

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

Monday, March 22, 2021

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

Due to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services order, this meeting was held via Zoom, electronic video conferencing technology.

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

ROLL CALL: Present: William Petsch, Chairperson
Rachel Kast, Vice Chairperson
Sarah Henderson, Secretary
Barbara Garbutt
Linda Champagne
Bob Berkheiser
Johnny Walker

Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks & Recreation
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director
Larry Gray, Township Supervisor
Jason Mayer, Giffels Webster, Township Engineer
John Padula, Meeting Moderator, Merge Live

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Garbutt, seconded by Kast, to approve the February 22, 2021, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Garbutt, Kast, Henderson, Walker, Champagne, Berkheiser, Petsch

NAYS: None **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Petsch opened to Public Comments.

John Padula – Callers, if you would like to ask a question, please dial *9 to raise your hand.

Mr. Berkheiser asked callers who were not planning to speak to please mute their lines to prevent background noise.

There were no other comments.

Chairperson Petsch closed to Public Comments.

ITEM 1: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

Ms. England – I sent the reports I received ahead of time in your packet. I know that Josh is on. I know that Carrie from the Horse Farm was calling in, and I believe that the Byers crew is on here.

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz, Janice Buchanan

A report was submitted in the packet:

- *Attached are the last two months of Treasurer's reports.*
- *We are working hard on the inside maintenance of the Barn as it really needs a facelift.*
 - *The new candy counter is now complete and we purchased new glass candy jars so that everything matches.*
 - *Dean built the shelf unit and re-stained and poly-coated the antique farm table below it.*
 - *Pat Hildebrand and I revamped the counter with new skirting and table cover.*
 - *We have re-stained the front wood entry doors and back counter and will continue until we get everything restored.*
- *We have also been working on our upcoming Pictures with the Easter Bunny and every appointment slot is filled. We ought to have a great day.*
- *We have scheduled our build days with Kayla for the Butterfly Garden and completion should be after planting day May 16th.*
- *We will take pictures as we go and send them to you.*

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

A report was submitted in the packet:

- *Registration is still open.*
- *Spring registration banner will be removed first week of April*
- *Annual Spring Cleanup: Saturday, March 27th at 1:00pm*
- *Spring season opens at Dodge Park: Saturday, April 10th*

Windmill Farms (Horse Farm) – Carrie Hancock

Ms. Hancock shared the following with the Committee:

- *We've got a lot of kids signing up for Equestrian Team with the middle schools, through Walled Lake, Huron Valley and West Bloomfield. Enrollment is still open for that, so we'll probably know our numbers more toward the end of March.*
- *Our new parking lot is holding up well to the snow plowing and water runoff.*
- *It looks like we'll be riding outdoors soon with the dry weather and the early spring. We're looking forward to that.*
- *Otherwise, everything is going right along.*

Interlakes Girls Softball – Tim Bailey

Mr. Bailey shared the following with the Committee:

- *Registration has closed down.*
- *We have 36 teams, which is up a couple from what we were going to have last spring.*

- We've got quite a number of younger girls participating. In the two younger leagues, I think we've got at least an extra team in each of those, which is really good news because those kids will tend to keep moving up through the ranks.
- We're at right around 300 girls, which is really good.
- I was out at the fields this weekend. We had our draft out there. It was the first time we've had our draft outdoors in a number of years. We usually have it at Total Sports. We decided not to have it indoors this year, and the weather cooperated.
- The park looks really nice.
- We are going to need 10 more garbage cans.
- Thanks, Mark, for getting the water going and the other things you're working on.

Mr. Berkheiser – Mark, when the ball fields open up, do we have enough cans from last year? Are they just stored somewhere and we need to get them out, or is that something where we have to reach out to GFL?

Mr. Schoder – At Maple, we stored them in the restrooms. They're all pulled out. At Hickory, we stored them on a trailer and put them at the Fisher Road garage. All the trash cans are out, but I know we needed more. We didn't get our allotment last year for Hickory or Maple. I'll reach out to GFL and get another shipment.

Ms. England – They were ordering us the large ones, and they never delivered them. They delivered the small ones, but that did not meet the quantity we needed. They owe us some of the larger cans for both Hickory and Maple Glen.

Mr. Schoder – I'll get them to deliver what we need. I still have the list at the shop.

Mr. Berkheiser – Thank you.

John Padula – It looks like we have one more caller with their hand up.

Motor City Mountain Biking Association – Mike Kearney

Mr. Kearney shared the following with the Committee:

- The trail is in great shape.
- It has been getting a ton of usage over the past couple weeks.
- Since the snow has melted, it has been draining well. Our drainage and erosion improvements we made throughout the year last year have been holding up extremely well.
- A few things are planned for the short term.
 - As far as trail days, we'll probably look to schedule something in May. I'll circle around with the ball folks on any tournaments or anything scheduled so we avoid those weekends. Hopefully we can get something going, COVID-friendly, in May.
 - As far as the bridge, Emily, I need to connect back with you for the next steps on the EGLE permit. As a chapter, we can't talk with EGLE without permission or an affidavit from the Township; otherwise, the Township has to submit the permit request. I think Jay was going to provide some direction on that. We're still in a holding pattern there.

Ms. England – Correct. It's on his list to get back to me. The Building Department has been running on a remote work schedule over the last few weeks. I will touch base and remind him.

