off so they could meet. They're in the middle of that, looking at the house.
 - Again, with that, unless the property is purchased, the house is going to be demolished, probably by the end of this year.
- We had a lot of Board appointments in November.
- There was an RFP approved for realtor services. We have certain properties around the Township that we are bundling together. I think it's 6 properties that are going out to be sold. One that comes to mind is a piece of property that we own. It sits behind Clifford Smart Elementary.
- Most of our meetings have been budget discussions and some SAD approvals.

Chairperson Petsch – Bob, most of those properties that are bundled, are they usually adjacent to homeowners?

Mr. Berkheiser – There's two different processes going on. Small, what we would call non-buildable lots, maybe they have wetlands, that are next to your property or around a couple pieces of property, those homeowners would receive a letter giving them the opportunity to purchase that piece of property, which are priced depending on whether they are small, medium, or large, ranging from about \$1500 to \$6500. For you to own it, maybe that would expand your property enough that you could expand your garage or something like that. We've had several folks that have bought adjacent pieces of property. They're not buildable lots. They'll be combined with the current property and they can't split the property later. There are certain rules to doing that. We've had several of those done in and around neighborhoods.

Then there's this one which are buildable lots. We have 6 of them in the Township. We had more, but there were some that the Board decided they didn't want to sell, for whatever reason. The 6 properties have been sent out on the RFP for a realtor. Have we received bids back?

Director England – No, it was just posted last Wednesday.

Mr. Berkheiser – Right, so we'll evaluate those, choose a realtor and let them sell the properties for us.

Ms. Waterworth – Are those just for residential?

Director England – Residential.

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England discussed the following:

- The majority of everything is in my board report.
- The Senior Center is thriving.
- We're gearing up for our January/February newsletter. The seniors are excited and we're excited to get that out.
- The biggest thing is our Christmas Tree Lighting event scheduled for this Saturday, from 4-8. They were there last week to put the lights on, and the Maintenance Department is bringing the Christmas trees over so we can get ready for Santa. We're pretty excited about it, so come join us at the Richardson.

Ms. Waterworth – Did we get the pickleball nets?

Director England – No. The posts for the pickleball nets had a longer lead time. We didn't want to accept a lesser product, so we're waiting for those to come in. We also could not paint the courts because the temperature dropped too much, so we decided to wait until spring. We have had people out there with portable nets. They're enjoying them.

Mr. Berkheiser – In your update, you have that *we're addressing issues over at the Hickory Glen parking lot*. Can you update us on that?

Director England – Yes, all that work just got approved at the end of last week. We are staying within our original budget amount. I know you've been over there to see it. The idea was to organize parking, but when you put it on a piece of paper, you have lines that show parking spots. When the final product was done, it just looked like a big open driving area. Now we're putting in some more roping to designate parking areas versus non-parking areas, and putting in parking blocks to designate where people should park. We walked the site with the league, addressed the issues that they had. Some of their gates were blocked, so we're moving some fencing and dealing with that. It will all be finished and ready for their spring season. It looks nice and we're fixing the issue.

Chairperson Petsch – It does look a lot better.

ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park

- Speaking of Hickory Glen, I just told Mark about the board on the bridge that's missing.
- On the baseball diamonds, they have flags. Are those kept up year-round?

Director England – For the numbers, they typically do. It's the sponsorship ones that come down.

Ms. Waterworth – Okay, one of them is half hanging and I'm concerned it's going to blow off in the wind.

Director England – Okay.

Ms. Waterworth –

- We have tons of trash bins out there, but somehow, the trash doesn't make it there. I like to do an eco-walk out there to pick up trash.
- Other than that, the park looks fine.
- The trails are looking good.

Mr. Berkheiser – Mark, do we leave all of the trash cans out there when there's no baseball season?

Mr. Schoder – No, we limit it during the winter. We only put a few out where they're needed and put away the rest. A lot of the garbage that you're talking about is when they empty the cans, the trucks dump trash everywhere. We were out there today, picking up garbage and moving leaves off the grass.

