

**Charter Township of Comstock
Parks & Recreation Commission**
Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2018
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: none

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

1. Review of the Minutes from December 11, 2017 (note: January 2018 meeting cancelled):

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

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/ 0 No

2. Bills Payable:

Motion by Law/support from Weir to approve Bills Payable with clarification on property insurance billing dates.

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

3. Correspondence: A Thank You letter from Kathy Dilsaver (3364 Senne Street) was received by the Comstock Township Board and then forwarded to the Parks & Recreation Commission regarding a decision by the township not to rezone her neighborhood area. She hopes for more neighborhood expansion (vs. industrial) and particularly appreciates the park/green space zoned area known as Green Meadow Park. She suggested expansion of this space for more use by children and for walking trails, including for walking dogs. It was noted by Commissioner Law that many folks spend their lunch break at Green Meadow Park.

4. Citizen's Comments: None

5. Request for Agenda Adjustments: None

6. Reports:

a. Parks Director: Provided to Commissioners in Board packets. Commissioner Joling thanked Parks Director Street for the recent article in the Comstock Communicator about Merrill Park. It was noted that not all of the cost of the new bathroom planned for the park is included in the awarded grant improvement funds (specifically for location change+sewer hookup), and so any difference in cost from original plan will be covered by the township.

b. Treasurer: Report provided in packets

c. Commission Chair: Commissioner Law shared the following:

- The township has approved a consultant for a project to improve the center of Comstock, which includes Merrill Park.
- The Comstock Superintendent has written a 2017 Administrative Annual Report.
- Commissioner Law has been attending most township meetings and workshops.

7. Business:

a. 2017 Annual Report

Commissioner Law distributed a draft of the 2017 Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report for review.

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve the 2017 Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report with noted minor corrections.

Motion to approve the 2017 Annual Report: 5 Yes/ 0 No

b. Merrill Park Update

- 1) Parks Director Street is working on the bid process for park improvements. It is not finalized.
- 2) Parks Director Street shared the initial conceptual rough draft drawing of planned improvements.
- 3) Commissioner Spears suggested that the playground design process include a kids' perspective.

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- 4) Commissioner Weir recommended that the full amount required for the new bathroom be included in the budget.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve that \$110K be put in the Merrill Park budget for its planned bathroom facility/hook-up.

Motion to approve addition of \$110,000 to the budget: 5 Yes/0 No

c. Robert Morris Park – DEQ Permit Application

Commissioner Law met with the DEQ in January 2018 for its site visit to the park, as required for the permit application. Parks Director Street shared a firm concept drawing (referred to as “mock-up”), showing a walkway with a fishing platform at two different location options west of the swimming area, also required for the permit application. The drawing shows the walkway/platform extending from the shore out to the solid muck edge of the lake. Commissioner Law noted that the plan is not actual, and that the platform can be adjusted back (i.e. moved closer to the shore), after Commissioners Spears and Young were concerned about how far the platform was shown to extend into the lake.

d. MParks Conference Summary

The Michigan Parks (MParks) Conference was held in Detroit, Michigan, attended by Parks Director Street and Parks Coordinator Hopkins. Both appreciated sharing ideas with other Parks Directors and staff across areas.

Director Street reported the sessions she attended encompassed ‘long-view’ planning, including trends in playground safety risk, ballot initiatives concerning parks, and using economic impact data to demonstrate relevance. Director Street also requested that she receive permission to train and become a Certified Playgroup Safety Inspector so that she can lead community ‘builds’.

Coordinator Hopkins shared an example of a “rebirth of a playground” in Traverse City, about change and progress to make better playgrounds, and shared awarded program information about park visit/photo scavenger hunt activities. Many ideas were shared across areas and among many participants (e.g. “99 programmers”).

Commissioner Spears noted that Firekeepers might be a resource for parks/environmental project funds.

e. Other Misc.

- 1) Commissioner Weir requested that the Commission formally reaffirm/approve Parks Coordinator Hopkins’ position from part time to full time.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve full time Parks Coordinator position by Commission vote.

Motion to approve full time position: 5 Yes/ 0 No

- 2) Reflecting on the success of last year’s park “free day”, Commissioner Weir made a motion that we participate in this year’s free day in June.

Motion by Weir/from Young to approve a park “free day” in June 2018: 5 Yes/ 0 No

8. Announcements: None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 12 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary