

PROPOSED MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
AT
TOWNSHIP HALL

April 19, 2017

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Sall, Jim Johnson, Ryan Bosscher,
Janice Lozon, Karen Simmons
MEMBERS ABSENT: None
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Dick Becker 2382 Valley Drive said he is trying to learn how the township works. He recommended that the commissioners be careful with the survey with a 3% participation rate. The survey may say a strong interest but what does it really mean? You are doing a good job – keep up the good work!

Sherry Sirko of 6397 Hidden Pond spoke in objection of developing the Huyser Farm. She feels ODC, the Holland Nature Center and other already developed parks are enough. Developing it would take away the natural beauty which is what citizens like; not having anyone around is nice. She likes seeing the nature and wildlife as it is and asks that it not be changed.

ARTICLE III. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Johnson and seconded by Bosscher to approve the March 15, 2017 minutes as written. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT

Johnson reviewed the bills to be paid as of March 2017. Maintenance: Veldhof – \$400.00; Salaries: Robert Jerow - \$140.00; Contracted Services: John Kunkel - \$165.00; Electricity: Consumers Energy - \$95.26; Taxes: \$12.63.

Johnson said nothing out of the ordinary except asked what the electricity is for on 142nd Street and Meshkin said the Old Township Hall and the Huyser Farm.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Simmons and seconded by Lozon to approve the Treasurer’s Report as submitted. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE V. HUYSER FARM PRESENTATION BY STEVE VAN TIMMERMAN, MSU RESEARCH

Steve Van Timmerman provided a hand-out of the project. He works for the Berry Crops Entomology and Pollination Ecology Department of the Trevor Nichols Experimental Farm of MSU. He reported on the Spotted Wing Drosophila at the farm. The blueberry field is important because it is an unsprayed site so it is vital to research. The habitat evaluation study for this year involves setting traps to study the flies to determine when the flies are present during the seasons and where. Wild raspberry, honeysuckle, blackberry and other fruit varieties are present on the farm and all were noted as infected last year. The flies are attracted to the honeysuckle and move on to the fruit trees where larvae are detected. Parasitic and blueberry wasps and are also being studied; the parasitic wasps emerge in the spring and summer. Van Timmerman said the university does value the site for its natural condition. Sall said it was advised to close the blueberries off if we had decided to spray and Van Timmerman confirmed there are rules that address this. Sall stated it was advised that the berries are safe and no health hazard to humans and Van Timmerman confirmed that is correct. Meshkin advised that there were biological controls used in past years. Van Timmerman said this species originates from Asia. Tom Hoekman asked if there are any natural parasitic wasps on the farm and Van Timmerman responded that there is but it has difficulty fighting this species off. Johnson mentioned that there is a gentleman, Brad Moorer, in the township who is the CFO of the Michigan Blueberry Growers Association and offered some support with the blueberries. Van Timmerman added that his research group works closely with the growers to support their needs. Sall mentioned that the flies survive Michigan winters and Van Timmerman confirmed that is correct.

ARTICLE VI. TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORTS – SALL

- a. Sall – reported there was nothing significantly related to the parks.

ARTICLE VII. STAFF REPORTS

- a. Meshkin reported the grants for the beach and restrooms were submitted and he anticipates a preliminary review in the summer to amend where needed. The point scoring system has items that we have no control over. Simmons asked what his initial reaction is and Meshkin said he feels good about both grants. The Passport Grants have a high award rate of over 50 percent. We have received Trust Fund Grants, Coastal Zone Management Grants and others that may affect the outcome. Grant dollars awarded per capita are quite high but he feels good about the beach grant. Williams has started clean up in the parks and on the bike paths. This summer there will be five weeks of support from the Holland Youth Connection crew so a list of projects is needed; tasks that do not require power tools.

Sall provided a list of projects for the Youth Connection as follows:

- Laketown Beach – 1) Plant beach grass; 2) Pick up trash; 3) Shovel sand
 - Huysen – 1) Monarch Way Station; 2) Trim and remove pricker bushes; 3) Remove small trees; 4) Create and mark a western trail
 - Farview – 1) Distribute bark to trails; 2) Paint way station; 3) Fill potholes
 - Sanctuary Woods – 1) Garlic mustard pull; 2) Graffiti removal; 3) Remove roots from trails
 - Shore Acres – 1) Arrow markers to the next tee on the disc golf course
 - Wolters Woods – 1) Touch up paint on playground; 2) Trail at Macatawa Watershed trail system; 3) Woodchips; 4) Poles with cables (painted band) touch up
- Sall also noted that oak trees should not be trimmed until after July 15 due to the invasive species.

ARTICLE VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. BEACH

Johnson said Jason Schrottenboer has made some progress with the first section of the stairs somewhat cleared (first 20 steps) and he is finding they have to move the sand twice to remove it. He has two groups lined up to volunteer to work on the stairs; Holland Christian and the Allegan Debts Crew. Johnson has contacted four contractors to provide estimates on raising the stairs. The original builder of the stairs is also interested in the quote at \$12-\$15,000. Onder Construction (Sanctuary Woods stairs) \$16,800; Land-tech will provide a quote and Plaggemars Construction will also quote. Bosscher asked if the quotes are for stairs parallel to the shore and Johnson said it is. Meshkin said these are reasonable numbers for the estimated 80 linear feet. Bosscher asked what we pay to keep it clean for the season and Meshkin said \$13,000. Meshkin said Meekhof said the existing stairs raised

may not be strong enough and suggested boring through the current to raise it up. More to come on this topic to determine the cost to correct versus continue to maintain each year.

