

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

Monday, September 22, 2025
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

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

ROLL CALL: Present: William Petsch, Chairperson
Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson
Bob Berkheiser
Laura Waterworth
Ron Krueger
Denise Vecellio

Absent: Krystal Schwartz, Secretary (excused)

Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks & Recreation
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director

COMMUNICATIONS:

Director England – The Eagle Scout will not be here this evening, but I did put some paperwork in front of you that we can discuss briefly. This is what he’s proposing for the sign. His budget is attached. So, two things; do you want this sign, and are you comfortable with him installing signs for Fields #1-#3 if he has the materials to do that piece of his project?

Ms. Waterworth – It’s going to look like this, minus the handwriting?

Director England – Yes, I put those markings on there so you knew where he would locate them. It sounds like some of you might want the sign more uniform with our other park signs.

The Committee was in agreement.

Mr. Krueger – That was one of the things that I brought up.

Vice Chairperson Walker – And the “You Are Here” needs to be like a normal star.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is this actually what it’s ...

Director England – This is what he is proposing as his sign.

Mr. Berkheiser – Then I would say no. I think he needs to go look at other signs in the parks. I’m not sure how much good this will do to put a sign at each individual field. Is that what’s intended?

Director England – So one is at the pathway coming from the Library, the pathway that runs in between the two separate fields. One is at the corner of the restroom, and one is near Field #3. What he's asking permission to do is to put up the signs that we currently have which say Field #1, #2 and #3 to identify them. He was working with Chris Haney on that.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is that what the fields are going to be called, #1, #2 and #3?

Director England – Yes, but this piece of it is for the informational sign and we need to do some more work on it, I agree.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, and I sent some examples to you years ago. I think it needs to be 4x3, something big, and when people pull into the parking lot, they see a big sign that tells them where everything is in the park.

Vice Chairperson Walker – And I think you can zoom into this sign. We really don't need the Commerce Township Library and the Boy Scout Pavilion in there.

Director England – Just the south section of the park?

Mr. Berkheiser – Well, unless you're going to put one over on the ...

Director England – On the Library side as well. Okay, I will work with him on that.

Discussion continued regarding people parking on the Library side and walking over to the soccer fields. Mr. Berkheiser felt signage should go on both sides and the signs should be bigger. Director England noted that the sign was approximately 14x20.

Ms. Vecellio – The parking lot should be on here too.

Mr. Haney – That is one of the few things that Gavin hasn't shared with me. I don't think he had it done in time when I met with him in the past. Can I get a copy? I would agree, it should be akin to some of the other signage that we have at the Dog Park now and across the street at Wise Woods to give you the overall idea. It needs to be big enough to get people's attention.

Vice Chairperson Walker – But also reach out to the sign company we're using and have them help him to design it.

Director England – I will help him with that piece of it.

Vice Chairperson Walker – All right.

Chairperson Petsch – Okay, so we're going to send that back to him?

Director England – Yes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Walker, seconded by Berkheiser, to approve the August 25, 2025, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes.

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

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee.

- We are gearing up for Boo Bash on October 18th from 630-830pm.
- The barn has been very busy on Sundays. We've had a lot of out-of-towners. We advertise outside the Commerce area. They really enjoy doing tours. We do tours on Sundays, averaging close to 30 people in a 4-hour gap.
- As a footnote to that, at the Bicentennial, we put 280 people through the farmhouse. So, that was great advertising of the farmhouse.

Silo Ranch – Dawn Raye

Ms. Raye – We just finished with Silo Fest. I think it was a pretty good event. We had 400 people, not including kids. I think it was successful, and I hope it will continue to grow each year.

Mr. Berkheiser – Anything for the fall/winter?

Ms. Raye – Not yet. We would love to do something for Christmas, but we don't really have heat.

Mr. Berkheiser – Bonfire?

Chairperson Petsch – Sleigh ride.

Ms. Raye – Yes, if you have suggestions. We'd love to do something for Christmas, but I feel like everybody does something with Santa. We will have something coming up soon for the spring, but we haven't gotten the details in yet.

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

Mr. Haney – Nothing to report.

