

Chikaming Township Park Board Meeting - APPROVED

July 27, 2020

Electronic meeting via Zoom and In-Person (following guidelines)

The July 27, 2020 meeting of the Park Board was called to order at 6:33PM by Chair Hall-Kayler. Also present were board members Reed, Underhill, Anderson, Schrader, Sellers and Taylor, along with members of the community.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Hall-Kayler

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Moved by Anderson, supported by Underhill. No objections, Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA: Moved by Anderson, supported by Underhill. No objections, Motion Carried

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Harbert Community Park is greatly improved and beautiful. Many comments being made about how wonderful it now is.

Stairs were improved at Townline Beach by Josh Higgins, Roland Otte, and Arthur Anderson. Josh Higgins also repaired the damage to the McKinley Beach stairs.

Joe Sipek and Dan Menitoff, along with 30 volunteers, put in over 700 hours of work in 13 days to recreate the stairs to Cherry Beach, which will hopefully last 20 years. What a demonstration of vision, leadership, skill, determination, and positive energy they all gave to this community.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Fran Wersells - There is storm debris at Berrien, there should be better for signage for dogs, rental property owners are giving their residents firewood which leads to campfires on the beach, Cherry Beach stairs are amazing, and the consent agenda keeps her from knowing what is going on so she does not prefer that.

Donald Bridgeman - There is an issue with dogs on the beach and people are disregarding the signs, suggestion of parking stickers this year for 2021 at Cherry Beach to complete this season, amazing job by Joe Sipek!

Olga Georgiev - dogs at Pier St. beach, no one wearing masks on the beach so perhaps we should put up a sign.

Joe Sipek - Stairs were finished up today, we may want to put sandbags around the stairs in October to protect both the stairs and the dune, thanks to all volunteers and donors!

Bernie Dahl - Great to work with Joe, he had a great time and it was fun!

Jill Underhill - People are not following the no dog rule, she educated some people at Berrien and they said they'd rather pay the fine, she got yelled at and found people really not caring about it.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence was presented to the board and placed on file as read.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Mason and Clayton Kuipers from "Lakeshore Customs." They install a 4-tiered sandbag system, 7-8 ft. high, to hold dunes in place and prevent erosion. Since there is a lot of clay and little sand at Harbert and Cherry, they would subcontract a company to dump beach sand near the access points to use to fill the bags. \$350 per foot using subcontractor, which is cheaper than sea walls.

You would have to climb over them if you wanted to get to the water. Bags can be cut open once the water has receded. They have worked just north of Holland State Park (north of Spyglass). They are a limited liability company and are self-insured. They use an engineer to look at blueprints. All the walls they have built are currently still standing. The fabric they use is Polypropylene.

OLD BUSINESS

Cherry Beach project update – approved by Senate and ready for governor’s signature. An additional \$10,000 came in last month.

Acorn Anywhere – They have canceled their event at Harbert Community Park.

NEW BUSINESS

There was a request for a bench to be donated at Chikaming Township Park and Preserve on behalf of beloved family dog, Sunshine, who loved it near the pond. We already have ten benches coming so we could use one of those. The family did not have a dollar amount in mind yet but they will make a donation.

Moved by Anderson to accept the donation from Nora and her mother, Nancy McReady, for a bench for Chikaming Township Park and Preserve to be placed in the name of Sunshine. Supported by Schrader.

Roll Call vote:

Underhill: yes

Reed: yes

Schrader: yes

Anderson: yes

Hall-Kayler: yes

Sellers: yes

Taylor: yes

All ayes, motion carried.

Cherry Beach is now open. We will have parking lots attendants Saturday and Sunday from 10AM-3PM, and then Friday through Monday during Labor Day weekend.

Beaches are noticeably crowded and turning into a mess so we need to limit the number of cars in the lot at Cherry Beach. New Buffalo said they handled it by limiting number of cars in their lot but could not limit foot traffic. We may want security to be present on holidays because people are experiencing a lot of tension and erratic behaviors. Parking attendants may need a training session with Todd. A committee with Sellers, Underhill, and Taylor will work on parking lot situation.