B. ADAPTIVE REUSE OF OLD TOWNSHIP HALL

Sall tabled this item.

C. INVASIVE SPECIES

Lozon provided information from an Ottawa County meeting she attended regarding the invasive species that is in our county and township, specifically Sanctuary Woods and in Fennville, Kollen Park, Ottawa Beach and other surrounding areas. The goal is to try to stop its migration north where there are more Hemlock trees but the problem is funding to address this, particularly with the new administration. If you know people with Hemlock trees there are resources to help. The migratory birds are carrying the disease up the coastline. Lozon said the suggested time to look for the species is actually in the winter. Lozon has spotted it in Sanctuary Woods but the positive is that it is slow growing and there has been some development on how to prevent and eliminate it. The trees would have to be treated in order to avoid loss.

Noah Sall noted there is a grant program out of the MDNR and \$3.5mil has been funded for eradication efforts that we may qualify for to treat the problem. Sall discussed two options for treatment, a slower approach through the root or a spray to the base of the tree, both of which have varied timeframes and must be repeated. The article does not specify a deadline to submit.

Johnson discussed the oak wilt disease that is also found in the area. It is a fungus that is spread by a beetle and advised not to trim or injure oak trees from April 15 to July 15 as this disease can bring down the tree within weeks.

Sall asked to have the staff look into the grant and asked what the cost of the grant besides the 10% match. Noah Sall responded that he will have to do further research.

Sall said the Japanese knotweed must also be addressed. Meshkin said the ODC contacted him and they have funds for this and another species that must be addressed, the phragmites, both of which are in various areas of the township. Meshkin asked that commissioners make a note on the parks map where they have seen it and submit it to him to consolidate the information to send to ODC for spraying.

D. DOG PARK

Sall tabled this item.

E. SAUGATUCK COMMUNITY RECREATION REPRESENTATIVE –
APPROVAL OF JANEL HAGERTY

Meshkin proposed appointment of Janel Hagerty to represent Laketown Township on the Saugatuck Community Recreation Board.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Sall and seconded by Simmons to approve Janel Hagerty as Laketown Township representative on the Saugatuck Community Recreation Board. Chair Sall called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Tom Hoekman asked what the position is and Meshkin explained the program and the opportunity for representation from the township to the recreation advisory to the Saugatuck school board.

F. PICKLE BALL UPDATE

Bosscher reported that he contacted several contractors to get quotes and has had some difficulty getting responses. Kurt Smith of K & K Concrete met at the Township Hall Recreation Park to better understand the project. Soil borings must be done with engineer specifications for the concrete before a quote can be submitted. Bosscher did get a quote from the contractor being used by the City of Holland for \$11,750 for the surface and fence but without the concrete base; two courts 60' x 60' area (half size of tennis court). Racquet Sports gave two quotes again, for top of the pad, on asphalt for \$6100 and concrete for \$6900 but does not include fencing. Bosscher reiterated that soil borings must be done to determine the engineering specifications for the concrete base.

Johnson asked if a final location has been determined and Bosscher said the northeast corner where the tennis courts are currently shown on the plan. Sidewalks to the courts would also have to be considered in the cost. Simmons asked what the cost of soil borings would be and Johnson said \$500-\$800. Simmons said what are the odds that soil borings would be needed for future projects? Meshkin said there are different varying depths of soil in the area so it would have to be excavate, the spoils moved and sand added. If a tot lot is done, borings may be needed for the concrete piers. Simmons asked if the spoils will have to be removed either way and Meshkin said yes, it depends on how much and how deep will determine how much has to be removed. Lozon asked if it would have to be hauled away and Meshkin said no, it can be moved to another area of the property. Johnson added there is a lot of interest in the surrounding townships and cities. Meshkin stated the approximate cost would be \$30-\$35,000 for the court.

Mitra Delaney said if there are courts in Saugatuck and Holland, we do not need them here.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bosscher and seconded by Simmons to approve the expenditure of \$500-\$800 to proceed with the soil borings on Township Hall Recreation area identified on Master Plan for tennis and playground areas.**

Chair Sall called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED. Johnson will pursue the procurement of the contractor.

