

MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
AT
TOWNSHIP HALL

October 19, 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, Bill Snyder,
Jan Lozon, Jim Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Sall reported receiving one communication from Ryan Bosscher regarding Laketown Beach improvements. Bosscher was present for the meeting and suggested including a ramp in the improvement plans for the beach.

A second communication was received from Joel and Mary Griggs regarding a proposal for Huyser Farm. The Griggs have proposed becoming caretakers of the farm and expressed their concern that the property might go to waste. Sall and Johnson acknowledged their concern and appreciation for their interest. Johnson asked Griggs to provide an overview of his background to take on such a project. Griggs responded that he has experience in carpentry and farming both livestock and vegetation. He and his wife are from Iowa and Illinois where historical landmarks are maintained and utilized for income. Griggs explained they have lived here and owned property in the township for 9 years and would be interested in eventually creating a full-time opportunity with the farm. He currently is a project manager for Land-Tech. Sall provided history on what has been previously discussed regarding the Huyser Farm noting that the property is overseen by the Land Conservancy so there are some restrictions to potential uses. Johnson added that just recently efforts have been put forth to improve the blueberry fields. Sall asked about the proposed restrooms noted in the proposal and Mary Griggs responded that it would depend on the revenue that is raised to support the effort. Meshkin explained there are no funds available at this time for the Huyser Farm and likened it to the Felt Mansion Project which is now approximately 14 years in the

making. Meshkin asked if Griggs sees this as a project that would start slow and build into something. Griggs responded that he feels moving slow at first is the best way to begin such a project. Meshkin asked if they would be interested in taking another month to come back to the Commission with a one-year plan for the project. Snyder asked if Griggs thinks this could be a self-sustaining venture. Griggs asked if there is a way to get grants for the project. Meshkin responded that it might be feasible, such as a trust fund grant or a USDA grant however there is often a match involved in obtaining the grant. Mary Griggs asked if the Township would write the grants or if she could work on it as well and Meshkin stated that it would be done together. Griggs believes that once restored, the farm could be self-sustaining. Lozon asked for clarification of a working farm. Griggs stated that it would be more tours and other activities that would generate revenue. Simmons asked if Griggs have experience to take on such a project and they responded not necessarily but have the desire to pursue it. Griggs asked how much the Township would support the project. Simmons stated that there are organized volunteer activities however it is a limited number of people to rely on. Griggs will return with a one-year proposal and submit it to the Commission.

ARTICLE III. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Minutes

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Simmons and seconded by Johnson to approve the September 16, 2016 minutes as written. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT

Snyder reviewed the bills to be paid as of September, 2016. Maintenance: Veldhof – \$480.00, Heavener - \$6,898.50; Supplies: Robert Jerow - \$10.00; Salaries: Robert Jerow - \$220.00; Contracted Services: John Kunkel - \$155.00, Consumers Energy - \$50.00; Electricity: Consumers Energy - \$22.57; Capital Outlay: Evergreen Sprinkling - \$10,910.00, Precision Construction - \$13,748.00 Taxes: \$16.83.

Snyder noted there were a few big ticket items but nothing unexpected.

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. TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT – SALL

Sall reported the residents at the meeting were primarily discussing the fiber optic project.

Snyder asked about the development at 64th and 147th and Meshkin responded water plans have been submitted. Simmons asked about the Macatawa Water Project and Meshkin responded that it remains in litigation. Meshkin also noted that the rezoning of the Havlik property was approved.

ARTICLE VI. TOWNSHIP STAFF REPORTS – MESHKIN

- a. Meshkin reported that downed trees across paths at Wolters Woods have been removed. Heavener’s crew worked on the bike paths, clearing 12 loads of brush from the paths. Dan has applied treatment for weed removal. Simmons asked what the wooden structure is to the west of the Wolters Woods entrance and Meshkin explained it is an education kiosk under construction by Macatawa Greenway to explain the Watershed Project and Project Clarity. Several kiosks will be placed throughout the area where the water drains into Lake Macatawa.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. PARKS SURVEY

Sall provided a copy of the survey results. Snyder and Simmons thanked Sall for the work done on the survey and the report. There were 84 responses of the potential 2723. Survey results demonstrated the beach, walking trails and the desire for a dog park as most popular. Sall suggested using the survey results, particularly the comments suggesting improvements be used for the 5-year planning process. In retrospect, Sall noted that it may have been beneficial to include demographics on the survey. There was additional discussion concerning donations and volunteer opportunities. Simmons asked if there has been progress made on the property on 147th and 62nd for a dog park. Meshkin has not heard anything from the property owner. This property is connected to Wolters Woods. Meshkin will begin work on the property acquisition and Sall expressed interest in providing support. Bosscher stated that City of Holland is working on a dog park on 24th Street.

B. BEACH STAIRS

Jason Schrottenboer was present to discuss the progress on the stairs and noted that the video cameras worked to deter vandalism in the parking lot. Johnson stated he and Meshkin met at the beach to discuss the stairs being raised above the current stairway. Schrottenboer stated this has been the hardest year to keep the stairs clear due to the lack of rain and much of the beach grass died. Schrottenboer replaced some of the handrails but people walk on them and they split in half. The snow fences are now being installed. Griggs commented that they run their stair posts on permanent micro piles which allows for adjustability; no concrete but a hydraulic driver is used, a potential solution for such a condition. Griggs added that if done on an existing staircase on a critical dune it may be able to be done without permitting. Schrottenboer said he can continue to clear as long as

he can but not sure what the plans are for next year. Johnson said we are at a point where a more sustainable solution must be sought. Johnson thanked Schrotenboer for his continued support to maintain the access at Laketown Beach.

C. ADAPTIVE REUSE OF OLD TOWNSHIP HALL

Sall suggested tabling for future business.

D. HUYSER HOUSE RENOVATION

As noted above in Citizen Comments.

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. INVASIVE SPECIES

Johnson stated that Japanese Knot Weed was found at Huyser Farm, a patch next to the green house and near the gazebo. Some treatment of herbicide had been applied but it requires approximately 3 years to completely destroy. The knot weed is extremely destructive to the land and structures the weed grows on. Meshkin is awaiting additional information.

B. U.S. BIKE ROUTE 35 SIGNS

Bosscher noted that there is a U.S. Bike Route 35 sign on 64th Street and South Shore Drive. Bosscher was involved in drafting maps for this project and would like to raise awareness of the route. Johnson noted they are also signs in Saugatuck. Sall suggested using it for grant purposes, particularly for restrooms near Huyser Farm since it is on the route.

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 P.M.