Walker – Maple Glen & Windmill Farm

- Maple Glen looks really good. I was there over the weekend. It was nice weather so we had a lot of people walking around, dogs playing and people still using the baseball diamonds for fun items.
- I'll be your liaison so if you need anything, let me know.
- Otherwise, it's a nice little park.

Garbutt – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- At Long Park, there's still lots of people walking around, looking at birds and taking pictures as they're migrating.
- That's about all that's going on right now.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- Nothing new to report.
- Waiting for that equipment.

Director England – The equipment is in. They're just waiting for an install date because they're having staffing shortages.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- At Dodge Park, there were a lot of people there on Friday after Thanksgiving. There were at least 20 cars in the parking lot. Quite a few people were letting their dogs run on the soccer fields.
- Are the restrooms closed?

Director England – Yes, they're winterized. There is an outhouse over there now.

Mr. Krueger – Yes, I saw a porta-john. Everything looks great and everybody seemed happy.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- Byers looks good. Nothing to report.
- I couldn't get into Mill Race to see the concrete, but there's some new graffiti on the front, and some on the trees.
- Other than that, the park looks good.

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- On the Wise Woods side, the parking lot gets used. It's not packed, so I guess that's good and it means we picked the right size.
- On the Victory Park side, I still see some cars parked where we project to put in that parking area.
- Obviously we're getting ready to do our Park Master Plan, and we've had some initial discussions with CW3 to look at the Victory Park side.

Director England – We did have damage to the Wise Woods sign. It looks like somebody ran it over with their car, but there's no tire marks. It looks like somebody intentionally vandalized it. We have a new sign ordered to be installed.

An update on the Land & Water Grant that we applied for, for Victory Park; the final scores are rolling in so we should hear if we've received that grant or not by the end of December.

ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Waterworth discussed the following with the Committee:

- They're having Snacks with Santa on Saturday, December 17th from 1-3pm at the Richardson Center.
- If anybody likes to drive around and look at Christmas lights, Wolverine Village is having a holiday home decorating contest.

ITEM 6: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- The BMX track at Victory Park has been leveled.
- We are working on all the parks to get the leaves off the grass, and all the trails should be clear.
- We have 25 boards on 3 bridges that need to be replaced. We'll get to those this week.
- The trees at the Library will be taken down Monday or Tuesday of next week.
- We did get our sickle bar so we can start using that along the parks and pathways.

ITEM 7: SCARLET'S SMILE SIGN

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- In your packet, you'll see what they're looking to do.
- Scarlet's Smile has asked to be allowed to put a sign underneath the Dodge Park sign that says "Scarlet's Smile". They would pay for it.
- We just need approval or disapproval.

- They did send a quote. It's \$836.40, which they would cover.

Mr. Berkheiser – Does that include installation?

Director England – Yes, from the same company that did the sign. Typically we don't do something like this. I know CW3 has asked to put signs up, and we allow them to put their banners up. I don't have an issue with doing this, just know that if you do this, you're going to get requests from other organizations that are going to want the same thing. That's fine.

Mr. Krueger – Are you just looking for a motion?

Chairperson Petsch – Well, let's have a discussion, then we'll make a motion.

Director England – This isn't just a one-time approval. We need to have discussion.

Chairperson Petsch – In the past, this board has not been in favor of putting up permanent signs to advertise something. Now, in the case of a playground, I think that the playground is there. It is Scarlet's Smile, and that's what it's known as.

Director England – It's a destination.

Chairperson Petsch – Correct, and it's a permanent part of that park. I think even though we may be stepping out of our bounds a little bit on what our normal policies are, I think this is different than what we've denied in the past.

Director England – I would agree. It's not an organization. It's a structure.

Chairperson Petsch – It's a structure that's permanent in the park. I think we discussed this when we put up our park signs originally, possibly adding information to the sign for permanent structure, whether it be an address board or anything of that nature.

Mr. Krueger – Well, I totally support putting the sign there. I actually remember looking for Scarlet's Playground before this all occurred. There was a sign off Commerce Road which misleads you as it's a back door. For what it is, I think there could be an exception.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Would that be how it reads, *Scarlet's Playground*, and then have the handicap sign?

