

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

Monday, March 25, 2024

2009 Township Drive
Commerce Township, Michigan 48390

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Walker called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

ROLL CALL: Present: Johnny Walker, Chairperson
William Petsch, Vice Chairperson
Krystal Schwartz, Secretary
Bob Berkheiser
Ron Krueger
Laura Waterworth

Also Present: Denise Vecellio
Emily England, Director of Senior Services/Parks & Recreation
Allison Kennedy, Asst. to Parks & Recreation Director
Mark Schoder, Maintenance Director

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Petsch, seconded by Krueger, to approve the February 26, 2024, Parks and Recreation Committee Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairperson Walker opened to Public Comments.

No comments.

Chairperson Walker closed to Public Comments.

ITEM 1: LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION REPORT

Friends of Byers – Dean & Karen Schantz

Mr. Schantz shared the following with the Committee.

- We had our Easter event yesterday.
 - It went fantastic. We had full attendance and some walk-ins. We had 236 patrons. We booked all 55 slots.
 - There were lots of compliments on the farmhouse.
 - Everything went smoothly.
- We have our Spring cleanup on May 5th. We have involvement from Troop 308, the Girl Scouts, and my daughter's nonprofit. We will have a lot of people doing a lot of work that day. We will be planting ornamentals. Bogie Lake Greenhouse will be donating.

Mr. Berkheiser – Are the Scouts still taking care of the butterfly garden?

Mr. Schantz – Actually, we recruited a garden club. They come out to weed and water.

Interlakes Girls Softball – Angela Skiver

Ms. Skiver shared the following with the Committee.

- Practices officially could have started last weekend. We had a little bit of a chilly, snowy week. This week is Spring Break. So, there should be some teams out there practicing.
- We have new dirt that we laid in the fall. That's good. We have another inch or so on every field and we cleaned it all up.
- We're ready to go. We're just waiting to see when our bathrooms are finished.

Director England – Mark is here, so he can give an update, but I believe the partitions are due in on Tuesday next week and they will be installed. You're working on sinks this week, correct?

Mark Schoder – Yes, sinks should be in this week.

Director England – It doesn't mean that we will be able to open them due to the weather conditions.

Ms. Skiver – Yes. We're just anticipating games will start in April.

Silo Ranch – Dawn Ray

Ms. Ray shared the following with the Committee.

- We had our Easter event last week.
 - We had 150 scheduled, but I don't know how many actually showed up.
 - It went well. There were a lot of kids and a lot of parents.
 - Next weekend is our Open House. Come out and see us! We have a lot of vendors coming, and some rescues.
 - Our "Cars & Coffee" will be starting the first Sunday of May.
 - We started on the fences. We have the first part on the main road, on our Chickory Lane side, we have three lines up there so far. We hope to get the rest of that finished this week.

Director England – Your Open House is April 6th, correct?

Ms. Ray – Correct, from 12:00 to 3:00pm.

Ms. Kennedy – Do you have an updated flyer?

Ms. Ray – I should have brought it.

Ms. Kennedy – When you get one, just get me a copy so I can post it.

Ms. Ray – Okay.

Motor City Mountain Biking Association (MCMBA) – Mike Kearney

- The trail is in good shape after the winter.
- Nothing else to report.

Lakes Area Hawks – Andy Graham

Mr. Graham shared the following with the Committee.

- We're just waiting for some warm weather to get the water on.
- We are filled up at all levels so that's great news.
- We are thinking of maybe putting some lights on the fields that we could use later, for when teams are in the playoffs, because the cost to rent a field at the schools is getting out of control. I'm wondering what I would need to present to the Committee.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – We've discussed that in the past. In today's lighting and downlighting, we were always concerned about the offensiveness to the neighbors. You guys are out in the back there. In that type of situation, get your plan together and bring it to us, with details on that type of lighting. In the past, when I was involved with the Hawks, we brought out auxiliary lighting to practice and get the kids used to some night games. It's a possibility.

Mr. Graham – We would just take the existing poles. We would only use it in October.

Director England – We get a lot of requests from all organizations. As Bill said, lighting has changed so you're not going to have lighting impacting residential areas; however, it does go against what our ordinance says, so the ultimate decision would lie in the hands of the Township Board. That's not to say that they can't make an exception for limited use, but it will go to the Board for final approval.

Mr. Berkheiser – I would recommend that whatever you're thinking, you present it here, and then the Committee could provide a recommendation to the Township Board, and then you would show up there too.

Mr. Graham – Okay, thank you.

Lakes Athletics Association – Jared Stoddard

A report was submitted in the packet dated December 9, 2023:

- *League Update – 2024 registration numbers have matched the record '23 season with 280 players, in addition to the 190 from our travel LCB program, we will have almost 500 registered players this 2024 Spring alone. We are excited for the House Spring 2024 season opener Saturday April 20th. Field clean-up will be Saturday April 6th and on field organized practices and travel LCB games will start that afternoon. LAA/LCB is once again preparing for our Memorial Weekend Tournament with full field entry.*
- *Upcoming Dates & Information*
 - *Season Dates –*
 - 1) *Field Clean-Up and Field Opening will be April 6th*
 - 2) *Opening Day Games for Spring '24 Season: Saturday April 20th*
 - 3) *LCB Memorial Weekend Tournament: May 24-26*

- *Monthly Meeting – Next scheduled meet Apr TBD 2024 for the Board Meeting at Richardson*
- *2023 Capital Improvements –*
 - 1) *Sprinkler work is completed; LAA will work with Parks to schedule meetings for review and support of repair work invoices. We need to schedule a separate meeting for this discussion. TBD*
 - 2) *Infield landscape overhaul for 4 of the 7 fields at HG.*
- *Needs From Township*
 - *Picnic Tables: Can the township provide 5 new picnic tables for the park? We have limited, and the current are old. We have increased volume at the concessions, and would like to provide families a place to enjoy.*
 - *Cement Bleacher Pads F1: The poured cement bleacher pads and ADA accessible seating area on Field #1; Township to provide updates.*
 - *Sprinklers: Repaired and renovated after many years of service. Map of the completed system is now in existence for future construction reference. LAA can schedule meeting with P&R to review and discuss next steps, and reimbursement for approved portion share. Lakes board member will reach out to schedule meeting for further discussion in early 2024.*

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

- *Lakes Athletics Association*
- *CW3 Soccer*
- *Commerce Little League*

ITEM 2: TOWNSHIP BOARD REPORT

Mr. Berkheiser provided the following:

- We renewed our narcotic contract with the County. We have special police officers that handle just narcotic issues. That has been renewed again, and we have done that for about 5 years. It's helps to provide focus on narcotic issues that may be going on in our area and throughout the County.
- Mark bought a woodchipper, so I suppose that means now he can pull all of that brush out of Dodge Park and chip it all up.

Mr. Schoder – Yes, and all of the downed trees too.

Mr. Berkheiser –

- I think I've explained before that we have Tri-Party road money. One-third comes from the Township, one-third from the County, and one-third is from the RCOC. It's intended to do local projects. We've asked about a couple projects, and the RCOC has said that they want a road study. We have identified several areas, and we can do the studies with those Tri-Party funds, and the Board approved moving forward.

ITEM 3: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director England discussed the following:

- The majority is in my written report in the packet.
- I wanted to touch base on what Dawn said. The Easter Egg Hunt was a great success for our first time. We learned a few things, but nothing that would have

made it better or worse – just to make it run smoother. We're looking forward to doing that next year and hopefully we can add more children to the event. It was great doing it over there with the weather we had; we got the kids inside and out of the wind.

- The Oakley Park pathway was approved by the Township Board. That is expected to start mid-April. They figure it will take 30 days to complete. I'll keep you updated.
- Bids for Bicentennial Park are due back this Thursday, March 28th, so the Township Board will see those bids next month at their meeting for approval.
- Victory Park is still in the design phase.
- We are doing the Library Pathway. That is to extend the pathway down to S. Commerce Road, put a boardwalk in and make that a safe crossing. That is being done with grant funds, so we're working on the design phase of that.
- The Union Lake kayak launch; we're still awaiting topographic survey and Geotech reports so they can finish the design work and get that sent out to bid.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – I did see that being used already. I saw people launching their kayaks.

Director England – Yes, I think it's going to be great. That should all be covered with CDBG funds.

ITEM 4: PARK LIAISON REPORTS

Berkheiser – Wise Woods & Victory Park

- Wise road properties; nothing new there.
- It's just starting to pickup with the number of people using the Wise Woods side.
- I still see parking on the other side. Any update?

Director England – They're finishing the design phase and that should be ready to go out to bid within the next 30 days.

Mr. Berkheiser – I think once we get some official parking or structure over there, it will increase appropriate use. We have been getting some reports of 4x4s over there. Maybe ask the Sheriff to increase patrols.

Discussion continued regarding issues with 4x4s and dirt bikes at Victory Park.

Schwartz – Byers and Mill Race

- Nothing new to report.

Vecellio – Long Park & Snowy Ridge Park

- Hopefully nobody will be expected at Snowy Ridge going forward.
- Long Park had a little bit of graffiti. I sent a picture to Emily. It's on the same stand where we need a handrailing; it has the two steps.
- Other than that, Long looks really good. There were a lot of people out there enjoying the weather and taking pictures.

