

PROPOSED MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
HELD AT THE TOWNSHIP HALL
Social Hour at 6:00PM under the gazebo
Regular Meeting at 7:00PM

August 16, 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,
Karen Simmons
MEMBERS ABSENT: Jan Lozon
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Noah Sall – Deputy Assessor/Deputy Zoning Administrator
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Bosscher stated he received a communication from the Delaneys asking that a couple of items on the July minutes be corrected. Sall said the office received a communication from a De Graaf Nature Center representative regarding Oriental Bittersweet at the entrance of Sanctuary Woods and Simmons commented that she understands it is everywhere.

No citizen comments.

ARTICLE III. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bosscher and seconded by Simmons to approve the July 19, 2017 minutes with the deletion of identifying the Delaney name during the tax bill discussion. Sall called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT

The bills to be paid as of July 2017 were reviewed. Maintenance: Veldhof – \$480.00, Heavener Property Svcs - \$482.50, Capital One Commercial - \$534.25, Chef Container - \$75.00, Graafschap Hardware - \$81.86; Contracted Services: Robert Jerow \$195.00; Supplies: Overisel Lumber Co. - \$46.24, Robert Jerow - \$20.00; Electricity: Consumers Energy - \$47.58; Salaries: \$1,005.00; Taxes: \$91.80.

Johnson reported that all invoices looked to be in order and commended the township staff for identifying the error on the Veldhof invoice noting \$800 instead of the correct amount of \$80. Johnson asked for clarification on the use of the crushed concrete and Sall advised that it was used for the parking lot at Farview Park. Johnson asked if Meshkin takes the 10% discount on the payment terms for Graafschap Hardware and Meshkin confirmed that we do when it is offered.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bosscher and seconded by Simmons to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted. Sall called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE V. TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORTS – Sall

- a. Sall reported it was a short meeting and there was nothing related to the parks.

ARTICLE VI. STAFF REPORTS

- a. Noah Sall reported that this is the final week with Youth Connections. Most work was done at Farview Park painting, trail trimming, crushed concrete in the parking lot; Huyser Farm work included cutting trees from the blueberry fields, trail trimming, weeding; Sanctuary Woods work included trail trimming, root removal where possible, painting over graffiti; Wolters Woods work included painting, laying down diamond dust on the trails and Felt Mansion work included floor maintenance. Sall commented that the students were great to work with and it would be nice to have them again next year.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. BEACH

Sall said an email was received from the contractor noting an issue of the snow fencing being torn down, however work to clear the stairs continues. Johnson said there are still a number of kids jumping off the platforms causing extra erosion and probably knocking down the snow fences. The contractor advised that there is vegetation spreading in areas to help slow the movement of the dunes and hopefully it will help in the lower platform

areas where the post placement is becoming loose. The storm, winds and waves have moved a lot of sand back to the stairs. Johnson also noted that the parking lot lights are flickering and Meshkin stated that he would contact Consumers Power. Sall confirmed that this will be the last year that the current contractor will be clearing the sand from the stairs.

B. INVASIVE SPECIES

Sall said there is no update on the treatment plan of invasive species. Johnson said he noticed the Japanese Knotweed along 64th Street is dying off in some areas. Meshkin said only on the parks are being treated and not private property.

C. DOG PARK

Bosscher provided commissioners two fencing options for Wolters Woods; 235 feet of fencing or 450 feet. Bosscher received a comment from a resident near the park that the fence to the east needs to be repaired. Bosscher suggested that current fence be maintained before adding new fence for the tot lot area or the proposed dog park area. The resident was present and stated he felt the posts were installed improperly and some of them are now loose and rotting. He would like the fence either repaired or removed as it is unsightly. Meshkin stated that the fence dates back to 1995 or 1996 and it would be costly to repair and would not be in an in-house or volunteer project. Meshkin will get quotes from the original contractor and advise accordingly. Sall stated that originally, there had been discussions for a dog park but there is no funding available so she asked the commissioners for feedback on next steps. Simmons asked if additional property would be needed or if the current park as is would have capacity for a dog park. Johnson commented that there are different types of dog parks, one for walking and one for a higher level of activity. Simmons suggested opening up some of the wooded area of the park for the dog park. Meshkin confirmed that the park is approximately 37 acres and it would be somewhat costly to clear not to mention it would be a loss of prime forest area. A new park is a long-term project. The discussion then turned to whether the fence was for the safety of children or the confinement of dogs.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Simmons and seconded by Johnson to table the dog park topic until adequate funding is available. Sall called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

