

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

February 17, 2010

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

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

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chuck Strabbing

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

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS/COMMUNICATION RECEIVED

Howard Bouwens Jr. of 6630 Halcyon Hills spoke on behalf of the Halcyon Hills Association and expressed concern in regards to the beach access and what he feels is trespassing that has been occurring on the private property of the residents. He also provided a document supporting the concerns.

Bill Kaiser spoke on behalf of the Shore Acres Disc Golf Club stating concerns about returning the Shore Acres Park back to the State of Michigan. Chairperson Linda Howell responded that there have been discussions in the past regarding a land swap in order to accomplish water access. Al Meshkin stated that there have been discussions but nothing has been determined at this point. Mr. Kaiser stated that there are concerns because the club has plans for volunteer work to be done at the park and if it will be returned to the State it may be done for nothing. He would like to know the plans before the club goes any further in their fund raising and development plans. Al Meshkin explained that while he feels it is unlikely, there are no guarantees that the ownership of the property might change in the future. His goal is to secure the property around the Felt Mansion for the estate but at this point there are no decisions made. Linda Howell reminded Mr. Kaiser that the plan he referred to was written prior to the disc golf course being put in place. Based on this information, Mr. Kaiser feels it is safe to proceed with the club plans. He

stated that the club would like to get a handle on the garbage situation. Currently, there are white plastic garbage bags tied to the trees but it would be better to have receptacles. The club would also like to install tee pads for each hole. The estimate would be \$1,000 but would not include the lumber to make the forms. It would take about 9.5 yards of cement and optimally be done in one day. The club is asking the Township for \$1,000 to support the effort to cover equipment and fuel. Mr. Kaiser would also like to solicit for volunteers to mow the course and he asked what kind of liability would be involved. Mr. Kaiser showed a picture of a hole and what kind of clean-up and trimming should be done. The brush that would be cut can be taken care of with a chipper and recycled. Al Meshkin stated that the Township does have liability insurance to cover all volunteers. Mr. Kaiser also asked about the sand removal and wondered how much more would be taken away. It is difficult to plan holes 13 and 14 without understanding the scope of the sand removal. The goal would be to have the work done by April 15. Al Meshkin stated that the bike path will be done by the end of the summer and that is when the sand removal would end. Mr. Kaiser asked if the club could work with the construction company to attempt to leave a plateau for the course. Al stated that he would meet Mr. Kaiser at the course when the weather gets better. Mr. Kaiser asked if a staging area could be created. He stated that he works with a pipeline company and he is familiar with logistics and planning for such projects. He also asked if a mound could be created for the 13th hole. This will also be reviewed at the site visit. Mr. Kaiser asked if the Board had any questions. Linda Howell stated that she does not see any problem with this but would like to understand more after he and Al meet. The Commission will be reviewing the 2010 budget and a decision on the requested funds will be made at that time. Mr. Kaiser also asked for an additional port'o'potty at the golf course.

Bill Malane of 142nd Avenue stated that there were continuous issues with parking near the beach last year. Linda Howell explained that the Commission is in the process of working with the Allegan County Road Commission to determine appropriate signage and any parking recommendations they might have. Mr. Malane asked if Linda Howell had a plan for the parking. She reiterated that the Commission will continue to work on the issue. Mr. Malane asked if towing and ticketing is an option. Linda Howell responded Laketown Township residents voted down additional millage for police and safety so there continues to be one deputy for the entire Township. Mr. Malane stated that the "No Parking" signs do not work because they are not enforced. Al Meshkin stated that there are no additional deputies and it is possible that Allegan County may reduce deputies as well. Linda Howell stated that 142nd Street is on schedule for repaving in 2012 and something could change at that time. Mr. Malane stated that the size of the beach allows for 20 parking spaces and it far exceeds that. He asked what the neighbors should do on either side if there are no resources for patrolling. Are we to be vigilantes? I am tired of people driving through my driveway when they cannot turn around in the street. There are some days that I am not comfortable pulling in and out of my driveway. Linda responded that he could gate his driveway as it is his property.

Felipe Ramirez stated that his brother-in-law owns property on the north side of the Laketown Beach. He stated that he does not understand that for a beach that has space for 100 people, this past summer he and his wife counted approximately 180 people on

the beach invading private property. According to the law, people have the right to walk anywhere on the beach within 6 feet of the shoreline. People walk within 50 feet of the shoreline and take driftwood from private property. He feels that taxpayers' rights are being violated. We should live in harmony but more signs should be placed restricting the number to 100 people and appropriate parking. It is getting out of hand. Legal action may be necessary. He feels that Laketown Township has a responsibility to the residents. We need the Township's help. It is becoming a hassle and people could be hurt if something isn't done.

Jack Grates of 142nd Street stated that it has been established that there are issues at the beach. It used to be restricted to residents only and was patrolled accordingly. When it was changed to open it to the public, the parking was not addressed. He stated that it could be changed to a tow away zone and it would not be an expense to the township.

ARTICLE III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission members reviewed the minutes of the November 18, 2009 meeting. The minutes were approved as written.

