

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

May 20, 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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Snyder

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

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS/COMMUNICATION RECEIVED

REMOVAL OF WATER TOWER

Aaron Edgel of Maksaba Trail explained that he is a Boy Scout and striving to reach the Eagle Scout ranking. In order to do so, he would like to propose a project to the Commission that would qualify him for this achievement. There is an old collapsed water tower in Sanctuary Woods and he would like to propose a plan to dismantle and remove this structure. The removal of this structure would make the park a safer place and deter further vandalism in this area. He would like to clean the area and remove the metal shards and recycle the materials to pay for the expenses of tearing it down. There are no assured methods yet but one idea is to hire a professional welder to cut the take into smaller pieces that could be carried out.

Chairperson Linda Howell said it was a great idea. Michelle Sall asked if there would be access from the neighborhood properties rather than going through the park. Kim Edgel stated that they live at 2337 Maksaba Trail and he could speak to the neighbors for their approval. This is a preliminary fact finding exercise. Linda Howell said she would love

to see the water tower gone and see the plan for its removal. She recommends working closely with Al Meshkin to ensure that all potential liabilities are addressed.

Karen Simmons congratulated Aaron Edgel on his accomplishments thus far and wished him luck in this project.

Chuck Strabbing stated that he agrees with the idea as long as Al Meshkin is closely involved to avoid any liability issues. It is really a mess and a fire hazard with the vandalism that occurs. Kim Edgel stated that Scouting does have a liability program which would provide insurance for such an activity. Al stated that all volunteers are under the Township liability insurance.

#### HBPW SPOILS

Judy Visscher, Environmental Regulatory Specialist of the Holland Board of Public Works spoke on the topic the Dredge Containment Facility. She provided a hand-out to the Commissioners giving an overview of the purpose and process involved in the dredging of Lake Macatawa. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is planning the next dredging of the Holland inner harbor in 2010. The Corps has funds to haul and place the dried containment material off site this year if there is a suitable placement site. This material is useful as fill to build up or reconstruct existing land for future use. The purpose of this presentation is to offer Laketown Township an opportunity to take advantage of this offer if there is feasible use for such material. The material is safe for growing and has been issued a Certificate of Inertness by the DEQ.

Linda Howell asked how much might be used for the Laketown Township Recreation Park Project. Al Meshkin estimated approximately 40-50,000 yards. The Township property would have to be cleared prior to the placement of the material and he estimates that expense at approximately \$16,000 to \$25,000. It would also be necessary to consult with the M.C. Smith and an engineering consultant to determine desired placement given the preliminary plan that was previously approved. The Township Board would have to approve the expenditure and the transition of the property to official park status. This is a great opportunity to obtain clean fill dirt at no charge to the Township. It is estimated it would cover almost half of the cost of developing the complex. There is also potential to utilize the fill in other parks such as Huyser Farm.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Chuck Strabbing and seconded by Michelle Sall to recommend approval to the Township Board to utilize the containment material for fill at the Laketown Township Recreation Complex and other feasible park locations. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

#### ARTICLE III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission members reviewed the minutes of the April 15, 2009 meeting. Following discussion, the minutes were approved with correction to the meeting date.

#### ARTICLE IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Chuck Strabbing reviewed the bills to be paid as of April 2009. Maintenance: Veldhof Septic Service - \$150.00, Heavener Property Services - \$4,244.00. Virg's Refuse - \$47.50; Contracted Services: Nick Otting - \$840.00; Electricity: Consumer's Energy - \$30.00; Salaries: Michelle Sall - \$180.00, Karen Simmons - \$180.00, Linda Howell - \$225.00, Bill Snyder - \$120.00, Chuck Strabbing - \$140.00. Following discussion, the Treasurer's Report was filed.

Chuck Strabbing reported that there were not a lot of expenses in the month of April. Chuck asked why Nick's pay was increased to \$840.00. Al Meshkin will follow up on this but he assumes it may be a combination of the Parks and the mansion work.

