

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

Monday, October 23, 2023
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Walker called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Johnny Walker, Chairperson
William Petsch, Vice Chairperson
Bob Berkheiser
Krystal Schwartz
Ron Krueger
Laura Waterworth
Absent: Barbara Garbutt, Secretary (excused)
Also Present: Emily England, Dir. of Senior Services/Parks & Recreation
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director
Leah Groya, Consultant

Mr. Berkheiser – I want to amend the agenda to add a resignation letter that we have to accept before it goes to the Township Board.

The item was added as 11A., before 11B. Other Matters.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Petsch, seconded by Krueger, to approve the September 25, 2023, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Walker opened to Public Comments.

Marie Botsford – It was nice to meet most of you at the park walk-through. I represent a group called the Four Towns CAT, the Citizen’s Action Team. We are working together to try to repurpose part of the Oakland Community College (OCC) Highland Lakes campus. The campus is scheduled to close in 2025, at which time the property will be offered for sale.

Currently, we have a petition on change.org with over 1,200 signatures. With your help, our group is interested in transforming part of the 160-acre campus into a recreation and community center, serving not only the Four Towns communities, which are Commerce, Waterford, West Bloomfield and White Lake, but all of Oakland County. The property has so much potential and would offer a wide variety of services and programs to meet the needs of the growing population. The large front lawn area has

been used for youth soccer and football. There are tennis courts, a baseball diamond, a small amphitheater and hiking trails.

The existing structures include a large physical education building with a weight room and indoor courts that are currently being extensively used for pickleball. The student center building would be ideal for continuing education and events.

Many local communities are using available state and federal funding for repurposing existing educational structures into similar recreation and community centers. Our goal is to follow their example by saving part of this beautiful, beloved property and utilizing it to purposefully enhance our community. We are working with OCC Chancellor, Peter Provenzano, Oakland County Parks & Recreation Director, Chris Ward, and Waterford Township Supervisor, Gary Wall, toward a shared goal to create a multipurpose community center supporting youth and adult activities and education.

The Lakes Church, also located at the corner of Cooley Lake Road and Hospital Road, has expressed an interest in purchasing one of the existing campus buildings for their new location as they are quickly outgrowing their current building.

I thank you for your time. We appreciate any information, insight or interest that you might have in this project. Attached are some of our ideas regarding the property and its potential. We're hoping we can all work together, our Four Towns community, to try to make this happen. I did give Krystal the handouts with our ideas and goals.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, you understand it's not in Commerce. It's in Waterford.

Marie Botsford – Right.

Mr. Berkheiser – And, this is a recommending body, so it's great for informational purposes. You need to contact the Supervisor, and I would suggest that you do a similar presentation to the Township Board on the second Tuesday of the month so they're aware. My guess is that financially, we would not be able to do anything because it would be Commerce Township dollars being spent in Waterford, but certainly we can support things through a resolution. Talk with Larry about that.

Have you talked with our County Commissioners? I know you're talking with the County Recreation people, but we have two County Commissioners in Commerce; Christine Long and Ajay Raman.

Marie Botsford – Right, we have a list of elected officials that we plan to contact. We are just hoping that funding-wise, maybe we can make something happen. Thank you.

Chairperson Walker – Thank you.

Chairperson Walker closed to Public Comments.

ITEM 1: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

Interlakes Girls Softball – Tim Bailey

- We just completed two weekends, in the beginning of October, of a very successful fall tournament. I think they had upwards of 40 teams out there over the two weekends.
- After that, we contracted with a company to bring in some new dirt and redress all of the fields.

- I don't know how they measure this, but for some of the fields it was 65 yards, and two of the other fields were 30 tons.
- It's crushed limestone dirt that they put on top of the field and they re-level everything.
- I talked to the contractor and he said that we are taking very good care of the fields. He was very impressed with the current condition.
- They're also going to bring in 35 yards of 21AA gravel to place in front of the dugout entrances where they are washing out. The 21AA should compact that down and hold it in place.
- We did that at a total cost of about \$14,000.
- We plan on participating in the Trail-or-Treat event.

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

- We've only had one cancellation this fall so far.
- Our final house/rec and developmental program is this Sunday, October 29th.
- We do have a few matches scheduled the next two weekends into November, so the last actual scheduled match is Sunday, November 12th.
- On November 13th, we are closing down the sprinkler system.
- From the 13th through the 16th we will be doing a major amount of fall field maintenance. The northeast corner of the parking lot closest to the field entrance is going to have a few tons of top dressing sand on it for a few hours and they will get it all cleaned up like they always do.

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz

Dean Schantz shared the following:

- We just had our Boo-Bash over the weekend on Saturday.
 - We had slightly under 500 patrons.
 - We had lots of compliments about the barn and the park.
 - We had 11 kids volunteer from Walled Lake Northern. They were very helpful.
 - We did the event in half-hour increments. We almost ran out of parking during the first half hour.
 - It went really well and there was a lot of interest in touring the farmhouse.
- We are doing the farmhouse Open House in a couple weeks.
 - A lot of people are interested in finding out the history of Commerce.
 - We will do an improv tour of the farmhouse.
- We have the Christmas event happening in a couple months.
- It was all very positive.
- We're looking forward to the Boy Scouts in early November for the park cleanup.

Director England – What is the date for the farmhouse Open House?

Karen Schantz – It's on our Sunday that we're open in two weeks.

Mr. Berkheiser – Dean, last month when we were there, it looked like the barn could use some paint on the north wall. Is that something you guys are looking at over the winter and get some prices?

Dean Schantz – Yes. I know you mentioned something about getting quotes on the electrical too.

Mr. Berkheiser – There are certain things that we're willing to share or work with you on and share costs so that hopefully we can get more done than we would otherwise. I know you have all of that artwork, but I know the north wall needs paint. I didn't really look at the south and ...

Dean Schantz – The south and east are done. We just need to do the north and the west. The north will be the most maintenance intensive.

Mr. Berkheiser – I know you have a lot of projects that you're working between now and then, but once we hit January, maybe you can get some quotes.

Dean Schantz – Yes, we'll put something together. We also need some trees looked at.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Yes, we saw that.

Director England – Mark met a tree company over there already, so he's working on getting some quotes.

Discussions continued regarding deadfall and nuisance trees to be addressed at Byers.

Director England introduced the new concessionaire for the Township property located at 2552 Wixom Road, which will now be known as the Silo Ranch of Commerce Township. She pulled up their website on the overhead.

Silo Ranch – Dawn Ray

- We are having an Open House this Saturday, October 28th from 12-4 to show people around the barn and see what's coming up.
- We will have some riding camps over the summer, along with riding lessons and boarding.
- We will have lots of opportunities.
- We have a community garden coming in the spring.

Director England – They have been at the property doing a lot of work and cleanup, getting ready for the weekend for the Open House. They will have pony rides, food trucks, kids' activities, and tours of the barn to let people know what they have upcoming. Dawn and her crew have been working hard on getting the fence replaced. I drove over there today and saw that the whole fence is torn down along Chicory Lane and the new posts are in. The property is getting the facelift that it needed. We are excited to work with them. If the Committee members are available on Saturday, go see what they have to offer. Dawn and her group will also be participating in our Trail-or-Treat on Friday night as well.

Chairperson Walker – Awesome. I see that the manure pile is three-quarters of the way gone.

Director England – It's gone.

Chairperson Walker – Oh, is it gone now?

Dawn Ray – Yes, it's gone.

Chairperson Walker – Yes, I saw a bunch of pictures and I started following as soon as I saw it. I was talking to one of your supporters.

Mr. Berkheiser – Dawn, do you have a Facebook page?

Dawn Ray – Yes.

Director England – Yes, and we've been sharing. They posted the Open House today. Commerce Township did a post for them last week. We are sharing events and trying to cover all the bases.

