

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 3, 2023**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

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

Absent and Excused: Andy Hoort

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

Call to Order: Chair DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

1. Public Comment (6:01)

None

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:01)

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

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

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 6, 2023 (6:01)

Spence moved and Bukowski seconded to approve the minutes of March 6, 2023.

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

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:02)

Members of the mountain bike subcommittee for the Commons Natural Area prepared a report providing background information of the mountain bike trails, current issues, and recommended solutions. Hannon indicated that this report would be discussed under item 6.b.

5. Reports (6:02)

a. Commissioner Reports

Planning Commission – DeGood stated the Planning Commission is beginning work on the Master Plan.

b. Staff Report/Updates**i. Parks Steward Report**

Kehoe said Parks staff are building cages for a tree planting event. The countertop for the men's bathroom at Silver Lake Recreation Area will be arriving soon. Staff are looking into fish stocking for the pond at Kids Creek Park. Staff also did a walk through of the mountain bike area at the Commons Natural Area with mountain bike subcommittee members.

6. Old Business**a. PD 2023-35 – Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Grants Update and Next Steps (6:07)**

Hannon explained that the MNRTF grant application has been submitted and adjustments were made to the proposed trail loop after Staff walked the route. Later this year, the Michigan DNR may do a site visit and provide a preliminary score for the grant application. The next steps will include getting a wetland delineation, a boundary survey, and some site preparation. EGLE may also have some suggestions for artesian wells, stream crossings, and permitting. Old underground valves pertaining to the State Hospital reservoir system were found and must be dealt with to ensure safety of the future trail loop. Staff will consult with the Township Engineer regarding the underground valves.

Spence moved and Remy seconded TO RECOMMEND that the Township Board seek a wetland delineation and boundary survey of the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area and consider seeking bids for professional services to conduct these tasks.

*Yeas: Spence, Remy, Bukowski, Schmuckal, Scott, DeGood
Nays: None*

b. PD 2023-36 – Mountain Bike Subcommittee Update (6:20)

Hannon provided the details on the two subcommittee meetings in March. On March 15, the subcommittee discussed fundraising and scheduled a walkthrough of the park site. On March 22, the subcommittee and Staff walked the mountain bike area of the site to better understand the current state of the trail system and issues including unsafe crossings, rebuilding of unsafe features, and unclear signage. The subcommittee proposes to re-route some existing trails and avoid conflicts with the main hiking trail, remove unsafe trails, improve the "Up-Trail," and install signs throughout the mountain bike area. In April, the subcommittee plans to do another walkthrough of the park site, determine any specific changes to be made to the trail area, and schedule a work bee event for May.

Commissioners stated that any 501(c)(3) or fundraising efforts need to be brought to the Board for approval before going ahead.

Schmuckal moved and Bukowski seconded that Staff forward to the Board the information from the mountain bike subcommittee and the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding proposed 501(c)(3) and fundraising efforts, proposed short-term clean up and changes to the mountain bike area, and a recommendation that the Commons Natural Area be officially opened for cycling activity.

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

Nays: None

7. New Business

a. Park Rentals and Fees – Discussion (7:03)

Kehoe reviewed some recent requests from members of the community for larger events proposed to be held at Township parks. He asked for guidance on charging groups to cover the wear and tear on the parks. Historically, the Township has not charged nonprofits for events.

Commissioners discussed potentially charging a venue fee and debated what factors may influence the fee including the number of people at the event, how much of the park is being used, and parking. Commissioners discussed requiring users to have a security deposit to cover potential damage to equipment such as sprinkler heads. Staff will bring this item back to the next meeting including a potential draft fee schedule.

8. Public Comment (7:22)

None

9. Items for Next Agenda – May 1, 2023 (7:22)

Items for the next agenda will include continued discussion on proposed park rental and venue fee policies, and a mountain bike subcommittee update.

10. Adjournment

DeGood adjourned the meeting at 7:22 pm.



Chris Remy, Secretary
Garfield Township Parks & Recreation
Commission
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