Mr. Kearney – Thanks, Emily.

Lakes Athletics – Josh Springer

Mr. Springer submitted a written report, included herein, and he also shared the following with the Committee.

- *Opening Day, Saturday, April 24th*
- *Championship Day, Saturday, June 12th*
- *Tournament Dates:*
 - *June 26th weekend*
 - *July 24th weekend*
 - *August 7th weekend*
- *Telephone Poles for Parking Perimeter: Chasing down additional opportunities for obtaining telephone poles at a significantly discounted rate. FB marketplace seems to be our best route. Contacting a lumber mill directly for 7-8ft posts could be an option.*
- *Friday, April 9th will be field cleanup, we'll be putting leaves and branches in the back gated area.*
- *Needs from the Township:*
 - *Richardson Center – Hosting meetings in person at the Richardson Center would be fantastic.*
 - *Backstop Windscreens – In 2020, the Township suspended our acquisition of sponsored windscreens in replacement for some Commerce focused windscreens. Where do we stand with that?*
 - *Outhouse for F1 – Will the Township be providing an outhouse for Field 1, or should Lakes order it and expense it to the Township?*
 - *Parking Lot Update & Bleacher Pads – Start after June 12th and should avoid tournament weekends.*
- I just wanted to circle back. Last year, we talked about the windscreens and we took that to the Township. I wanted to get an update on the status of that because we are at the point where we're going to want to order some windscreens for the backstops. We talked about selling those as sponsorships, and you wanted to look at getting the Township logo on there.
- The only other item is some information that I just sent to Emily about an update to some posts. We can't get big telephone poles, but our contact was able to do some research and give us some other possible options.

Ms. England – Got it.

Mr. Springer – Other than that, it's pretty much like what the other baseball and softball folks said, numbers are up this year. We more than doubled registrations in the last 30 days. That's pretty awesome. We're up, year over year, even from 2019. It's exciting.

Ms. Champagne – Parents want those kids out of the house.

ITEM 2: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Ms. England submitted a written report, and provided the following overview:

- We're still serving meals at the Senior Center on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We are seeing those numbers drop off in the warmer months.
- I think there is hope that we will be able to open up more in the next couple months.
- We are doing yoga and tai-chi on Wednesdays. We hope by May, we can start adding more activities for seniors.
- We do have a Cinco de Mayo celebration scheduled for May 5th, with hopes that we can gather outside. It would be our first senior event for them.
- Taxes are still going good. We still have two days left for AARP taxes. People are still calling trying to get appointments, but we are completely booked at this time. We are taking names and trying to get them help as much as we can.

ITEM 3: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- I'll welcome Johnny Walker. Johnny was appointed, and he is our newest member. He is on for a 4-year term ending in February.
- We approved our mowing contract.
- We've had issue over the years with Lower Straits Lake, weed control and treatment of the lake. There was a meeting held. I believe that SAD expires this year, and they need to decide how that's going to be handled for future years.
- We also have a subcommittee, the Township Property Management & Strategy Subcommittee. Emily and several folks are on it. They are reviewing all Township-owned property to see if it should be retained or sold, and to come up with a pricing plan to get those properties back on tax rolls. When property goes up for tax sale, if no one bids or wants it, it gets pushed to the Township.
- Our Bylaws were approved by the Township Board and are now in place.
- We are reviewing our security company and access into buildings. We're looking for one system that will control everything with one card.

ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON UPDATES**Berkheiser - Wise Woods & Victory Park**

- My parks, some of them are on the agenda. We're trying to get some of the items looked at, such as the Wise Woods parking lot.
- Other than that, there's not a whole lot new.
- I reported last month that we were having issues with people driving over our telephone poles because of the snow.
- I've seen a lot of cars parked on the side of the road. Most are walking dogs back in there. We're getting a lot more use on both sides of the road.

Ms. Garbutt – We have had a lot of people in the cemetery. There were two cars this week, and one truck. I saw the Sheriffs down by Byers, so I turned around, but the minute I got stopped at the traffic light, they left.

People are parking on the flat stones in the cemetery. We did call the Township and talked to them. The same truck seems to be there a lot, early in the morning.

Extensive discussions took place and the aerial plat map was shared to review this area of the cemetery and park, and consider potential solutions. There is a need to create park access and trail connections in this vicinity to eliminate these issues and protect the gravestones. Additionally, the potential for a crosswalk somewhere along Commerce Road was also discussed.

Garbutt - Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- The park is accessible, and I've been there twice in two days. If you go down Decker Road, you can go east on 14 Mile.
- On Sunday, the park was packed. I could not find a parking place.
- I went again today to take a look.
- Mark, God bless you guys, if they don't pick up, there sure is a lot of mess there.
- Emily, are they going to keep both of those driveways open?

Ms. England – No, it will be just the original when it's done.

Ms. Garbutt – Okay, otherwise, I couldn't go into the park. It was open, but no parking spaces.

Chairperson Petsch – Is Welch closed at the intersection?

Ms. Garbutt – No. It was open and I got through there.