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

- *Lakes Area Hawks*
- *Lakes Athletics Association*
- *Motor City Mountain Bike Association*
- *Commerce Little League*

ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- It's budget season. Every other week we meet and go over sections of the budget. Emily is on tomorrow night, so come in and support her. That is what our special meetings have been.
- We have been in negotiations with the firefighters, so we are working on the contract for them. I've been told they agreed with the contract, and the Township Board needs to discuss it. We expect that to be finished up tomorrow night.
- We did renew the GFL contract for trash collection. There were some questions on that. There were increases, which weren't dramatic, and we renewed for 3 or 5 years. There were also fuel surcharges, and that has been clarified. That could result in some increases that would get settled by the next year's SAD. They are small amounts overall that work out to somewhere between 20 cents to \$1.00 per household for a month, depending on the cost of fuel.
- We did snow removal contracts.
- As you've heard, we approved the concessionaire agreements.
- The Library got approved for a generator.
- We did a resolution stating that the Township Board is opposed to the State taking over our local zoning issues. There's a big topic that is actually being voted on this week in the State House. It's a power utility organization trying to override local zoning. If you are in a community with a lot of open land, and there may be zoning against a solar farm, they will be able to override that and do what they want with windmills or solar. Although it may not affect Commerce Township, the Township Board generally feels that it sets a precedent and we could lose local control and our zoning, where our residents can make their voices known. I encourage you to contact our representatives to vote against that.

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England discussed the following:

- The majority of my items are listed in my written report.
- The Township Board also approved to move forward with the design process for the Bicentennial Park project. That will be designed and construction documents will be developed to go out to bid over the winter for a spring 2024 project.
- I believe the old Township Hall is down now. Mark, is that correct? Is it completely gone at this point?

Mark Schoder – No, there still some there. They are working on the footing.

Director England – Okay. That will be greenspace once that’s done. We’re excited for that day to come.

- Since our last meeting, we had our pickleball tournament and we were at full capacity. Everybody had a great time and we are looking forward to doing them next year.
- We are getting ready right now for the Trail-or-Treat this weekend. If anyone is available Friday evening from 6-8pm to man a station and hand out candy, we would take the help. We have 28 vendors.
- We will be moving forward to finish our planning for our Christmas Tree Lighting event which is on December 2nd.

ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- We just met at Wise Woods and Victory Park for the walk-through. You got an overview of the potential there for expanding out the Victory Park side and putting in the dog park, pavilion, rest rooms, et cetera. Emily can give an update on that.
- A couple of us walked over to Wise Woods with the new parking lot and there is the kiosk that’s not quite done. Mark, are you working on an insert?

Mark Schoder – Emily is working on something to go in there. Whatever she wants, we’re going to do it.

Director England – We’re building it. They don’t make it.

Mr. Berkheiser – Other than that, it looks good.

Director England – An update on the project; the plan is to take that to the Township Board at their November meeting, for approval to move forward with the construction design and to also send that out for bids for an early 2024 project.

Mr. Berkheiser – If we can have all of those projects ready, are we looking to combine them to get a better price? Are they bid separately and together?

Director England – We can try that.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- No update.

Walker – Maple Glen

- I was there last weekend during one of the tournaments that was incredibly busy.
- It's great to see and there was definitely a packed parking lot.
- The fields were full of kids and everybody looked like they were having a good time.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- Pretty soon we will have that area cleared out.
- We're waiting for the money to get approved and then we can get started on redoing that park.
- I have been approached regarding putting pickleball there, and also about indoor pickleball. It's so popular.

Discussion continued regarding pickleball popularity, and the sign-up process which is best for the majority and gives all members equal play time.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- I drove through Dodge Park a few times.
- Everything really looks great.
- It's always fun to see all the kids and everyone playing on the playground.
- I noticed the old playground equipment by the Library is still being used.

Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park

- I've been going in on the Oakley Park side, walking my dog.
- Today was the first time I actually drove into the parking lot and I saw the fence down. I emailed you guys, but I don't know if you already knew about it.

Director England – We did.

Ms. Waterworth – Okay, I also got to test out my new tires. Do we have a grading schedule?

Director England – We will wait until the spring at this point to grade in there.

Ms. Waterworth – Okay.

Garbutt – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- No report.

ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Waterworth discussed the following with the Committee:

- Today was the last day to submit for the Halloween outdoor contest.
- If you like driving around to look at Christmas lights, you might want to go drive around this weekend and check out Wolverine Village to see the Halloween decorations.

