

**Ross Township
12086 M-89
Richland, Mi. 49083
269-731-4888**

**Ross Township Park & Recreation Committee Meeting
February 4, 2021, 6PM**

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
Christopher Gottwald
Lynn Harmon
Peggy Sattler

Attending via phone: Gail Hurn

Absent: Cathy Knauf

APPROVE AGENDA

Donna requested an addition to the Agenda to review a request for use of the park. Chris moved to approve the Agenda. Seconded by Lynn and passed.

MINUTES FROM January 7, 2020

Minutes from the January Park Committee meeting were reviewed, and Chris moved to accept them as presented. Seconded by Gail and **passed**.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Park financial records for the 2020 Summer season, from the Township Clerk and Treasurer were compared and analyzed by Donna and Diana. The total expenses for FY2019-2020 were \$ 66,479.66, and total Income from fees and grants was \$ 81,151.96. This leaves \$14,672.30.

Lynn moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Seconded by Peggy and **passed**.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

Electronic Gate Purchase Proposal

Diana assembled a list of the Pros and Cons of installing an electric gate at the Park. Increased revenue could result from the gate collecting revenue for all times that the park is open. With less need for attendants and Park Manager time, wages would also be a savings.

In contrast, Park maintenance and supervision are quite necessary for upkeep, and assuring Park rules are followed. With less on-site presence, there could be more abuse of park equipment and the site. A means of emergency communication would need to be purchased. The jobs performed by attendants are also an asset to them and the local area. If there were a need for limits on the numbers allowed in the park, that, and any traffic waiting would best be handled by attendants in person.

An electronic gate would require more space for a two-lane entrance and exit. More space and site preparation would be required, and there is not funding in the Park budget. Research of other parks shows that frequent maintenance would be needed, even though the park is only open less than half the year.

Review of 2021 Budget

The income projected for FY2020-2021 is \$ 34,000.00, which with carryover funds gives us a budget of \$ 48,672.30. Expenditures for this summer are estimated to be \$ 28,913.00, leaving a projected \$ 19,759.30 at the end of the season.

Approval of the 2021 budget was moved by Chris and seconded by Lynn. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Signs for the Playground Project and Park

Signs to honor Gilmore and Gull Lake Area Rotary Club grants for the new Playground, and also for Park rules were discussed. We have worked with Julie at Printex in Richland in the past and they have our logos on file. A 48" x 60" metal sign would cost about \$370, plus 4" x 4" wooden posts. Chris and Gail will work with Julie to ascertain whether we can add to our current rule sign and/or what other good-looking options she might be able to offer us. We will also want two small No-Smoking signs to post in the west side of the parking lot. Chris and Gail agreed to follow this up.

Rob Thall, the Township Attorney, will be checking the new proposed Park Rules from this committee, and they will be up for approval at the next Township Board meeting.

Donna has also been working on getting the Kalamazoo County Road Commission to install better signage along East Gull Lake Drive to prevent accidents from traffic going through blind curves near the Park. She had emailed the KCRC Supervisor Jim Hoekstra, who called her and directed her to the online application. We would like to get Pedestrian Crossing and Playground warning signs; but those signs aren't allowed by KCRC at this time. The KCRC agreed that the approach from the north has been identified as dangerous already.

We will purchase two 24" x 18" brown-and-white Park signs for south and north approaches. Donna and Bill Tellam posted markers 25 feet either side of the Park gates for Inspector, Brian Franklin, to check on. Once he approves the sign placements the KCRC will issue us a permit. Donna filled out on line paperwork to get a curve study done to justify a blind/curve sign and possibly a 35 mph speed limit sign. If approved KCRC will facilitate installing said signs at no cost to the township.

Other steps we could take would be to ask neighbors along East Gull Lake Drive to trim bushes to improve sightlines, and to have the Sheriff's Department enforce the speed limit near the park. Any bush cutting would also have to be facilitated by the KCRC.