#### ARTICLE V. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Staff

i. Al Meshkin

1. Huyser Road Update – The Huyser Farm road is done and looks very good. There have been issues of quad runners abusing the new drive. It was suggested to place large boulders on the drive. Chuck Strabbing suggested a gate as an option.
2. Update on gate closing issue/security lights for bathrooms – Al has no update on this yet. A power pole will be placed for the security lights but they have not been installed.
3. Update on CMZ grant request for beach stairs – Al reported that he expects a site visit in July or August.
4. Disc golf course update – Ben Barton reported that he has raised \$4914.14 and anticipates another \$900.00. He has enough money to purchase the baskets. He also shared information from Park Township. Some of the clearing has already begun. Ben is asking that the Park Commission consider funding the cement to install the baskets. He has raised \$900.00 for 3 of the 18 holes. He

estimates the material at approximately \$100.00. He would also like to meet with Glenn Heavener to discuss the mowing to determine if the task will be feasible and at what expense. Typically, it would need to be mowed 2-4 times per season. He also asked if the Township would agree to share the cost of appropriate signage for the course. Ben stated that his on concern is that he maintains the control of the baskets in case he loses the park space for some reason in the future. Al Meshkin stated the Township could lease the baskets from him for \$1.00 per year. Linda Howell will generate a document to cover this. Ben showed the Commissioners a drawing and instructions for installation of the baskets. They will be left out year round. He has a crew of volunteers to install the baskets. Al will arrange for a meeting with Ben and Glenn Heavener. Karen Simmons asked if this will increase the cost of mowing. Al responded that it may increase the mowing by about \$200.00 per year. Ben also noted that leagues are started, a portion of the money would be returned to the Parks Commission. Ben will remove the BMX sign and also clean up some of the structures that need to be painted. Al Meshkin will see that the sewer holes will be filled.

Linda Howell stated that a sign should be placed that include rules for the course. Al will work with Ben on an appropriate sign.

Rob Buit of 4633 Pine Drive suggested having trash receptacles strategically placed perhaps encased in wooden boxes. Al stated that each 96 gallon receptacle costs \$11 per month to be emptied. Chuck Strabbing offered to drive through and empty them. Ben will work with Nick Otting on getting the materials to place the baskets and also options for the trash.

5. Electrical inspection at Huyser for security lighting – Al reported that he had not received a response from the inspector yet.
6. Bluegrass Festival – alcohol ordinance question – Al has asked Ron Bultje to draft an amendment to the ordinance for only certain conditions. Another option would be to take Shore Acres off the list of Parks where alcohol is prohibited.

Chuck Strabbing asked who has the authority to do that. Karen Simmons asked if any of the parks allowed alcohol. Linda Howell asked if the ordinance was put in place as a response to a problem.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Chuck Strabbing and seconded by Michelle Sall to recommend an ordinance amendment to allow alcohol at the Shore Acres Park only. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Chuck Strabbing stated that people are taking alcohol in from the State Park and he cleans up bottles and cans every Monday. If this amendment is made, would it be difficult to rescind? Al Meshkin responded that it should be no problem to rescind.

Karen Simmons asked how the amendment would affect the disc golf park. Ben Barton stated that it would not be a problem.

Linda Howell asked if Ron Bultje could draft the amendment to allow for review and recommendation to the Township Board.

Chuck Strabbing expressed concern over disturbance to the families and sport activity attendees.

Al Meshkin will ask Ron Bultje to draft an amendment. This would not be noted on any of the course or park signs.

ii. Nick Otting

1. MSU status – John Weiss came out to the property and stated that it is virtually a gold mine wherein it could maintain its organic state. He will provide additional items that would be necessary to pursue the next steps to secure it as a project for the University. Almost all of the trees and weeds are out of the blueberry fields. The school just started a new organic farm growing course and John recommended that Nick take the course. Linda Howell asked if the secondary field was reviewed. John Weiss said it would be a good research project because of the flooding. Nick reported that the Debts Crew has individuals that specialize in drainage. John Weiss would like to get a meeting involving more representation from the school and Commissioners. The Township must do the initial clean-up and the school might take on the project from there. Linda asked if there was any mention of the chestnut tree. Al Meshkin stated that he did not think the Huyser Farm chestnuts are the true American species. John Weiss did not think the apple trees would be an option for organic farming. The blueberry bushes should be pruned before winter by someone who is knowledgeable. Linda asked if John Weiss has seen the Huyser Farm master plan. Nick responded that he has not.

