

Chikaming Township Park Board Regular Meeting - APPROVED

March 22, 2021

Electronic meeting via Zoom

The March 22, 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:** No objections, Approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Joe Sipek - Rebuilding Harbert Beach stairs, took measurements with Dan Menitoff and will develop plan. Making good progress and would like to complete stairs by Memorial Day. Cherry Beach is bigger than ever! Harbert is a good size but has a steep drop. Will submit estimates when he has them. Lumber costs have risen but should still be within estimate given. Volunteers are coming in.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Thank you, Joe Sipek and Dan Menitoff, for work you are putting in for the Harbert Beach Stairs.

Bernie Dahl is recognized for being on the committee for the Red Arrow Highway improvement.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING:**

Sherri Curry would like it to be known that she attended 13 sessions over 3 days of the MParks conference.

Moved by Anderson to approve as amended, Supported by S. Taylor. No objections, Motion Carried.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Sellers reviewed report - \$282.55 is not recorded but spent, so \$56,613.75 is current balance.

Set aside is: \$1,500 for fence, \$1,500 for computer, and \$2,800 for Harbert Community Park

**REPORTS**

Garth Taylor reported on Harbert Community Park planning:

Garth met with John Chipman (Chair, Chikaming Planning Commission) and Bernie Dahl (Professor of Landscape Architecture, Purdue University) to discuss areas where the Harbert Community Park plan touches on the plan to make Red Arrow highway a 3-lane thoroughfare with a bike path on the lake side of Red Arrow. The areas of contact are:

1. a trailhead and bathroom facility on Township property at the south end of HCP
2. a pedestrian crossing from the bike trail into Harbert Community Park - to be built somewhere between the two ends of Harbert Community Park
3. dramatic landscaping on either side of the pedestrian crossing to announce the entry
4. a sidewalk/trail on the 30-foot State-owned easement on the railroad side of Red Arrow to run the length of the Harbert Community Park and potentially connect to the River Valley Senior Center

Chipman proposed that there be joint Park Board / Planning Commission meetings to coordinate views on the design/ placement of these features. Garth is the Park Board liaison to the Planning Commission.

Garth reported for the record that new IRS regulations on Qualified Charitable Distributions in 2021 have created an opportunity for him to match 50% of the construction costs (expected to be under \$100,000) for improvements he has suggested for Harbert Community Park, provided these improvements are approved by November 1 and built to acceptable specifications by the end of this year. These improvements are:

- a. a walkway to the pond,
- b. a pollinator garden between picnic pavilion and the pond,
- c. a walkway partially around the pond with a viewing platform and spaces for benches,
- d. habitat plantings around the pond,
- e. a small performance platform easily accessible by the walkway, and
- f. terrain modifications as required to accommodate the walkways and a viewing area for the performance platform.

Arthur Anderson is working on the draft of a Master Plan for Harbert Community Park. In early March he shared his written views on priorities for implementing the 2025 Chikaming Parks Master Plan and invited Garth Taylor, Kathy Sellers and Joseph Reed to share written comments. The combined written comments will become the basis for special Park Board meeting April 5.

Sherri Curry is working on Electricity and Lighting at Harbert Community Park: AEP runs power for free and she has an estimate from Olson on what it would cost. There could be power to the shed or run a conduit from the welcome center as an alternative. Going to put the shed on hold since it may be torn down as part of the trailhead project.

Curry is working on the Cherry Beach fence. The dog park fence is nothing satisfactory, Custom Fence from Niels is the lowest price, Fence Masters is a higher end fence. At the last meeting, \$1,500 was approved to run fencing for the overlook. She would like the highest priced fence approved, and is requesting \$300 more approved so it can come from this budget. It would cost \$800 more to do additional section. VerLee questioned if 48" is code in a public area. Sherri will consult with someone to confirm the appropriate height of fence. She would like to approve both sides done for under \$2,400. Sellers thinks Fence Masters is worth every penny.

Anderson reported there is graffiti on the Cherry Beach stairs and can be removed. Josh and Alex can sand it out. It should be gone so it doesn't invite people to do more. It was questioned how to get paint off a tree without harming it. The date on the tree is from Aug. 2020.

Anderson reported on the burn at Chikaming Township Park and Preserve. The burn is coming and we will have more discussion under new business.

S. Taylor reported on the ice rink. There's been great enthusiasm and excitement. VerLee said it was great to see so much activity and how much it was being used. G. Taylor got emails about how great it was and he called it a "banner year!"

