

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES QUARTERLY MEETING
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, MI 48390
Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 7:00 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chairperson Trustee Sovel called the Township Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Molly Phillips, Treasurer
Rick Sovel, Trustee and Acting Chairperson
Bob Berkheiser, Trustee
Robert Long, Trustee
George Weber, Trustee

Absent Larry Gray, Supervisor (excused)
Melissa Creech, Clerk (excused)

Also Present: Emily England, Senior/Parks and Recreation Director
Dave Campbell, Planning Director
Jim Dundas, Fire Chief
Jay James, PE/Building Official

ITEM 1: Public Comments

Acting Chairperson Trustee Sovel opened Public Comments.

Seeing none, Acting Chairperson Trustee Sovel closed Public Comments.

ITEM 2: Lakefront Setback

PE/Building Official Jay James asked the Board of Trustees to consider amending the zoning ordinance to allow detached waterfront accessory structures. During the summer months it is estimated that more than 10 residents per month inquire if they can have a shed, gazebo, or other structure near the water. Residents indicate they need a place to store lake gear and toys such as rafts, life jackets, paddle boards, etc. It causes a lot of issues for the Ordinance Department. As the ordinance is written today, if a resident wants to build a new house on the lake, the maximum setback the Township can enforce is 50 feet. The original ordinance took effect back in the 1970's and seems to be one with some inconsistencies that affect many of our lake front owners. If the Board of Trustees decides to move forward with the Planning Commission looking at this issue to allow detached structures on the water side front yard, then restrictions on height, size, and location could be included to limit the potential impacts to adjacent parcels.

Quarterly Meeting

ITEM 2: Lakefront Setback continued

Trustee Weber said the Board should be very cautious about allowing detached accessory structures lakeside. He's concerned about the lake view from adjacent parcels being blocked.

The Board discussed current boat hoists with covers that already partially block the lake view, the potential limitations on size and height of detached accessory structures, and the Township having some control over design elements and construction materials. In addition, the Board discussed accessory structures such as sheds and patios, and decks built on the lake out over the water.

The Board of Trustees agreed to have the Planning Commission to begin to consider amending the ordinance.

ITEM 3: Pathways Discussion

Parks and Recreation Director Emily England and Planning Director Dave Campbell presented maps showing the areas targeted for pathway connection and construction. The results of a pathway survey taken by residents was used to inform where the pathways would be constructed with an additional emphasis on connecting to the Michigan Airline Trail and to pathways close to parks and schools.

Director Emily England said the project would be bonded out so that all construction would be completed in 3 years and the millage would pay the debt service on the bonds. This plan has the advantage of saving money on construction costs as the Township would be paying current construction prices, and the project is completed much sooner instead of waiting for the money to accumulate over the life of the millage, during which construction costs are continually rising.

The Board of Trustees debated the merits of a millage versus a special assessment district (SAD), the possible millage rate, the estimated cost of phase one, the question of whether there would be a phase two, whether the bonds could be paid off early, whether a millage would be subject to Headlee and tax capture by the DDA, if both real property and personal property would be included in a millage, and if the Village of Wolverine Lake would be included in a millage or SAD. In addition, the pathways group spoke to the Village of Wolverine Lake Council regarding constructing pathways on the borders of Commerce Township and the Village of Wolverine Lake for the benefit of all residents. The Village of Wolverine Lake indicated their possible support if the Township included a pathway along South Commerce Road to Ethel Road.

Planning Director Campbell asked the Board if .6 mills sounds like the right number and do the projects sound like the right projects to achieve with that number? If the consensus is there, then they can do more investigation regarding a millage versus an SAD and he can have another conversation with the Village Council.

Quarterly Meeting

ITEM 3: Pathways Discussion continued

Trustee Weber said the important points are project specificity to the Board's intent, an end date, deliver for .6 mills, include the Village of Wolverine Lake, if they support it, and the Board should vote on it at the November 4th meeting and then have Township Attorney Hans Rentrop get involved to do the investigation on the pros and cons of an SAD versus a millage, and that gives Molly time to calculate bond scenarios and interest.

Treasurer Phillips said her list of questions includes whether you charge real and personal property or just real property and the rationale behind it, and if that's dependent on it being an SAD or a millage, would a new SAD be captured by the Brownfield in the Huron Valley School District or the DDA, and would a new millage be captured and does it make a difference for the bonding?

Trustee Weber recapped the Board's discussion:

1. Agreement on the concept
2. Agreement on the \$20 million range over 10 years
3. Getting potential Wolverine buy in to the South Commerce section
4. The unknown is if it's smarter to do an SAD or a millage
5. If there's a good rationale for including real and personal property or just real property

Treasurer Phillips will email Attorney Hans Rentrop and the bond counsel tomorrow.

Trustee Long said he would like a pathway along the south side of Maple Road near M5 at the piano store to connect with the new pathways in front of Zerbo's and the strip mall.

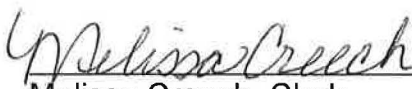
Acting Chairperson Trustee Sovel said we can ask the engineer for a quote on that.

The Board of Trustees agreed to place the Pathways Discussion item on the Tuesday, November 4, 2025 special meeting agenda

Adjournment

MOTION by Phillips, supported by Long, to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY


Melissa Creech, Clerk
Charter Township of Commerce