

Chikaming Township Park Board Regular Meeting – APPROVED

April 26, 2021

Electronic meeting via Zoom

The April 26, 2021 meeting of the Park Board was called to order at 6:34PM by Chair Arthur Anderson (Harbert). Also present were board members Shelly Taylor (Three Oaks), Kathy Sellers (Florida), Sherri Curry (Harbert), Jocelyn VerLee (Harbert), Steve Ellis (Sawyer), and Garth Taylor (Harbert), along with members of the community.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Anderson

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Motion by Anderson to approve revised agenda, supported by Sellers, No objections, Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Fran Wersells – There are 4 tiny beaches on south of township, people come early and stay late, 8-10am window for dogs will be hard to adhere to and hard to enforce. Short term renters won't know the rules. Early in the morning dogs will not be on leashes and you can't pick up dog urine. There are other local options such as the Dog Park, Warren Woods, Park and Preserves, Warren Dunes, and Weko. Trial period is not a good idea, can't put the cork back in the bottle and will confuse the issue. Trial should be at one beach, like Cherry, where there is parking. Many people have to go to the beach early for quiet time with coffee and their newspaper.

Deborah Hall-Kayler – Joe Sipek rocks! She understands Fran's concerns, suggested 6:30am possible, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Where she recently visited, people were very clear on the rules and she hopes people would abide to trial. Hopefully police department could be strong in the beginning with enforcement.

Kathy Sellers – agrees with Fran 1,000%. Little beaches are very crowded and people go down early. She suggests one beach only, maybe Cherry. If we get extra footage, it would be a good place. Not sanitary in smaller beach areas. Joe Sipek is a Rockstar! He and crew are amazing and we are so grateful.

Janet Schrader – Requesting dog on beaches motion be postponed, when amending an ordinance we need a public hearing. Would like time to wrap her head around the change.

Sherri Curry – Miller and smaller beaches are not appropriate for dogs, use Cherry. Charge a fee for non-residents. We know who goes down and would know who doesn't come up.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Thank you, Joe Sipek , who is one of many working on Harbert Stairs. Jocelyn is putting together a comprehensive list of all involved. She echoes other's thoughts, big effort by a lot of people.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Steve Diller and Deborah Hall-Kayler – Rotary Club Members. Spoke about importance of pollinators and process of beautification. It aligns with our 5 year plan in regards to education for adults and children. Eco-systems are deteriorating, which include butterflies, bees, bats, and a wide-variety of species. Decline in reproduction of plant species, beauty can't survive unless we take steps to protect it. Shrubs, perennials, milkweed all affected. They would prepare ground, plant seeds and seedlings, care for them for a few years until they've established themselves. Reduce cost, no mowing, gets better year after year. Every time we add land for pollinators we give back to what was here and it enhances what we already have. Need to identify where to put this and partner with them to provide labor, \$20-30 for seeds. Rotary provides publicity. They can look at any of the parks and preserves and decide how many plants should go in. Deborah is happy to assist with any and all questions. 8 projects are currently in process and could grow much bigger.

Sellers asked if they could begin in the Fall, then they'll pop up in the beginning of Spring.

Ellis thanked them for presentation and invited them to look at butterfly garden.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING:

Moved by Anderson to approve March 2021 Regular Meeting minutes, Supported by G. Taylor. No objections, Motion Carried.

Moved by Anderson to approve March 2021 Special Meeting Minutes, Supported by Sellers, No objections, Motion Carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Sellers reviewed report - \$134,095.74 is balance. Money that had to be returned instead of carried over couldn't have been spent anyways, total of \$46,027 returned. The only area we could have been more cognizant of is repair and maintenance.

REPORTS

Work reports are in folder

Minutes were marked incorrectly, "proposed" as opposed to "approved."

VerLee said Harbert Stairs are coming together, residents and those outside neighborhood are working so well. Looking to wrap up project this week, tentatively. Encouraged everyone to come by the job site and offer encouragement. Thanks for chipping in and for support, thankful for food donations. Sipek said the support is tremendous, with 13 volunteers. Lunches have been phenomenal. Brings a smile to his face every morning, tremendous community support. Currently coming in under budget.

Harbert Community Park Master Plan Presentation - Phase 1 features coming in 2021, Phase 2 will be after 2021. Phase 1 includes cement walkway around pond (much cheaper than boardwalk) and fits within ADA guidelines. Emergent plantings around walkway, wetlands pollinator habitat, in regards to Kayler's presentation. May have viewing platform, another focal point may have picnic table. Other features of phase 1 include cement platform, cement paths linking park elements, remove scrub, remove baseball field for meadow/festival/market area, unitary feel with clean sightlines. Phase 2 may include dog park enhancement, splash pad, discovery area, trees and landscaping, other recreation, such as pickleball as a possibility.

Sellers was unclear about all involved in Phase 1, it IS included in grant.

Joseph Reed is getting good feedback and also wanting more feedback. He's excited about the project.

Sellers questioned concrete vs. trails with logs on outside and fill on inside. Only going where had to in order to get handicap to focal points. G. Taylor responded that other parts can be done later, other paths could be wood chips or something else. Sellers questioned if we could proceed with Phase 1 without considering the linear park? G. Taylor said yes, linear park is on the other side of red Arrow. May be sidewalk from township to trail head. VerLee questioned how close to the tracks the stage would be. Would it be too loud with trains? G. Taylor said it's not a problem. Sellers commented that there's excitement when trains go by. VerLee said it seems like a sports intense area. Taking away from future sports? Consider putting the stage closer to the pond. Anderson said it's very boggy running along pond, would pose problem. Difficult to put features there because it slopes down, difficult to have anything there besides a path.

