

PROPOSED MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
4338 BEELINE ROAD
ALLEGAN COUNTY
HOLLAND, MI 49423
TELEPHONE (616) 335.3050

January 21, 2009

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Linda Howell called the regular Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Sall, Linda Howell, Karen Simmons, Chuck Strabbing, Bill Snyder

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Nick Otting – Park Maintenance
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

Linda Howell invited all Commissioners to introduce themselves to Bill Snyder, the new Commissioner.

ARTICLE III. CITIZEN COMMENTS/COMMUNICATION RECEIVED

No communications were received and no citizen comments.

ARTICLE IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission members reviewed the minutes of the November 19, 2008 meeting. Following discussion, the minutes were approved as submitted.

ARTICLE V. TREASURER'S REPORT - - Chuck Strabbing

Treasurer Chuck Strabbing reviewed the bills to be paid as of November and December 2008. Maintenance: Advantage Building Maintenance - \$110.00 (November), \$110.00 (December), Veldhof Septic Service - \$150.00; Supplies: Graafschap Hardware - \$69.88 (December), Seven's Paint & Wallpaper Co. - \$97.44 (December), Overisel Lumber - \$690.46 (November), \$18.42 (December), Menard's Holland - \$39.99 (November); Contracted Services: Julie Buursma - \$455.0 (November), Veldhof Septic - \$150.00 (December); Electricity: Consumers Energy - \$15.00 (November). Following discussion, the Treasurer's Report was filed.

Chuck Strabbing reported the budget is at 52% to date. He advised Al that the hedge trimmer should be allocated to the mansion expense and not the Parks budget. The budget is over on electrical and the salaries. Karen Simmons asked if a snow blower had been purchased and Chuck responded that he had not found a decent model for the allotted \$400.00. Linda asked for confirmation on the receipts from the lumber company, were they for the bridges at Farview Park? Chuck responded that they were. Bill Snyder asked when the fiscal year is. Al responded that it is April through March. Karen Simmons asked if the budget for the Huyser Farm small house is at \$8,000.00 or has it been exceeded. Al stated that we have not exceeded the budgeted amount. Nick Otting stated that the exterior will need painting in the spring. Linda Howell suggested it be treated just like any other park improvement expense and asked that Nick prepare a proposal for the labor and materials.

Linda Howell asked Al Meshkin to explain how the wages are handled for Nick Otting. Al provided a budget draft for the Commissioner's review. In the review of the budget, Al explained how Nick's salary and the house rent revenue are incorporated into the Parks budget and the General Fund. He also explained the amendments that have been made to the 2008 budget due to the changes in activities by the Parks Commission for the year. He proposed that a number of projects that had been scheduled for 2008 be extended to 2009. Linda asked for clarification of the Heavener fees. Al explained that there have been some additional fees due to the heavy snow removal this season.

Al asked for feedback on the proposed budget. Chuck Strabbing asked what Heavener's proposal might be for next year. Karen Simmons asked what Nick Otting might do that Heavener currently does to alleviate some of the costs. Chuck provided some detail from last year's billing. Al stated that there are some things that Nick might be able to cover in the upcoming year. Nick stated that a chain saw, power drill and skill saw would be beneficial tools to cover some of the smaller tasks. Linda questioned whether it might be beneficial to have a commercial mower that might be used for the parks in lieu of the fees that Heavener is charging for mowing. Al responded that he has suggested a maintenance type person in the past for tasks that are currently contracted out. He suggested several items such as landscaping service and snow removal that might be done by such a position. He suggested tying such a position into a part-time maintenance and part-time

fire fighter position. This idea may not save money but would potentially improve service to the residents. Al does support the work that Heavener does as the service is excellent. Linda suggested directing all of the smaller scale tasks to Nick for cost savings and the larger ones to Heavener. Al reiterated the importance for a weekly task list for Nick to address issues in the parks. Nick stated that he has been hiking the parks regularly. Linda asked if we are really spending \$5,000.00 to open parks for the seasons. Al confirmed that is correct. It is more than a one person job to hit all of the parks. Linda asked what generated the need for this. Al explained that there were issues of vandalism. There are pros and cons to having the gate control. Al suggested that perhaps the deputy might be able to do this task. He also suggested that Heavener take on this duty. Linda asked the Commissioners to review this issue. Chuck stated that the gate at Farview Park has not been controlled for two years. Sanctuary Woods and Wolters Woods are the only two parks that are controlled seasonally.