Kast - Dodge Park

- Dodge has been super busy every time I'm there.
- Both Scarlet's Playground, and the old playground on the north side, are always full.
- Saturday afternoon, I did see some dirt bikes going through. It looked like they were going along S. Commerce, and then cut through the Library fields and over to Nike. It's something to keep watching for.
- The construction work on Newton, is that going as far back as the parks, or is that stopping at Multilakes?

Jason Mayer – That construction is going to go on the south side of that bypass drain, and it's going to go all the way to the southwest corner of Commerce and Carroll Lake Road, across from the 7-Eleven, and connect to that pump station, and then it goes all the way down to the high school. They are planning to be done with that project in June.

Vice Chairperson Kast – Is it going along the road, or through the park to get there?

Jason Mayer – It's going through the south side of the drain in the park, and then it's going up the east side of Commerce Road, then it crosses over the west side of S. Commerce Road.

Mr. Berkheiser – We were at Dodge today and looking through the new washroom facilities. I can't count the number of people who were there and asking about the washroom and getting it hooked up. Is the only issue we have waiting on the sewer connection, and that's due to the issues over on Newton Road?

Jason Mayer – No, I sent that email out to the Board. The restrooms should be open by the end of April. We came up with an alternate plan for the sewer discharge. We're not connecting to Newton Road and we're not at the mercy of their slightly delayed schedule. The grinder pump; I already met with the contractor and they were going to start on that right away. It's just some restoration, and some fixtures and painting that needs to be done.

Mr. Berkheiser – There will be a lot of happy people with that.

Ms. England – We did get an outhouse ordered to go over there.

Vice Chairperson Kast – Piggybacking on that and the construction project work, I have noticed that the parking has been super busy.

Henderson - Byers and Mill Race

- I walked through Mill Race today.
- There was no more spray paint than normal.
- I noticed a couple areas in the pathway where there are logs that you have to balance on to get across.

Discussion took place regarding concerns with these vertically placed logs that have been placed in the river to create a crossing in this mucky area. Maintenance would look at this issue.

Ms. Henderson – I picked up some garbage, but the floating garbage and beer bottles in the river present concerns. There are multiple garbage cans there. Other than that, the park is beautiful, the bridges look great and there was a lot of activity there today.

Champagne - Hickory Glen Park

- Everything looks like it's moving.
- I see we have it on Item 9.
- It's in full swing with people walking, biking and playing baseball.

Petsch - Bicentennial Park

- Nothing new to report.
- People are finally getting outside and starting to enjoy some of the parks.

Walker - Maple Glen

- I found out Friday that I will be heading up Maple Glen and Windmill Farms.
- I will be making my way there for the first time to Maple Glen this week.
- I've been by Windmill Farms several times. I can second that the parking lot is amazing. It's great to see. It was nice to be able to get in and out of that parking lot this winter without getting stuck.
- I think it's really coming along, especially the roof without the leaks.
- I will be checking out both of them more as time goes on.

ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Champagne had nothing new to report.

ITEM 6: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- Scarlet's Playground is getting packed. We set up that it's going to be cleaned 7 days a week, before anybody gets there.
- We're cleaning all the parks out. You've seen the trash at Mill Race. It will be cleaned up, hopefully by the end of the week.
- Along the roadside, we did S. Commerce, Oakley Park and the M-5 bridge is cleaned on both sides and in the center.
- We're working on a price for the bleacher pads, Emily. We'll get that to you hopefully before the next meeting.
- The well at Maple is going to get disinfected. We will take a water sample by the end of the week, and it's 7-10 days before we get the samples back.
- Bill, the Bicentennial pavilion needs painting. You need to pick out the colors.

Chairperson Petsch – It's in my budget, just get the rollers out. I'm an earth tone guy.

ITEM 7: PATHWAYS (DODGE PARK, RICHARDSON)

Ms. England shared her screen and discussed the following with the Committee:

- I sent this out today. This goes over the pathway projects we discussed last month. Jason is on to answer any questions.
- There's the Richardson Center sidewalk.
- There's also Dodge Park, up by the Library, which we are looking to use CDBG money to cover that. I heard back from the CDBG people at the County. I'm hoping to be able to get reprogramming of those funds on for the April Township Board meeting so we can start bidding the project out.

Mr. Berkheiser – We can't use the CDBG money for both of them, or do we only have a certain amount?

Ms. England – We can, and we have enough, but they have not been very easy to get in touch with. I spent the last month trying to get the response I got today.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is that a County thing?

Ms. England – Yes, and it's different program years. When I do the reprogramming, I cannot reprogram it as a lump sum. I have to reprogram it based on program years. Once we get the program years satisfied to do the pathways up at the north section of Dodge, then that will give them time to give me approval on these pathways and we'll see how much of that they're going to cover. We definitely have enough money to cover both of these projects if that is what we choose.

Mr. Berkheiser – I like this one. This is a nice drawing.

Ms. England – This is the Richardson Center path. Jason did some work on bringing this around the building so that it's not just a stub to the new deck. You can see that it does go to the deck and puts a ramp to make that deck ADA accessible, but then it continues a pathway around the building and you can see where the future pathway

goes off, and that would make the connection to the current pathway that's back in the woods behind the Richardson Center.

Jason Mayer – We tried to match up with the Master Plan that Living Lab put together, but obviously there will be a path to the northwest off that trail around the back eventually too.

Chairperson Petsch – Looks good.