Discussion continued regarding decorations for Halloween and Christmas.

ITEM 6: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mark Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- We have started putting together the new picnic tables. The handicap tables look really nice. They will work out great. We will distribute those to Scarlet's and Richardson.
- We ran the chipper and did some more chipping at the horse farm and at Scarlet's. We put some on the Mill Race trails. We will rent a chipper one more time this year to finish that up.

Mr. Berkheiser – Mark, how do you decide where the picnic tables will go. The pavilion by the Library gets used a lot. Is that someplace that we already have them?

Mark Schoder – No, this is the first time we've had handicap type tables. They're really nice.

Director England – All of the picnic tables are ADA accessible. We did order a few that have the extended top. We will put some in heavily used areas. Obviously Scarlet's and north Dodge will get some. We can order more as needed.

Mr. Berkheiser – North Dodge, meaning the Library, because we used CDBG funds to access that.

Director England – Correct.

Mark Schoder –

- By November 1st, we will winterize all of the sprinkler systems and buildings.
- The pavilion pad at Long Park is finished. We will get Emily pictures of that.
- We finished the bridge peak that kids were throwing rocks at and they had busted the wood up. (Mark distributed a photo of the bridge repair.)

ITEM 7: REVIEW DRAFT MASTER PLAN

Director England – I sent the draft plan out to everybody earlier this week in hopes that you could review it. We are going to run through it quickly with you. If you have any questions, corrections or comments, we can address those.

Leah Groya gave a brief overview of the draft Master Plan. This is the first full draft that the Committee has seen, so it is for comment and discussion. She explained that once the Committee is good with the draft plan, she and Emily would make the edits and look for approval to have the Plan released for public review. The DNR requires that the Plan be available for public review for 30 days prior to the official public hearing. December 18th would be the public hearing and adoption by the Parks Committee, so the draft would need to be out to the public by November 17th or so, and that will be notified per the usual methods. The Township Board would have the Master Plan on their January 9, 2024, agenda for approval. The DNR's deadline is to submit to the State by February 1st in order to be eligible to apply for grants at the April 1st deadline.

Mr. Berkheiser – On Page 5, at the top, it says we are in the southwestern portion of Oakland County. Is that a picture there of the County?

Leah Groya – It's a portion of the County.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay.

Chairperson Walker – That's about a quarter of the County.

Mr. Berkheiser – I assume you will fill in all of the dates on those blanks?

Leah Groya – Yes, why don't I do a 5-minute scroll through the Plan, and then we can come back if people have particular pages and comments. If it's a typo, comma, grammar, et cetera, I love that people proofread, but you can get those to Emily and she can get them to me. We don't have to take your meeting time for that. I'm sure people have read through it to catch that kind of stuff.

Leah Groya continued her brief review of the draft Parks Master Plan, and then opened to comments and questions.

Ms. Schwartz – The property that is now the Silo Ranch is not included on this list.

Director England – That is correct. It is still not considered technically park land, so it's not listed in here. If the day comes that it's ever zoned park, or becomes recognized as an official park, we can do an amendment to this plan and include it.

Leah Groya – That's a good point though. I wonder if staff and the Committee want to identify it in the inventory as an amenity in the community. We can give it a paragraph and a couple of photos. We do mention Proud Lake and a number of different opportunities in the community.

Director England – Yes, I think that's a good idea.

Mr. Berkheiser – If it is not mentioned, is it not eligible for grants if there were any available?

Director England – Through the DNR.

Mr. Berkheiser – So, if there were any, we need to make sure it's mentioned in there.

Director England – That's where the amendment would come in. It's not park property, but if it met a goal and was identified as Township property. Does it have to be zoned park to be DNR qualified?

Leah Groya – No. The DNR would accept applications if you're trying to make improvements to publicly owned property. So, if you anticipate in the next 5 years the potential that you might want to apply for a grant from the DNR for anything on that property, we should definitely highlight it and maybe somehow list it in the CIP, or make some goal statement and make sure we're referencing the Silo property.