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

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

ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- I was not at the last Township Board meeting, so I'm just going from the minutes.
- The Dog Park naming rights were put through, and you'll see in your packet information about the shindig we're doing there in October.
- The Parks & Rec Park Policy update was in the consent agenda. Was it approved?

Director England – It was, the consent agenda was approved and there were no changes, it was just consistency within the language.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay. There were some other things. I think all of it is preparing for upcoming budget meetings, which are starting in October. Almost every week we will have a budget meeting going into early November, for approval hopefully at our November Board meeting. There are some things in there that will be interesting, so if you get the agenda packet, look over those. I know the police are trying to put through a proposal for Flock cameras. These cameras scan license plates and hold the images for 30 days. You may have seen news articles related to these cameras. There are some privacy issues that we need to discuss as a Board.

Director England – Mark got approval for a remodel of the maintenance garage.

Mr. Schoder – About 1,200 square feet inside for a garage area for parking. That will be a big help. It's not enough, but we're getting there.

Mr. Berkheiser – Put up the new pole barn and get the whole thing done.

Mr. Schoder – That will be on the next budget.

Director England – You'll see that at one of your budget meetings in the near future.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'm sure we will.

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England discussed the following:

- The majority is in my written report.
- We are excited to be at full staff and we can start offering our in-house trips again. That has been great. Our seniors just went to the Tigers game last week; 37 seniors and our chaperone. They had a great time.
- An update on the Silo Ranch roof; We put our deposit down. They are 12 weeks out. He said to call him in 6 weeks and he will try to move us up. I will keep you updated on that.
- We're getting ready to put our next newsletter out and planning for next year's community events.

ITEM 4: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- We installed the 130 yards of mulch around the play structures. We are probably going to need another 100-130 more yards to fill in.

- We cleaned up and graded around the new fence area at Victory Park where they're doing the work there. We had to take down a big hill so it would be more tapered for that, and we took out a few small trees. Everything looked good and we're going to put up some more cameras.

Director England – To clarify what he's talking about is the Victory Park silos, the depressions we're seeing. We're preparing to start that exploratory research on what's causing that. So, a more secure fence was put up to keep the area and their equipment secure, and that's what the security cameras will be for as well. We're hoping they should be starting sometime next week.

Mr. Schoder –

- We cleaned up an area at Haggerty where they're going to put that big rock for the Airline Trail. We put fresh limestone there. That should be done Wednesday afternoon.
- You saw the temporary fencing for parking at Richardson.
- The water line is in for the drinking fountain at Scarlet's. We're going to install that this week.
- They had another water leak at the Silo Ranch. It was 30-40 yards east of the barn. We had to go down pretty deep. It was a cracked coupling. I'm glad they noticed it before winter.
- Leaves are starting to fall so we'll be very busy.
- Then we will get the wood cleaned up at Scarlet's and back here, and anywhere else. More woodchips.

Mr. Berkheiser – I know I sent you a message regarding bees at the Dog Park. Was it just one instance, or did you see more?

Mr. Schoder – Inside, the one you picked out, then there was one on the east end, and one on the west end. We had one guy, a maintenance worker, who got stung multiple times.

Chairperson Petsch – Are they ground bees?

Mr. Schoder – Yes. I just got stung right in the forehead last week.

Chairperson Petsch – They're relentless. They'll chase you.

Mr. Schoder – You can't run fast enough.

ITEM 5: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- I don't get to go by the parks as often with the Wise Road construction.
- You've heard a lot about the repairs and the investigative work being done.
- Other than that, there's still quite a few cars that go into the Wise Woods parking lot.
- The Dog Park is getting used a lot.

Director England – The pavilion is up.

Mr. Berkheiser – I did see that, yes. We're waiting on the well stuff?

Director England – The Oakland County Health Division deferred it to EGLE, and now EGLE has deferred it to the Army Corps of Engineers. We're waiting for an update on that meeting. They have concerns.

Vecellio – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- Both parks looked really good.
- Mark, did you already do the overlook that you were going to rebuild?

Mr. Schoder – Not yet.

Ms. Vecellio – Is it shaky?

Mr. Schoder – We took a lot of it apart. It is starting to sink and get uneven. We added another step there and repaired the sides, but eventually we have to rebuild that.

Ms. Vecellio – Okay. And then the dog bags were out.

