

PROPOSED MINUTES  
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
AT  
TOWNSHIP HALL

November 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, Michelle Sall, Bill Snyder, Chuck Strabbing,  
Karen Simmons

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS/COMMUNICATION RECEIVED

Linda Howell stated that she received correspondence from a resident asking if the Laketown Township residents could have a first chance at the Huyser Farm hunt lottery. Linda asked the Commissioners to give it some thought for future discussion. She will get back to the resident and advise him of the number of people that entered the lottery and how many were residents. The Parks Commission will take this request into consideration for next year. Feedback was received from hunter Scott Jerome stating that he saw three deer on the Huyser Farm property during his allotted hunting time and one large owl. He also mentioned that there were not many deer hunting signs visible in the park. Al Meshkin stated that some farmers are practicing “culling” to reduce the deer population on their property. Al also suggested opening up other parks to bow hunting. Karen Simmons will provide Linda Howell with the details of the applicants and permits awarded for the Huyser Farm hunting lottery.

ARTICLE III. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes

The Commission members reviewed the minutes of the October 20, 2010 meeting. Michelle Sall commented on corrections to be made to Section VI. a. ii. **The minutes were approved with the recommended corrections as noted.**

b. Township Board Report – Chuck Strabbing

Chuck Strabbing reported a discussion occurred at the Township Board meeting concerning strengthening the partnership between the Township and the Outdoor Discovery Center. This came about in the process of writing a grant application for the additional property near Wolters Woods. Travis Williams made a presentation to the Board to consider future support for the ODC through resurrecting an earlier contract involving the Macatawa Greenway which is now part of the ODC. Al Meshkin amended the grant application for the purchase of the property near Wolters Woods stating that the Township is partnering with the ODC. Linda Howell asked if the money that the Township is spending on programming could be applied to Laketown Township residents. Linda Howell and Al will discuss how the ODC will be included in the upcoming budget discussions.

ARTICLE IV. TREASURER’S REPORT

Chairperson Linda Howell reviewed the bills to be paid as of October 2010. Maintenance: Advantage Building Maintenance - \$110.00, Veldhof Septic - \$375.00, Heavener Property Services - \$942.50, Contracted Services: Joyce Teusink - \$85.00, Robert Jerow - \$65.00; Supplies: Michelle Sall - \$118.59, Menards Holland - \$121.78; Salaries: Nick Otting - \$810.00, Michelle Sall - \$180.00, Karen Simmons - \$120.00, Chuck Strabbing - \$140.00, Linda Howell - \$225.00, Bill Snyder - \$60.00; Electricity: \$19.66.

Chuck reported that the budget is at 49%.

Linda Howell questioned an item on the Menards invoice.

Michelle Sall questioned the portable potty fee at Farview Farm. Al Meshkin clarified that these are actually on Shore Acres property which is also on 138<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Following discussion, the Treasurer’s Report was approved as submitted.

ARTICLE V. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Township Manager – Al Meshkin

i. Gate Closing at Sanctuary Woods

Al Meshkin mentioned that a decision must be made concerning the opening/closing of the gate at Sanctuary Woods for the winter months. He did receive one report from a resident stating that the service could be better. The Commission decided the gates should be left open for the winter.

ii. Ice Rink

Al has asked Nick Otting to caulk the rink and test for leaking. The rink will not have a liner this year but may be flooded and maintained this year for skating if it holds water. Nick reported that so far he has not detected any leaks.

iii. Praxis

Al reported that he has tried to reach Pat McKown from Green Starts but has not been able to do so. Chuck Strabbing stated that he will further research an alternate source for the species. Linda Howell asked about the Michigan State Extension contact. Nick Otting stated that there have been representatives from John Weiss' group at Huyser Farm studying the microbes and he will try to contact them.

iv. Grant

Al reported that the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for the Township Hall recreation project requesting \$50,000 was not awarded. There are still two outstanding grants that he has not received responses on yet which may be a positive indication.

b. Maintenance Report – Nick Otting

i. Felt Mansion

As mentioned above, Nick is checking the ice rink for leaks to determine if the current materials will be adequate if the rink is set up and maintained. Al Meshkin asked that Nick repair the broken windows at the mansion carriage house before winter.

ii. Huyser Farm

Nick reported that he has removed the fallen tree from the barn and is now working to repair the barn. He can reuse some of the wood left over from other structures but will need to purchase roofing materials. He is working on putting the bench in place and should have the installation complete this week-end. Al Meshkin commented that the bench is gorgeous. It will face west-northwest with its back toward the road overlooking the blueberry fields. Linda Howell asked that something be done to recognize Mr. Ford's donation of the bench. Michelle Sall will take photographs of it to include the plaque and Al will see that the photos and a note be included in the next Township newsletter. Nick reported that he and the debts crew have been working on trimming the blueberry bushes. Linda Howell asked if the broken windows on the house have been replaced and secured for the upcoming winter months. Nick stated that he has begun this work but has not yet replaced all of the broken windows.

iii. Sanctuary Woods

Nick reported that he has removed a lot of very bad graffiti from this park and also from some of the other parks. He is using a "green" approved soy solution that has been very successful. The tree that obstructed the trail has been removed.

iv. Laketown Beach

Nick reported that he will schedule the debts crew to clear the sand off the steps at the beach before the snow comes if possible.

v. Wolters Woods

Chuck Strabbing reported that he recently did a number of repairs at this park including repairing the gate and some issues in the restrooms. The plexi-glass is broken in the men's restroom skylight, which continues to be a problem. Several suggestions were made for possible options. Nick will price a number of materials that might be used to alleviate this problem in the future.

vi. Miscellaneous

Karen Simmons asked if Nick's time sheet could be shared with the Parks Commission for review. Al will scan and email it to everyone.

Linda Howell asked if the issues that Joyce Teusink reports are forwarded to Nick. Nick responded that he receives this information from Kathy Stoike once a month to address the issues.

ARTICLE VI. NEW BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Huyser Farm House Update

Bill Snyder reported that he has sketched the floor plan of the house and will put it on auto cad within the next month. He would like to know the anticipated scope of the project in terms of expenditure. He said the siding on both the house and the garage should be repaired or replaced. The interior walls are intact with the exception of one bedroom upstairs. He would suggest tearing all the walls down and putting in new electrical, drywall including additional electrical outlets. The bedroom downstairs has very cheap paneling. Nothing in the kitchen or bathroom is worth salvaging. The well and septic system would have to be replaced. It would cost approximately \$4,000-\$5,000 to drill a new well. The heating system would have to be replaced and it is uncertain if there is natural gas service near the property. Bill suggested a heat pump system as the most efficient option if natural gas is not available.

b. Reservation Policy Update

Michelle Sall reported that she has researched local parks and organizations that currently have policies and procedures for exclusive rental options of their facilities. She has found that most of the organizations have adequate staff to support the process which is not the case in Laketown Township. In addition to the administrative duties, the enforcement would also require additional support. Would there be significant revenue generated to justify staff? Karen Simmons asked if it has been a problem in the parks. Michelle stated that there could be a time when a group does something that might be undesirable. How would it be handled? She hopes that the posted rules cover the things we do and do not want to have in the parks. Al Meshkin stated that the Felt Mansion is different because it

is staffed and run as a revenue generating business. Michelle concluded that at this time, it is not manageable to operate a reservation policy for the parks.

c. Graafschap Hardware

Linda Howell mentioned that she was advised by Graafschap Hardware staff that they carry the green address signs for homes. He asked that the Township office staff advise residents that inquire about the availability of these signs accordingly. Currently, referrals have been made to a vendor in Kalamazoo as it was not known that Graafschap Hardware carried the signs.

The hardware staff also commented on the Huyser Farm hunt stating that it is a very positive activity for the community. Linda asked if the Township had an account with Graafschap Hardware and if we would consider patronizing them for more items versus Menards. Al said we do have an account with them.

Chuck Strabbing reported that he did make a recent purchase at the Graafschap Hardware to rectify a situation with the blue barrels at the disc golf course. With the recent high winds, the barrels have been blowing around spewing garbage. He purchased and installed fence posts and now has them bungee corded to the posts.

#### ARTICLE VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M.

The next meeting will be held at the Township Hall on Wednesday, January 19 at 7:00 P.M.

#### Assignments:

Linda –

1. Respond to the inquiry made to give preference to Laketown Township residents in the Huyser Farm hunt lottery.

Michelle –

1. Photograph the new bench at Huyser Farm and forward the photos to Al for the Township newsletter to give recognition to the donor, Mr. Ford.

Chuck –

1. Research supplier for nematodes.

Karen –

1. Advise Linda of details concerning the lottery for the Huyser Farm hunt, specifically residents versus non-residents.

Nick –

1. Contact the Michigan State Extension office in regards to availability of nematodes for Huyser Farm.
2. Ensure all windows at the Huyser Farm house are repaired and secured before winter weather starts.