Sellers placed a letter in correspondence regarding revetments still in front of staircase at Pier St.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Placed into folder as read:

Letter regarding Pier St. revetments

Letter from DNR about passport project on Harbert Community Park complete

Fran Wersells wrote a letter and Sellers felt it was very public. Sellers said the budget is thought about carefully and things happen throughout the year. She asked to bring things to the board instead of putting them in a letter for people to comment on. So much surplus is because of late hire of Alex. Sellers would like those requests to come through in a different way. She is not against the suggestions but not right to discuss in open forum. Wersells disagrees. Anderson said according to OMA the park board is not allowed to engage in discussion in email. He will reach out to Fran later. This poses a problem for the board because we cannot respond. BCC would have been better, Fran thought she did that.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Steve Ellis - Miller Beach Signage, need to protect our property and width might be wrong. Signs are 80ft. apart, should be over 100ft. Might need a survey to find legal lanes.

Cherry Beach fence - need an additional sum of money.

Curry moved to spend an additional \$800 to do the North side of overlook to the stairs at Cherry Beach for safety purposes. Supported by Anderson.

Roll Call Vote:

Anderson - yes

Sellers - yes

S. Taylor - yes

VerLee - yes

Ellis - yes

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - yes

7 yes, 0 no, motion carried.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Motion by Anderson to expend sum of money, not to exceed \$1,000, for passes for Cherry Beach parking this year, Supported by G. Taylor.

Cherry Beach passes will be ordered. Anderson recommends having the passes this season. There have been a number of requests from the community to channel the flow of traffic. The passes prioritize residents to park there and put visitor on warning they may not be able to park there on weekends. Residents are asking where their passes are. The pass is used for Saturday, Sunday, and holidays only. Curry wants people to understand there are only 27 spots but usually 50 people coming. She'd like to have a note distributed with the passes so it's clear what this pass is. We can discuss later. Sellers asked why there are only 27 spaces, Anderson said it's Covid related. Sherri thinks we could fit 40 vehicles. 35 fit well but may be able to fit more. We should order 25-30 parking space bumpers. G. Taylor asked how long passes are valid, answer is May 2022. He suggested a one-time pass per weekend, compared to zone parking in Chicago. Sellers said residents won't want to go every week. Curry is concerned about the legality of turning people away.

Roll Call Vote:

Anderson - yes

Sellers - no

S. Taylor - yes

VerLee - yes

Ellis - yes

Curry - no

G. Taylor - yes

5 yes, 2 no, motion carried.

Moved by Sellers we don't issue passes until we have further information among ourselves and discussion with Bunte about legality. We should suspend passing them out until May 1. Supported by Curry.

Anderson is against withholding them because we've distributed them for years. Sellers would like Bunte's input. Anderson said we aren't stopping people from parking. Sellers thought we give priority to pass holders. Curry also wants to run it by Bunte. Ellis asked if they cause a problem or accomplish something.

Roll Call Vote:

Anderson - no

Sellers - yes

S. Taylor - no

VerLee - yes

Ellis - no

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - no

3 yes, 4 no, motion failed.

We need to have a special meeting for Harbert Community Park and Harbert Road Stairs.

Moved by Anderson to have a special meeting to discuss Harbert Community Park master plan and plan in general, and Harbert Road Stairs on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:30PM, Supported by G. Taylor.

Roll Call Vote:

S. Taylor -yes

Anderson - yes

VerLee - yes

Sellers - yes

G. Taylor - yes

Curry - yes

Ellis - yes

7 yes, 0 no, Motion Carried.

We are going to table the next 2 items on the agenda, including the Burn and Grading.

Curry moved to approve \$1,500 or less to investigate or spend electricity through shed or conduit. Supported by VerLee.

When hosting at the dog park, they ran into problems with too many extension cords. There is no outdoor electric from the concession stand to where the parking lots begins/ends. G. Taylor said the shed may be back in play. A discussion should be had with Bunte between now and the special meeting. Could we run electricity from the township? Anderson opposed this motion because it's not well thought through. Conduit would come from box at welcome center. Curry wants bids and then run it through Chipman. Sellers asked if it was a necessity, Curry feels extension chords are a tripping hazard. Anderson asked if she was willing to postpone it for two weeks but Curry wants it from this budget.

Roll Call Vote:

Anderson - no

VerLee - yes

Sellers - yes

Curry - yes

G. Taylor - no

Ellis - no

S. Taylor - no

3 yes, 4 no, Motion failed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Next regular meeting is Monday, April 26, 2021 at 6:30PM.

Special Meeting Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:30PM

**ADJOURN MEETING:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:33PM with no objections.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly Taylor