

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, February 5, 2024 at 6:00 pm
Garfield Township
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684
Ph: (231) 941-1620

AGENDA

ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Call Meeting to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call of Board Members
Election of Officers**

1. Public Comment

Public Comment Guidelines:

Any person shall be permitted to address a meeting of The Parks and Recreation Commission, which is required to be open to the public under the provision of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, as amended. (MCLA 15.261, et.seq.) Public Comment shall be carried out in accordance with the following Board Rules and Procedures: a.) any person wishing to address the Board is requested to state his or her name and address. b.) No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter, excluding time needed to answer Commissioner's questions. Where constrained by available time the Chairperson may limit the amount of time each person will be allowed to speak to (3) minutes. 1.) The Chairperson may at his or her own discretion, extend the amount of time any person is allowed to speak. 2.) Whenever a Group wishes to address a Committee, the Chairperson may require that the Group designate a spokesperson; the Chairperson shall control the amount of time the spokesperson shall be allowed to speak when constrained by available time.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 4, 2023

4. Correspondence

a. 2024-2028 Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Plan

5. Reports

a. Commissioner Reports
b. Staff Report / Updates
i. Parks Steward Report

6. Old Business

7. New Business

a. PD 2024-10 – 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report
b. Future Investments at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve – Discussion

8. Public Comment

9. Items for Next Agenda – April 1, 2024

10. Adjournment

Garfield Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting to individuals with disabilities upon the provision of reasonable advance notice to Garfield Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Garfield Township by writing or calling Lanie McManus, Clerk, Ph: (231) 941-1620.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 4, 2023**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: Art Bukowski, Chris DeGood, Andy Hoort, Chris Remy, Denise Schmuckal, William Scott, and Fern Spence

Staff Present: Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon, Parks Steward Sean Kehoe

Call to Order: DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited by all in attendance.

1. Public Comment (6:01)

Phillip Leete of Silver Valley Lane and representing Silver Lake Farms Homeowners Association commented on the TART trail as relates to their neighborhood.

Daniel Sarya of Silver Farms Lane commented in support of the proposed Buffalo Ridge Trail expansion.

Sid Van Slyke of Silver Farms Lane commented on the proposed trail expansion.

Rick Ellery of Silver Farms Lane expressed his support for a proposed trail expansion in the Buffalo Ridge area.

Ed Lemieur of Silver Farms Lane commented on a proposed trail expansion

Mark Bernier of Silver Valley Lane commented on the TART trail.

Doug Spence of Old Incochee Farm Trail commented on the TART trail.

Mark Wilson of Silver Hills Lane commented on the proposed trail expansion.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:15)

Schmuckal moved and Remy seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Schmuckal, Remy, Bukowski, Hoort, Scott, Spence, DeGood

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 2, 2023 (6:16)

Hoort moved and Bukowski seconded to approve the minutes of October 2, 2023.

Yeas: Hoort, Bukowski, Remy, Schmuckal, Scott, Spence, DeGood

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:16)

None

5. Reports (6:16)**a. Commissioner Reports**

Schmuckal commented that some Township ARPA funds will be allocated to Parks projects.

DeGood stated the Planning Commission continues to work on the Master Plan and that the Draft Master Plan is available online for public review.

b. Staff Report/Updates**i. Parks Steward Report (6:18)**

Kehoe submitted his report in writing. He added that a foot bridge was replaced at River East Recreation Area and that Phase 3 of projects at River East, including bathrooms, is moving forward.

Hannon explained that the Township received their final score from the Michigan DNR for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application for the Commons Natural Area accessible trail.

The Trust Fund board will soon meet to recommend which projects receive funding. The mountain bike group did a work bee and flagged areas where new signage should be placed.

6. Old Business

None

7. New Business**a. Buffalo Ridge Trail Phase #3 – Discussion (6:33)**

Tim Hughes of Silver Valley Lane talked about a possible Buffalo Ridge trail expansion in the Township. He has spoken with several potential partners to get the trail moving forward. Amy Hartzog, a trail planner with TART, spoke to the Commissioners and supports the Buffalo Ridge Trail extension. She emphasized the easy access from this neighborhood and other nearby neighborhoods to the trail network that this extension would provide. Commissioners asked questions and discussed the proposed trail extension. DeGood described which projects that Commissioners had already recommended for the 2024 budget and stated that the trail expansion would need to be added to a future budget year. He gave the interested parties the steps to follow to help with the proposed budgeting of this project.

b. PD 2023-136 – Parks and Recreation Plan Implementation Matrix (7:19)

Staff drafted this matrix for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to help implement goals and objectives of the Plan. Commissioners discussed the matrix and agreed it was a very useful tool.