Walker – Maple Glen

- Maple Glen as picked up a little bit.
- We stopped by two weekends ago. There were a couple people with their dogs and others with their kids.
- It looked good.

Petsch – Bicentennial Park

- It's a lot nicer to be able to drive down Fisher and look into the park and see everything, now that the building is down.
- It's a great improvement and I'm looking forward to the rest that will go on this Spring.

Krueger – Dodge Park

- Everything is looking great.
- I was at the Library and there were lots of people walking.
- I drove over to Scarlet's Smile and there were 50 cars in the parking lot. There were a lot of people there and a lot of kids having fun.
- On the pathway, I mentioned last time that there was a tree down. It's not on the main pathway. You have an asphalt and a natural path next to each other. The tree is down on the natural path.

Mr. Schoder – On the dirt trail?

Mr. Krueger – Yes, close to the Library. When you go over the bridge, it's the dirt path that goes to the right. It's a secondary trail that people don't use as much. Did you guys mulch?

Mr. Schoder – Yes, we did some at the Library and at Scarlet's. We did preen and mulch.

Waterworth – Hickory Glen Park

- Not too much for Hickory Glen.
- Just a lot of people walking their dogs.

ITEM 5: VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE UPDATE

Ms. Waterworth discussed the following with the Committee:

- The Village will have their Spring Yard Sale May 15th-18th.
- After you're done running our 5K, a week later, the Village is having a 5K on Memorial Day weekend. Flyers for that are on their website.
- They're doing something new this year; June 22nd at 11:00am at Clara Miller Park, they're going to have a Dog Show. It's \$3 to enter your dog. More details to follow.
- They will have the corn roast again this year.

ITEM 6: MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Schoder discussed the following with the Committee:

- We've already covered Maple Glen. Hopefully that will be ready to open in the next couple of weeks, as long as the weather cooperates.

- As mentioned, we're trying to get everything mulched.
- Winter damage at Scarlet's Smile playground equipment; I have a list of that which I will give to Emily.
- At the Horse Farm; the railing for the steps going down to the arena is roughed in. We're going to probably finish that up this week.
- The restrooms at Scarlet's; we're going to start putting in the fixtures and valves, so hopefully that will be ready by April 1st.
- The Board approved the wood chipper, a road grader, a leaf vac, a riding blower, and a dump trailer, which will all benefit the parks a lot.

Vice Chairperson Petsch inquired with Mr. Schoder about storage and use of excess wood chips. Mr. Schoder explained that would be up to the Parks Department and Committee. Director England noted that quite a few wood chips are used on the pathways at Byers, Mill Race, Richardson, et cetera.

ITEM 7: BYERS ELECTRICAL

Director England discussed the following with the Committee:

- Dean reached out to me last week.
- I'm still waiting to hear back from Jay.
- Dean is looking for some direction on the scope of work for the electrical. I don't think it needs to be as elaborate as was included in the Daly report.
- I was hoping to have Dean explain what they would like to do there, and then some of you with more knowledge can help guide him. Then we will have Jay review it to make sure it meets the Building Code.

Mr. Schantz – The original contract with Daly had a 200-amp service. The expense of that is bringing new service wire in. It's #6 service wire currently. The house only has plugs, lights and a furnace, so the demand for electricity is not rated at 200-amps. I think you could put 150 or a 100-amp service panel in there. At the most, somewhere down the road, maybe central air. I just want to collaborate with the Township to see what they expect, electrically speaking there. Jay James might have some input with that too. I don't think we need 200-amp service, and I'm in the process of getting contractors and three bids.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's for the house itself, right?

Mr. Schantz – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, what about the property? Any outlying power sources for lights? I know we have lights up at Christmastime.

Mr. Schantz – Well, there's two feeds. There's an Edison meter down below the pole that feeds the house. There's two Edison meters or two feeds. There's also a feed going into the barn, which has a 100-amp panel. There's two separate areas outside of the house that you can tap into for lighting if that's the case.

Mr. Berkheiser – My question was more along the lines of what your plans or wishes are for any power sources. Do the craft shows use electricity?

Mr. Schantz – Yes, there's a couple areas on the upper tier where we could probably put a stanchion with GFI outlets.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'm just saying that if you have a desire of what it is you're looking for, put all that together and get it to Emily.

Director England – Is that to make sure that the feed coming in is big enough?

Mr. Berkheiser – Right, but if there's two feeds, it could be split.

Mr. Schantz – There's actually three feeds coming off Tamworth; the barn, the Edison pole, and then another feed going from there to the farmhouse. There's three meters.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – A 200-amp service is overkill for that property.

Mr. Schantz – I agree.

Discussion continued regarding the necessary amperage and anticipated uses. Vice Chairperson Petsch felt that even a 100-amp service would be a lot.

Mr. Schantz – I want to get details as far as the bids. It should be MC wire inside the wall. I don't want to see conduits outside the wall. That would look horrible. I want to communicate details to the contractors, and also coordinate with the Township.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – If the wiring is substantial for a 150-amp panel then put the 150-amp panel in because that cost is minimal, it just gives you more outlet boxes on it.

Mr. Schantz – It's the same cost as a 100-amp panel. It's all about the branch circuits that come off it.

Director England – Are you looking to redo the electrical completely in the house, or tie the existing into a new panel?

Mr. Schantz – New wiring all throughout the house. It's sealed 2-wire and I think it should all be grounded in my opinion to make it safe.

Mr. Berkheiser – I think the other one ... there weren't a lot of plugs off of it. I want to say there were two or three on the bottom, and one or two upstairs, and it was all new wires.

Mr. Schantz – The crazy thing is that house sub-fed the barn at some point, so there's still wire and main breakers for the barn. That can be addressed when they do the contracting. We're looking to replace everything in the house and a new panel, but less than 200-amp.

Director England – Okay.

ITEM 8: E-BIKES

Director England – We had a long discussion about this in the past. I added it back on here. I also want to address the mountain bike trails as well for e-bikes. I see that the DNR is looking at possibly allowing a level of them, and I wanted your input on that so that the Board can hear it. In the past we looked at this and the Committee said, *Only Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes are allowed on paved hike/bike trails within the Township.* And then, we would set a speed limit of 10-15 mph to ensure not only the safety of the rider, but pedestrians also on the pathway.

What we've learned, and we've included in your packet some of this information, is that all e-bikes are to be labeled with what classification they are, and if you do any modifications to increase the classification, you're responsible for labeling that correctly. Class 1 is pedal assist only, Class 2 has a throttle which is basically a motorized bike and you don't have to pedal, and Class 3 is pedal assist up to 28 mph.

The Michigan Airline Trail is only allowing Class 1 on their pathways. We do need to remember that our paved paths, such as the Lakes Area Community Trail, are considered nonmotorized trails. We would need to look at language in the ordinance as well if we change this.

I need your opinion on this. I do see that the State is looking to change something. There are mountain e-bikes too now.

Mr. Kearney – Yes, they have been around for a while.

Director England – They're allowing them on single-track trails.

Mr. Kearney – Yes, the DNR really doesn't make much of a distinction in their natural surface trails. They are looking to make that distinction. I think with the DNR, there are some trails where it makes sense, and some that don't. They're looking at it statewide, and on the average, most of their trails are okay for an e-bike in terms of the speeds that you can reach with an e-bike. I really don't think Hickory Glen is the right trail for an e-bike. There are benefits to allowing e-bikes for handicap accessibility, but most of the e-bikes you see people riding around here are not the nice ones that are well-tuned. They're the Costco bikes and they don't know how to use them on the trails. I think Hickory Glen, being as tight and twisty as it is, isn't favorable to allow an e-bike.

Director England – Okay, and I think that's the stance that the Committee took previously, was that this would not be allowed on the mountain bike trails. I just wanted to get clarification from you since I did see that. So, Oakland County allows only Class 1. The State allows Class 1 and 2. Wixom and West Bloomfield are only Class 1.

Mr. Kearney – Most natural service trails stick with Class 1 with pedal assist. I think the DNR will only allow Class 2 if you have a permit for accessibility.

Mr. Berkheiser – How do you differentiate between Class 1 and Class 3, since they're both pedal assist?

Director England – Class 3 can go up to 28 mph, and Class 1 only goes up to 20 mph. They would have to have the classification on the e-bike.

Mr. Berkheiser – In reality, when you're standing there, unless you see them flying by faster than a motorcycle, you really can't tell the difference.

Director England – Correct.

Mr. Berkheiser – You can tell the difference on a Class 2 when their feet are on the handlebars relaxing. Personally, I think of what we would want, but then I also think of how we're going to enforce it. It's going to be the police officers who have to enforce it, if we even can. I would almost agree with Class 1 and 3, with a speed limit. A range isn't good, but I wrote down 13 mph because it stands out. I don't know how fast folks are actually going to ride, but you have areas where you have people walking and riding bikes on our pathways.

Director England – Before, you said 10-15 mph.

Mr. Berkheiser – That's not a speed limit you can post. You have to pick something to post it.

