

PROPOSED MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
AT
TOWNSHIP HALL

October 21, 2015

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Michelle Sall called the regular Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Sall, Karen Simmons, Jan Lozon
MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Johnson, Bill Snyder
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A letter was received from Laura Judge of 65th Street with a complaint about the portable restrooms at Laketown Beach and Shore Acres. She felt the beach facility should have a more visible placement under the light and a nicer facility at Shore Acres. Michelle Sall will follow up with her to advise that the Township is providing the best possible units based on location, water source and available funding.

An email was received from Nathan Alkire of Hamilton Middle School and STREAM School advising that he brought a group of students to Farview Park for a research project to study macroinvertebrates and fishing. All species were returned to the pond once the research was completed.

An email was received from Nate Johansen regarding the Eagle Scout Project at Wolters Woods. Painting was done and new benches were designed and installed. Meshkin noted that the benches built are an excellent design, very functional but simple and would be a good model for the upper trails in Sanctuary Woods.

ARTICLE III. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Minutes

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Karen Simmons and seconded by Jan Lozon to approve the September 16, 2015 minutes as written.**
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

ARTICLE IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT

Michelle Sall reviewed the bills to be paid as of September 2015. Maintenance: Veldhoff Septic - \$560.00, Heavener - \$1025.00, Menards Holland - \$214.39, Graafschap Hardware - \$105.80; Salaries: Robert Jerow - \$155.00; Contracted Services: John Kunkel - \$155.00, Consumer’s Energy - \$50.00; Supplies: Robert Jerow - \$9.00, Menards Holland - \$262.08, Michelle Sall - \$29.77; Electricity: Consumers Energy - \$22.62.

Simmons commented on the expenses for the Day of Caring included some necessary tools. Simmons asked where the tool trailer is kept and Meshkin responded between Dan William’s home and the Township Hall depending on the projects being worked on.

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 – AL MESHKIN

Meshkin reported that the Township Board did not meet in October.

ARTICLE VI. TOWNSHIP STAFF REPORTS – AL MESHKIN

Meshkin reported that the Township Hall parking lot has been done and Phase III of the Recreation Park is to take the asphalt drive out and put in concrete to tie in with the concrete walkway near the recreation field. By doing so it will be differentiated from the parking lot and also tie into the bike path. The walkway will be 8’ wide and the bike path is 10’ wide. It will allow a clear path for bicycles to get from the bike path to the recreation area where two bike racks will be located. The cost will be part of the Township Hall building expenses and not part of the Parks budget. Ideally, there would be permanent restrooms on site near the ball diamond or potentially connected to the existing utilities of the Township Hall which would be more cost effective. There was a high level of activity in the recreation park this year, primarily with the ball diamond. Meshkin will research and potentially budget for next year. There will not be a lot of additional funds available next year due to payments on the recreation facility. There is a composting style of restroom for a cost of \$25,000 that might be a good option for Wolters Woods. Another concept would be a solar supported facility, particularly for Shore Acres. Municipal water is available for Sanctuary Woods but not sewer. These are all things to consider for the future in the 5-year plan.

Sall asked for an update on Dan Williams' activities for the month. Meshkin responded that he has removed the trees on the trails in Sanctuary Woods and has been doing general clean up and maintenance in all of the parks. He has had some delays in tasks due to pending equipment repairs. He repaired the cemetery sign and also some mansion work. Meshkin requested the Commissioners advise him of any work that needs to be done in the parks before winter so he can direct Williams accordingly.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. PARKS SURVEY

Michelle Sall asked for input on the survey draft sent. Sall referenced the Ottawa County survey noting it was a phone survey asking residents what kind of recreation activities they would like to see in the county. Sall will forward the updated draft for Commissioners to review and provide feedback.

B. DAY OF CARING

Sall said the Day of Caring was very successful with a great bunch of volunteers that did a lot of work. The work done at Huyser on the blueberry fields was incredible, the rows look really good and the area around the gazebo was cleaned up. Lozon commented on the stone dust material used on the trails at Sanctuary Woods. Meshkin said we have to look at it and see how it holds up over the year as it packs harder on the trail. Lozon said after the rain last night there were no muddy holes so hopeful this will be a more sustainable material for the trails.

C. HUYSER HUNT

Simmons said there was some feedback on the surveys received regarding the Huyser Hunt. Meshkin noted that there were paint ballers on the trails and in the woods. Sall asked if we could put a landscape timber across the bridge to deter motor vehicles from driving over it. Simmons said paint balling is not the kind of activity we want in the parks. It was also noted that a younger boy was there without a hunting license. There have been no reports of a deer being caught yet from the Huyser Hunt perhaps due to the terrain and openness. It was suggested that Farview Park would be a great area for a hunt. Meshkin asked if we would want to consider that for next year. Sall said the bow hunters have to be more precise and gun hunters are not so specific.

D. VOLUNTEER SHEETS

Sall said she would like to create volunteer sheets for each park to include what might be needed and what could be done in each season. She started to design a model to use and will continue to work on it.

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. LAKETOWN BEACH UPDATE – JASON SCHROTENBOER

Jason Schrottenboer reported he has been the Laketown Beach man for four years. Platforms were installed which allowed for putting blowers on the top and pull the sand down to blow out. For the last two spring seasons there have been approximately 80 Holland Christian students volunteer to help remove the sand. Schrottenboer said it has been a challenge not having snow fences up to deter pedestrian traffic on the dunes. Kids are the biggest problem; most adults will call them off the dunes if they notice. The sand flows downward making it more difficult at the top of the stairs. The dune grass helps but fencing would be more beneficial. In the last two years, volunteers have been wearing Laketown Beach Patrol t-shirts which seems to work. There seems to be less abuse but it would be difficult to respond if we were asked if a true criminal situation occurred. There were 12 “smash and grabs” in the parking lot this summer including one that happened when he was with one of the perpetrators, actually held a conversation with him. Kids send someone to the top to look down and then smash car windows if there are things to take, such as a purse or other items sitting on the car seats. Meshkin said it had been a problem all along the coast line this summer. Meshkin said a few of the individuals were caught but it didn’t stop. Schrottenboer said there were a lot of people there all summer, a lot of garbage and even the residents help to clean up but high school and college age people abuse the beach. Meshkin said the property owner to the north, De Vos hired County Deputies to monitor the trespassers and abusers so more are coming to Laketown Beach. Schrottenboer added that a lot of the trails coming down are becoming wider and the dune grass is disappearing. Simmons said the beach itself is getting smaller. Schrottenboer said the water came up about 1.5 feet Meshkin added it has come up 3 feet in the last 5 years. Schrottenboer said it has been the windiest year on record with 40 mph winds. He did put a snow fence at the top and the bowl behind is the where the sand comes from if wind is over 25 mph. Meshkin has new topography and was stunned at the changes in the dune. Sall asked when we should put fencing up and Schrottenboer said now is the best time. Simmons asked for a rough estimate and Schrottenboer responded they should be put along the lot line, at the top two trails making it long enough and include signage which would reduce 80% of the foot traffic. Applying an offensive smelling spray on the dune grass, such as deer scent was also suggested. There was also discussion regarding the adjacent property owned by King that many park goers assume is part of the public space. Schrottenboer also noted that it has been difficult to get volunteers this year and Meshkin said he will forward information he received from someone at Hamilton Schools looking for volunteer projects. There was also discussion regarding the installation of cameras in the parking lot to deter and record vandals. Meshkin will further research and report. A suggestion was made to create a sort of moveable dock system for the stairs and platforms. Following discussion, it was decided that snow fences would be installed to aid in the movement of the dune and deter foot traffic. The approximate cost would be \$1,100.00 Schrottenboer will work with Williams to coordinate the project. Meshkin suggested researching the effect of snow fencing on the movement of dunes.

Sall thanked Schrotenboer for all of his work and dedication to the beach.

ARTICLE IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.