8. Public Comment (7:33)

None

- 9. Items for Next Agenda – February 5, 2023 (7:34)**
 - a. 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report

- 10. Adjournment**
DeGood adjourned the meeting at 7:34pm.

Chris Remy, Secretary
Garfield Township Parks & Recreation
Commission
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684



1213 W. Civic Center Dr.
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone: 231-922-4818
<http://www.gtcountymi.gov/parks>

January 18, 2024

(Sent VIA EMAIL to John Sych at jsych@garfield-twp.com)

John Sych
Planning Director
Garfield Township
3848 Veterans Dr
Traverse City, MI 49684

Re: Submission of 2024-2028 Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Plan

Dear John:

The Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation department is pleased to submit the 2024-2028 Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Plan. The Plan is being submitted to Garfield Township to ensure cooperation and coordination of planning efforts. The plan can be found at <https://www.gtcountymi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21655/2024-2028-GTC-Parks-Recreation-Plan>.

The Plan was adopted by the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners on January 3, 2024. A certified resolution of the adoption is included in the Plan.

If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact me at (231) 922-4511, or at jchase@gtcountymi.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Chase".

John Chase
Director of Parks and Recreation



Charter Township of Garfield

Parks Report

Silver Lake Recreation Area

We have blocked off the parking lot at the south end of the multi-purpose field to save on snow removal.

Steve Duell mowed an area behind the tennis courts that has made for a nice sledding hill.

The suspect from the vehicle larcenies was arrested this week in Chicago after running from Livonia PD the day before. It sounds like he was wanted in multiple states for similar crimes. Park security cameras helped to identify.

Three new kiosk posters of park and trails have been ordered.

Commons

We have a meeting planned for mid-February with some of the lead tenants at Copper Ridge regarding trail head options that suit everyone.

River East

Staff is working with Jennifer at Gourdie-Fraser to move the bathroom addition to the park along as soon as the weather breaks.

Boardman Valley

When the weather breaks, we will be starting to replace some rotting guard rail along the trail.

Miller Creek

The heavy snow limited access to the trails but the thawing is starting to bring the hikers and dog walkers back.

Kid's Creek

We are looking at replacing the split rail fence at the east end of the pond when the weather breaks as the current one is rotting and falling apart.

A member of the Brook Trout Coalition (who is also a Conservation Resource Alliance biologist) reached out to us to see what volunteer jobs they might be able to help with around the trout pond.

Buffalo Ridge Trail

We have heard from the Conservation Resource Alliance, and we will be receiving some tribal funds to replant some of the trees that didn't make it through the drought early last summer. We just have to go out and identify which trees need replacing.

We are looking at ordering a brush bar to assist with the removal of the autumn olive bushes along the trail.

Additional Information

We have created a winter kiosk poster regarding animal tracks that will hopefully get park users to become a little more interactive with the wildlife that uses the park by trying to identify some of the critters. We are having one printed for each park right now. Shortly we will be working on a summer kiosk poster so that we can rotate outdoor information to our users.

Submitted January 30, 2024

Derek Morton

Sean Kehoe

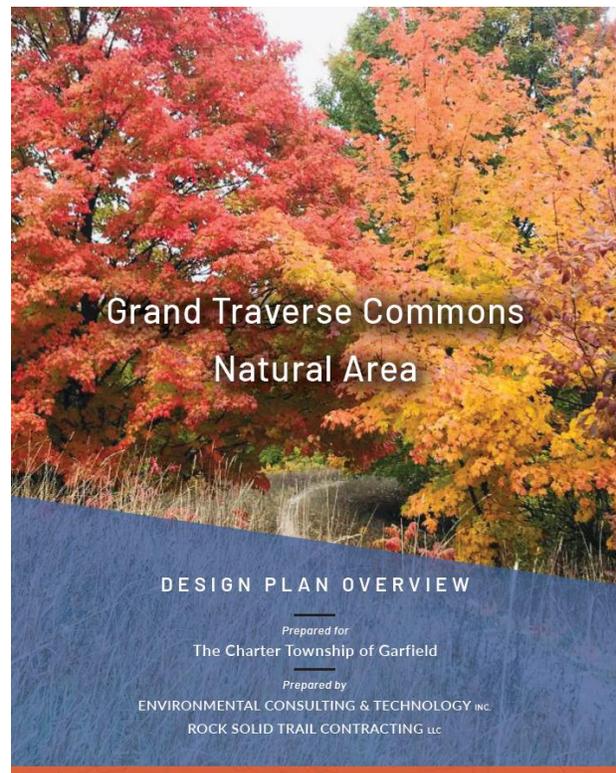
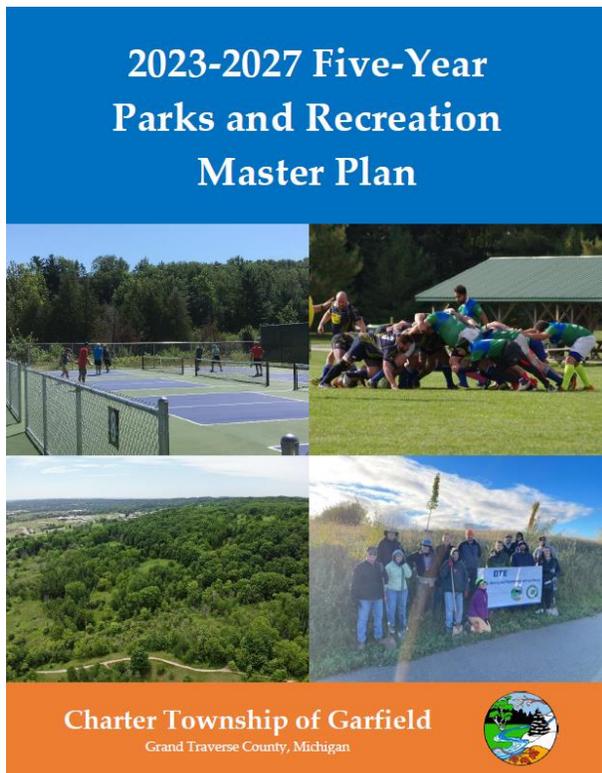
 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2024-10			
Prepared:	January 29, 2024	Pages:	5
Meeting:	February 5, 2024 Parks and Recreation Commission	Attachments:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report		

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT:

The Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission is required to submit an annual written report to the Township Board concerning its operations and the status of parks and recreation activities.

PARKS PLANNING ACTIVITIES:

2023-2027 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan – The Township Board adopted the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan on January 10, 2023 and this Plan was approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in February 2023. The Plan allows the Township to maintain its eligibility for MDNR grant programs including the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF). The Parks and Recreation Commission and Staff worked on an update to this Plan beginning in Fall 2022. The Plan also includes the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, which was formulated throughout 2022. Public feedback for the updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan was primarily gathered from the Design Plan process and the 2021 Park User Survey.



The 2023-2027 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which includes the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, was adopted in 2023

PARKLANDS OVERVIEW:**GRAND TRAVERSE COMMONS NATURAL AREA:**

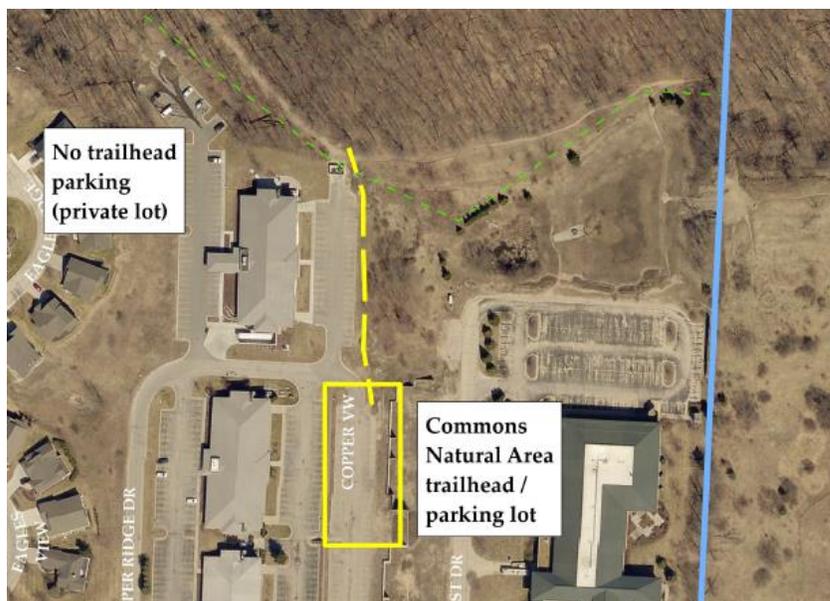
MNRTF Grant Application – In March 2023, the Township submitted an MNRTF grant application to the MDNR for \$300,000 for a trail improvement project at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The application is for a 1.25-mile universally accessible (UA) trail loop as identified in the Commons Natural Area Design Plan. The Township was notified in December 2023 that this application was recommended for funding by the MNRTF Board of Trustees. A formal grant offer will be made after the grant funds are appropriated by the State Legislature. The project is anticipated to begin in 2024.

Wetland Delineation – The trail loop proposed in the MNRTF grant application has some sections which cross wetlands and streams. In anticipation of future trail work, the Township Board approved a bid from Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) to conduct a wetland delineation of this part of the site. The wetland delineation is helpful in anticipating any impacts of wetland and stream crossings and for future permitting needs through the State. ECT completed the wetland delineation and provided a full report to the Township in 2023.

Boundary Survey – Also in anticipation of this future trail work, the Township Board approved a bid from Gourdie-Fraser to conduct a boundary survey of the site to identify where work can be performed and to ensure that the neighboring property owners' sites are respected. Gourdie-Fraser completed the boundary survey in early 2024.

Mountain Biking – During the process of developing the Commons Natural Area Design Plan, current and potential conflicts were identified between hiking and mountain biking trails. In January 2023, the Parks and Recreation Commission agreed to create a subcommittee focused on issues related to mountain biking at the Commons Natural Area. The subcommittee met several times throughout 2023. Some topics that the subcommittee covered included the following:

- *Copper Ridge Trailhead* – The Copper Ridge trailhead entrance was moved to a new temporary location to mitigate conflicts with traffic for the newest Copper Ridge building. Staff and Copper Ridge representatives are also discussing potential locations and designs for a permanent trailhead as envisioned in the Commons Natural Area Design Plan.



New location of temporary Copper Ridge trailhead

- *501(c)(3) and Donations* – The Township and the Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association (NMMBA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding fundraising for mountain biking at the Commons Natural Area. This agreement allows for continuation of a forum for discussing issues with the subcommittee while enabling a mechanism for fundraising.
- *Signage* – The subcommittee reviewed desired locations for signage in the mountain biking area. Staff ordered the signs in fall 2023 and they are scheduled to be installed in spring 2024.

RIVER EAST RECREATION AREA:

Dog Park – Development of amenities at River East Recreation Area continued in 2023. The new dog park was constructed and is scheduled to open in spring 2024 once the grass has been established. The next phase of improvements at River East is anticipated to include bathrooms and a paved trail loop.

Development of this park has been identified as a major near-term priority. Further discussion and public engagement will determine the direction and scope of any future improvements at this park.



The dog park at River East Recreation Area was constructed in 2023

Bridge Repair – Staff made necessary repairs to an existing footbridge on the nature trails (seen picture to the right), as a part of regular maintenance of the park.

Future projects at River East Recreation Area will include some improvements and repairs to the nature trails. Potential projects include completing a loop along the northern part of the park and repairing trails along the bank of the Boardman-Ottaway River to address the issue of erosion.



SILVER LAKE RECREATION AREA (SLRA):

Pavilion and Multi-Purpose Athletic Field Reservations – The SLRA pavilions continue to be a popular amenity for reservations. The yearly amount collected in reservation fees is shown in the chart to the right. Garfield Township collected \$5,900 in reservation fees in 2023, and the past three years have seen the most revenue from reservations in the past decade. Also, the baseball field continues to be used for tee-ball in the summer months.