Mr. Berkheiser – I think it should be included or highlighted. There's no reason to do a lot of work if there are no grants for that type of property. However, if grant funding is available, we might want to have that in there.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – It is an asset of Commerce Township.

Mr. Berkheiser – We definitely should highlight it, the question is whether there's grants out there. If we have to do a mini master plan for that, I don't know that I would want to spend money doing that if there's nothing out there. We would want a return on the investment. If there is, then sure.

Leah Groya – Let me keep thinking on it. We won't give it its own page in the inventory like the official park properties, but we definitely should summarize it with a paragraph or two in the inventory like we do other facilities.

Director England – Could we do a goal that has to do with public owned property and recreational opportunities?

Leah Groya – Yes, and maybe not even create a new goal, but let's look at our statements under the goals. And, maybe we would mention it in one of the guidelines or tasks.

Ms. Schwartz – I'm not sure if you're aware, but on the 10-minute walk map, the boat launch was not on there.

Director England – It is, it's just tiny.

Leah Groya – It is small.

Ms. Schwartz – Okay. Another question I had was regarding the 2009 document from Oakland County on Byers, that 20-item list. Is that still a relevant list that we are working off of and have we accomplished any items, or is there still 20 items left?

Director England – I think that document is still relevant 100%, and there are still items remaining. We talked about the electrical that was listed in there. That document got into adding an ADA bathroom to the house and things that probably aren't in our future for the property, but there are items that are relevant.

Mr. Berkheiser – On Page 10, on the organizational chart, did that come from Commerce or did we build that?

Director England – We built that.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'm thinking or looking at the Parks & Recreation Committee and maybe we could do dotted lines to the recreation and community partners. I mean they do fall under the Township Board. I'm not sure how the rest of it really relates to it.

Director England – It's not authority, but it's reporting.

Leah Groya – Yes, it's more a relationship line as opposed to reporting.

Mr. Berkheiser – On Page 13, and this has come up in other areas, so I'm curious if we know this. If we do, we could put it in there. We say Commerce Township owns and operates 12 parks and a certain number of acres. What percent of Commerce Township is that? If we know that, could we have that in there?

Director England – We do know that. We figured that out with our property management committee.

Mr. Berkheiser – There's two spots in there where it would be nice to know what percentage of the Township is Commerce Township owned property, and what is the norm.

Director England – Township owned greenspace?

Mr. Berkheiser – Park property, not residential that we're trying to sell. I'm not saying do a lot of work to find it. If we have it, that would be great. Is our park land 15% of the Township? And what is the norm for a community? People say we should have more greenspace, but we already own 25% or something, so how much should we own. Then on Page 15, where we have the total Township which includes Proud Lake, et cetera, if we know the total acres including school and Proud Lake of recreational area available. While we may own 15%, when you add the rest, it could be 30% that's actually recreational in nature.

Director England – Okay, we have it.

Mr. Berkheiser – On each park we have a DNR accessibility rating 1-5. I know what it means by reading the 1-5, but how did you decide that?

Leah Groya explained that the ratings are very subjective. From the DNR's perspective, they want communities to be thinking about accessibility and prioritizing improvements.

Mr. Berkheiser – At Robert Long Park, we have a 3, but I know over the years we've tried to make some of that more accessible, like the fishing pier and other projects. Was that taken into account with this rating?

Leah Groya – I would have to look at our past plans and how we rated it before, but we did talk about the handicap accessible crushed limestone trail. To get to a rating of 4 or 5 is quite a bit.

Mr. Berkheiser – I question the Richardson Center as a 3.

Leah Groya – Okay, I will look back.

Mr. Berkheiser – On Page 33, you have this physical activity and the number rating by sports. It's more of a national thing. I know we go back to 2017, so it has several years. I don't see much difference with covid. I would have thought with all the impact or push

during that time frame, but when I don't see that it makes me wonder if that's valid. Is this the only thing we use and is this what is traditionally used in these reports?

Leah Groya – Yes, we've used it in the past reports about activity participation. I would be surprised if they don't make comment in their report about covid. So, let me look at how they gathered data in that year.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's fine. Then, on the 10-minute walk, Page 36, this is all urban land and urban benefits. I don't really consider us urban. If you lived in the thumb or somewhere remote, rural, you wouldn't have hardly anybody living within a 10-minute walking distance. I don't know what the goal is and what difference it makes, but I questioned the need for that.