2. Trail markers – No update.
3. Wolters Woods bathroom update – The wall has been torn down and a pole will be placed for the security light. Nick found a light at Menard’s that will work with a solar panel for the price of \$40.
4. Laketown Beach Stairs – Nick reported that the Debts Crew cleared the stairs but most of it has been filled with sand again.
5. Debts Crew – Nick reported that the crew has been working at Huyser Farm to clean the brush around the buildings and trim the paths. They have also worked at Wolters Woods clearing paths and trimming brush.
6. Huyser Farm Door – The door continues to get broken through by vandals. Linda Howell suggested nailing a board from the inside on the back door. Al Meshkin suggested having someone live in it to avoid the vandalism. Linda asked what the cost would be to make it habitable. Al responded that approximately \$8,000 was spent on the small house. The plumbing would be the most expensive renovation. The family made a stipulation of single family occupancy on the property and they would have to be contacted for approval if plans move forward to occupy the main house. Al stated that the next action must be to get the Huyser monument done and a presentation for the family.

Chuck asked if there was an estimate from Kelly DeWitt to clear the blueberry fields. Al will follow up on this as well as an option for clearing the Township Hall property.

## ARTICLE VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. HEAVENER PROPOSAL (mowing/plowing/maintenance) – Closed

B. PARKS INVENTORY REPORTS/WORK DAYS/DEBTS CREWS

Linda Howell reported on the Laketown Beach noting that the gate entrance sign should be replaced or the metal frame removed. Al Meshkin stated that this sign was removed and after 4 years reappeared and then disappeared again. It is an ongoing issue. The sign with the beach rules has spray paint on most of it. Al Meshkin suggested putting a new vinyl sign over it. There are some stair issues that should be repaired. Linda Howell will make a list of tasks and email it to Nick Otting.

Michelle Sall reported on Farview Park stating that the walkway should be cleared. Parts of the walking trails are under water. Bark and/or fill should be put on the walking trail and parts of the trail that should be rebuilt. Michelle will email the list of tasks to Nick Otting. Michelle shared an Observer article that was done on an event at Farview Park.

Chuck Strabbing reported on Shore Acres and asked if the gate should be locked again. Al Meshkin suggested that the gates be locked and he will get more padlocks. The parking lot continues to be a problem with rough spots. Al will get Busscher to smooth out the sand and place more aggregate on the lot. He expressed concern over having adequate parking for the Blues Grass Festival given its current condition. Al explained how the parking and traffic will be executed.

Karen Simmons reported on Sanctuary Woods stating that there was some graffiti on the handrails and other parts of the stairs. There is one large tree near the trail up by the water tower that should be removed. There is some erosion at the top of the trail where people go off the trail to cut around to the stairs. She suggested putting a couple of steps there. An overlook landing over the water would also be nice. Karen will email a list to Nick.

Linda Howell expressed concern over scheduling work days and suggested using the Debts Crew instead. Chuck asked if we would be meeting with at the parks for the remainder of the summer meetings. The next month's meeting will be at the Felt Mansion on the west balcony.

## ARTICLE VII. NEW BUSINESS

### A. ODC PROGRAMMING UPDATE – No update

### B. WOLTERS WOODS

A report was made that a trailer was sited at Wolters Woods with the appearance of a campfire and evidence of food. Al Meshkin will advise Deputy Curnick.

### C. HUYSER FARM GARDEN PLOT FENCE

Bill Snyder asked if it would be possible to clean up and remove the garden plot fence from behind Huysen Farm building. The Commission agreed that it should be removed and the space cleared.

### D. RETIRED FIRE DEPARTMENT QUAD FROM GRAAFSCHAP FIRE DEPARTMENT

Al Meshkin reported that the Graafschap Fire Department will put their old 1997 quad with trailer up for bid. Is this something that the Parks Commission would be interested in to use for work tasks? It is possible that it could be a shared expense with the Felt Mansion. It might be beneficial to consider shared equipment for all parks and the mansion.

#### ARTICLE VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on June 24, 2009 at 7:00 P.M at the Felt Mansion. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

#### ARTICLE IX. ASSIGNMENTS

Al-

- Coordinate a meeting with Ben Barton and Glenn Heavener to discuss mowing for the Disc Golf Course
- Purchase padlocks for the Shore Acres Park gates
- Contact Busscher to improve the condition of the Shore Acres Park parking lot and also fill in the sewer holes in the golf course areas
- Follow up with Kelly DeWitt on the contact to brush hog the blueberry fields at Huyser Farm
- Follow up on salary amount noted for Nick Otting for the month of April

Linda-

- Draft a rental agreement for the disc golf baskets to be rented from Ben Barton