Michelle Sall commented on the Capital Outlay amount of \$37,000.00 and whether or not expenditure for moving the old township hall would be a worthwhile cause. She would rather see the funds used for bathroom facilities at Sanctuary Woods. Linda Howell asked if information is available for discussion purposes to install facilities at all parks. Al estimated each building would cost approximately \$100,000.00 for each site to have running water. It was suggested that port'o'potties be placed at each park. Michelle also commented on the need for a decent driveway at Huyser Farm.

Linda asked that Al prepare a proposal for restroom facilities at each site to be discussed at the next meeting.

ARTICLE VI. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

- a. Staff
 - i. Al Meshkin reported on the budget. He also provided official notice from the DNR denying the request for the grant. He communicated that the Nature Conservancy representative walked the Huyser Farm and had no issues to report.
 - ii. Nick Otting
Nick stated that he has been walking all of the parks on a daily basis. Karen Simmons asked if the trail markers had been placed. Nick has not been able to do that yet but will get the markers from the Township Office. Ice has been a problem on the Huyser Farm small house breaking the front screen door. Karen asked if the doors at the big Huyser Farm house have been secured. Nick responded that all the doors have been shut but the handles and locks have not been installed. Al asked that Nick work with Kathie Stoike to get his name on the accounts at Menard's and Lowe's.

- b. Board -- Chuck Strabbing stated there is nothing to report except that he will not be available for the February or March Township Board meetings.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. CELL TOWER AT WOLTERS

Al Meshkin stated that this is a dead issue.

B. HOCKEY RINK

Nick Otting reported that there have not been any weather permitting days to clear and install the ice rink this year. This will not be completed for the 2008-09 season. Michelle Sall suggested that we partner with Patty Meyer to have it at the Felt Mansion. Al Meshkin responded that she would be in favor. Nick Otting will put it on his spring list of things to do to investigate the best location for a rink.

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Nominations were made for Linda Howell to remain as Chair and Bill Snyder as Vice Chair. Nominations were made for Chuck Strabbing to remain as Treasurer.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

B. GOALS FOR 2009

1. Huyser Development

a. Blueberry Driveway

Al Meshkin will get bids in the spring.

b. Blueberry Maintenance

Nick reported on his research done with MSU on farm research projects. The school would do maintenance on the farm as a class project. The school representative also gave Nick information on pruning the bushes. The work should be done before spring. He suggested doing a section as a pilot. He was also provided with a contact for the professor that would handle the blueberry project.

Nick would need to provide building and facility information to the university contact. The issue of water may also be a concern. Linda Howell suggested inviting the MSU individuals to visit the farm. Linda also mentioned that Hope College may be interested in a project at the farm. Nick will continue to work on coordinating a site visit for the MSU group.

c. Other Suggestions

Michelle Sall made the following suggestions prioritized accordingly: 1) Driveway at Huyser Farm; 2) Bathroom at Sanctuary Woods; 3) Memorial for Huyser Farm and 4) Ice Rink.

Chuck Strabbing commented on the lack of success with partnering with the Outdoor Discovery Center in the last year. Al Meshkin commented that the expenditure is minimal and we may want to try to pursue it again this year. Bill Snyder will contact the ODC. The comment was made that the Graafschap Nature Center is somewhat competitive.

Karen Simmons asked if the bee hive contact had been made for Huyser Farm. Chuck Strabbing responded that he had made the contact. Chuck will also follow up with Kelly DeWitt on the brush hogging of the blueberries at Huyser Farm.

Al Meshkin stated that nine surveys from the hunters at Huyser Farm were received. Karen Simmons will take them for review and synopsis at the next meeting.

2. Grant Applications

Grant opportunities will continue to be considered for the upcoming year.

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on February 18, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

ARTICLE X. ASSIGNMENTS

Nick – Provide proposal for painting the exterior of the small Huyser Farm house.

Continue to work with MSU on setting a date for a site visit.
Begin installing trail markers.

Chuck – Follow up with Kelly DeWitt on brush hogging the blueberry fields at Huyser Farm.

Karen - Provide a synopsis of the feedback received from hunters at the Huyser Farm.