Dog Park – The dog park remains a popular amenity with dog owners from across the region. The Facebook group “East Silver Lake Dog Park” has almost 1,100 members as of this writing.

BOARDMAN VALLEY NATURE PRESERVE (BVNP):

This park continues to be a popular destination for the community, especially the pickleball courts. The Township and Traverse Area Pickleball Association (TAPA) have an agreement for TAPA to manage the online reservation system for the pickleball courts. An update to this agreement was adopted in 2023 by TAPA and the Township Board, which adjusted the reservation times.

KIDS CREEK PARK:

A major tree planting was undertaken at Buffalo Ridge Trail and Kids Creek Park in conjunction with the Conservation Resource Alliance. Several volunteers including SEEDS, Gourdie-Fraser, and others joined in this effort to plant 3,200 trees. Oleson Pond continues to be stocked with fish in the spring. The pond is frequented by many users for fishing throughout the spring and summer.

MILLER CREEK NATURE RESERVE:

No major projects occurred at this park in 2023, but the park and hiking trail system continues to be well-used, especially by the nearby residents.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETINGS:

The Parks and Recreation Commission held nine meetings in 2023 on the dates listed below. The Parks and Recreation Commission has adopted a bi-monthly regular meeting schedule to ensure that they meet at least six times annually. This scheduling format will continue in 2024.

- Tuesday January 3, 2023
- Monday February 6, 2023
- Monday March 6, 2023
- Monday April 3, 2023
- Monday May 1, 2023
- Monday June 5, 2023
- Monday August 7, 2023
- Monday October 2, 2023
- Monday December 4, 2023

PARKLAND ORDINANCE:

The Parkland Ordinance (Township Ordinance No. 50) provides for operating rules and regulations for, and to apply to, all Parkland under the jurisdiction of the Charter Township of Garfield. The most recent amendment to the Parkland Ordinance was adopted on June 23, 2020. No amendments to this Ordinance were considered or adopted in 2023.

HUNTING ON TOWNSHIP PARKLAND:

Hunting is currently allowed at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve, Miller Creek Nature Reserve, and River East Recreation Area with a Township permit during hunting season. The Township issued 25 hunting permits for 15 different people in 2023.

Year	Number of Hunting Permits	Number of Hunters
2023	25	15
2022	25	16
2021	27	15
2020	18	12

OTHER:

Volunteer Activities – Many volunteers have assisted the Township throughout 2023 on projects including tree planting, invasive species removal, and general cleanup. The Township appreciates everybody who generously volunteers their time to help keep the parks clean and maintained for the community!

As mentioned above, volunteers helped with planting 3,200 trees at Buffalo Ridge Trail and Kids Creek Park. Other volunteer projects have included the following:

- Staff volunteers from 4Front worked on a cleanup of the Commons Natural Area for Indigenous Peoples' Day. Staff assisted in covering up graffiti, picking up trash, and hand pruning the trails.
- TART Trails and the Buffalo Ridge Trail Volunteer Group helped to remove the invasive autumn olive plants near the Buffalo Ridge Trail.

Equipment – In November and December 2023, the Township Board approved the purchases of a trailer and a utility vehicle. The additional equipment allows Staff to operate efficiently in maintaining the parks and respond quickly to emergency situations.

CONCLUSION:

Looking ahead to 2024, Staff is anticipating receiving a formal grant offer for the Commons Natural Area accessible trail project once grant funds are appropriated by the State Legislature sometime in 2024, after which the project can move forward. Bathrooms at River East Recreation Area are anticipated in spring 2024 after which focus can turn to the next major project at that park.

The 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, will continue to guide the annual list of parks priority projects as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission and approved by the Township Board of Trustees.

ACTION REQUESTED:

That the Parks and Recreation Commission review this report and request any changes prior to directing Staff to forward it to the Board of Trustees. If the Commissioners are satisfied with this report, then the following motion is suggested:

THAT THE Parks and Recreation Commission 2023 Annual Report as presented in Planning Department Report 2024-10 BE RECEIVED and FILED and FORWARDED to the Township Board.