

PROPOSED MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
AT
TOWNSHIP HALL

May 18, 2016

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, Karen Simmons, Jan Lozon,
Bill Snyder, Jim Johnson
MEMBERS ABSENT: None
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Meshkin noted communication has been received regarding volunteers from Holland Christian High School for the beach and a resident offered to clear the blueberry fields at Huyser Farm. Lozon stated that she saw the volunteers at Laketown Beach shoveling sand off the stairs and Johnson said it appears that someone plowed the parking lot at Laketown Beach.

Ryan Bosscher of 967 Laketown Drive announced that he is running for a seat on the Parks Commission, stating he has been a resident of Laketown for about 8 years and has an educational background in Geography, City Planning and Public Administration. Bosscher discussed the historic township hall and its reuse noting that historic buildings are valuable and often lose value when moved from original placement. He suggested leaving it in its place and work toward determining a good use for it. He does not feel that it should be used for a public restroom. Another option would be to move it to Huyser Farm and perhaps use it for a learning facility. He also questioned how much it would cost to move it and transition it into a restroom. Bosscher discussed the potential use of the vacant property at Lakeview School. He reviewed the population statistics and feels that Laketown residents should offer their feedback on the potential uses of the park.

ARTICLE III. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Snyder and seconded by Simmons to approve the April 20, 2016 minutes as written. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT

Snyder reviewed the bills to be paid as of April, 2016. Maintenance: Heavener - \$7,042.25, Chef Container - \$111.65, Jason Schrottenboer – \$6,300.00; Supplies: Valleyvet - \$88.56; Salaries: Robert Jerow - \$155.00, Jan-Mar - \$915.00; Taxes: \$81.86; Electricity: Consumers Energy - \$22.59. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Simmons and seconded by Lozon to approve the Treasurer’s Report as submitted. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Snyder stated that the major expenses this month were the sand removal and the mowing.

ARTICLE V. TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT – MESHKIN

Meshkin stated that the fiber project was discussed, approved the KLSWA Agreement and road resurfacing bid. Simmons asked if there is another plan for the fiber project and Meshkin responded that it is still under review.

ARTICLE VI. TOWNSHIP STAFF REPORTS – Meshkin

Meshkin stated Dan Williams hasn’t been at the parks a lot due to the weather but has been working on the gate at Wolters Woods. Meshkin stated that there have been issues with people dumping in the parks trash receptacles. He advises if anyone sees any of that activity they should get a license number and report it to the Allegan County Sheriff but not confront the individual. Lozon stated that she has seen the dumpsters fill up at Sanctuary Woods and feels there should not be two dumpsters as it invites abuse. Johnson asked if there are posted signage to prohibit dumping and there is not. Meshkin stated the restroom at Farview Park is being repaired. There are no major projects on the agenda at this time. Johnson asked if locks have been put on the restrooms at Wolters Woods. Meshkin stated that he will put it on Dan’s list. Sall asked about the trails at Huyser Farm and Meshkin stated they are being worked on.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. PARKS SURVEY

Sall reported that she ran the Survey Monkey report with 80 responses to date. She asked how much longer the survey should remain open and it was decided it would be closed out on July 1 at which time a final report will be run. Results thus far show 45% asking to improve beach access; 35.6% request a dog park; improved parking; 27% requested restrooms in the parks. Johnson questioned if the request was for additional beach access or less sand on the stairs at Laketown. Sall said feedback she received is better parking. Meshkin said there are 2 miles of beach accessible from Shore Acres Park but residents are likely requesting a road and parking directly on the beach similar to Oval Beach in Douglas. Sall noted the Saugatuck State Dunes Beach is very busy. Meshkin said the DNR approved plan from 1979 showed a roadway through the dunes with parking near the beach but that has never come to fruition. Snyder asked what the resistance is and Meshkin stated the reasons have varied over the years. Meshkin mentioned the water intake option to support funding beach access and Snyder asked if it had been considered at Shore Acres Park. Johnson noticed that the shelter is gone at Shore Acres which Sall was able to coordinate getting it removed at no cost. Meshkin is working with Ben Barton on a newer shelter for the disc golf group. Meshkin noted there is high utilization at the Township Hall Recreation Park. The sprinkler system should be in soon and he is also looking for a concrete contractor. Sall suggested Schipper Concrete.