Ms. Schwartz – I think last time we said it was because we have posted different speed limits at different parks, so we would have to revamp that. The other item I was thinking about on this; it has been my experience that a lot of people who have these bikes have a Class 2 and have the ability. Are we saying that *ability* would not be used, or that you couldn't even have the throttle on there?

Director England – That would be up to the Committee's recommendation, but as it states right now, our paths are nonmotorized. So, if there's a throttle where you can put your feet up on the handlebars and ride it like a mini-bike, to me, that's a motorized vehicle. Again, enforcement will be the issue and unfortunately this will be when something bad happens. This would give the ability to issue a ticket.

Ms. Schwartz – That's true when it comes to enforcing, but the calls to enforce are going to be when someone sees a throttle on a bike. How many calls will we get when someone is unhappy about someone else riding? I'm concerned with overloading our police department, or your department.

Director England – We have e-bikes on the trails now. They exist, and we don't receive complaints about them now. I foresee it when something bad happens, but of course I'm afraid of the fact that if you're encouraging it, then there will be more out there, and then more phone calls will come in.

Mr. Berkheiser – We should probably be more in line with the County and State, that way it's consistent.

Director England – Class 1 is consistent with the Michigan Airline Trail, and other local communities.

Mr. Berkheiser – I struggle with the definition of their pathways. A linear paved trail – that's what we have?

Director England – Yes, and ours are considered nonmotorized. What I'm asking you to do is make a recommendation regarding the e-bikes, and then I can handle what needs to be changed with the attorneys. Then, the Township Board will have the ultimate say in what gets changed. I think that the definition of a nonmotorized path would need to be adjusted a little bit.

Mr. Berkheiser – That also means there are no golf carts on any pathways.

Director England – Correct, because it is a nonmotorized pathway.

Mr. Kearney – I think the ordinance specifically says, *motor-operated bicycles*.

Ms. Schwartz – It does, that's correct; *motor-operated bicycles and motor vehicles of any kind*. I do disagree with this. I think we're going to run into issues with the Class 2 mostly because they are so popular. That is what the majority of the bikes are, they're Class 2 where you can push in the throttle. I do think we have to make a distinction; they're not allowed to use it, or they're not allowed to have that Class 2 e-bike on there at all. I think we will run into problems because the majority of them do have the throttle.

Mr. Berkheiser – You can still pedal a Class 2 bike, right?

Ms. Schwartz – Right.

Mr. Berkheiser – So *you can't use it* is the way I would think of it.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – You can set it. There are buttons on there that either allow you to use throttle, or pedal assist.

Ms. Schwartz – So let's talk about when there is an accident. They might say they were just pedaling, but it's a Class 2 bike. So we're not resolving that issue. That's my concern.

Ms. Vecellio – That's why I wouldn't allow Class 2. I would just say you can only have Class 1, and if there is an accident, you know it's a Class 1 bike.

Ms. Schwartz – That is an issue because the majority of them do have both.

Mr. Kearney – The ones you buy at Costco are Class 2. This discussion is the same problem you have on the mountain biking side. You devolve into the definitions of classifications and it doesn't really fit well. You can't really identify a Class 1 from a Class 2 from a distance. You just see a motor-operated bicycle. At Kensington, I don't know if they technically allow it, but there are throttle operated bikes out there all the time; however, they do have a pretty strict 10 mph speed limit.

Ms. Kennedy – The Metro Parks are one of the only local ones that allow Class 1 and 2.

Mr. Kearney – And I don't know how many incidents they've had, but anytime I've been on their paved path, everyone gets along. If you're maintaining the 10 mph, it doesn't matter whether you're hitting a button or pedaling.

Ms. Schwartz – I lean toward just the speed limit myself, just because I think the majority of the bikes are sold with both.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Where do you get the classification sticker?

Director England – I don't know where you register them at. I think they are sold with their classification on it, and then if you reclassify it, I guess you have to identify it or maybe register with the State.

Ms. Kennedy – When I was reading through the State's paperwork on e-bikes, it just said that every bike had to have a classification sticker on it, and if you modify one to go into a new class, it had to have a sticker.

Director England – So they're relying on the bike owner.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – I've never even paid attention. I'll have to look at my bike and see if there is a classification sticker.

Mr. Berkheiser – So what is the State permit for Class 2?

Mr. Kearney – I think you're talking about for the natural surface trails.

Mr. Berkheiser – Yes, it says for paved trails and natural surface trails.

Mr. Kearney – I missed the Q&A on it, but I think it's intended for accessibility. So, if you're handicapped or have some legitimate reason ...

Mr. Berkheiser – Correct, that's what it says.

Mr. Kearney – I don't know the process for that.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is that like having a handicapped parking permit?