D. PICKLE BALL

Johnson reported that no further action beyond posting the proposed court area has been taken. Meshkin said this topic was raised earlier in the year but no funding was approved in the budget. Johnson commented that pickle ball continues to gain popularity and noted that Park Township recently announced installing courts as part of their recreation offering. Meshkin responded that Park Township has a millage for their parks unlike Laketown Township where \$50-\$60,000 is not available for the courts. Meshkin stated that a consultant, such as Smith & Associates could be hired to provide design and cost estimates

which could later be considered in the Parks Recreation Plan and potentially the next budget year.

E. FIVE YEAR RECREATION PLAN

Simmons commended Sall and the township staff for the fine work done on the plan draft. Sall explained that one primary function of the plan is to meet the requirement necessary to apply for state and federal grant funding. The draft was made available tonight for resident review and feedback; a formal public hearing will be noticed for the September 20 Parks Commission meeting for final public comment after which time the Parks Commission will provide recommendation to the Township Board for approval. Simmons reiterated that the intent is to gain public comment and feedback prior to the finalization of the plan to be presented to the board. Sall stated the plan includes accomplishments achieved from the previous plan and goals for the future. Meshkin cautioned that the Capital Program section of the plan lists the goals but it should be understood that it is likely not all goals will be met due to the lack of funding which would be an estimated \$5 million for all of the 5-year plan goals. It is important to understand that the goals must be listed to ensure documentation should appropriate grants be made available for application.

F. HUYSER FARM HOUSE

Sall reported there is no update on the Huyser Farm House and Bosscher added that the request for proposals are due on September 1, 2017.

G. DAY OF CARING

Sall said the forms are due to the United Way Office on August 18 and asked that commissioners submit projects for consideration. The date for the Day of Caring event is September 21 with crews available for morning and afternoon sessions. Last year approximately 50-60 volunteers worked at several of the parks, the Felt Mansion and the Old Township Hall. Following discussion, it was decided that work would be done at Wolters Woods, Sanctuary Woods and Huyser Farm to clear trails including placement of diamond dust on the trails; root removal where possible on Sanctuary Woods trails and general clean-up. If time allows, clearing around the pond at Farview Park may also be done. Sall asked commissioners to check their calendars and advise if they will be available to support the volunteer groups for either morning or afternoon sessions. Johnson noted that last year supplies ran short at some of the job sites.

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. FENCE WORK AT WOLTERS WOODS

Sall raised the question if the fencing is for safety and security of the children or confinement of dogs. Simmons said the only reason for fencing is if dogs are allowed in

the park so sees no reason for fencing if dogs are not allowed. Johnson agreed that a fence will not be necessary if dogs are not allowed in the park.

B. DOGS ON LEASHES

Sall stated that currently the policy is no dogs at Wolters Woods and Laketown Beach. Johnson commented that the policy is not enforced as people bring dogs to the beach leashed and unleashed. Simmons suggested dogs be allowed at all parks.

Bosscher does not support allowing dogs at Laketown Beach. Johnson questioned what if the survey provided feedback and how other townships address dogs in parks where there are not designated dog parks. Meshkin reminded commissioners that policy changes, which are ordinances, require approval of the Township Board based on a recommendation from the Parks Commission.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Simmons and seconded by Bosscher to recommend to the township board that leashed dogs be allowed in all township parks except Laketown Beach. Sall called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

C. FENCE IN THE TOT LOT

Johnson asked that Bosscher obtain quotes for a vinyl covered chain link fence for the tot lot at Wolters Woods.

D. LAKEVIEW SCHOOL PARK

Bosscher said the City of Holland owns the park and asked to meet with him and Sall to discuss potential improvement ideas for the park. Bosscher noted that 11% of Laketown residents live within one quarter mile of the park, a high density area. The City of Holland would like to invite residents to get involved in the plans for the park. The preliminary meeting that Sall and Bosscher will attend is scheduled for August 31. Currently the park is used for softball and soccer. Bosscher suggested proposed uses might be walking trails around the perimeter and pickle ball courts.

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

Sall adjourned the meeting at 8pm.