Director England – Yes.

Ms. Schwartz – Will we need to change any of our policies for this exception?

Director England – No. It's kind of an unwritten rule, but I support the fact that this is a structure and not an organization.

Ms. Waterworth – What's the purpose of asking for it now? The park has been there for a while.

Director England – They get a lot of calls. It has technically been about a year since the park has been open and flourishing, the playground piece of it. This is something they had talked about during that time. They are actually a foundation, so Scarlet's Smile gets a lot of calls wanting to know where it's at because it's not identifiable at the park entrance.

Ms. Schwartz – I think we were talking about a splash pad previously, and that would also have been a charitable organization. I think it's something we need to think about down the line. Are we going to end up having two or three signs? Also, going forward, we're going to have Victory Park and somebody might donate equipment. I think we are setting a precedent because we are allowing charitable organizations to come in and donate structures and the signs will be something we have to deal with down the line.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Is that permanent naming rights? Or do they pay for the naming rights for so many years that they take care of it? Does Scarlet's own the permanent naming rights?

Director England – That's in their agreement that they had with us when they built it.

Vice Chairperson Walker – They'll take care of it?

Director England – They do not take care of it. We do.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Okay.

Director England – They paid for the entire project, with the exception of the restrooms. We added that piece on. That project was over \$1 million that they raised. In their agreement, once they were done, it became the property of the Township, but the name Scarlet's Smile will always be a piece of it, because it's named after Scarlet.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Okay.

Ms. Garbutt – I think this is very important that we put the sign up. I've stopped by and I speak to people very often. I ask them how they like the playground and how it's going. I've even had some calls when there were kids doing things they shouldn't be doing. I think for people who have handicap people in their car, they have children to look after in the car, and they're looking for the park, we need to help them every way we can.

Ms. Schwartz – Are we saying right now that we're going to take this case-by-case? I think it's important for the public to know, and in the future when we look back at these discussions. I want to make sure we are saying, we are taking this case-by-case. This is not necessarily precedent.

Chairperson Petsch – Krystal, I see in the future when we develop Victory Park, we're definitely going to have to put a kiosk at the entrance of that, because we will have a nature center on one side, and recreation to the east and so-forth. In this case, everybody knows that's soccer fields and playground.

Director England – This will have to go to the Township Board for final approval.

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, it will be case-by-case.

Mr. Berkheiser – We don't have addresses on our signs.
Director England – The new signs do.

Mr. Berkheiser – If somebody looks this up, is there an address online?

Ms. Waterworth – Yes, if you just Google Scarlet’s Park, and it automatically says, Scarlet’s Playground and it has an address to the park.

Mr. Berkheiser – If you click on it, it takes you to the park?

Ms. Waterworth – Yes, and we’re 7 minutes away.

Mr. Berkheiser – So, I don't understand people calling to ask where it’s at.

Discussions continued regarding several addresses listed for Dodge Park, people having difficulty finding the south entrance, GPS routing issues, and defining the physical address for the playground.

MOTION by Walker, supported by Garbutt, to recommend approval, to the Commerce Township Board of Trustees, of the request for the Scarlet’s Smile playground sign as presented, to be added to the Dodge V Park sign.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Walker, Garbutt, Petsch, Krueger
NAYS: Waterworth, Schwartz, Berkheiser

MOTION CARRIED 4-3

ITEM 8: COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Chairperson Petsch – I will open the floor for recommendations. We’re looking for a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary.

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Berkheiser, to appoint Johnny Walker as Chairperson to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Discussion –

Petsch – Mr. Walker, do you accept the nomination?

Walker – Sure.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Walker, to have Barbara Garbutt remain as Secretary to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Discussion –

Petsch – Do you accept?