Additional garbage pick-up – Double pick-up is already taken care of at Cherry, Townline, and Berrien.

Mountain Bike Report – the trail is just under 8 miles, there are many volunteers who report down trees, etc. They’d like permission to use the 4-wheeler for work. They’d also like to form a steward committee that would include Anderson and Schrader. They are looking at a fundraiser event, not to be advertised this year due to pandemic, for a walk-through and ride. It would take place on Sept. 26 this year and in the future be held the last Saturday in September. They’d like to get this on the calendar yearly and look at it being a race. We also need a line item for donations because many people want to give money but don’t know how to go about it.

Maybe a donation box at the kiosk? A GoFundMe could be done personally, without coming to the board. They'd also like to change the name of the mountain bike trail.

Moved by Underhill to change the name of the mountain bike trail at Chikaming Township Park and Preserve from Mountain Bike Trail to "Schrader's Mountain Bike Trail." Supported by Sellers.

Roll Call vote:

Underhill: yes

Reed: yes

Schrader: yes

Anderson: yes

Hall-Kayler: yes

Sellers: yes

Taylor: yes

All ayes, motion carried.

The board was honored to make this motion and see it carried through.

A presentation ceremony is being worked on to thank the volunteers who have given over 100 hours.

Moved by Anderson for the park board to give permission to the mountain bike committee to bring a 4-wheeler onto Chikaming Township Park and Preserve to assist in the construction on the mountain bike trail with a sign that properly identifies the 4-wheeler, with the permission expiring July 31, 2021. Supported by Underhill.

Roll Call vote:

Underhill: yes

Reed: yes

Schrader: yes

Anderson: yes

Hall-Kayler: yes

Sellers: yes

Taylor: yes

All ayes, motion carried.

Park Board Election

There needs to be a quorum post election, otherwise the township can appoint people to fill the gaps. Schrader, Underhill, and Hall-Kayler are not re-running. Anderson, Taylor, and Sellers are on the ballot. Garth Taylor also submitted his name. Reed would like to remain on the board and will be a write-in.

Discussion on changing from 7 to 5 board members:

The board needs to grow and there should be a study on how to make this happen. It is difficult to give the time that is required to do the job well as a board member. If we went down to 5 members, the workload would be much greater for those 5. Spreading the workload to 7 members strengthens the board to take action. If we get a parks manager, then 5 is plenty. We are ready to move forward with that position, but paused everything because of COVID. Once we've made a hire, we should remain a 7-person board for the first year and see how it goes, then reevaluate.

It is now time to go forward with our hire by posting the position. We may have difficulty finding someone for part time, but could possibly partner with Three Oaks so the person has full-time work.

Hall-Kayler will meet with Bunte at 9AM Tuesday morning, along with Sellers. Reed will phone-in.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Can we enlist the state to help enforce the leash law?

Suggestion to close the beaches because they are so packed. Health Dept. and emergency agencies make that decision but Health Dept. said they were not in charge of that. The supervisor said it's up to our emergency agencies and the board, but we don't have the manpower to enforce all outdoor executive orders. It could be taken to the board, but it would be a hard time enforcing it. How would we maintain, enforce, and monitor it?

Our vision is a "sense of community to live, work and play." We should get wifi at Cherry Beach since there is no cell service. We want to be welcoming and not rule-creating. What is our near term plan, May 2021, for Harbert? We could work to create access. There are yellow parking lines at Weko and when the lot is full then one car goes out and one comes in.

Suggestion on angled parking at Cherry because parallel will cause accidents. There is a need for wifi or a hotspot for emergencies. On the wavy weekends, there is no beach.

Concern over how close large boats can dock to the beach. They are allowed to dock anywhere but must follow laws on proximity to buoys and swimmers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 24th, at 6:30PM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Schrader will fight any type of seawall being put in.

ADJOURN MEETING: The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM, moved by Sellers and supported by Underhill, with no objections.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly Taylor