Mr. Schoder – Okay.

Ms. Vecellio – And we'll talk about the signs later. Thank you.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- Nothing to report.
- Everything is good.

Walker – Maple Glen

- The park looked good.
- It's starting to get busier again. Everybody is playing softball.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- I met with Chris Haney earlier this month at the park.
- We talked about some dead white pines in the field, and one inside the walkway. We determined that they are trees that should be removed. They don't necessarily have to be replaced. I don't think anybody would miss them.
- I noticed another dead tree that Mark had cut down. It's only about 3-feet tall now.
- I'm not sure the status of the trees on the trail leading to Field #3 that we talked about last time. There are two big dead trees right on the path that really should be removed, and one that should be trimmed.

Mr. Schoder – I'll go look again.

Mr. Krueger – I'll be happy to meet you there and show you.

Mr. Schoder – Okay, that would be great.

Mr. Krueger – And then when I was there the other day, I noticed that boxwood moth was prevalent in all the boxwood we have planted there. I contacted Mark and we're getting them on a spray program. In the spring, we will really have to get on it. This is a bug that has three generations, so it's a constant spraying hassle, but through fertilization and control, those boxwood can be brought back. I'm pretty optimistic about that.

There were a lot of people there at the park. I stopped by on the way here. It's a great park. It's well used, and people really like it.

Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park

- The park looks good.
- I drove by this past weekend. My friend was shocked at how many cars fit in that parking lot. All the work we've done to improve the parking lot seems to be doing well.
- As a side note for the Dog Park; People are surprised that we don't charge for a pass. Every dog park I go to has a problem with dog waste, because people don't pay attention to their dogs. You might consider having a pass and offering residents a discount.

Director England – If it becomes an issue, that's something we will look at, but because that park was built with taxpayer money, it's not something we wanted to start with. It's easier to add that later.

Ms. Waterworth – That makes sense. I just wanted to put it out there if there is a need to make money to maintain it.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- No report in Schwartz's absence.

ITEM 6: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Waterworth discussed the following with the Committee:

- The Village is still having their Farmer's Market. It's cute. This is their first year. It's a typical, small Farmer's Market. They have a little bit of everything.
- The Village is having a Halloween house decoration competition. I think their deadline is October 23rd, so if you want to drive around and see their Halloween lights.

ITEM 7: 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

MOTION by Vecellio, supported by Waterworth, to approve the 2026 Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting Schedule, with one change to move the December meeting to December 14th. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Berkheiser and Director England discussed the December 2025 meeting date.

ITEM 8: MILL RACE BRIDGES

Director England – In front of you is information regarding replacement of the bridge on the north side of the park. Please review this and let me know how you want to proceed. This is something we have set as a priority this year.

Chairperson Petsch – Did we send this out to anybody else besides Bob?

Director England – I can, and I could bring it back next month.

Mr. Berkheiser – You can, but the decision at the time was that we wanted consistency.

Chairperson Petsch – I understand. I heard some discussion about the price being a little bit higher than expected, and others said it was around what they expected. I just want to make sure. I know Rousseaux has done a good job for us in the past and we haven't had any problems with his work. I don't have a problem with it. I don't know if we have anybody else that would do that kind of work.

Director England – I can check with Jay James to see if he has anyone he could recommend. I will meet with him and I will bring it back next month.

Chairperson Petsch – And if Jay looks at this and feels it's reasonable...

Vice Chairperson Walker – Well, what kind of time frame is he looking at to be able to do the work?

Director England – I don't have that answer, but I can ask.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Are we going to do it this year?

Director England – I would like to.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Then we've got to do it sooner than later, because the ground will freeze.

Discussion continued regarding ground and weather conditions, and frost laws.

Mr. Berkheiser – When we did the last bridge, this is probably \$7,000 to \$10,000 more. If Jay thinks this is within reason, why don't we push it forward? If he thinks we can get a better price, then we will bring it back.