ARTICLE IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Chuck Strabbing reviewed the bills to be paid as of November, December 2009 and January 2010. Maintenance: Veldhof Septic Service - \$225.00 (Nov), \$225.00 (Dec), \$225.00 (Jan), Advantage Building Maintenance - \$110.00 (Nov), \$110.00 (Dec), \$70.00 (Jan) Chef Container - \$789.46 (Dec), Heavener Property Services - \$367.50 (Nov), \$445.00 (Dec), \$200.00 (Jan); Salaries: Nick Otting - \$590.00 (Nov), \$600.00 (Dec), \$540.00 (Jan) Michelle Sall - \$60.00, Karen Simmons - \$120.00, Chuck Strabbing - \$140.00, Linda Howell - \$150.00, Bill Snyder - \$120.00; Contracted Services: Joyce Teusink - \$155.00 (Oct), \$150.00 (Nov), \$155.00 (Dec), Julie Buursma - \$455.00 (Sept/Oct/Nov); Training, Membership & Dues: \$150.00 (Dec); Supplies: Graafschap Hardware - \$14.98 (Nov), \$24.30 (Dec), \$44.24 (Jan) Nicerink - \$32.67 (Dec) Overisel Lumber - \$45.88 (Nov), \$18.86 (Jan), Menards Holland - \$27.48 (Nov), \$264.89 (Dec), \$27.98 (Jan); Capital Outlay: Brewer City Dock - 5079.51 (Nov), Quantum Construction Company - \$29,472.20, Nicerink - \$991.33 (Dec); Electricity: Consumer's Energy - \$19.66 (Jan).

Following discussion, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

ARTICLE V. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Staff

i. Al Meshkin

1. DNR Response - Al reported that the request to replace the beach steps was declined. He provided information on the application for DNR grant opportunities.

ii. Nick Otting –

1. Nick reported that he has been walking the parks as much as possible. He has also scheduled debts crew to trim the berry trees. Al Meshkin asked about the doors on the red barn at Huyser. Nick responded that the hinges are very weak and should be replaced. Linda stated that she and Michelle will be working on some grant opportunities and will need Nick's support to gather data to justify the requests. Linda stated that the Commission should begin prioritizing projects.

iii. Township Board Report - No report.

iv. Chair's Update – Linda Howell

1. Linda provided a written update of recent activity. Michelle asked for clarification of the tee pad estimate at \$1,600 versus \$1,000 that was asked for this evening. Mr. Kaiser spoke to Linda regarding a potential grant that might be available through his pipeline company. There are 166 Facebook participants with the Shore Acres Disc Golf Course Club. Linda would like to encourage Al to work with this group to improve the course and the overall volunteer participation in that park and others. Bill Snyder asked what the status is of the trash cans for the course. Chuck Strabbing is working on this but there is no update at this time. Bill Snyder stated that he may be able to get the blue plastic style but it would not have a top. The plastic barrels would not rust but the question is whether there are lids that would fit. Bill will take one of the lids and try to fit them on the plastic barrel. A pick-up schedule would have to be established. Linda confirmed that she will be working a few hours a month at the Township office and in the parks.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2010

Linda Howell asked for nominations for the 2010 Board. It was suggested that Chuck Strabbing continue with the role of Treasurer. The seat of Vice Chair will be filled by Karen Simmons and Linda Howell will remain Chair.

Linda called for role call vote – 4 yeas, 0 no. **UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

B. PROPOSED 2010 BUDGET

Linda Howell opened for discussion. There was some question on the increase for bike path expenditure. Al Meshkin responded that it was part in due to the June 2009 storm repair. The same is true for the increase in maintenance expense. Michelle Sall asked what the Township Board's reaction was to the budget. Al responded that the Board has seen the budget several times and there are no issues.

Al included \$25,000 for dirt to be used at the Township on the sports and activity facility plan. A grant application will be submitted for a government match.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bill Snyder and seconded by Michelle Sall to approve the proposed budget and recommend to the Township Board for final approval. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

C. POTENTIAL GRANTS AND PROJECT PRIORITIES

Linda Howell opened up for discussion. Michelle Sall expressed a desire to work on the Township sports complex property. Karen Simmons would like to make improvements to the beach. Al Meshkin stated that a public hearing should be scheduled for March in regards to the grant and match activities.

Karen Simmons would like to see the garden project at the Huyser Farm as a priority for community garden opportunities. Trails and the monument should also be a priority at Huyser Farm. Michelle Sall would like to see monies put toward a boardwalk. Bill Snyder asked about the property adjacent to Wolters Woods on 147th Street. The purchase of this property may also be an opportunity for a grant this year. Al Meshkin will contact Rick Mouw concerning the availability of the property. The grant should be structured to request \$93,750 for this property.

D. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Linda Howell reported that she has had requests from Cub Scout troops and a boating group from the Eldean Marina to do volunteer work in the parks. Linda is asking if

anyone is interested in taking a more active role in the coordination of the volunteer opportunities. Michelle Sall expressed interest but it would not be until later this year.

E. OUTDOOR DISCOVERY CENTER PROGRAMS

Jamie Krupka of the Outdoor Discovery Center gave a brief presentation of the programs offered at the Center. The Center merged with the Macatawa Greenway in August of 2009. He began with an overview of the activities that took place in 2009. Jamie highlighted several activities that were held in the various Township parks as a result of the partnership that was created with Laketown Township. Programs are offered free of charge to participants as a result of combined funding from the partners. Jamie reviewed the proposed ODC-Greenway and Laketown Township agreement for programs in 2010.

Linda Howell asked if Jamie has seen a trend in participation levels. Jamie responded that it is often weather dependent. Bill Snyder commented that his grandchildren attend and enjoy many of the activities. Michelle Sall asked if there is an increase in funding. Jamie responded that there has been an increase in the programs offered therefore an increase in requested funding. Al asked that Jamie send program brochures to the Township. Linda Howell asked that future program photographs be forwarded electronically for use in the Township newsletter.

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on March 17, 2010 at 7:00 P.M to be held at the Township Hall. The meeting adjourned at 8:39 P.M.

ARTICLE X. ASSIGNMENTS

Al –

1. Contact Rick Mouw in regards to the available property on 147th Street.

Linda –

1. Follow up with Howard Bouwens on the beach concerns.

Bill -

1. Work on appropriate trash receptacles for the disc golf course.