

MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
AT
TOWNSHIP HALL

February 16, 2011

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, Karen Simmons

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chuck Strabbing

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS - None

ARTICLE III. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Minutes

Following discussion the minutes were approved as submitted.

- b. Township Board Report – No report.

ARTICLE IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

Linda Howell reviewed the bills to be paid as of January 2011. Maintenance: Advantage Building Maintenance - \$70.00, Action Heating & Cooling - \$272.74, Lowe's Companies Inc. - \$12.03, Ottagan Plumbing - \$575.00, Veldhof Septic - \$375.00; Capital Outlay: Dan Hoe Excavating - \$1,296.00; Contracted Services: Robert Jerow - \$155.00; Supplies: Menards Holland - \$21.12; Salaries: Nick Otting - \$640.00, Michelle Sall - \$120.00, Karen Simmons - \$60.00, Chuck Strabbing - \$140.00, Bill Snyder - \$120.00, Linda Howell - \$150.00; Electricity: \$19.84.

Linda noted that there was one bill from the Fire Department in the invoice packet. Al stated that it was a copy only that should not have been included and is not on the actual budget report.

Linda noted the invoice for the hot water heater for the small Huyser house that Nick Otting is living in. Apparently, there was flooding in the basement again with the snow melting and damage done was to the heater. Al Meshkin stated that the heavy rain we had in December damaged the hot water heater so it had to be replaced. The new hot water heater is set on blocks to avoid this from happening in the future. There was some question about the cost of the water heater. Karen Simmons asked about the painting labor that was listed on Nick's work hours. Al explained that the tongue and groove acoustic ceiling panels in the kitchen were falling down and had to be reinstalled. This month Nick was out of water for some time due to the water pump failing. Al brought Koops into look at it after all of Nick's attempts to repair it had failed. A new motor was put on the pump but Al is wondering if the well is running dry. Karen asked if Koops had been asked about that. It may be possible that a new well is needed but the amount of clay in the area may be an issue. Bill Snyder asked if municipal water is planned for that portion of 64th Street. Al responded that it does not go that far down 64th Street. Linda Howell stated if a new well is necessary, she would like to research what would be necessary for future planning. Linda commented that in this type of situation it is inevitable that it might be necessary in the future so she would like a full analysis done of the entire property to accommodate phases that might progress as the property uses expand.

ARTICLE V. TOWNSHIP REPORTS

a. Township Manager – Al Meshkin

i. Blueberries at Huyser and MSU

Nick advised Al that the MSU researchers would like to adopt the Huyser Farm for investigating the invasive species and further the use of organic farming. Nick is working closely with contacts at MSU to create a long-term partnership. The farm would continue to be open to the public.

Michelle Sall commented on the note from Robert Jerow concerning the beech trees that are covering the path at Wolters Woods. Is Nick taking care of that? And what about the skylight that continues to be broken every year. Linda Howell asked that Al Meshkin ask Nick to replace it the glass with hard fabric cloth instead of glass.

ii. Grants

Al asked if the Commission wants to apply for a grant for the Township Hall recreation facility. He suggested waiting until next year but after discussion it was decided that it might be best to do it this year. Al feels that more points might be possible. Bill Snyder asked if there is any credit for perseverance. Al said there might be to show that we are serious about it. It could be

brought before the Board in March to allow time for a public hearing in March and submittal by April 1. Linda Howell asked when the grant for the beach steps expires from our list of grants on that project. Al responded it will expire in approximately two years. After next year the new state park fee will allow for some local distribution. Al will draft the documents for review and then schedule a public hearing in April.

Linda asked about the status of the current grant to obtain the parcel at Wolters Woods. Al stated that it is kind of on hold right now due to waiting for legislative action. Al will wait until after April 1 as an environmental study must be done on the parcel prior to completion of the grant. Rick Mouw has contacted Al each month for an update on the sale.

Linda asked about the moving of the old Gibson church and whether or not there will be water available for it and a drinking fountain in that area of the park. Al stated that the mover has been contracted and he is donating a third of the price. He is also working with Consumers Energy to coordinate the overhead line moves. The church pews have been purchased and will be on their way here at the end of this week. They were very reasonably priced on ebay and are coming from Missouri. According to Wendy Van Huis they are almost a perfect match to the original pews. The church could be in place as early as the end of May. There is enough money to do that right now. Al is working on the water connection, which should be fairly easy to tap into the current water main. The septic may be a bit more when we get to that point.

Linda asked about the grant that Mark Kappel is working on for the bike trail. He is working with another group to potentially obtain \$12-\$18,000 for improvements. The West Michigan Mountain Bike Association is aiming to put in 50 miles of track in the next few years.

- b. Maintenance Report – No report.

ARTICLE VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. 2011-12 Budget

Linda Howell asked if there are any questions about the budget. Linda asked if Al had spoken to Ben Barton about how much more he wants for the maintenance of the disc golf course. Al suggested allocating \$2,000 more to maintain the course. Karen Simmons feels it is a good idea as it is money well spent due to the high usage.

Linda confirmed that Praxis may come out as MSU will take this over. Linda asked about numbers from Heavener. Al stated that he does not have his numbers yet but it will be more due to the additional shared use path – 6 more miles to maintain. Michelle Sall stated that along 140th to Beeline to the Saugatuck connection it was not very clear during the end of December. Al said there has some discussion about when the best time is to

plow it, before or after the county plows come through. Heavener is charging approximately \$20 per mile right now which is very reasonable. There are issues with residents that are intentionally putting snow onto the bike paths. Al will have the deputy follow up with those residents in the future.