Mr. Kearney – I would think so. They would have some sort of decal or permit.

Mr. Berkheiser – So really it's just handicapped people that could have a Class 2 in a State Park system.

Mr. Kearney – That's my understanding. I don't know the threshold for issuing that permit.

Ms. Schwartz – For statistics, from 2018 to 2022, the sales in general quadrupled on these e-bikes, and 2019 show that 50% were Class 2, and that's the 2019 numbers. I'm trying to put out there what we're regulating; it's what people have, and the second it changes that we do allow some motors on our trails, I feel like that's all we're going to hear.

Director England – So are you against e-bikes all together, Krystal?

Ms. Schwartz – I am not. I am for having a speed limit.

Director England – To me, even with having a speed limit though, then you have a bike that has a motor on it. It's kind of a contradiction.

Ms. Schwartz – It is. I think this is where technology is heading and there are so many people that have them. I just don't think we're going to be able to keep them off the trails. I think it is one or the other; I think we allow the Class 1 and 2, or we don't have them.

Director England – Do the Class 1 have a motor or batter on them.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – They look the same.

Mr. Berkheiser – But you can't operate them unless you're pedaling.

Mr. Kearney – In all reality, the people that are biking to Hickory Glen to ride can ride just as fast as the e-bike is going.

Mr. Berkheiser – So the speed limit applies to all.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – It doesn't take much to get up to 20 mph on a bike.

Ms. Schwartz – You can't tell there is a throttle on my bike. It's a button and it's not obvious. It looks like a normal mountain bike. I feel like we are going to have a rule that we're not going to be able to enforce.

Mr. Berkheiser – The Board will decide, but I'm not opposed. What do you do now with a throttle bike, and then you have a golf cart?

Director England – I think that's why Krystal is saying that it has to be one way or the other.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – A bicycle is considered two wheels, or three wheels. That's a tricycle.

Director England – So are dirt bikes.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Well that's a gas motor, not "e" which is electric.

Chairperson Walker – They have dirt e-bikes. We have two of them for the horse shows and they are fast.

Ms. Ray – How fast are you allowed to pedal on a mountain bike?

Director England – We don't have anything set right now.

Mr. Kearney – Really fast.

Director England – I guess it's the consistency in the message to me. Our pathways are nonmotorized, so as soon as we make this change, you make an adjustment to the definition of our pathway system. Denise, I don't know if you were around when the Michigan Airline Trail decided this. I don't know if you have any input on the discussion and research they did that you could share of why they chose just Class 1.

Ms. Vecellio – I wasn't on the committee when they chose it so it was already there. I don't know that there have been any problems, but the Airline Trail is a straight, flat shot. That's a little different than our parks system where you have a lot of people and it's curving around.

Mr. Berkheiser – It's not just our parks. We're talking about up Commerce Road and all of those trails that we have.

Director England – Our nonmotorized trail system, yes.

Ms. Waterworth – If we allow the bikes, it's going to say "nonmotorized trail, except for e-bike"?

Director England – That's an attorney question. I don't know if that's muddying the waters, but that's one of the questions I will have to ask. If it's nonmotorized, then we have to adjust the language to address it.

Ms. Waterworth – I'll still go with if it says nonmotorized, it's no motors. There are roads and you have helmets to ride bikes. I know there's lots of cars, but it's actually safer and you don't get hit by someone pulling out of a subdivision when you're trying to ride your bike on the sidewalk.

Chairperson Walker – I think if you go e-bikes and you allow them, there has to be a speed limit, because then people will stretch the meaning of an e-bike.

Ms. Waterworth – Is Oakland County going to have Sheriffs on e-bikes to patrol?

Chairperson Walker – No.

Director England – No, and it will be hard to enforce in that instance. It's posted and enforceable.

Mr. Berkheiser – They do crash investigations with vehicles, so they can do it with bikes. Unless you're looking for a recommendation, maybe ask the attorney for his thoughts at your routine meeting. I don't know if the Sheriff is involved at that point.

Director England – I can ask her what she has seen.

Mr. Berkheiser – Everything we do, they always say post it or we can't enforce it.

Director England – We can't enforce it unless it is an ordinance as well.

Ms. Waterworth – If we say yes, our paved paths are going to be nonmotorized except for e-bikes, and I would agree that if we did allow e-bikes, we should have a speed limit. And, if we have a speed limit, why not have Class 3 included as well? Why exclude Class 3 if you're going to enforce a speed limit?

Vice Chairperson Petsch – How fast does a horse walk?

Ms. Ray – I don't know. That depends on the horse and breed. Some walk fast and some walk slow.

Chairperson Walker – And it depends on the event.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Would you say between 5 and 10 mph?

Ms. Ray – Probably.

Director England – They don't have a motor.

Ms. Schwartz – There's another item on here and I'm not sure if this is what Oakland County is saying; for the Class 3 there is a minimum age and a requirement for helmets.

Director England – I think that's State.

Ms. Waterworth – It's both State and Oakland County for Class 3, you have to be 14 or older and wear a helmet.

Mr. Berkheiser – That speed limit applies to nonmotorized bikes too.

Open discussion continued regarding safety on the trails for pedestrians and bikes.

Mr. Krueger – So are we supposed to develop the goals of what we're trying to do and then let the attorney figure out whether things are limited?

Director England – Yes. We want their opinion obviously; they're in the court system. And then the Sheriff can answer if they've had any incidents. Ultimately, this is a Township Board decision, so it's a recommendation at this point. I need to know what direction you'd like to go in so I can send people to do the right research.

Ms. Vecellio – Have we had people asking for it?

Director England – Just here. I haven't received phone calls.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is there somebody at Oakland County Parks you can talk to?

Director England – Yes.

Mr. Berkheiser – Ask if they've had issues, or how long they've had their policy in place, because they only allow Class 1. I would lean toward what the County and State have to be consistent, although the State appears to be changing it.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – I kind of agree with Krystal though. The majority of the bikes out there now are going to be Class 2, and we have to put the stipulation that it's 10 mph.

Director England – I think we have to remember that these are multiuse trails and we need to make the use of the trails enjoyable for all participants, and how any decision we make with this will affect other users.

Mr. Berkheiser – So why not have all classifications and put a speed limit on them.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – We don't have regular bikes. We sold all of our bikes and now we have all e-bikes.

Mr. Berkheiser – I'm not riding on the streets around here. That's crazy.

Director England – I will ask those questions and I'll bring this back to you.

Mr. Kearney – I think on the mountain bike trail side, it would be great if we could separate natural surface and paved trails.

Ms. Waterworth – It will be there. I keep pushing it and she knows.

Director England – That has always been the intention. I just read it and I wanted to get clarification since you were here.

Mr. Kearney – I think there could be a day where we will be pressured or interested in allowing Class 1 on our trail, but before we do that, we really have to open up emergency access, because the penalty of speed with someone who isn't skilled to handle it is pretty high, and that's the big fear with e-bikes.

Ms. Waterworth – I don't think you want e-bikes on that path.

Mr. Kearney – The trail does attract a lot of beginner riders and you see them go out there without helmets. The last thing I want is someone on an e-bike down there.

Director England – If anything comes up between now and our next meeting, you all know how to get ahold of me. I will get answers and bring them back.

ITEM 9: PARK RULES

Director England – This is a policy that you have seen. Most of it is following our ordinance. We've looked at State laws and Oakland County rules. Most of you have seen it and I hope you've gone through it. I made a few notes. #12, I just want to check with the attorneys that it's good, but I think this would address solicitation in the parks as addressed by Bob.

Mr. Berkheiser – I have a question on #1. They don't mention golf carts at all.

Director England – This is taken directly from our ordinance, so we can add that.

Mr. Berkheiser – It's part of what we're trying to address in general, and we have all of these trails that lead to the park.

On #9, we've talked about canopies and tents. What are the rules for baseball games, soccer, et cetera, when they're out there all day playing and they put up a 10x10 canopy?

Director England – We don't have any currently. I guess the idea behind this is that somebody can't go to Dodge Park, which we've had them do, stake a canopy down and hit a water line.

Mr. Berkheiser – The water line issues would be the same with a ball game or otherwise, but we said you're not allowed to use a canopy without prior approval. I'm talking about baseball games, they're there for tournaments, and people are putting those up to get out of the sun. Is that considered prior approval that we give that to the league to allow them to do it?

Director England – We have an agreement with the leagues so I think that would be appropriate.

Ms. Kennedy – This says larger than 10x10.

Mr. Berkheiser – So a 10x10 is okay but you still can't stake it.

Chairperson Walker – You can only use sandbags or water jugs.

Ms. Waterworth – #18 is about e-bikes; so that's something you were going to add?

Director England – Yes, this is just draft form. It's not in place; it hasn't been approved. Obviously we would need to make corrections there. I had questions about #14. I think we need to have discussion about that. #14c is:

A Commerce Township resident who would like to reserve a field which is owned, leased or controlled by the Township for neighborhood leagues, family reunions, school alumni or other special events, shall schedule with the Parks & Recreation Department by submitting an application for the field use.

These are not fields that are under agreement with leagues. If somebody called us and wanted to use an Interlakes field, we would send them to Interlakes to work that out with them. The soccer fields would fall into this, the tennis courts, pickleball courts or basketball courts, that type of thing. The reason I'm bringing this up is because with the pickleball courts, we have been stern about the fact that these are community use and we do not reserve them. It's first come, first served. We have rotation rules to allow people equal play. I think these statements contradict that, so I wanted to revisit this. We don't allow people to reserve it for personal use. It's only a first come, first served basis.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Can't we put a clause in there and select and pull those out? Not including our pickleball courts, et cetera. Something that is used on a daily basis by the community.

Director England – Sure.

Mr. Berkheiser – What if you have community people who want to come in and reserve it?

Director England – Focusing directly on the pickleball courts, we don't reserve them.

Mr. Berkheiser – What have they come in to try to reserve from you?

Director England – Scarlet's Smile; we get a lot of questions about reserving the park. People want to set up large tents, specifically on the soccer fields, to have family reunions. We get a lot of requests to reserve the Boy Scout pavilion for all different kinds of events.

Mr. Berkheiser – You're not set up to do reservation type stuff. Maybe at some point we would.

Director England – We could leave this piece out until it becomes ...

Mr. Berkheiser – Or put in there to call the office.

Director England – We just want to be consistent in our message. We need to set policy.

Mr. Berkheiser – You're better off saying that we don't do this than not mentioning it.

Director England – Correct. Agreed, that's what I'm thinking. Then, if a community use group like the Girl Scouts requests it, they fit the definition of a community use group. We can work with them.

Mr. Berkheiser – You could use sort of the same statement that we have with camping.

Director England – I wanted to make sure you guys are fine with changing that piece.

Mr. Berkheiser - #17.

Director England – That's in our ordinance.

Mr. Berkheiser – I thought we had catch and release somewhere.

Director England – I actually don't believe the ordinance says that, but I will double check it. Also, if it is an ordinance or a State law, I am going to reference that next to it.

Ms. Waterworth discussed the asterisk item at the end of the document, which states that the above mentioned policies do not apply during Township sponsored events. Director England would clarify which items that applies to.

Chairperson Walker – Isn't it a State law that you can't smoke in a park?

Director England – It's not State law. They're encouraging communities to develop those policies that don't allow smoking in recreational facilities, so in previous discussions, this is what group came up with, 100 feet. I think it's consistent with what Oakland County Parks has.

Mr. Berkheiser – Was there something about not smoking in large gatherings?

Director England – I don't know.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – Let's go back to #17 for a moment. At Long, Barb had mentioned that there were families fishing off the bridge, catching fish and taking them home to eat. It doesn't say anything about fishing in here. Is that supposed to be included in this, or if you have a fishing license, you can keep the fish.

Mr. Krueger – It says wild bird and animal.

Vice Chairperson Petsch – A fish isn't an animal.

Mr. Krueger – No, a fish is a fish.

Mr. Berkheiser – I said catch and release. We will evaluate what's in the ordinance.

Discussion of wildlife protection and fishing rules continued. After some debate and a Google search, Mr. Berkheiser noted that fish actually fall into one of the six general animal groups, so a fish is an animal.

Director England – I remember a lot of discussion here, and at the Township Board level with this specific ordinance, so we will revisit it to make sure the language is consistent.

ITEM 10: PARK EVENT UPDATES

Director England – As I said, our Easter event went great, so now we're onto our M-5K which is May 18th. I think we already have 22 people registered for that. We're getting all of the planning done for our pickleball tournaments and our concerts.

ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS

Ms. Schwartz – Just a reminder, we are at Hickory Glen Park next month at 6:00pm, and then here at 7:00pm.

Chairperson Walker – Weather pending. If there's snow ...

Director England – Rain or shine.

Chairperson Walker – That does not include snow.

Mr. Berkheiser – I would like us to start tracking the cleaning out of the brush at Dodge Park. No rush, but I like the half where you can see back there. The rest of it, you can't see. I noticed coming over tonight, there were a whole bunch of cars because soccer is starting.

Mr. Krueger – All those people were in the playground.

Mr. Berkheiser – Really?

Mr. Krueger – Yes, I drove through there.

Mr. Berkheiser – Is there a dog park update?

Director England – They are finalizing the construction documents right now. That should be able to go out to bid in the next few weeks.

Mr. Berkheiser – Okay, so April-ish.

The next Parks and Recreation Meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2024, at 7:00PM at the Township Hall, after 6:00PM park visits at Hickory Glen & Bicentennial.

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Petsch, supported by Krueger, to adjourn the meeting at 6:59pm.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Krystal Schwartz, Secretary