Chikaming Township Park and Preserve Burn - contract with Plantwise. Unclear if they can complete burn with the rain coming. If cannot be done within 1 week to 10 days then it'll be done in the Fall.

Cherry Beach - Sherri reported they are working on the parking lot, S. Taylor will attempt to gather the safety team at the township if needed to gather there together.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Placed into folder as read:

Zach Chamberlain regarding rebuilding steps at Pier St, allocate money for it. Sellers concerned it's not safe at this point. Too soon to replace stairs because they'd go down to a dangerous area. S. Taylor suggested we do one stair repair a year, as we've done twice now (Cherry then Harbert), so no harm in waiting until next summer. VerLee suggested platform instead of stairs, extend platform and sit at various levels. Sellers said there are already 2, one at top and one with bench so plenty of viewing already. Sellers suggests we look at these stairs next summer because the beach may be in better shape. Ellis asked if we are getting lots of calls about restoring Pier St., answer was "not much."

New phone system - highly automated and tied into Chair's email. Can tie into Chair's cell phone possibly during office hours.

OLD BUSINESS:

Rules of engagement - emphasize working constructively and civilly together with board members and public. We need to all represent the township well, and interact in a professional and courteous manner. Apologize if you lose your temper. Our bosses are the elected officials of the township. We need to be able to communicate well. Email, text, or call chair so we have a thread of important ideas. Can't single out a member to not call/text. Accept calls and texts from all members or none. All emails and texts are subject to FOIA.

Expectations for Parks Facility Manager - Board members should reach out and help, remember he's a trainee. Alex is doing a tremendous job with the burn, taking care of all the details. He has deep roots in the community and has helped improved the relationship between the park board and board of trustees. Alex commented that everyone has been great and he enjoys getting to know everyone.

Vice Chair Position - Moved by Anderson to postpone discussion until May meeting and ask for vote then. Supported by G. Taylor.

Sellers asked why, Anderson said he'd like to see if the executive committee works. They will meet pre and post meeting. He is against a co-chair. G. Taylor hasn't heard great reasons for having a vice chair, Anderson responded that they could give moral support. When he was in that position he was given a few tasks, mediated disputes with other board members, and did 10% of the work while chair did 90%.

Anderson - yes

Sellers - no

S. Taylor- yes

VerLee - no

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - yes

Ellis - yes

5 yes, 2 no, Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

One Drive Training - Reach out if we want training or not, Ted has done training for previous board.

Motion by Anderson to schedule Special Meeting for Harbert Community Park enhancement list, Supported by Sellers.

Will be lengthy discussion. Public hearing needed, Ellis would like to involve young people. Post Powerpoint and pictures on website and Facebook page.

Anderson - yes

Sellers - yes

S. Taylor - yes

VerLee - yes

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - yes

Ellis - yes

7 yes, 0 no, Motion Carried. Special meeting will be on May 10 at 6:30pm.

Motion by Anderson to ask the Township Board of Trustees to approve a temporary variance in Ordinance 126 to allow residents to bring their dogs on to beaches from 8am-10am from date of enactment until September 30, 2021; provided, that the dog owners keep their dogs on a six-foot leash, and pick up any dog litter; also that the owners agree to pick up any other litter found on the public beaches, glass plastic other waste as a public service. Supported by G. Taylor.

Anderson wanted to give window of time, others can come later to avoid dogs. Peer to peer enforcement, gently encouraged or told to bring dogs tomorrow at appropriate time if someone violates it. It should be noted that Janet Schrader sent a statement in opposition, that has been shared with the board. Fran commented in public comment on the issue.

G. Taylor asked when beach opened, likes idea of it being at A beach, like Cherry.

G. Taylor proposed an amendment to have the time slot be 6am-10am, limited to Cherry Beach, Supported by VerLee. Ellis said existing ban isn't working so we aren't losing much by trying to accommodate. This gives the public more time, above what they already have at all the parks where dogs are welcome. Ellis suggested adding 7pm-10pm as well, or sunrise until 10am and then 7pm to sunset.

Motion by Anderson to amend times to 6am-10am and 7pm-10pm, Supported by VerLee.

Ellis suggested this enables people to enforce the rules, who are against dogs.

Roll Call Vote:

Anderson - no

Sellers - no

S. Taylor - no

VerLee - yes

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - yes

Ellis - yes

4 yes, 3 no, Motion Carried.

Roll Call Vote to limit it to Harbert and Cherry:

Anderson - no

Sellers - no

S. Taylor - no

VerLee - yes

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - yes

Ellis - yes

4 yes, 3 no, Motion Carried

Roll Call Vote to allow dogs from 6am-10am:

Anderson - yes

Sellers - no

S. Taylor - yes

VerLee - yes

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - yes

Ellis - yes

6 yes, 1 no, Motion Carried.

Motion as amended, restated as temporary variance to Cherry Beach and Harbert Roach Beach, 6am-10am and 7pm-10pm daily, with 6 foot leash and asked to pick up litter. Sellers does not want to include Harbert but it's too late, already voted. Now it's up the township to have a public hearing.

Roll Call Vote to send current motion to township:

Anderson - yes

Sellers - no

S. Taylor - yes

VerLee - yes

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - yes

Ellis - yes

6 yes, 1 no, Motion Carried.

Allegations of Violation of OMA - postpone until response from Hilmer

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD:

Fran Wersells - boundaries on Miller Beach have not been corrected, missing beach and nothing has been done about it, no surveys or GPS and now we are approaching summer season.

Kathy Sellers - wanted ONE beach for a trial with dogs, not two beaches.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next regular meeting is Monday, May 24, 2021 at 6:30PM.

Special Meeting Monday, May 10, 2021 at 6:30PM to discuss Harbert Park enhancements

ADJOURN MEETING: The meeting was adjourned at 8:56PM with no objections.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly Taylor