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

Karen Simmons asked if we still have money allocated in the budget for the Huyser Farm memorial. Al stated that it is included in the proposed budget. Linda will follow up with Esther Van Slooten by means of a letter to approve the verbiage for the Huyser Farm memorial. Linda stated that she has made contact with a vendor that can carve into rock, similar to that of a headstone. Do we want the bronze plaque or carve into the rock? Michelle Sall stated that she would like to see it on the plaque. Bill Snyder and Karen Simmons agreed.

Linda Howell stated that Play World is a vendor that put a life trail in the Holland area and asked if we would be interested in something like that for the parks. Holland Hospital paid for it through a grant. Bill Snyder will follow up with a potential contact to learn more.

Al Meshkin commented that the ODC is working with a vendor that does playground equipment constructed out of natural materials. It provokes more touching and interaction with natural things instead of plastics. He believes they have a small set-up at ODC right now. Linda suggested if Wolters Woods is expanded it might be nice to add more playground equipment. One option might be to contact Holland Public Schools for possible access to playground equipment from the schools in the area that are not longer being used.

Al suggested a Phase 3 to Wolters Woods that might eventually include the family home as a potential facility for programming or ODC type residency.

Bill Snyder stated that he has seen zip lines with very little elevation and has witnessed children having great fun. Karen Simmons suggested putting one in for adults, too.

Linda Howell said she has a friend that would set up a Parks Facebook page if there is interest to do that. It would help to create awareness of the park programming opportunities.

Al also suggested considering to putting a grant together to put restrooms in at Sanctuary Woods. Pat Meyer is working with M-DOT related to the Interurban bridge and it may be possible to include restrooms in the project.

Karen Simmons asked if there are better ways to keep track of Nick Otting's hours. Karen questioned some of the dates, hours and duties recorded for the last month. Linda

Howell asked if Nick follows direction given by Al. Al said he monitors as much as he can given his other responsibilities. Linda suggested writing a check list of objectives to be accomplished each month. Bill Snyder asked if a work order system has been tried. Al agreed that is a great idea to use a formalized work order form. Linda commented that it would also help with the time sheet recording.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

a. ODC Programming

Jamie Krupka from the Outdoor Discovery Center reviewed the attendance numbers for the 2010 program year. There were nine scheduled programs and only two were unattended. He also provided a schedule of events for the 2011 calendar year. The Huyser Farm and Blueberry Programs are both very popular. Jamie has tried to utilize all of the parks for programming. The snowshoeing event last week-end was unattended. The next opportunity is in April. All events are published are on the ODC website calendar and also in their newsletter when space allows.

Karen Simmons commented on the various attendance numbers from programs for 2010. Jamie commented that some are better attended than others but the ODC will continue to get the word out.

Linda Howell confirmed that the amount requested for support in 2011 is \$1,250.00. Jamie responded that he understands that it will be that amount as an annual contribution by the township and then there would be no charge for residents to attend the programs. Jamie asked if the commissioners had any other ideas for programming. Linda asked if he has done treasure hunts using geo-caching. Jamie stated that the center has done that in the past. Linda stated that there are many available in various places in the township parks today. Jamie stated that the center tries to do this event with more educational items. Karen Simmons agreed that the children love that type of event. Linda suggested places caches that have something to do with Laketown Township. She stated that it might be a way to tap into different populations. It might be a family event with a potluck. Linda asked if ODC has the equipment. Jamie stated that they do have some equipment but not a lot of it. Jamie stated that it might be a promotion of local businesses using relative tokens as the caches.

Linda confirmed there is money in the proposed budget to support the programming. Al Meshkin stated that he will attempt to get the event calendar in the township newsletter.

Michelle Sall asked if any of these programs are part of the Ready for School program. Jamie responded they are not at this point as these events do not qualify under that particular grant.

Bill Snyder asked where that amount is in the budget. Al responded that it is categorized under contracted services.

Jamie stated that the ODC is willing to work with the Felt Mansion on any potential programs. He also noted that if additional property is purchased at Wolters Woods, the center would be willing to support any efforts there as well. Al reiterated that part of the reason that the grant to purchase the property was approved was the fact that the township is working with part of a larger organization, the Macatawa Greenway. Jamie stated that this continues to grow as the Greenway Corridor is part of many partnerships such as the one with Laketown Township. Al pointed out that the waterway virtually reaches out to the Huyser Farm properties.

Linda mentioned the Huyser Farm house and the potential of collaborating with the ODC on future opportunities there.

Karen Simmons spoke in favor of providing the requested funding for the programming. Linda Howell asked if there is any impact on grants. Al responded that it is more beneficial to be a partner with ODC than a “pay as we go” plan.

ARTICLE VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 P.M.

Assignments:

Linda –

1. Follow up with Esther Van Slooten on the approval of the verbiage for the Huyser Farm memorial plaque.

Bill –

1. Follow up with Holland Hospital on a contact for the “Life Trail” project.

Al –

1. Contact Koops regarding the water situation at Huyser Farm, particularly the well for the small rental house.
2. See that the ODC programming calendar is put in the next Township newsletter.
3. Implement a “work order” process for Nick’s duties in the parks.