Donna got a bid from Rathco Safety Supply Inc. for two 18' x 24" brown and white signs identifying the Park. With hardware and installation, their bid came to \$ 468.25. Chris moved to accept this bid, and Gail seconded it. Motion passed. This will be forwarded to the Township Board for purchase.

Athletic Mentors' Triathlon Report

Athletic Mentors would like to reserve Park space for their annual Triathlon on Sunday, August 1st, 2021 at 7AM, and for members of their six week Tri Camp for adults and youth. They would like to use the park for six Camp sessions (Thursdays: 6/24 7/1 7/8 7/16, 7/22, and 7/29). They would be coming in from 6:30PM until 9PM. The Park Committee agreed to let them have a reduced car rate of \$5.00 per car just for their training. We can encourage them to obtain annual passes for a good deal on the parking fee. They will be charged full price on the day of the event. We could require them to complete an official authorization form with the Township.

We might want to do an article about such park activities for the Gull Lake Quality newsletter, etc. It would be a positive step in encouraging participants, including young people, to use the park. They might also be interested in providing free swimming lessons for kids coming to the park.

DNR Grant Seminar

Peggy reviewed the webinar slides put together by the DNR for those seeking to obtain grants for parks and recreation projects. Donna and Mary Carol also provided an enlarged site map of Rick King's overview of what park improvements we are planning. These include:

- New stone retaining wall to stop erosion, with larger beach area
- New stairs to the beach at the north, middle and south ends of the retaining wall
- Using existing path to go to stairs, possibly adding a non-slip coating
- Installing a new barrier-free path at the south end, with an ADA-accessible patio area and dock which would have a lift into the water
- Designated kayak, sailboard or canoe launch area

The DNR offers three types of grants, and funding has been increasing for coming years. In addition, some matching fund requirements have been lowered, and can be met through donations, other grants, and volunteer labor.

Many of our plans for the park renovation resonate with DNR priorities, such as ADA Design, environmental impact, nearness to urban areas, and access to lakes and woodlands. Trails are a major

priority of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant, which seeks to provide amenities and recreational opportunities near biking and hiking trails. In 2020, the MNRTF awarded nearly \$2.4M to core projects of the Iron Belle Trail, which has two forks running north-south through Michigan. The North Country Trail runs through Hickory Corners to Augusta, and crosses B Avenue, between 39th and 40th Street. It would be only a short distance down B Avenue and East Gull Lake Drive to the park. The Interactive Trail Map shows a marker for the Kellogg Manor House, and we could ask to be put on there as well.

Grant Application open using the MIGrants software beginning in January. The Grant submission deadline in April 1, and decisions are made in November. We could use Early-Stewart, Civil Engineers or Marvin Construction for required design specs. Grant Scoring Criteria and other requirements are listed in the full DNR webinar report.

Bench Plaques

Quotes were obtained for two plaques recognizing Rob Poth and John Daugherty for donating a LandScape Forms bench to the park. They also repaired and recoated the bench. After discussion, Peggy moved that we purchase the \$96 plaques from Otten Trophies, which Chris seconded. Motion passed.

Judge Plummer Memorial Service

The family of Judge Peter Plummer has requested use of the Park for a memorial service in early June. They would have about 75-100 people, perhaps on a Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday mid-morning. The Blue Knights, of whom Peter was a member, would do a Memorial Drive-By, and one food truck would provide refreshments. Peter gave many services to the Township, and was a much loved neighbor. It was recommended to post a sign one week before that the park would be closed from 9AM - 1:30PM on that date. The same Notice to be posted on the Township website. Lynn Harmon's Scout Troop #239 will provide parking services on that date.

Chris moved to accept this request, and Peggy seconded. Motion passed.

**Note the Plummer Family has chosen Sunday, June 6, 2021 as the Memorial Date

MEMBER TIME

A new Park Manager has not yet been hired, but the importance of having back-up for the Park Manager was noted. Several of the Park Committee members who live on Heights Drive volunteered to be available and active when situations arise.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

The next meeting will be March 4, 2021 at 6:00 pm at the Ross Township Office.

Respectfully submitted:

Peggy Sattler