B. ADOPT-A-PARK

Sall reported that she does not have an update but it is work in process with no takers yet.

C. ADAPTIVE REUSE OF OLD TOWNSHIP HALL

Meshkin stated the Township Board took the suggestion under advice but no further comments were made. Meshkin will further research the potential wetlands location on the field. Sall addressed Bosscher's suggestion stating that there has been consideration for other uses of the building on its current site but a barrier has been no restrooms. Meshkin stated he agrees with Bosscher that moving a historic building does devalue the property. He used the Gibson Church as an example, if it not been moved it would likely have been torn down. The building has been empty since 1987. Bosscher asked if there would be ramifications with the Historical Society if it would be moved. Meshkin stated the marker would have to be returned to the state. Johnson asked if it were moved to the Township Recreation Park, would the utilities be connected by the current water sewer. Meshkin said the sewer would be the challenge.

Meshkin stated that he spoke to Neal King regarding the in-holding at Laketown Beach with no resolution.

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. LAKETOWN BEACH DISCUSSION

Sall asked for feedback on the research. Johnson said he was alarmed by it, not sure how accurate it is but it was alarming. Johnson asked if the path that is used is a blow-out and Meshkin said it is and it constantly shifts over time. Simmons said even if you try to do something there is no guarantee that it will be effective. Meshkin said the sand deposition is coming from the south, Halcyon Hills. Sall said the paper did not address all of the issues and some items noted in the research are not within the township owned property. Our boardwalk has saved a major portion of our dunes. Sall felt the research missed the major concerns on our property. Howell asked if a report has ever been submitted by the Hope College professor asked to study the dunes a few years ago and Meshkin responded that he had not received anything. Johnson asked if new stairs will be built above the current stairs. Meshkin said there were new platforms in last year. We need to apply for a new grant to lift the center staircase up. Jason Schrottenboer will repair the staircase and handrails.

B. INVASIVE SPECIES

Johnson mentioned the Japanese Knot weed is becoming a bigger issue on 64th Street. Lozon asked if it was poisoned last year. Meshkin said he has someone going in to look at all Laketown parks to inventory the invasive species and will provide a report. Johnson said the Stewardship Network which has resources to address invasive species removal if we apply for funding. Meshkin said we are also members of the Allegan Conservation District which also has resources for funding. Johnson said he has seen the mustard seed and Lozon said it is at its peak right now. She did not see much at Farview Park, Shore Acres did not have any and she continues remove it at Sanctuary Woods.

C. PARKS PARTNERSHIP

Meshkin had a meeting with the City of Holland Parks and Recreation representatives and at this point the intent is to improve the Lakeview property for its current use. Meshkin said a parcel adjacent to Wolters Woods may be an option for a dog park. Meshkin stated the future is to work together on a park. Meshkin asked Bosscher if he'd received feedback from the City of Holland Parks and Recreation and he had not.

D. PORTABLE RESTROOMS

Johnson shared a picture of a potential alternative option. He asked if he is authorized to buy gray spray paint to cover the graffiti. His experience is if it is covered up quickly, it deters additional abuse. Lozon suggested painting a different color. Meshkin said it is an ongoing problem and requires regular maintenance. Johnson will try an alternate color to cover the graffiti at the beach and track how long it will stay untouched.

E. OWL SIGN

Meshkin reported that a Park Township representative asked to put a sign up to protect the baby owls from dogs. The baby owls are close to the ground and free running dogs could pose a threat to their wellbeing.

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 P.M.