Garbutt – I can do that. Thank you.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION by Walker, supported by Garbutt to appoint William Petsch as Vice Chairperson to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Discussion –

Petsch – I’ll accept.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 9: 2023 PARK EVENTS

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- This item was on here twice, so we can eliminate Item 11 from the agenda.
- We're gearing up for next year.
- We have our Concerts-in-the-Parks.
 - We have 5 of them again.
 - I think we're missing one band.
 - We have a meeting set up with JAG Entertainment within the next couple weeks to finalize that.
 - Allison has been working on getting the food trucks.
- We will continue the Holiday event next year. We will see how this year turns out and we'll look at expanding that.
- I think the big question we had was our M-5K.
 - This was our 3rd year.
 - The 1st year, there was a lot of excitement because the trail was just completed, so we had over 100 people. Then we had COVID.
 - We came back after a year off. Last year we had 65 people.
 - This year we had 32, so it's falling.
 - It's a great event. The problem is that we're in competition with a lot of other large races.
 - We talked to the timing company and they suggested us moving it to the spring.
 - We wanted to have open discussion here. If you want to try to a spring run, we need to start advertising that now. If not, we can give it a go again in the fall next year.
 - This year, we did try to do the M-5K9, but we only had one person sign up for it.

Mr. Berkheiser – The timing company, is that one that does a lot of the races around?

Director England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – So they suggest spring is a better time frame?

Director England – Yes. And we use Run Signup, which if you're a runner, you go there to find races. There are a lot of races in the fall.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, we do the Outrun Hunger and that was just a couple weeks ago.

Chairperson Petsch – I think give it a try, see what happens.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do you have a date picked, or are you going to work with them? When you say spring, what does that mean?

Ms. Kennedy – For me, spring would be more May, not March or April. I'll work with them.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay. For the most part, you're not going to be able to start doing things until January and it just doesn't seem that you have a lot of time.

Director England – Allison is like a well-oiled machine. She's got this all together.

Chairperson Petsch – How about if we tie it into Oktoberfest and we have brat and beer stations?

Director England – We've had a lot of discussion about that.

Chairperson Petsch – I'll go, with my e-bike.

Ms. Kennedy – The question then was do we do one in the spring and one in the fall? I don't want to do two and only get 15 at each one.

Chairperson Petsch – How much work is it, Allison?

Ms. Kennedy – It's a lot, but I think at this point I have most of it down. The biggest thing is advertising it and getting it out to the community. I think that's my biggest downfall. I don't know what else to do to get it out into the community, beyond what we're already doing. I'm not a marketing person.

Director England – Which is why the timing company suggested a spring run because people are ready to get out of the house, and you search on Run Signup and find any race and how ever many miles you want to set for yourself.

Ms. Kennedy – We had people from Woodhaven and Livonia. They loved it. I thought that we would get a ton of people by doing it as a fundraiser for a dog park and advertising it that way, and having it be a dog walk.

Director England – It was odd because the week of the race, we had so many companies calling us wanting to sponsor it.

Mr. Berkheiser – Did you keep their name and number?

Director England – Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so pick something in May and work with them as to what works best. Keep it away from Memorial Day, early May maybe.

Ms. Schwartz – Call the schools.

Ms. Kennedy – We tried that the first year. We gave flyers to the high school coaches because they practice at the Richardson Center, but still nothing. But, in the fall, they have cross-country meets on the weekends.

Chairperson Petsch – Let's try spring and see what happens.

Mr. Berkheiser – If it doesn't work well, that gives you the answer.

ITEM 10: PARKS & REC BYLAW CHANGES

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- This is just cleanup.
- The Township Board already accepted these terms.
- There's a memo in here from the attorneys explaining why. It's just that this phrasing should allow the Parks and Recreation Committee to automatically adopt and apply any future OMA amendments allowing remote electronic participation without having to amend its bylaws each time.
- I included a redlined copy in there so you can see the changes. It's just housekeeping.

MOTION by Petsch, seconded by Krueger, to approve the Parks & Rec Bylaw Changes as presented. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS

None.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for **Monday, December 19, 2022, at 6:00PM.**

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Garbutt, supported by Schwartz, to adjourn the meeting at 7:06pm. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Barbara Garbutt, Secretary