Ms. England – Right now, that is estimated at \$47,292.60. I can keep working on my end.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's a pretty specific estimate.

Ms. England – It's because Jason is that good. So this takes us back to the pathways at the north section of Dodge at the Library. The edges were softened. This is the layout over the topo map.

Jason Mayer – Yes, I think we just used the aerial with the existing topo. We went out and shot some more topo on this too, but it's pretty flat throughout that whole area.

Mr. Berkheiser – Jason, last month, there was potential concern with the piece that's running next to the road. How much space is between the road and the sidewalk, roughly? The concern was that kids could be walking on that and take off over to the driveway as cars are coming in that way. I was curious if there is enough time for mom or somebody to grab the kid before they hit the road.

Jason Mayer – I think it's at least 10 feet.

Chairperson Petsch – That pathway is 10 feet wide, correct?

Jason Mayer – These are 5-foot wide sidewalks. At Richardson, we did 6-foot. We would add another ramp at that north end of the parking lot where there isn't one. There's already a ramp at the south end. We would connect everything so you could basically get everywhere, from the parking lot to either of the play areas and the pavilion somehow. It was almost the most direct ways that I could walk.

Vice Chairperson Kast – In the top area, the play area, that's where the swing set is?

Ms. England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay.

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, I'm good with it.

Ms. England – I just want you to be happy with the layout so that once we get approval from the Board and the County, we can start the bidding process.

MOTION by Kast, supported by Garbutt, to move forward with the proposed plan on the Pathways for Richardson and the Library/Dodge Park.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Kast, Garbutt, Champagne, Walker, Henderson, Berkheiser, Petsch

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 8: REGINA MUSIC BOX - LOCATION FOR DISPLAY

Ms. England – Alyson Lobert, our Librarian, has reached out to the company that has done all of their furnishing within the Library to see what they will charge us to build a box to contain the music box to keep it safe. I've got a couple other leads out there that I will work on to get pricing on cases.

Chairperson Petsch – Would that be like a plexiglass box or something of that nature?

Ms. England – That's what we're thinking, but we want to make sure that the plexiglass is good, so that it's not scratched up.

ITEM 9: HICKORY GLEN CONCEPT PLAN

Ms. England shared her screen and discussed the following with the Committee:

- The last time you saw this, the entry into the park was across from Laguna.
- Jason, because you've talked to Wolverine, maybe you can help me give the proper update on what they said.
- We went out and looked. The idea is, if it's not going to cost a ton more, or if it's relatively the same, why would we put a temporary entrance in here? Why wouldn't we put it down here and make it more of a permanent entrance?
- We actually walked the site with Lakes Athletics and they had concern, as well as us, about the parking spots along these fields here. People just aren't going to use them. They will end up making their own parking.
- Again, we wanted to focus on giving some kind of organization, but still keeping the park feel. We don't want to go in and clear a bunch of trees. We don't want to lay a bunch of asphalt down. We want to use what we have but make parking pods and make it more organized.
- Within this dotted line here, that's still going to be considered overflow parking. After walking the site, I think it's going to be tough to do without removing a bunch of trees. That's still up for discussion, but over here is completely cleared out where we could put in a couple rows of parking.
- The idea is that this will be a drop-off zone. This is already in existence.
- Down here is a turnaround.
- This addressed a lot of the issues that Lakes had. I think it also addressed a lot of issues that our subcommittee had. I think it's organizing the parking, reducing the safety issues we have over there.
- This is the new cost estimate. By moving the entry way, it looks like it did drive the cost up. I will look more into that.

Chairperson Petsch – We'd have both the westerly and easterly entrances?

Ms. England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – Bill, what we looked at when we went over this originally was for an emergency access as we'd been discussing, but if can get it in this place, and depending on what the cost is, maybe we just make this a permanent entrance. We're hoping that it stops all the backup that you would have of people trying to get out of the park. It will be a paved entrance. Our idea was to look at those costs. I was really pushing for the road further east, because cars come up over the hill and you don't see them until the last minute. By moving it down 100 feet further west, it would allow plenty of time to see vehicles. The speed limit, in theory, is 35mph. It's right across from the parking lot to Wolverine Lake. Hopefully that will go through. Jason, did you have contact with the RCOC and Wolverine on whether we would be able to do that or not?

Jason Mayer – Glengary is strictly Wolverine's road. I talked to their engineer and he took it to their counsel. They were in general agreement with this location. Maybe it has to be offset from the Village office slightly. The engineer was concerned about people turning in and out. It wouldn't move that much. They were generally in agreement. It would all be permitted through the Village.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's fine.

Vice Chairperson Kast – The crosswalk is farther to the east, and the other is farther to the west of all this work, right?

Ms. England – Correct.

Ms. Champagne – The crosswalk is right across the street from the party store. A question about those four parking spots on the baseball side. At one point in time, we talked about where you were going to put some handicap parking.

Ms. England – That's an idea. We had talked about maybe making all of this up here handicap parking, but they were pretty confident that people aren't going to park there because of the foul balls. We could identify those as handicap. Josh is on; do you know how much need there is?

Mr. Springer – I think it's probably going to be a pull up and drop off, just because of the terrain. Even with us leveling and putting down millings, I just don't see somebody meandering over there with crutches.

Ms. Champagne – Handicap people aren't always disabled. There's people with lung cancer and respiratory issues that come to see their grandkids and they can't walk. They drive themselves but they can't walk very far. My feeling is, it's a community park and there needs to be some designated areas.

Mr. Springer – There's that little group in between the two fields when you first come in. I would say those four would be a good spot, with access to Field 3 and 4. Then I would probably would say more toward the right, there's a subgroup of four, and then open space in front of Field 6. Those would be my recommendations. I'd probably put one or two over by Field 7 dedicated to that field.

Ms. England – You could put some back here as well.

Mr. Springer – I would prefer to have them more toward the middle, by the concession stand, than out on their own.

Mr. Berkheiser – It doesn't do me any good to park handicap by the concession stand and have to go to Field 1. I think deciding on a couple handicap spots at each field or within reason is good.

That turnaround, the way it's described, when you look at the drop-off turnaround, there's a lot of room in there. We talked about down the line, putting a pad in there and the potential for a pavilion so that if it's raining or whatever, as people are waiting to get picked up, you can be underneath there, and it could also be a handicap area for grandparents to watch ball fields.

I think this is certainly a move in the right direction. Linda, we appreciate Wolverine working with us there.

Ms. England – If you're good with this, I would like a motion to approve the concept so that we can take this to the Board and get their approval to move forward so that we can seek bids.

Chairperson Petsch – We have this funded, right Emily?

Ms. England – This was budgeted, correct. We budgeted \$250,000 for this project. It came in at \$284,000.

MOTION by Champagne, supported by Walker, to approve the Hickory Glen Concept Plan for Parking.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Champagne, Walker, Berkheiser, Kast, Garbutt, Henderson, Petsch

NAYS: None **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ITEM 10: WISE WOODS - PARKING LOT

Mr. Berkheiser – Where are we looking at putting this? It's on the north side of the road?

Chairperson Petsch – Yes.

Ms. England – The cost estimate was \$214,203.78.

Vice Chairperson Kast – Is this where the current pull-off area is on the north side?

Ms. England – It's across from where we always park to go into the park.

Mr. Berkheiser – Jason, is this going to require roadwork done on Wise Road, acceleration and deceleration, the County roadwork?

Jason Mayer – We already have a permit. This project was bid in 2016, and the bids came in high. I'm working with the RCOC to renew their permit. The permit was what you see on the plans here, so there's no accel/decel lanes. Just the approach, and a culvert that goes under the approach. That's what they approved.

Mr. Berkheiser – Oh, okay.

Discussions continued regarding permit reissuing, removal of the crosswalk, bids and paving instead of gravel for the parking lot.

Vice Chairperson Kast – On the drawing, can you explain what’s coming off to the right?

Jason Mayer – That’s limestone and it has fines in it, so you can actually ride a bike and probably even roll a stroller on it. It will have a gravel base, and then we’re going to put fines on top of it, that’s smaller stone that will fill in the gaps and make it a smoother surface, but it’s not pavement, it’s aggregate.

Vice Chairperson Kast – The one going off to the top left is connecting to the existing trail?

Jason Mayer – Yes, all those paths are going to be aggregate gravel paths. The only thing that’s paved is the approach and the actual parking lot.

Mr. Berkheiser – Emily, was this part of a grant program we were looking to apply for?

Ms. England – No. This was a project that has always been on our list to rebid out. We never did, and it seems month after month, we talk about the cars parked on the road. It seems like this might be a good idea.

Mr. Berkheiser – From a budget point-of-view, we just looked at something that was \$280,000, and this is let’s say, \$220,000. We’re looking at \$500,000 – do we have that?

Ms. England – Yes.

Chairperson Petsch – We’ve got to do something over there. It’s been years and we haven’t done a thing to Wise.

Mr. Berkheiser – I absolutely agree, but I want to make sure we have the money to do it.

Chairperson Petsch – We’ve budgeted this over and over, but some of the bids came in so high.

Vice Chairperson Kast – I think this one’s really important too because across the street, the dirt parking lot is in really rough shape.

Ms. England – Yes.

MOTION by Kast, supported by Petsch, to move forward with getting bids for the Wise Woods Parking Lot project.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Kast, Petsch, Garbutt, Henderson, Walker, Champagne, Berkheiser
NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 11: PARK USE POLICY