Leah Groya – I think there's a couple of things. We do recognize in the text that nuances can certainly be argued. Things like the boat launch and sledding hill that are single targeted activities, does that really count as having something you can walk to and participate in activities. But, the open spaces and neighborhoods, private properties, particularly in the more suburban and rural areas, your yard is a good sufficient size for a lot of people where they are recreating in those types of spaces. I have seen other communities, West Bloomfield most recently, use this type of map to help support developing a new park in an area that might not have something publicly owned.

Also I think in your nonmotorized considerations, and your trails and paths, if you can prioritize connections within a quarter mile of your public park properties, you'll be able to connect people that live in those areas directly to them without having to get into a car or go a far distance. I think they can be pieces to bigger pictures and bigger discussions you might be having in the community.

Mr. Berkheiser – This may not be necessary for the report, but just in general. On Page 46, we talked about forestry management. Did we have that done in 2013, so it's ten years old?

Director England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so one, an update on it or where are we? And two, if those are still our most heavily wooded parks, should we relook at that? And/or should we add other parks to it? Specifically, what comes to me is Mill Race.

Director England – All the plans that we did, they have all been completed. We had the arborist come out, he surveyed the land, gave his recommendations, and the following year we had the suggested tree work done, which was very specific to dangerous safety issues within the parks. It's definitely time to relook at it. Mill Race was not a park that had a forestry plan done, but we can definitely look at all of our parks again. The plans that were done reference the health and age of the trees, so they are still relevant, but as far as the suggested work, it has been completed.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, put on your future list, maybe we ought to look at Mill Race. We commented today that we have people that ride dirt bikes through our bigger parks and

the only way you can shut that down is by opening these parks up for more people to go in. We still have issues in Mill Race.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Well, Chris stated that he is out there on his fields working and he has motorized vehicles on the fields. That's a very open park.

Mr. Berkheiser – Page 48, we talk about social media. We the Township generally have not done well with social media. Are we looking at trying to improve that, at least with the park stuff and our new website?

Director England – I think we've done well with social media as far as getting our message across. Unfortunately, we cannot control the response.

Mr. Berkheiser – I don't think we should control it. We have to let it run its course.

Director England – But social media is a tricky thing, so maybe we add different platforms. We primarily use Facebook and our website, but I think trends are going to different social media platforms. It's something we can talk to IT about to get the message out.

Mr. Berkheiser – Where did the areas of focus come from on Page 53? Are we looking at these as priorities? I don't remember when we talked about some of that stuff, such as developing a DPW yard storage/equipment area to improve operations.

Director England – I don't think that it has ever been discussed here, but it has been discussed internally. I know Larry and Mark have had several discussions on it. As our parks department grows, so does the need to create a DPW department.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is that a parks issue?

Director England – I think it's a joint issue. I think it should still be referenced here because obviously Maintenance takes care of our park land as well as all Township land.

Mr. Berkheiser – So this isn't necessarily a prioritized list in any fashion, because we have the millage due next year and I think things that would lend toward that should be prioritized.

Director England – Correct.

Mr. Berkheiser – When you get into the list on Page 54, you have guidelines and tasks; those aren't prioritized either.

Director England – Correct.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so we still get to decide and we may or may not even do some of these.

Director England – Yes.

Leah Groya – I will say that when Emily and I reviewed your capital improvements priority table, the 2-pager from your current plan, you do accomplish quite a bit of it over the 5-year period. It's a good thing because it lays out things that are on your radar that you'd like to figure out how to accomplish. You might not have the funding to do them all, but it definitely has been used over the past couple of plans to review and keep discussing on an annual basis in your budgeting decisions to determine what your priorities are. Sometimes grant application requests might not be your #1 priority in the Township, but it is the priority of the funding source. There might be a funder who is funding kayak and canoe launches, and it might be your 5th priority but you go after the grant.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's where I was going because we have programs and it says outdoor education. We're talking about the pavilion in Victory Park, but it's not necessarily our first priority.

