

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

October 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. CITIZEN COMMENTS/COMMUNICATION RECEIVED

Howard Bouwens of 6630 Halcyon Hills expressed concern about the overflow of beachgoers at Laketown Beach onto the private property of the Association. He asked what the Township can do to work through a solution to this issue of trespassing, vandalism and abuse. He feels the Township has some obligation to protect against such activity. It has been going on for many years and if the Township does not do something about it, the Association will have to do something to address the issues.

Chair Linda Howell expressed appreciation for the concerns of Mr. Bouwens and advised that this issue will be on the agenda for future meetings. Linda asked for a phone number or email address to follow up with Mr. Bowden. Mr. Bouwens stated that his contact information is as follows: 616-335-6837 and email address hoboweb@hughes.net

Mr. Bouwens appreciates the efforts the Parks Commission is putting forth but more needs to be done to reach a solution.

Bill Snyder asked if the issue is parking or trespassing on the beach property. Mr. Bouwens explained that it is intrusion on the beach front. The Association members have put signs and fences up in the past but they have been vandalized. He explained that the Association would like to do whatever we can to work together to resolve these issues.

Keri Rogers-O'Neal of Halcyon Hills expressed that her family spends a lot of time on the beach with their teenaged children and their friends. The teens are uncomfortable with over 100 trespassers on the private property. She and her children made signs to try to deter individuals. Another time there were over 150 trespassers and 75 illegally parked cars. An attempt to speak to the trespassers ended in verbal abuse and rude behavior.

Peter Hledin of 6623 Halycon Hills stated that he has been through this situation 8 years ago and had formed a committee working with Ray Buursma of the Parks Commission to address concerns at that time. He provided a copy of a report that had been done with recommendations that had not been followed through on. The public beach frontage is not large enough to accommodate the number of visitors. The space is only 200 square feet and too many people are using the small beach. The E. coli levels are likely so high that it should be shut down. He also provided pictures of the overflow parking and the beach that shows the violators. The trespassers make fires on the beach, paint over the No Trespassing signs and leave garbage everywhere. Mr. Hledin asked why the Township cannot create better access to the beach at Saugatuck Dunes State Park.

Al Meshkin explained that the Township has no jurisdiction to create access to the Saugatuck Dunes State Park as it is State owned property. Al recommended that the residents contact their state legislators to express their concerns. The proposed water access project is also a road block to creating better access to the beachfront.

Linda Howell thanked all of the residents for presenting their concerns. She stated that she and Al would further study this situation in the winter months.

Mr. Hledin asked what can be done in the short-term if nothing can be resolved to protect the privacy of the Association.

ARTICLE III. SPECIAL BUSINESS – EAGLE SCOUT TOMMY FINN

A. EAGLE SCOUT TOMMY FINN

Tommy Finn explained that he would like to clear the blueberry bushes and clean and repair the old gray barn.

Michelle Sall asked who would be assisting in the trimming of the bushes. Tommy Finn responded that it would be his troop of approximately 10 scouts along with several adults. Michelle asked if there would be someone that is qualified to direct the trimming so it is done correctly. She stated that she would like to see someone with expertise in blueberry farming. Michelle also questioned the repairing of the roof and who would do that work. Tommy responded that he may be able to get adults to assist with that or if the roofing is not possible they would just clean out the barn.

Bill Snyder suggested limiting the activity to clearing the brush but not prune the blueberries. Bill also suggested clearing out the stream in the southwest corner of the blueberry farm.

Chuck Strabbing stated that he would like to see the project overseen by one of the Parks Commission members. He expressed concern over the items in the barn that might have historical value. These are items that may be used for display in the future.

Karen Simmons commented that it would be nice to see a more detailed application before giving approval.

Linda Howell explained that the Commission would like to see more detail on specific projects that can be measured and accomplished in a safe manner. The Commission would also like to see details with “Who, What and How” along with a timeframe. She asked that Tommy provide a new draft to Al Meshkin who will then circulate it to the Commissioners.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Chuck Strabbing and seconded by Karen Simmons that Tommy Finn would submit a more detailed application for review and a decision could be made at the November meeting.**
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

ARTICLE IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission members reviewed the minutes of the September 16, 2009 meeting. Following discussion **a motion was made by Bill Snyder and seconded by Chuck Strabbing to approve the minutes with the correction as noted to include Bill Snyder as present at the meeting.** **UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE V. TREASURER’S REPORT

Treasurer Chuck Strabbing reviewed the bills to be paid as of September 2009. Maintenance: Veldhof Septic Service - \$225.00, Heavener Property Services - \$4,935.00, Chef Container - \$246.96, Action Heating & Cooling Inc. - \$115.79, Advantage Building Maintenance - \$110.00; Salaries: Nick Otting - \$560.00; Contracted Services: Joyce Teusink - \$155.00, Julie Buursma - \$460.00, Consumers Energy - \$50.00, Allegan County Sheriff's Department - \$119.00; Supplies: Accent Sign & Graphic - \$252.00; Electricity: Consumer's Energy - \$19.66.

Following discussion, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

Chuck Strabbing explained that the budget is at 57% at this point in the fiscal year.

Linda Howell asked about the invoice for the water heater for the small Huyser Farm house. Nick Otting explained that the repairs were made but should have been under warranty.

ARTICLE VI. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Staff

i. Al Meshkin

1. Dirt project update – Al explained that dirt has been hauled over the last 8 days totaling 15,000 yards. It has been taking a lot of bull dozer time to move the dirt. The initial figure was \$25,000 to move the dirt and the project will exceed that amount. There is approximately \$17,000 in the Capital Fund. To date the expense has reached \$18,000. The dirt is costing about \$1.00 per yard compared to \$5.00 if it were sand but would still have to be moved. It is impossible for trucks to get to the rear of the property line and dozers must be used. The price to install 225 linear feet of piping in the ditch would cost \$5,000. This would allow for the dirt to be pushed further south. Al suggested going to the Township Board to ask for \$15,000 to complete this project. The opportunity to get the dirt for the project was not known at budget planning time last year. The piping would allow for savings in the future to fill in the area where it is needed and avoid further issues in later years. Linda Howell asked if the \$15,000 would allow for stockpiling the dirt. The 30,000 yards is sufficient for what is required of the project at this point. Optimally, \$20,000 would benefit the project most. Chuck Strabbing asked for clarification of where the piping would be installed. Al explained that it would run

under the Township Hall to the end of the property to the ditch line and into the pasture.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bill Snyder and seconded by Chuck Strabbing to approve asking the Township Board for \$20,000 to fund the completion of the dirt delivery project at the Township Hall.**

UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

Chuck Strabbing asked if we could obtain additional dirt beyond the 30,000 yards. Al responded that there is an opportunity to receive additional dirt if we have the space and monies to support the movement. Chuck suggested dirt at Shore Acres.

Linda Howell asked if the Holland Board of Public Works could provide monetary support for the dozing. Al responded that he has researched that previously but will do so again. Michelle Sall suggested raising the trails at Farview Park if the logistics would be feasible.

Karen Simmons asked if there is additional space on the Township grounds to hold more dirt. Al responded that the Township grounds can hold as much dirt as can be delivered.

Al will approach the BPW to share the Corps of Engineers grant to support the dozing.

2. Ice rink at Shore Acres Park update – the curb was installed successfully. Heavener has improved the access drive to the rink. The Graafschap Fire Department will put water in later this week to determine if a tarp is necessary. The installation of electrical power would be very expensive at \$3,600 for Consumers Power. Another option is the power access from the Felt Mansion. He will continue to explore the cost options. For this year he recommends purchasing four large solar lights to be mounted on the backboards. Chuck Strabbing stated that the light poles on the other side of the mansion could run a cord for the dawn to dusk timeframe. Al will report options found at the November meeting. He also suggested getting the old hand pump connected by putting a trench in that would also accommodate the electrical installation. Linda Howell stated

that she would like to see the usage numbers at the rink for this season before spending more money.

3. Discontinue port-o-johns for the winter – Huyser Farm, Farview, Shore Acres and Laketown Beach parks all have receptacles and they will remain through the winter.
4. Sanctuary Woods Firewood – Al explained that he had received a call from a resident to remove the downed trees to be used for firewood. Al stated that there is firewood available from the removal of the bike path. Rich Meinke is the contact through Dan Hoe Excavating. Al has the contact information.

ii. Nick Otting

1. Security light, bathroom genders signs and painting at Wolters Woods – Nick reported that the light has not been installed due to his inability to erect the pole. The signs and painting were addressed on the Day of Caring.
2. Metal door for Huyser Farm house – Nick did not find an additional metal door on the property that could be used. The actual wood interior door frame is the issue for vandalism. Al stated that he does have a steel door frame that could be used. The approval for power has been obtained but there are not funds to install the wiring and receptacles. Vandalism continues to be a concern throughout the house. Chuck Strabbing stated that the door on the house had been open the last time he was there. Nick asked if the size of the door frame could be modified to accommodate a new door. Bill Snyder stated that the door frame is into the cement foundation. Al suggested future consideration for occupying the home to deter vandalism. Nick reported that the Huyser Farm sign by the driveway has been taken down and needs to be replaced. There is one area on the house that provides a space for maps of the farm for hunters. Nick will also attempt to trim the blueberry bushes before winter.
3. Status of building removal at Huyser Farm – Nick reported that more needs to be done.
4. Sanctuary Woods Trail – Linda Howell asked Nick to check to see if the trails need to be cleared before the winter.

- iii. Township Board Report - No report.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. DEER HUNTING AT HUYSER FARM

Al Meshkin reported receiving one survey from a hunter. In general, others have mentioned a lot of activity. Karen Simmons reported favorable sightings from a selected hunter. Another had expectations of a higher population of deer and was disappointed. One hunter had a dog walker come up on him while hunting.

B. TRUCK REQUEST – no update.

C. GRILL POLES AT WOLTERS WOODS

Chuck reported that there are two different styles in place at this time. Both could be removed and/or replaced. Linda Howell stated that she has a welder friend that would provide assistance to replace the poles for reuse. Chuck will report back to Linda.

D. TRASH RECEPTACLES AT SHORE ACRES PARK

Nick Otting stated that Ben Barton is still trying to obtain the steel receptacles.

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. POTENTIAL GRANTS

Linda Howell and Michelle Sall attended a seminar on development grants through the Department of Natural Resources. Linda explained that the money that goes through the Department of Natural Resources grant application is based on the profits of oil revenue. A development grant for \$50,000 and an acquisition grant for \$100,000 are both opportunities. The Township Hall property dirt project may qualify for a grant. Does the Township want to stockpile dirt and put the grant application in to complete the project with a greater amount of dirt, which could be spread at a later time? Linda stated that the non-motorized bike path could also be used for match projects. MDOT would provide a letter to accompany the grant application for the bike path if necessary.

Linda Howell also mentioned applying for a \$100,000 grant for purchase of in holdings at Laketown Beach. Al Meshkin suggested Linda speak to Neal King in regards to the purchase of the property. Al will email Linda the details of the property.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Linda Howell and seconded by Michelle Sall to approve application of a \$50,000 Department of Natural Resources Development Grant. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on November 18, 2009 at 7:00 P.M to be held at the Township Hall. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

ARTICLE X. ASSIGNMENTS

Al --

1. Research more electrical options for the ice rink at Shore Acres Park
2. Email information to Linda Howell concerning the beach property owned by Neal King
3. Contact the Holland Board of Public Works concerning the sharing of the Corps of Engineers Grant to fund additional dozing expenses

Chuck

1. Continue to work on the grill poles at Wolters Woods

Nick –

1. Contact Ben Barton concerning the trash receptacles for the disc golf course