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- This has been on our radar for a while. Since we're almost reaching completion of our Parks Donation Policy, we felt it was time to work on this, especially with all of the new COVID restrictions, and the amount of requests that come in to host events in our parks.
- I will say that this is actually a hard policy to pinpoint down amongst other local communities, probably because we don't know what road you want to take with it.
- We have a bullet point list of questions. It's a starting point to help guide us as to how you want to manage our parks.
- What stems this is, a lot of years ago, we had a request by a private individual to host a movie in our park. They wanted to put on a public event without requiring insurance. We were advised by our attorneys at that time that once you allow one group, even if it's an individual, to host something like this in our parks, then we have a really hard time telling anybody else no. They advised at that time that we need to set guidelines as to what we will allow within our parks.
- We've managed that way with our insurance requirements. Usually people don't want to do it anymore once they realize that we're going to require them to hold their own insurance for an event, but now it's getting to the point where we have individuals who want to have graduation parties and they want to put up a tent in the park. To me, now they're putting a tent up in a public park, staking claim to that area and hosting a party in our park. Is that the road you want to go down, or do you want to steer them to the pavilions?
- There's obvious things on here:
 - ATVs which we already prohibit. That's within our ordinance.
 - No motorized vehicles in the park except on designated roads.
 - All parks and pavilions are open to the general public.
 - No individual or organization can prohibit use to the general public. I do see us having to revisit this with as many calls and emails as we get regarding Scarlet's Smile. Once Mark gets his department established, we may need to revisit this and come up with a new policy.
 - No overnight camping.
 - No fires.
 - Noise ordinance.
 - No hunting on Township property.
 - Carry-in, carry-out; should you host an event within the park, you must remove all garbage after your event.
 - Destruction of property.
 - Photography, video, audio recording. Right now, they can go and take photographs within our parks. They do that a lot at Byers. I still agree with that if it's a private individual.
 - Alcoholic beverages, tents, tables and chairs; which I went over reserving.
 - Ball and soccer fields.
 - Insurance waivers.
 - Portable toilets. These came up because we did have a resident who wanted to host their birthday party at Scarlet's Smile. They wanted to have it early this month. There was no outhouse, so they called to ask if they could bring in their own. We explained that it's not a problem, but the Township would not be responsible for any damage that happened to it.

- At this point, it's discussion. How do you want to move forward?

Chairperson Petsch – Your first item up there was the tents. I'm sure they're talking about a 20x30, like a wedding tent.

Ms. England – Yes, large tents.

Chairperson Petsch – I'm totally against that. We have pavilions. If that isn't adequate, I don't see that we're going to allow them to bring a tent company and claim an area, which would then encompass a lot of area by the time you're done with whatever event you're having. I'm against that.

Ms. Champagne – You've also got a ton of people, if you're having a party, X amount of cars. Every family comes in with a car, and parking is always an issue, like at Scarlet's.

Ms. England – I'd hate to see somebody set a tent up on a soccer field because they don't realize there's irrigation lines. They don't realize the damage that some of that can cause.

Mr. Berkheiser – The only one that I could think of where we could put it would be at the Richardson Center.

Ms. England – We allow it with a renter. We have allowed them to put tents up at that point, but they have to get approval by the Township Supervisor to do so.

Vice Chairperson Kast – Have we had tents for the concerts in the park?

Ms. England – We discussed it, but we never had to do it. There were little ones, like small canopies.

Chairperson Petsch – Those were just pop-ups.

Discussions continued regarding requests to put in large tents for special events, versus very small tents, such as 10x10, at baseball and soccer fields set up for shade. The small shade tents are not staked into the ground.

Ms. England – The other thing that has come up a lot is that we have businesses who call and want to hold their classes within the park. This goes back to tutors in the Library. It's a public facility, and they're using public property to make money. We've denied them because we didn't have a policy set forth. That's another topic we need to discuss. How do you designate what type of business is allowed to, and which ones are not allowed?

Chairperson Petsch – Well, we've always said no to political rallies, and yes to nonprofits. Anybody that is in for-profit in our parks is a no. That has been our policy all along.

Mr. Berkheiser – I get the intent of what Bill's saying, but it's like saying you can't put political signs up, but you can put these signs up. There's certain things we can't say or

do. Honestly, I think if you're looking at cutting down things, maybe allowing it in one of our parks is the way we cut down the requests. Yes, we allow that, but we only allow it at Richardson if you're renting the facility because you want to use bathrooms and everything else.

People could make the argument that the Boy Scouts were out there camping for three days in the summer. You allowed them to do it, but now you have a church group that might want to go do it, and you're saying no. We might need to think about having certain requirements at certain facilities. We might want to run something like that past the attorneys in your next conversation.

Ms. England – We could use the same language that we use in the Richardson Center policies. That defines the nonprofit organizations that would still have to come before this Board for approval. Talking camping, one group couldn't just decide they want to camp and set up camp for the weekend. They would need to come to Parks for approval.

Ms. Champagne – Is there anything in the verbiage that states that whoever is reserving it needs to be a Commerce Township resident?

Ms. England – No, we changed that at the Richardson Center, but we can put that in here. I think it's going to be tough to enforce. We can look at it.

Ms. Champagne – If they're a resident, you can get to them. If damage is done, they're on the tax roll.

Ms. England – The Richardson Center used to be that way for years, so I get it. Allison, am I missing anything?

Ms. Kennedy – I don't think so. Like you said, the biggest thing right now is that we get calls every day to reserve the pavilion over at Scarlet's Smile. With graduation parties coming up, we are getting an increased amount of calls for people that just want to have their party within the park. I'll say part of that is because Richardson is already booked, or we're not open, so they just want to go to one of the parks, setup a tent and bring in tables and chairs to have a graduation party.

Chairperson Petsch – I think we ought to look into finding a vendor that would be our tent vendor, then we know what we're getting from them, where they're going to place the tent, how they put it in, staking...

Ms. England – You mean at the Center?

Chairperson Petsch – Yes. I know there's a few around.

Ms. Kennedy – I would say we should have a couple options. Narrowing it down to just one can be difficult.

Chairperson Petsch – We should select our vendors though.

Ms. England – I agree, make sure they have the insurance they need to cover any damage they may cause. That's a good idea, an approved list of vendors.

