

LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
HELD AT THE TOWNSHIP HALL

October 16, 2019
Workshop Meeting
6:00 P.M.

Tom Shuff opened the workshop meeting at 6:00 P.M.

Ellen Fitch presented a “Park Visitor Questionnaire” that might be used to solicit feedback park visitors. Dearborn suggested each commissioner visit a park. Becker suggested asking for visitor address or residency. Shuff suggested wearing name tags to identify themselves. Fitch said it should also be asked if the visitor feels safe in the park. Simmons asked how often Meshkin gets reports of unsafe conditions in the parks. Meshkin said not very often. Meshkin said park usage is down at this time of the year so suggested doing it over a span of a year, recording time and date of the survey. The main reason surveys were done in the past was for the Parks Recreation Plan. The current Parks Plan was just approved in January 2019 and is good for five years. Fitch said this isn’t meant to be a township wide survey but for the park visitors. Meshkin said the last township wide survey netted 86 respondents. Shuff wants to understand where people are coming from. Simmons said most people who respond to the township wide survey don’t use any of the parks. Meshkin suggested asking for an email address to generate a database and Becker said that might not be received very well. Meshkin said it could be optional to provide to provide an email if the person would like to receive information on the parks. Becker asked if there is a database of resident emails and Meshkin said there is not nor do many people subscribe to the electronic newsletter option. Dearborn asked if the survey could be done at voting times and Meshkin said that is not an option.

Shuff asked for feedback on the questions and Fitch said they are more social based questions. Becker suggested asking if they use any other parks in the township than the one they are in. Becker suggested what else would you like to see in the park. Simmons said to add a question about allowing alcohol in the parks. Dearborn suggested asking park specific questions if possible. Becker suggested condensing it to few questions and to have the surveyor add a note about the demographics of the visitor. Dearborn suggested throwing a “party in the park” in the spring and fall. In general, the survey could be placed on a clipboard with a pen/pencil attached. Further review of the questions occurred. Fitch said it is important to research what kind of interactions occur in the park. The following questions/order was agreed upon:

1. Why do you like this park?
2. How often do you visit?
3. How did you get here? (boxes with: walk; car; bike; other)
4. Do you meet others in the park?

5. Do you visit other parks and if so, which ones and how often?
6. What would you like to see in this park?
7. How do you think parks impact you and your community?
8. Are you a resident of Laketown Township?
9. Optional: email address

Surveyor would note demographics of the interviewee.

Shuff said to organize the campaign to visit the parks over a year. Meshkin said it would be nice to do it to capture four seasons. Becker said to evaluate the questions after the first few months to determine effectiveness. Fitch and Dearborn suggested having it available at the 4th of July Pancake Breakfast. Meshkin said there are certain times when the line is very long and it might be an opportune time to gather feedback. There will be a table for Parks and it could be available there. Simmons suggested starting the surveys as soon as the document is available. Meshkin will provide copies of the survey, clipboards and pens.

Shuff asked commissioners to review previous surveys. Dearborn would like to reach out to the City of Frankfort to review their park welcoming sign as a basis for what might be used. Dearborn will get a copy of it; commissioners will review and draft new Laketown signage. Shuff asked if there is an issue with noting alcohol allowed in the parks and Meshkin advised it would require a change to the ordinance which would have to come before the board. Shore Acres is the only park that currently allows alcohol consumption. Fitch is not in favor of making that change. Becker said just to note no glass receptacles allowed.

Shuff adjourned the workshop meeting at 6:50 P.M.

Regular Meeting
7:00 P.M. at Township Hall

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Tom Shuff called the regular Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Simmons, Tom Shuff, Kathleen Dearborn,
Ellen Fitch, Dick Becker

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Fitch seconded by Becker to approve the September 18, 2019 minutes as written. Shuff called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE III. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills to be paid as of September 2019 were reviewed. Maintenance: Jon’s to Go \$443.10, Capital One Commercial - \$476.10, Heavener - \$7,281.00; Contracted Services: John Kunkel - \$155.00, Consumer’s Energy - \$50.00; Capital Outlay: Robert Krause - \$4,717.50, Zeeland Lumber - \$639.96.

Fitch asked why we do not have someone opening/closing the gate at Farview Park as she has heard there are things that go on there after dark. If the gate were closed, it would deter visitors. Shuff suggested refurbishing the gate and Meshkin said we would have to find someone to open/close, manage the gatekeeping. Meshkin said the restroom facility might be better maintained in the future with the use of a newly purchased vehicle from the fire department that includes a water tank with power washer. Simmons said the seat must be replaced and Meshkin said it had been replaced 1-2 years ago. Fitch said she could probably find someone in the neighborhood to do it and Meshkin said it would have to be someone reliable. Shuff asked to table it until the next meeting. Meshkin said there have been some problems with graffiti in the weigh stations. Fitch said there are also a couple of trees ready to fall over and Meshkin will have Grams investigate. Fitch asked if LETA is maintaining the trails and Sall said that organization may be defunct.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Simmons and seconded by Dearborn to approve the Treasurer’s Reports as submitted for the month of August.**

Shuff called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

ARTICLE IV. TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORTS – SALL

- a. Sall said there is nothing to report

ARTICLE V. STAFF REPORTS – MESHKIN

- a. Meshkin asked Sall to provide information she received from Allegan County United Way. Sall reported that she received a call from the Allegan County United Way asking if they could provide volunteers for their Day of Caring scheduled for October 17, 2019. The offer was accepted and a group from Perrigo will work on spreading bark on the trails at Farview working from 8-11:45a.m. If time allows, there is work that can be done at Huyser Farm or the Old Township Hall. Fitch will be available on site and will have the volunteers start at the first ridge of the trail and work back. It is exciting to begin this partnership with Allegan County United Way.

ARTICLE VI. HUYSER CARETAKER REPORT - CIRCO

Circo said there is nothing to report.

ARTICLE VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. SPLASH PAD

Fitch said there is nothing to add about the splash pad and will no longer be pursued.

B. PARKS WELCOMING SIGNS

Dearborn will get a copy of the Frankfort sign to be reviewed at the next meeting if available. It will be sent to the commissioners prior to the meeting if possible. The current signs are 4 x 8.

B. WORK AREAS IN PARKS WITH WIFI

Simmons said we were not sure if the Wi-Fi is up and running at Wolters Woods. Meshkin said it will be available by spring for Wolters Woods, Sanctuary Woods and Laketown Beach. He will have cameras and necessary equipment installed, which he estimates to cost \$2-3,000 per park with the ability to record license plates. Fitch asked if signage must note that surveillance is present and Meshkin said he will check with the attorney.

ARTICLE VIII. NEW BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE IX. CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

ARTICLE X. ADJOURNMENT

Shuff adjourned the regular meeting at 7:11p.m.