Director England – We can do that, upon Jay's review.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Waterworth to consult with the Township Building Official regarding the quote for the Mill Race Bridges, and to approve it and move forward, or bring it back to the Committee, based upon his guidance and expertise.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ITEM 9: LONG PARK DESCRIPTIVE SIGN

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- We went with the pictures that were submitted. That is why the red-winged blackbird was taken off, and the gray egret was put on.
- As far as the Robert H. Long informational sign, Allison, Denise and I were talking about making that sign a little larger and having that be the centerpiece, with the two signs on the sides. We will get an updated aerial photo of the park, and then also put a QR code down here.

Chairperson Petsch – Okay, so this will be the centerpiece?

Director England – Yes.

Chairperson Petsch – Okay.

Director England – So, this is just to keep you updated as to what we're working on.

Ms. Waterworth – This whole thing is the sign.

Director England – Yes, and it will be bigger than that. That will be the aerial.

ITEM 10: DOG PARK GRAND OPENING

Director England – We'll let Allison take this one. She has been working her tail off on it.

Ms. Kennedy discussed the following with the Committee:

- We have scheduled the Grand Opening for the Dog Park on Saturday, October 25th from 10am-12pm.
- We are going to do a doggie costume contest at 11am that day.
- We will reach out to local veterinarians, dog groomers, pet suppliers, et cetera. We already have three that would like to give raffle baskets.
- I know K9-5 said they were hoping to come and they're going to hand out free doggie daycare passes.
- We will see if we can get local organizations to come and help support the Grand Opening also.

Director England – Blazing Bagels is going to donate doggie bagels.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Did you reach out to HoundsTown in Wixom yet?

Ms. Kennedy – No, I was reaching out mostly to places in Commerce Township.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Okay, I'll send it to them.

Director England – We have a letter, Johnny.

Ms. Kennedy – I can send it to you.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Perfect, send it over.

ITEM 11: PARK IMPROVEMENT UPDATES

Director England –

- I'm sure you have all seen, the parking lot construction has started.
- The pathway construction has started.
- We're hoping we are nearing the end of that. I think they're getting close to laying asphalt, so that's good news.
- They're still working on the final details for what we are referring to as the Library pathway. That is the extension down South Commerce, and it crosses over to Byers to the bridge which will be ADA accessible.
- The restroom facility is still on schedule to be put in this year.

ITEM 12: PARK EVENT UPDATES

Ms. Kennedy discussed the following with the Committee:

- The Trail-or-Treat is October 24th at the Library, 6-8pm.
 - We currently have about 20 local businesses and community organizations signed up to come and hand out candy to kids.
 - We usually have about 35 or so.
 - Last year we estimated about 1,200 kids.
 - We're getting all of our candy and everything together, Halloween supplies and decorations.
- After that is the Tree Lighting on December 6th from 4:30-7:30pm.
- We also have a pickleball tournament coming up October 4th.
- At our November meeting, we should have all of the 2026 event dates.

Discussion took place regarding the company who does the Christmas tree lights.

ITEM 13: OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Berkheiser discussed the December 2025 Parks meeting date. Ms. Kennedy noted that the meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2025.

Director England – We had our internal budget meetings, and as we were going through our open space budget, I was asked a question about the parking lot across the street from the Kayak Launch and why we don't do anything there. I explained that we didn't think that we could. They would like to see us spruce it up, maybe put down some asphalt millings or limestone, and maybe make part of that green space with picnic tables. So, \$100,000 was added to that line in the open space budget.

Chairperson Petsch – Would they like to see a pavilion or shelter and picnic tables?

Mr. Berkheiser – Not over there I hope. We talked about putting one in on the lakeside.

Director England – The pavilion on the lakeside, yes, but they would like to see greenspace and a sitting area on the other side as well, by the parking lot.

Mr. Berkheiser – On the west side of the road you're going to put a sitting area and greenspace, and people will walk back and forth with an unlighted crosswalk?

Director England – Originally we had put in a crosswalk there. I think we need to have further discussion about that.

Mr. Berkheiser – I think the County needs to let us know. Okay, do we have a date?

Director England – When we're presenting our budget to the Board, no.

Mr. Berkheiser – Are you looking for folks here to come in when we do that?

Director England – Always if you guys are available. I will let you know when it is.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2025, at 7:00PM, after the 6:00PM park visits to Wise Road and the Kayak & Canoe Launch.

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Walker, supported by Krueger, to adjourn the meeting at 7:36pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Krystal Schwartz, Secretary