

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission**  
Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2017  
7:00 P.M. at Robert Morris Park

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, Judy Joling, Sharon Spears, Teresa Young  
Commissioner Absent: John Weir  
Staff Present: Rachel Hopkins, Parks Program Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: approx.15-20

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

Introductions: The Parks Board and Staff were introduced to the audience.

### **1. Accessible Fishing Platform Public Comment**

Commissioner Linda Law provided an introduction and review of the accessible fishing platform topic. Handouts showing photographs of decks/platforms at Ramona Park and Woods Lake (Kalamazoo area) and other platform designs were available for review.

A summary of Commissioner Law's remarks is given below:

The objective of the public comment part of the meeting was to listen to citizen comments/concerns and try to answer any questions. The Parks Board is continuing to research the topic and will assess how to proceed before applying for a DNR grant for 75% project funding (which is contingent upon DEQ approval of a required (\$250) DEQ-application for the project/site, which is preceded by a required (\$100) physical site DEQ review). Note that the DEQ regulates bodies of water for fishing structures for inland lakes. In reviewing the application, the DEQ will do extensive research and ask for input from adjacent landowners on the lake, and will involve the public.

The project idea is supported by the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan, developed every 5-years. One goal is to "improve the quality of life for Comstock residents by providing safe, pleasant and accessible recreational parks and facilities for Comstock residents". Robert Morris Park users/fishermen have expressed positive support for an accessible platform place to fish off of the shore at the park.

The goals of this project for Robert Morris Park are to:

- 1) Encourage folks to fish away from the swimming area

Currently, fishing along the park's shoreline has resulted in trampling of the unstable shoreline berm with barrier plantings intended to grow to deter geese and thereby reduce beach/water contamination potential.

- 2) Provide a place for families with children to fish

- 3) Provide an accessible area plus walkways

Concerns from the public comments of the February 13, 2017 meeting included the "pier" design presented (location, size, maintenance), baitfish control, and other controls. Commissioner Law addressed these issues as follows:

The fishing "pier" presented at the February 13, 2017 meeting was just one initial idea. A current idea is to have more of a near-lakefront fishing platform (vs. "pier"), specifically along the West side's more "passive" area shoreline of the park (more conducive to fishing). Extension of the platform would stop well before the "muck line".

Any maintenance costs will be budgeted in the Parks budget as part of the Comstock Township budget. The platform would also be included in the routine cleaning regimen of the beach area

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission**  
Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2017  
7:00 P.M. at Robert Morris Park

to remove any goose droppings. Fence barriers, trip-lines and solar “geese away lights” (nesting deterrent) are currently used to deter geese. Note the DNR has many deterrent suggestions on their website.

Baitfish disposal/invasive species control (ref.: F.O.245.16) for the project can be managed by having specific bait receptacles and signs (available from the DNR).

Lake management/control: The DNR sets the fishing rules and regulations for inland lakes, and enforces all Fisheries Orders (F.O.'s). They also respond to immediate concerns on the lake, and can drop-in their boats (from the park) at-will to monitor the lake.

Public Comments:

Ten stated public comments/concerns/questions from today's meeting consisted of the following (from secretary's notes):

- Opposed to any dock – old swimming structure didn't last/why spend the money- kids will jump off-DNR unlikely to come to park (for problems), most complaints/problems occur after hours. (Rick Schipper, 8279 East H. Ave.)
- Kids love to come to the park & love to fish- folks pay taxes-no reason for public park not to have accessibility for folks to fish. (Kelly Stanley, 2977 N. 26<sup>th</sup> St.)
- A serious fisherman wouldn't fish here; we fish for fun – accessibility is key –platform can be used to promote/educate folks on how to fish & how to take care of resources. There are pros and cons – but good opportunity to educate folks. (Mary Huyck, 4757 Landing Way)
- This is an excellent fishing lake. A concern is that navigating the lake (by boat) is difficult so concern is the length of a pier as a hazard. (Laura Bowersox, 4822 Landing Way)
- Would prefer to have folks fish elsewhere – historically (w/rental boats) people threw trash in the lake – should spend money for maintenance of current items (park loses money (i.e. costs greater than what takes in)). (Rick Herbert, 8471 East H. Ave.)
- Where is the demand –what kind of analysis done/comparison with other parks? Have a park pass and have small kids and want the park maintained with enforced rules. (Valerie Schipper, 8279 East H. Ave.)
- Glad to see original pier design now disregarded – need to have the platform close to the shoreline/way back from the muck line edge (i.e. deck edge needs to be within ~25' of the shoreline –can easily reach beyond muck line by casting). (Brian Young, 8116 Waterwood Dr.)
- A fishing platform would be a nice addition to the park, and will keep folks from fishing off the shoreline, which is what we want. (Julie Vanderweele, 8199 East H. Ave.)
- Park staff has done a good job cleaning the beach and following recommendations – by making the berm buffer, things will improve. A fishing dock would be a great addition. Have watched employees picking up after geese and trash – they do a good job. (Chelsea Frederick, non-Comstock resident, monitors RMP beach-water quality for Kalamazoo County).
- Getting DNR to monitor is hard – issues fall on deaf ears. Not totally against it, there is some positivity behind it. Kids should be exposed to good things, but the rules must be enforced. (Dan Short, 8073 East H. Ave.)

