

**Charter Township of Comstock
Parks & Recreation Commission**
Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2017
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir, Teresa Young
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director, and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator
Citizens in attendance: 3

Call to Order by Chairperson Linda Law

Introductions: Commissioner Law introduced Jonica Camburn, a longtime resident of Comstock Township. Mrs. Camburn would like to share her views about Merrill Park.

1. Review of the Minutes from July 10, 2017:

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept Minutes as presented with the addition of citizens' names/addresses giving public comments.

Motion to approve minutes with addition as noted above: 5 Yes/ 0 No

2. Bills Payable:

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to accept Bills Payable pending confirmation of a \$300 entry and Check No. 151755.

Motion to accept Bills Payable after confirmation as noted above: 5 Yes/ 0 No

3. Correspondence: None

4. Citizen's Comments: Pat Haring (555 Moline St., Kalamazoo) raised concern about the proliferation of lily pads in the Cooper Park pond.

Commissioner Law will contact the Invasive Plant Species Task Force to look into eradication options, if the lilies are invasive.

5. Request for Agenda Adjustments: Commissioner Law requested adding "Merrill Park" under section 7 Business.

6. Reports:

a. Parks Director: Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

Addition 1: Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins described a Meijer & Johnsonville Corporate BBQ Competition/Comstock Fire Department fundraising event to honor Chief Switalski held at Robert Morris Park on August 9, 2017. The event was a success with over 150 persons attending.

Addition 2: Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that the fall softball league sign-ups are progressing nicely/filling up.

b. Treasurer: Report provided in packets

c. Commission Chair: Commissioner Law shared the following:

- A warm Welcome Back! was extended to Parks Director Vanessa Street, who is returning from leave.
- A big Thank You! was extended to Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins for filling in for Vanessa during her absence.

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- Commissioner Law will arrange a meeting with Commissioner Weir and Comstock Township Treasurer Brett Padgett to review the status/results of the Parks & Recreation budget audit and determine the current level of CIP funds.
- Comstock Superintendent Scott Hess plans to meet with each Comstock Township department head to review a township survey.

7. Business:

a. Parks Visit Discussion

Celery St. Park- To the Commissioners, the use level of the park seemed low. Commissioner Spears suggested asking neighbors about their assessment of the park. The park is clean with nicely cut grass; it has a large field with a baseball backstop but no infield diamond. The space for parking is limited (there is no designated parking area). The basketball court poles may need to be straightened. The play structure has a tall slide without extended rails.

Cooper Park- Commissioner Young asked about the crumbling cement areas around the waterfall and its structural integrity. Commissioner Law noted that the Township deemed the falls ok when thoroughly examined a couple of years ago. Comstock Township has taken responsibility for monitoring the waterfall/structural integrity, which is routinely checked by the Maintenance Supervisor. Commissioners agreed that the benches around the pond need to be moved back and areas in front of them filled/leveled.

Peer Park- Commissioner Young saw 3 fishermen enjoying the pond during her last visit; the park was well-maintained; the sluice-creek area was interesting but very rough; the memorials are well-tended.

Merrill Park- Commissioner Law noted that we are still waiting for Governor Snyder to sign the bill that will fund improvements to the park. Guest Jonica Camburn spoke about her family's experiences and concerns at the park: 1) the safety concern of the close proximity of the playground and benches near the river (suggesting a fenced play area would be better), 2) the dark, unlit areas near the water, and 3) the mischievous gathering of older kids near the secluded basketball courts at night, suggesting it would be better to move them closer to the road. She also suggested that it would be advantageous to have park monitors present.

For park improvement consideration, Commissioner Spears shared handouts showing illustrations of park swings designed for handicapped persons.

Neal Street Ball Diamonds- Commissioner Law noted that the area is no longer used or maintained.

North Wenke Park – Commissioners reported some trash was strewn in the park, and noted there is erosion near the table and in front of the bench (which needs to be moved back and fill-leveled/stabilized).

Commissioner Weir suggested some fresh paint on the fencing.

South Wenke Park- Commissioner Young noted that during her last visit there were several cars parked in the lot and several people were fishing and wading in the waters. Commissioners noted the park was clean but there were many birds and bird excrement on the grounds.

b. North Wenke Tree Memorial

Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that the request for a memorial at the park from D. Bobber and J. Holroyd could simply consist of a tree of our choosing, without a plaque. Note that currently there are no specific township guidance documents for such memorials.

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Motion by Joling/support from Spears to pursue further discussions with the requestors about the tree type, professional planting, and maintenance particulars.
Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No

c. DEQ Site Visit/Fishing Platform – RMP

Commissioner Law noted that the fee for the DEQ site visit, which is required to “green light” the the DEQ’s site application process, was actually \$250 (for a township entity) vs. \$100 (as required for a private resident). Parks Commission approval for the higher amount is therefore needed.

Motion by Joling/support from Weir to approve payment of the \$250 fee for a DEQ site visit at RMP.

Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No

d. Midlink Green Meadow

An independent estimate of the cost to relocate the Green Meadow Park baseball field, parking area, and fencing far exceeded the cost figure presented at the July 10, 2017 meeting. Other costs in terms of downtime and neighborhood needs also have to be addressed. Nevertheless, continuing the discussions were supported.

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to continue discussions with Rob Britigan regarding Midlink’s Green Meadow parkland transfer proposal terms and conditions.

The motion to continue discussions was approved: 5 Yes/0 No

e. Other

Commissioner Law noted that the Parks & Recreation Commission now has ownership of the maintenance garage building at Merrill Park.

8. Announcements: None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, September 11 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary