

Ross Township
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Ross Township Park & Recreation Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Donna Tellam, Committee Chair, called the regular meeting of the Ross Township Parks and Recreation Committee to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Ross Township Offices. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

ROLL CALL

Present: Donna Tellam, Chair
Cathy Knauf
Peggy Sattler
Gail Hurn
Diana Langshaw - Ross Township Trustee (Committee Advisor)

Attending via phone: Christopher Gottwald
Lynn Harmon

APPROVE AGENDA

Diana moved to approve the agenda. Seconded and **passed**.

MINUTES FROM October 17, 2020

Minutes from the October Park Committee meeting were reviewed, and Diana moved to accept them as presented. Seconded and **passed**.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As the new Treasurer of the Park Committee, Donna has been collecting and organizing the financial report for October. **Syndee** Genung provided the Park financial data, and they will review it one more time

It was suggested that Linda **Walters**, newly elected Ross Township Clerk, should be invited to a Park Committee meeting in the near future, and also go over the reporting with Donna, possibly with the assistance of Dave Senkewitz.

Park income for October 2020 equaled \$1,156.05, and expenses totaled \$7,837.43, resulting in the End of Month Cash Balance of \$21,992.01.

Cash Carryover from FY2019-2020 equaled 25,845.22. Total revenues for FY 2020-2021 were \$28,500.00 for Total Revenues of \$ 51,535.57.

General Park expenditures, including salaries, maintenance, and sewer repairs were 32,800.00, for a YTD Balance of \$51,885.06.

Ross Township Park received two grants for the new playground and other repairs, of \$ 17,000 (I. S. Gilmore Foundation) and \$5,000 (Gull Lake Area Rotary Club). The GLARC planned expenses came out \$ 1,797.82 above the grant amount, and were deducted as general park expenses.

Gail moved to approve the October 17, 2020 Treasurer's Report. Seconded and **passed**.

Public Comments

None

Old Business

A. Review of Accomplishments and Ideas for Future Projects

Donna provided lists of the planned goals and tasks for Park updates and repairs from 2019 and 2020, resulting in great improvement in the Park and visitor experience. The 2019 Park Site Visit Report had an extensive list of needed improvements to make it safe for families, as well as needed repairs and upkeep. Major progress included Spring 2019 repairs before opening the Park, including a new well and pump beach erosions tables, repairing a water leak in the attendant hut, replacing broken fixtures in the bathrooms, removal of toxic railroad ties, etc. The Park Committee also updated the Department of Natural Resources 5-Year Master Plan, including priorities to improve safety and accessibility for all: older adults, persons with a disability, and children.

Donna reported that the well and the rest of the Park was winterized today by **Brent** Gould.

Board/Park Rule and Rate Reviews

Peggy and Cathy reviewed and compared the Park's Rules and Regulations with those of other nearby parks and recreational sites. They presented their findings for discussion, and will assemble a final list for consideration in January. Topics discussed included:

- a. Use of alcohol or marijuana, or other intoxicants should not be permitted on the premises. Likewise, no smoking of any substances, and no vaping or electronic cigarettes.
- b. No boats or trailers, since limited parking space would be a problem.
- c. Although park oversight has been much better this year under the management of Park Manager Nick Margol, a couple of incidents in the evening caused concern. Committee members expressed frustration that the deputy assigned to the park this year did not leave her patrol car when visiting the park or survey the area. In the past, the deputies would walk around the park, talk to people, possibly inspect coolers, and issue one or two

citations when appropriate. This seemed to serve as a deterrent to negative behavior, taking any burden off park attendants.

Committee members agreed that stronger statements of expectations/action should be used to ask police to walk around, talk to people, and in general 'police' the park. The possibility of pulling the contract was discussed. In addition, the Park Manager should clearly instruct the attendants to call dispatch for back up when needed.

- d. Peggy and Cathy were requested to insert Ross Township noise ordinance definitions into the park rules.
- e. No unlawful weapons or explosives, fireworks
- f. No glass containers
- g. Fines should increase for continued infractions, as in Prairieview, Comstock parks. If the police enforce rules early in the season, this should lessen incidents.
- h. No pets, not even in cars, except for service dogs.
- i. Liability for accidents in playground
- j. Visitors should use appropriate behavior on equipment, playground, and show respect for all visitors
- k. No posting of signs, advertising, etc. The committee felt strongly that the Park should be a non-partisan neutral space for all.
- l. Rules for using the Little Library, travel games (e.g. "Please bring back games when you are done"). Balls, badminton and other sports equipment will be kept in the attendant hut.
- m. Visitors should launch kayaks, sailboats, etc. from the south beach area. No one may moor a boat on a swim buoy.
- o. No Propane is allowed in the park for cooking grills, ovens. Charcoal grills are okay, but no open or ground campfires

VII. New Business

Park Fees for 2021

Park fees should remain the same as last year. However, Daily or Seasonal Passes will be required for visitors entering on foot. Neighbors of the Park, who have traditionally had free access on foot will be given laminated cards, one per family.

Two season passes were purchased for 2021, as offered at the Playground Dedication.

Playground Update

A permanent sign will be purchased and erected by the playground to acknowledge the grantors who made it possible.

Suggestions were made to limit park hours in the evening to 9:00 pm. Attendants arrive at 8:30 am to prepare/clean the park, which opens at 9:00 am. The first shift attendant arrives at 8:30 and works until 3:00. The second shift attendant works until 9:00 pm (close) and does the end of day pickup.

Member Time

Electronic Gate

Diana was asked to relay a request from Rob Baker for the Park Committee to purchase and install an electronic opening/closing gate at the Park. Visitors would pay by debit card or cash.

Concerns about installing a gate included:

1. An electronic gate would require 2 lanes, gates and arms. There is not enough room in that area.
2. Unlike the gate at the north end of the lake, Ross Township Park is not a boat launch.
3. This would cause traffic delays.
4. Current patrons usually pay with cash or check, so this not feasible for those writing checks.
5. How would this work with walk-in visitors?
6. Revenue has been up this summer with good attendance even during a period of needing to limit visitor numbers because of COVID. This happened because of better park supervision and training of attendants. Hence, there would be little monetary benefit for a different system. This also points to the advantage of hire a full-time Park Manager out of the township budget, to fully manage responsibilities. It would also relieve the burden on Township officials and Park Committee members to be involved in daily park management.
7. Report on what is happening in Allegan, Prairieville
8. Cathy noted the benefit to Ross Township of hiring local youth as Park attendants, giving them training, experience and commitment. It is also a source of positive PR for the Park to community.

Some 2020 attendants would be interested in 2021 jobs, including neighborhood residents.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

There will not be a meeting in December. The next meeting will be January 7, 2021 at 6:00 pm at the Ross Township Office.

Respectfully submitted:

Peggy Sattler