Meeting Time: 7:55 P.M.

**2. Review of the Minutes from June 12, 2017:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept Minutes as presented.

Motion to approve Minutes: 4 Yes/ 0 No

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission**  
Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2017  
7:00 P.M. at Robert Morris Park

**3. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve Bills payable pending confirmation that Check # 151602 is for a Parks & Recreation's contracted service.

Motion to approve Bill Payable with correction: 4 Yes/0 No

**4. Correspondence:** Vanessa Street (Parks Director) received an e-mail from Ann Conklin, Executive Director (mParks.org) indicating Senate Bill 76 H-3 passed 37/0, and is proceeding to Governor Snyder's desk (this bill affects grant-funding for Merrill Park improvements).

**5. Citizen's Comments (non-fishing platform related):** None

**6. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**7. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets.

Addition: Celery Street Park report inadvertently omitted; Commissioner Joling noted that the 1 picnic table has one of its benches missing – may be a hazard.

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets

**c. Commission Chair:** no items

**8. Business:**

**a. Midlink Proposal**

Robert D. Britigan III, VP of Property Management, Midlink Business Park presented a proposal requesting support of the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Board for transfer of ownership of Green Meadow Park to Cork Street investors, LLC in exchange for 20 acres of farmland at the SW corner of East Cork and 26<sup>th</sup> Street, which may include a building, and funds for property improvements. Commissioner Law noted that the P&Rec Commission will need to do additional research regarding the cost to replace a ball park, playing field, parking area and fencing at the proposed site. Deed restrictions may also apply.

**b. Fire Chief Memorial**

Commissioner Law proposed that a memorial for Fire Chief Edward Switalski be included at a Comstock park (e.g. tree, plaque, or bench, dedication, etc.), but will coordinate with the Comstock Fire Department's memorial plans.

Motion by Spears/support by Young to approve Commissioner Law pursuing establishment of a memorial in coordination with the Comstock Fire Department.

4 Yes/0 No

**c. Tree Planting Request N. Wenke Park**

A request was received from Danielle Bobber and Janet Holroyd to plant a tree/plaque in honor of Adam William Reimer at N. Wenke Park (a person who passed away but loved the park).

Commissioners discussed the need for guidelines for such requests, and will check with the Comstock Township staff for information before considering the private request.

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission**  
Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2017  
7:00 P.M. at Robert Morris Park

**d. Park Visit Discussion – McLinden Nature Trails**

Park Commissioners present reported that the McLinden Nature Trails looked in very good condition – wide paths nice with bark, parking area clean, sign ok. Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator, questioned if trash barrel gator access was adequate (as the Parks Board is responsible for maintaining access). She also noted that we stock the pet waste bags.

**e. DEQ Site Visit Request**

Commissioner Law requested approval to proceed with applying for a DEQ site visit for site assessment for a fishing deck at Robert Morris Park, at a cost of \$100.

Motion by Joling/support by Spears to approve spending \$100 for a DEQ physical site visit at RMP.

4 Yes/0 No

**f. Fishing Platform: None**

**g. Other: None**

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M. the next meeting will take place on Monday, August 14. Commissioners are to meet at 6:30 P.M. at Merrill Park. The meeting will follow at the Merrill Park Pavilion at 7:00 P.M.

Commissioners should also visit Celery Street Park, Cooper Park, Peer Park, Neal St. Ball Diamonds, and North & South Wenke Parks on their own time before the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary