

**FINAL
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF COMMERCE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, October 27, 2025
2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Petsch called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

ROLL CALL: **Present:** William Petsch, Chairperson
Johnny Walker, Vice Chairperson
Krystal Schwartz, Secretary
Bob Berkheiser
Ron Krueger
Absent: Denise Vecellio (excused)
Laura Waterworth (excused)
Also Present: Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks & Rec
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director

COMMUNICATIONS:
None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Krueger, seconded by Walker, to approve the September 22, 2025, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Petsch opened to Public Comments.

There were no comments.

Chairperson Petsch closed to Public Comments.

ITEM 1: EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Gavin Showalter – I'm part of Troop 308. During the September meeting, I talked about my Eagle Project, and the Committee wanted to see a new budget and what kinds of materials I'm using.

- I am using 21-AA crushed limestone, which is $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch to dust, and that is ADA accessible.
- My budget went down from \$1682 to about \$180 because of donations received.
- Today, I went for three quotes for limestone; Rock Bottom, Site One, and Suburban Landscaping. Rock Bottom gave me 100% discount with the delivery fee. That is why my price went down.
- Through the donations of CW3, and Lowe's with the material, my budget has significantly decreased.
- I'm working with Ms. England on the directional signs that we should be talking about soon.

Mr. Berkheiser – What do you think your whole budget is going to be?

Gavin Showalter – About \$200.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's everything you need, so that includes your food, drinks, whatever you're doing?

Gavin Showalter – Yes. I have fundraised about \$400 worth of pop cans in the last three weeks.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so you have met your supposed budget.

Gavin Showalter – Yes.

Director England – So, to give you an update on the wayfinding signs. We're having those signs designed by the same company that designed the dog park signs so we can keep them uniform throughout the parks system. I should have a design by the end of the week, and I told Gavin we would work with him. I don't expect him to pay for a design that we're going to use throughout our parks system, so we will work with him on the price of that sign and installations.

Gavin Showalter – And I do want to say thank you to Commerce Township. I walked by Dodge Park this afternoon and saw that you dug the holes for the bollards and I really appreciate that.

Director England – Also, Jason Mayer, Township Engineer, did meet Gavin onsite to look at his drawing and what he is planning to do for the pathway, and he gave a seal of approval that it will be ADA accessible.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Cool. Do you need a motion?

Director England – Yes, he is looking for a motion to move forward so he can get his supplies delivered and start working on it.

MOTION by Berkheiser, supported by Schwartz, to approve the Eagle Scout Project at Dodge Park by Gavin Showalter to move forward.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Gavin Showalter – Thank you so much.

ITEM 2: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

CW3 Soccer – Chris Haney

Mr. Haney shared the following with the Committee.

- Our last full weekend was this past weekend.
- Our final match at Dodge Park will be on Saturday, November 1st.
- There's only one at the moment. It's possible that a reschedule will be added to that same date.

- The week of November 3rd through the 7th, we will be doing all of our end of season turf maintenance, aeration, top dressing, et cetera. We won't overseed because it's too late. Part of that is in conjunction with Gavin's plans, so thank you for approving that. We can move all of those nine yards of crushed limestone with machinery.
- On November 11th, American Sprinkler will be out to blow out the system, and that should be the end of it until March.

Director England – So you said your last game is Saturday, November 1st?

Mr. Haney – Yes.

Director England – Mark, can we hold off on closing those bathrooms until the following Monday so they can utilize the bathrooms for that day?

Mr. Schoder agreed.

Lakes Area Hawks – Andy Graham

Mr. Graham shared the following with the Committee.

- Our season came to an end a couple weeks ago.
- It was a bit of a tough year. We had a lot of expansion so not everyone made it to the playoffs.
- We hosted our Super Cheer this past Sunday.
- I'm in the process of winterizing the building, and then we will take a little break.
- In December, we will set up and start our weightlifting program for the older kids.

Interlakes Girls Softball – Jeremiah Fick

Mr. Fick shared the following with the Committee.

- Our fall tournaments are over.
- I think most of our travel teams are done practicing.
- The sprinkler system was blown out this past Friday.
- Mark is free to winterize the building at any point. Please let us know when it is done.

Silo Ranch – Dawn & Joe Raye

Ms. Raye shared the following with the Committee.

- We are in full swing with our trail rides, which we hold on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.
- There's really not much else that happens there in the wintertime as it's too cold.

Mr. Berkheiser – How are the trail rides going?

Ms. Raye – They're good. We've had a lot of people come in.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do they just reserve online?

Ms. Raye – They just call us. We're working on using FareHarbour to book them. That will probably be implemented next spring.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is that something you can link into the website?

Director England and Ms. Kennedy responded yes.

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee.

- We had our Boo Bash a week ago Saturday. With the rain, we did pretty good, but we lost a tent. We had approximately 300 people.
- We're looking forward to the fall.
- We have the Scouts coming on Saturday. Mike will provide tarps for the Scout on the wagon project.
- We're looking forward to our Christmas event.
- I want to personally thank Emily for getting the music box to the Library. It looks beautiful. She put a lot of work and effort into that. I get questions as to why it's not in the farmhouse. It's a lot more secure in the Library and a lot more community will see it there.

Mr. Berkheiser – Isn't it better temperature control?

Mr. Schantz – Yes, and better security. People can see it daily at the Library. We have to get a placard for it.

Director England – I know Alyson at the Library is working on getting something to give some history on it.

Chairperson Petsch – Emily, anything from Lakes Athletic?

Director England – No.

Chairperson Petsch – Could you put in a formal request that they show up with their report, their officers and everything else we need from them?

Director England – Yes, Lakes and Commerce Little League. You got it.

Chairperson Petsch – Thank you.

No representatives were present at the meeting for the following leagues:

- *Lakes Athletics Association*
- *Motor City Mountain Bike Association*
- *Commerce Little League*

ITEM 3: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- We're into our best part of the season, budget season.
- We've been meeting on Tuesdays. We have another meeting tomorrow, though it's not all budget.

- We split the budget up into roughly three sections. We make the directors come in and present to the Board, ask questions, basically justify the dollars they're asking for, review what they did in 2025, and what they're looking to do in 2026, and then hopefully all that supports what they're asking for in the budget. I think it has gone well. We did the basic General Fund, Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurers, et cetera at the first meeting. This past week, we talked with Parks, Fire and Police, and Open Space stuff. Maintenance was pushed to the next meeting. Emily did a good job representing what we've all discussed. She did get some questions, and there were also a lot of questions on the Police and Fire funds because of the amount of money.
- We also had a regular Township Board meeting. There really wasn't a whole lot.
- We have a quarterly Trustee discussion meeting tomorrow where the Pathway Work Group will make a presentation to the entire Board to discuss the pathway system in the Township, with the overall goal of having pathways put in and several different ways to do it. If it passes from the discussion session, it will move forward into creating SAD language to be approved for the November 2026 election so that everybody has a chance to vote on it. If it passes from there, then there would be money for the pathways. Currently, the ballpark amount for pathways is \$16 million to do what is projected to be needed to connect different areas of the Township. If you're interested in pathways, I encourage you to come to the meeting. If you were at the Bicentennial celebration, a lot of that was presented and discussed as to how we can get that done.

ITEM 4: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England discussed the following:

- To touch base on the Pathways Plan, we are calling it Phase I with the idea of creating the artery to the Pathway System. Then, Phase II and Phase III will come off of those arteries to make those big connections to parks, destinations, regional trail systems, schools, et cetera. There may be a lot of questions that come up of why we didn't make certain connections. It's not that we didn't look at it; it's just about the bigger story that we can then add those into Phase II.
- Everything else is written in my report.
- The Senior Center is thriving.
- We're currently working with Oakland County and People's Express to secure their next 3-year contract to provide senior transportation to our community. I'll keep you updated on that.
- Trips are going great and we're just planning for next year.

Mr. Berkheiser – We're looking at doing the contract for People's Express with Oakland County, or do we contract with them?

Director England – It's the community group that utilizes People's Express. We are voices to the County for our residents as to what we want to see and if we're happy with the service. There are questions within the contract that is being presented because there isn't an overall master plan approved yet for the County, but the contract language for the providers does indicate that they're going to abide by such plan, which they have not had a chance to see yet. That's where we're having discussions with the County; we don't think it's fair to ask a provider to sign a contract saying you will abide by a plan that you have not had the opportunity to review.

Mr. Berkheiser – Or taxing us based on a plan that we haven't seen.

Director England – Correct. So, that vote is supposed to happen on Thursday. We did have some County Commissioners on a call with us on Friday and they are making every attempt to push that vote so that some language can be changed.

Mr. Berkheiser – Do we currently contract with People's Express?

Director England – People's Express contracts with Oakland County.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so it is running through the County currently?

Director England – Yes.

ITEM 5: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- We helped with the setup and take down of the Trail or Treat event. I heard it was a success.
- We did some landscaping at the Dog Park. We put some mums and bushes in up front. Hopefully everybody liked it and the dogs didn't tear it up.
- We installed large solar lights and cameras at Victory where the fence is around the dig site.
- We're in full cleanup mode with all the leaves falling off the trees. We're trying to keep the trails and bridges clear, parking lots and everything.
- The two large trees were removed by Field #3.
- We're going to install bollards this week.

ITEM 6: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Chairperson Petsch – We'll start with you Bob. We were at Victory Park today.

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- If you haven't been to the Dog Park, you should go see it. It looks really good.
- The parking lot was full on Saturday for the formal opening.
- This evening, there were probably 25 dogs there, so quite a few folks utilizing it.
- I have to say when I've talked to residents, the two things they mention are the pickleball courts and the Dog Park. We can be proud of the way it turned out.
- Across the street at Wise Woods, that still looks good. There are still cars utilizing it. We still have some intermittent issues from the neighborhoods there.
- The only other thing we discussed is the well. I think they've finalized an area. Emily can give us an update. I think what we should consider, and I would recommend to the Township Board, that we should have two filling stations; pump it over to the Dog Park, so one at the pavilion and then one by the Dog Park area. I don't think we should put any spigots in because someone would just leave them turned on. I also think we should run a bottle fill station over to the other side of the street. So, if we can tunnel 1,000 feet to the pavilion, we can tunnel over to the other site and put in a fill station. So, a total of three, with one at Wise Woods and two at Victory Park.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- Nothing new to report.
- Emily, I will set up a time to meet with you to review what you talked about last time since I was not here for the Mill Race/Byers walk-through.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- Nothing new to report.
- Looking forward to maybe getting that ball field done this spring. That was in our budget.

Walker – Maple Glen

- The park looks good.
- I was over there about a week ago. There was not much going on, but it was a weekday.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- People are still using the playground quite a bit.
- I contacted Emily because the guy was there selling ice cream again.
- Other than that, everything looks great.

Vecellio – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- No report in Ms. Vecellio's absence.

Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park

- No report in Ms. Waterworth's absence.

ITEM 7: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Waterworth was not present, but Mr. Krueger noted that the Village held their last Farmer's Market last Tuesday. There were about a half dozen people with displays, and everybody had a nice attitude.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'll comment on Wolverine. Mr. Weber, on our Township Board, lives in the Village. He asked us to take a look at the skate park at Clara Miller just for thoughts. He said it might be something we want to consider.

ITEM 8: COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Chairperson Petsch – This is just introducing so we start thinking about our members for next year.

Director England – Correct.

Chairperson Petsch – Okay, so everybody think.

Mr. Berkheiser – Has it been two years?

Director England – We do it every year.

Chairperson Petsch – We do it every year, Bob.

Mr. Berkheiser – We just don't change them?

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, unless somebody wants to resign.

ITEM 9: ICE SKATING RINK

Director England – Bob kind of touched base on this, and I was hoping to have some more information on pricing, but I'm still waiting on that. I guess the idea came about when Bob brought it up last year; he suggested putting in an ice rink and I think the Richardson Center, where the volleyball court is, would be a good location for that. I'm getting pricing on doing that, along with renting and what all it entails.

I'm thinking maybe we could put it up for the season and see how much it gets used, then potentially looking at the option of placing something permanent that could be used for roller hockey and roller skating throughout the summer, and then it can become an ice skating rink through the winter months. I did find out that they have portable ice that stays ice. It's not really ice, but it's something to skate on. It's like a synthetic ice, so it's not limited by Mother Nature, like the sledding hill is. It can be a winter activity, which we do lack. I can bring that back next month once I get more information if you guys think it's a good idea.

Chairperson Petsch – Great, thank you.

Vice Chairperson Walker – Sounds good.

ITEM 10: VICTORY PARK MISSILE SILO UPDATE

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- As Mark noted, you will see a larger construction fence out there now surrounding the area. Cameras and lights have been put up.
- They will start digging this Wednesday, with the idea that we are going to dig down to where the caps are supposed to be, and then assess what we're dealing with at that point.
- If for any reason, there is a break in the cap, or the cap is collapsing, we're going to have a representative from ASTI onsite in case we were to find something within those silos; they are the environmental group that has done all of the testing on that property. They are pretty confident that we won't, but we can't be too safe.

ITEM 11: PARK IMPROVEMENT UPDATES

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- Let's start with the well.
 - The location of the well has been determined.
 - Oakland County Health Department has accepted the location of the well.
 - We have done all of the environmental testing and everything is good there.
 - Oakland County will not issue our permit until EGLE approves it.
 - EGLE will not approve it; they have turned it over to the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE). We're still waiting to hear back from ACE.

Mr. Berkheiser – How long has it been?

Director England – Six months.

Mr. Berkheiser – We have an election coming up. Let's contact our representatives. Larry could do that.

Director England – Yes. So, the parking lot and the pathway at the Richardson Center are complete. They're still telling me the restrooms will be completed this year. I think they're planning on getting started in the next week or two. I'll keep you updated on that. Besides that, I think we're looking good. We are looking at the potential of putting in a fishing dock at the kayak launch. When I came in on Saturday for the Dog Park grand opening, there were two people standing out there fishing, so I think it would get utilized and would be a good addition.

ITEM 12: PARK EVENT UPDATES

Ms. Kennedy discussed the following with the Committee:

- This past Friday was the Trail or Treat.
 - I would say it was very successful.
 - There were more people than last year. The Library is estimating between 1500-1600 kids, so with adults, probably in the neighborhood of 2,000 people came through.
 - We had 35 businesses/organizations within the community that set up to hand out candy.
 - The Library did their haunted house inside their youth room again.
 - Things seemed to go very well.
 - People started lining up at 5:30 for an event that started at 6:00.

Chairperson Petsch – To give you guys an example, we had our station just over the bridge. Looking back to the parking lot, they were lined up at the gates. That's how long the line was on that side, and then they had another line that was entering from the Library side. Those people with their kids waited and it stayed that long ...

Director England – Right until 8:00.

Ms. Kennedy – It was about 8:30 before all of the kids made it through.

Mr. Krueger – And everyone had a good attitude. There was no complaining about the wait or anything. It looked like everybody was having fun.

Ms. Kennedy –

- And then Saturday morning was the Dog Park grand opening, and everything seemed to go really well.
- We are gearing up for our next event, which will be the tree lighting. That is December 6th from 4:30-7:30pm. The Library is going to be doing story time again. We will have pictures with Santa, cookies, all of our normal things. Then we are expanding our lighted pathway, the paved trail around the Richardson Center. We have different Christmas displays and characters set up for people to walk through there too.
- Then we will be gearing up for 2026. Next month, we will have all of our 2026 dates for you.

Mr. Berkheiser – Have we thought about having a firepit in the back of the Richardson Center?

Director England – We have thought about it. I've brought it up to the Fire Chief.

Chairperson Petsch – When are the Christmas lights going up?

Director England – They already are.

Mr. Schoder – They're on the buildings.

Director England – They're just not plugged in yet. Actually, I think they're on at the farmhouse.

Chairperson Petsch – Yes, at Byers they are.

ITEM 13: OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Berkheiser – At one of the budget discussions, we discussed the cemetery fence that's over on Commerce Road, on the north side. I think the comment from one of the members was that it is the ugliest thing they've ever seen. That might have been me. It backs up on the north side, onto Victory Park. A suggestion was brought up to put some vines or something in there that will grow and eventually cover the fence. It would at least hopefully look better. I think the work was done well, it just sort of stands out and doesn't really match well with the cemetery. So, Ron was volunteered by the Township Board to look into that. I want this in the minutes and on the agenda, and then I guess Ron will give us an update on where we are with that.

Mr. Krueger – Okay, I talked with Mark about this. One of the first things we came up with was painting the fence black. It wouldn't be that hard to do, and black would not stand out the way the silver does, especially where there's existing trees. Then I did a lot of research pertaining to what kind of vines we could go with. I came up with a selection of different vines to use, planting them 3-foot on center, and doing a variety. For example, some Boston ivy, and some Clematis, honeysuckles and so on. I did assure Mark that I tried to stay away from invasive vines, but it's hard to get a climber that isn't somewhat invasive. I have a list I was going to provide and a price estimate. Based on what I have put together, it would cost about \$2,000.

Mr. Berkheiser – What does that mean, 3-foot on center?

Mr. Krueger – Planting the plants 3-foot on center.

Mr. Berkheiser – Each fence section is 8-feet.

Mr. Krueger – No, each section is 10-feet.

Mr. Berkheiser – So you're saying plant them every 3 feet?

Mr. Krueger – Basically, yes. That's the spacing they recommend. We can space them out farther, and it would take longer.

Mr. Berkheiser – That was my next question. How long are you talking?

Mr. Krueger – Especially with the Boston ivy or the Virginia creeper, within two years, you'll have the fence covered.

Mr. Berkheiser – So having different vines; is it going to look weird?

Mr. Krueger – No. I actually put 20-foot sections of fence between the groupings, so that they're not growing into one another.

Mr. Berkheiser – Can this be planted by a bunch of Boy Scouts?

Mr. Krueger – Absolutely. And I chose vines that were drought tolerant, because we wouldn't be out there watering. We can use soil moist to help establish the plants.

Mr. Berkheiser – When is the best time to do this?

Mr. Krueger – It would be in the spring.

Mr. Berkheiser – Get the information to Emily or Allison and we can arrange to have the troops designate a weekend to plant.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for November 24, 2025, at 6:00PM at the Township Hall. (No park visits before meetings from Nov.-Mar.)

ITEM 14: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Walker, supported by Krueger, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Krystal Schwartz, Secretary