ARTICLE IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. HUYSER FARM – DISCUSSION OF GRIGGS PROPOSAL

Joel Griggs reviewed the updated proposal as submitted noting that they would be willing to fund a portion of the renovation and asked what the township is willing to support. He and his wife are in position to sell their current home and move forward with the renovation. Simmons asked if you are going to cover all of the costs and Griggs said he understood the township had some funds to support the renovation. Meshkin said we have some monies earmarked for the renovation. Johnson said it may be premature as the commissioners are going to hold the next meeting at the Huyser farmhouse to walk thru and determine what might be next steps. This meeting will be open to the public. Griggs said they see a lot of ways that the place can be improved and a good opportunity to do festival and fundraising activities to restore and maintain the place. Johnson asked if Bosscher spoke to the Land Conservancy and if there are restrictions from them or the donors. Bosscher said the donors actually stated that they prefer that someone live in the house and maintain it and they are disappointed in how little has been done to maintain the farmhouse and surrounding buildings. Meshkin said there is a deed restriction that only one residence on the property so it may require getting the heirs to approve having two residences on the property so there may be legal aspects to be addressed. Bosscher asked from a zoning perspective, is it possible and Meshkin said it is possible. Griggs confirmed that it would be owned by Laketown Township. Johnson asked if there are liability concerns and Meshkin said yes, and there would have to be a legal document detailing many items but there is potential. Griggs said if you end up restoring the house and no one lives in it, there could be problems. Simmons said this is something we have to seriously consider. Bosscher said his understanding is that you would maintain the house and property. Griggs said he is proposing they would take care of the whole property and keep it natural.

Tom Hoekman asked about how the property was acquired. Meshkin gave a brief overview of how the property was passed on from the original family members. 60 acres has a West Michigan Land Conservancy easement and 40 acres of the farm has very little restrictions except one resident on the property. Hoekman asked if tearing the house down would be prohibited and Meshkin said no but is not likely. Sall invited all residents to attend the May meeting at the farm.

B. PARKS EVALUATIONS

Simmons reviewed Shore Acres and reported the attendees love the park; it is clean and free of garbage, everyone loves the disc golf course; would like little arrows that direct to

the next tee. Occasionally, fat tire bike riders obstruct the course but not very often. The parking lot has to be graded but otherwise the park is great.

Johnson reviewed the Laketown Beach and the stairs were discussed and removal of the sand from the parking lot which will be done by Schrotenboer. The port'o'potty is old but fine and upright; looked like someone dropped a trailer full of leaves next to it; trash containers were fine.

Bosscher reviewed Wolters Woods reporting that for most part it was in good shape. Touch up paint is need on the gazebo, bike rack and restrooms. The restrooms also need toilet paper holders installed. The trails are in good shape; small areas that were wet and muddy; tree stump in front of restrooms should be ground down; playground wood chips pretty good but could be added; most people are there for the trails; one couple having a picnic in the pavilion said they like the playground close by. There must have been an Easter egg hunt in the evening as there were eggs all over the playground. The poles around the perimeter also need some touch up paint.

Lozon reviewed Sanctuary Woods and said it is good shape. A lot of people use the park for exercise. The trails are in good shape but the graffiti is bad; stairs are in good shape; there is one port'o'potty and the owls are out. Johnson said he noticed a lot of roots on the trail, particularly on the loop. Sall asked if the forest beach residents might be willing to allow access to address the tree roots. Meshkin will research and Lozon said even then it would be quite a challenge. Garlic mustard is starting to come and there is a lot of it. People seem to love that park, always someone there and often the lot is full.

Sall reported on Farview Park and noted one resident request to put up a fishing dock. Simmons said it would be nice to have a removable one in the winter. Sall said if we might be able to get volunteers to design and build it. Meshkin will look into it and get back next month. Sall also walked both equestrian and walking paths and there are wood chips available to complete the trail; one bridge needs re-supporting; bench is really no longer usable down at the lake and should be taken out and put somewhere else; it appears that someone is using the park to dispose of their trash due to the condition of the barrels and the driveway needs to be repaired.

Sall will consolidate the reports and provide to Meshkin for a project list.

C. FIVE YEAR RECREATION PLAN UPDATE

Sall is working on an updated draft and will email a copy for the commissioners to review. She asked that Patty Meyer provide input on the Felt Mansion. A public hearing will be needed for final approval of the Five Year Recreation Plan. Johnson asked if there is a due date and Meshkin said is must be done by December 31, 2017 and suggested it be finalized by fall.

ARTICLE X. ADDITIONAL CITIZEN COMMENTS

Tom Crum of 144th Avenue asked if the public is invited to the meeting at the Huyser Farm and if so, when will it be held. Pickle ball is going to get out of hand dollars and cents wise and if you move forward, would like to see it done in stages to see if it draws people. Same subject he feels advertising should be done to get more bids; meeting and what's going on here, would like to see this on the Internet so John Doe knows what is going on with spending, spending and need to draw the line. Crum said you people are doing an awesome job and you put your heart and soul in it, pass that on to the board so they can do the same.

Tom Hoekman of 4174 62nd Street thanked the commissioners for their time, grateful that Ryan Bosscher is on the board and putting it on the Facebook. He will try to get to more meetings and appreciates the postings.

Mitra Delaney of 144th Avenue appreciates all the commissioners' work; pretty much agree with Crum to go evaluate things. Wait or no to dog park; 5-year plan will that be put on the website? Bosscher said it is on the website under the Parks tab of the page; Bosscher said the Master Plan for the Huyser Farm is also on there. When will the parks and pathways be out and Sall said it will be in the spring newsletter.

ARTICLE XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 P.M.