Ms. Champagne – Maybe some of those properties that we own that are doing nothing could be designated as party tent places.

Ms. England – Party places, we just got an email wanting to know how to rent a party place.

Ms. Kennedy – I have a question for Bob. Do you want to look at having different requirements for different parks?

Mr. Berkheiser – Honestly, I was thinking about trying to keep it out of Scarlet's. I don't want them putting tents up over at Dodge. I don't think there's any place that they could, but there might be one square area where they could. I think if we're going to allow that, we have to define what that area is. I like Bill's idea to have a couple vendors so they know where those areas are. In addition to Richardson, where else? Do we want it over at Bicentennial? I don't think so.

Chairperson Petsch – No.

Mr. Berkheiser – I don't think we want them over at the ball field parks.

Ms. England – It has to be long-term too. Developing this policy, we have to think of the long-term of the parks. I personally don't think we should allow tents.

Chairperson Petsch – At Bicentennial, we do have a gazebo there. Mark, with a new paint job we can spruce that up and it becomes a usable or rentable area.

Ms. England – Maybe we look at reserving the pavilions. I do think that day is coming for us.

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, and that would be a location to look at. There's plenty of parking. It's not a high-traffic park like Scarlet's at Dodge.

Mr. Berkheiser – Emily, maybe you need to have your team research how we want to handle the pitfalls of a rental policy. They can call you to say they want it Sunday from 1-5, but I don't know what that process is, if that means that Mark's weekend staff addresses it. If I'm there, and people are coming in to say they rented the pavilion ... there needs to be a formalized way to do it for all pavilions.

Discussion continued regarding parking, use of pavilions, parties in the parks, limiting events to restricted areas, reviewing concept plans for the parks for future pavilions to be added, installing kiosks where the rentals would be posted, limiting the number of tables they can take, and enforcement. It's important to ensure that no one is denied access to use of the park itself. Ms. England suggested that the policy be developed, then provide education over the fall and winter, then start enforcing it next year.

ITEM 12: PARKS DONATION POLICY

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- I think we have a final version here.
- If you are in favor, I would like to send this to the attorneys for review, and then to the Township Board for final approval.
- Allison cleaned up the policy.

Mr. Berkheiser – We ought to get a generic email address, maybe parksandrec@commercetwp.com, and each of you can get that email. It takes people's names out of it, and as people leave or come in, you can add them. I thought when we discussed trees, we were not putting plaques on trees. I thought we were putting them on a display that's going to be at the Richardson Center.

Chairperson Petsch – I remember that too. We went through that situation at Edgewood and we had little tombstones sitting by every tree. The policy now is, your tree is located here and there's a tree in the lobby that has the name of the person and the tree location.

Mr. Berkheiser – Under the memorial tree section, we should probably define that better, that the plaques get posted elsewhere. Otherwise I think it's pretty good.

Ms. Kennedy – I might have missed that so I'll make sure it's in there.

Mr. Berkheiser – How did we decide the money? The price of a memorial tree is \$500. We include planting and everything else. How big of a tree is that?

Ms. Kennedy – We were saying anything that will have a 1.5 to 2" diameter for the trunk.

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, that's a decent caliper tree.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do we know what that costs?

Ms. Kennedy – Most were about \$200 or so. Once we get the plaque, then do planting, water, maintenance, et cetera, that's how I came up with that dollar amount. That's what it was at surrounding communities as well, was \$500. That's pretty average.

Ms. Garbutt – That's probably pretty good, because most of them that we planted at the outdoor center were about \$350 and they were a good size, at least 2". The company put them in, that was part of the cost. I think that's a reasonable amount of money.

Mr. Berkheiser – On the bench, I know we decided on a bench, but I don't remember the amount. Does \$2000 give us good coverage?

Ms. Kennedy – The bench was just about \$1100. That does not include the cost of the memorial plaque. That was \$300. That puts you around \$1400 to \$1500 and that does not include the delivery cost. I didn't hear back from Lance regarding standard delivery pricing, and then what it's going to cost Mark and Maintenance for cement for the footings. I left a little leeway in that.

I know there was discussion about how much the memorial benches were going to be for the Michigan Airline Trail. Their benches will run closer to \$3500 because of the design.

Chairperson Petsch – Didn't we mention, let's buy 5 if there is a tremendous shipping cost?

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, we did talk about that.

Ms. Kennedy – That would help with the shipping cost.

Mr. Berkheiser – I want to make it reasonable, but on the other hand I don't want us to have to go back to continually change the price. If \$2000 is fine, I'm good with that, or if it needs to be \$2500.

Ms. England – Comparative to other communities, Allison found this to be low. We only heard one other community was lower, and I believe it was West Bloomfield at \$1000. We never did get confirmation on that.

Ms. Kennedy – Yes, someone told me they got that pricing, but I've reached out to West Bloomfield twice and I never heard from them. I can't find any information on their website that they have a policy for bench donations. I'm not sure how accurate that is.

Ms. England - \$1000 is pretty low considering every bench we looked at was at least \$1000.

Chairperson Petsch – Mark, if we put the number at \$2500, would you feel that would be adequate with what Allison just told us, to be able to put in the foundation?

Mr. Schoder – Yes, and I can come up with a price for that. I just need to know what size you want the pad to be.

Chairperson Petsch – We talked about possibly not even doing a pad.