Director England – It's just an overall vision.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, I think that's it.

Director England – Is everybody happy with the suggested changes and language changes that we just went over?

The Committee was in agreement.

Director England – So, Leah and I can work on some language to add into the goals that will incorporate the horse farm property. What we need from you is approval to release the document, with those changes, to the public. Your next item will be to set a public hearing date which will be at our December 18th meeting.

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Schwartz, to release the Parks Master Plan document to public scrutiny, with the changes made as addressed herein.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8: SET PUBLIC HEARING DATE FOR PARKS & RECREATION 5-YEAR MASTER PLAN

Leah Groya – At your public hearing, you'll have opportunity to hear public comment, and also to continue discussion amongst yourselves if something else comes up.

MOTION by Schwartz, supported by Krueger, to set the Parks Master Plan public hearing date for December 18th.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 9: OPEN SPACE MILLAGE

Director England – This is on the agenda as a placeholder to remind everybody that this will be going on the ballot next year. The Committee approved the language and the millage amount at your August meeting. Continue to educate, educate, educate.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'll make a comment on the millage for everybody to think about. There are two elections that it could go to, August and November. You won't decide that, but

there is a lot of thought being put in as to whether it should be in August or the November election in 2024. If it went in August and failed, it could come up again in November, and in theory, be passed and then we would continue funding. If it didn't go on the August ballot, then it goes in November, and if it fails, then the next time it could come up would be the next election, which could be two years. We would get no funding at that point. The Township Board decides which ballot it goes on.

Director England – The last capture is 2024 so it's going to go on the December winter bill. You, as a Committee, had already made a motion to have this go out in the August election. We had a discussion about it just a few days ago because this will go before the Township Board, and my idea behind this is that I understand we have Board members who do feel that any millage proposal/SAD should go to the November election. The exception to this one, I feel, is that this is a renewal and their taxes are not going up. It would actually go down because of the Headlee rollback. We're not introducing a new tax to them, and this does give us the opportunity to go to them again in November. Both will be big elections in 2024 as we are in a presidential election year. Our last collection will be on this tax bill that's getting ready to go out in December, so the 2024 winter bill.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – In our previous discussion we had at our August meeting, I was a big proponent of the August ballot in case something does happen. We are doing a lot. That will be right after we've had our summer events. People will be aware of what's going on and we are making further improvements. I think we pushed it in case there was a hiccup, then we'd have a couple of months to canvass.

Director England – Correct, and it also ensures there is time to get it on the tax bill.

Ms. Schwartz – It is worth noting that the reason why the November ballot was a benefit was that there are more people voting, so if there is more public buy-in, we know a good amount of the community was behind it. That was the other side of it.

ITEM 10: PARK EVENT UPDATES

Director England –

- We went over the Trail-or-Treat, which is this coming Friday from 6-8pm. That will be on the pathway between Scarlet's Smile and the Library.
- Our Christmas Tree Lighting event will be the next big thing coming up on December 2nd.

Chairperson Walker – We also have the Open House on Saturday from 12-4pm at the Silo Ranch.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Emily, at the Trail-or-Treat, you'll have tables set up along the pathway for us to man?

Director England – Correct. We have businesses that signed up and all sorts of stuff.

Ms. Schwartz – Parking at the Library?

Director England – Correct.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – What time would you like us to be there?

Director England – 5pm.

ITEM 11A: RESIGNATION LETTER

Mr. Berkheiser read the resignation letter into the record:

*It is my deepest regret that I must resign from the Parks and Rec Board. I've been happy to serve for 31 years and have seen great things happen to our parks. My greatest hope is that you are able to find someone to serve who is a nature person who can keep a sharp eye on Long Park. That park is used by more people than we realize who are deeply into nature.
Barbara Garbutt*

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Petsch, to reluctantly accept Barb Garbutt's resignation and to pass the letter onto the Township Board.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 11B: OTHER MATTERS

None.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 27, 2023, at 6:00PM at the Township Hall.

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Krueger, to adjourn the meeting at 8:14pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

William Petsch, Vice Chairperson