Ms. Kennedy – Just doing the footings.

Mr. Schoder – Okay, that should be a lot cheaper that way.

Mr. Berkheiser – It's a matter of covering your costs for time and materials. Does that money stay in the memorial fund and it just stays in there for whatever potential maintenance needs to be done down the line?

Ms. England – Correct.

Chairperson Petsch – We can look at increasing the price again in a few years.

Mr. Walker – So, the benches we're saying 10 years, or the life of the bench, whichever comes first. What is for the trees? Are we only offering a one-year warranty?

Chairperson Petsch – Whatever the warranty of the tree is, that’s what we’re informing the potential buyers.

Discussion continued regarding locations of trees, the life of a tree, location of the plaque, filling the board with plaques, and returning the plaque or nameplate to the donor after 10 years, and the same with the bench plaques. The tree is not guaranteed beyond one year.

Ms. Kennedy – I had a request last week to have a tree planted at the Richardson Center for her husband who passed away last year. She wants to spread his ashes on the tree once it is planted.

Mr. Walker – I think it’s against the law for them to spread ashes on public property.

Mr. Berkheiser – Ask the attorneys. Officially, the Township does not support that.

Ms. Kennedy – And then as far as tree types, you guys don't have any special requests? I mean whatever is native to Michigan, and whatever the arborist recommends. We’ve had requests for flowering trees. Is there an issue with those?

Ms. Garbutt – I’ll come over and talk to you about that, because there are some that are weaker than others. I’ll do a study to make sure I'm right.

Mr. Berkheiser – And we need to start thinking about where we want trees.

Ms. Kennedy – That will be determined by the Parks and Rec Committee.

Mr. Berkheiser – At one time, we had a reforestation plan.

Ms. Garbutt – Offhand, I would say we’re better off without evergreens because they don’t always last that long. We probably need to stick to more deciduous.

Ms. England – So we’ll have Barb come by and then I’ll send this off to the attorneys.

Ms. Kennedy – Are we at \$2000 for the bench?

Mr. Berkheiser and Chairperson Petsch replied \$2500.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Walker, to move forward with the Commerce Township Parks and Recreation Tree and Bench Donation Policy, with the recommended changes to include; a generic email, the bench price to be \$2500, the tree to be \$500, with a 1.5 to 2” caliper tree, and at the end of 10 years, or the life of the tree, whichever is less, as with the bench, any plaque will be returned to the donor.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Berkheiser, Walker, Garbutt, Henderson, Champagne, Kast, Petsch

NAYS: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 13: PARK EVENTS

Ms. England discussed the following with the Committee:

- The bands are picked. I included the list in your packet. So, we know who's playing at our concerts.
- We are working on the M-5K. Allison did meet with the Trailways Committee and did get approval for our event. She's going to start working on getting the permits and everything we need for that.
- We had talked about doing an Oktoberfest. I know you all love subcommittees as much as I do. I would like to put together a subcommittee to start working on this. We've talked about doing beer tents and a lot of things that the Township has never done before.

Mr. Walker – Do we have a liquor license?

Ms. England – Yes.

Mr. Walker – We have a lot of breweries in Commerce Township.

Vice Chairperson Kast – You sound like you're volunteering.

Mr. Walker – I'll do it. I love Oktoberfest.

Mr. Berkheiser – I can do it if no one else wants to.

Ms. England – I already had you listed.

Ms. Kennedy – We did have to change the date. It's now on September 11th. We do have a renter at the Richardson Center and she still plans on having her event that day.

Discussion took place regarding the date change and alternative dates. The M-5K is scheduled for October 9th. Chairperson Petsch asked if the date could be decided later. Mr. Berkheiser replied that the subgroup could decide.

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Berkheiser – I would like to have Windmill Farms put on our next agenda for an update from Carrie and Johnny, as to the prioritization of the action plan. Another one of our subgroups has been working on getting the Horse Farm back in shape.

There is a list. Some of this is incumbent upon Carrie and the groups that use the farm, to better utilize the money we have available to do things. We'd like to get a better idea on when these things will get completed.

- Roof repairs
- Drainage
- Well and water – move to barn area
- Fencing around the perimeter
- Observation room
- ADA bathroom
- There is a mobile home and a trailer on the property, some tires and junk that needs to be removed.
- There are some electric issues.

- Moving the electric to the barn
- Making sure the electric that's running through the barn is in good shape so that what needs to be done in the observation room can be done

Those things have all been looked at. Jay has looked at it and given some cost estimates. There's money available to do some of this, to stretch that money. We, the Township, were purchasing things and the barn was going to be putting these things up. There is a plan and we want to try to get those things in place, and get an idea when those things will be done. So Carrie, if you would work with Mr. Walker and Emily and come back at our next meeting with an idea on when we will start seeing stuff, the Township Board would appreciate that.

Chairperson Petsch – Welcome Mr. Walker to the Parks and Rec Committee for the next four years. It's nice to have you.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting will be Monday, April 26, 2021, at 6:00PM. April Park tours are Hickory Glen and Bicentennial.

ITEM 15: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Walker, supported by Garbutt, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59pm.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Walker, Garbutt, Champagne, Berkheiser, Kast, Henderson, Petsch

NAYS: None **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Sarah Henderson, Secretary