

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

Monday, February 7, 2022 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

Roll Call of Board Members

Introduction of Lynn Fricke – New Commission Member

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 6, 2021

4. Correspondence

5. Reports

- a. Commissioner Reports
- b. Staff Report / Updates
 - i. Parks Steward Report
 - ii. Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Update
 - iii. Michigan State University Urban Planning Practicum – Update
- c. Grand Traverse Conservation District Report

6. Old Business

7. New Business

- a. Fees for River East Recreation Area Pavilion
- b. PD-2022-10 – Parks and Recreation Commission 2021 Annual Report

8. Public Comment

9. Items for Next Agenda – April 4, 2022

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 6, 2021**

Call to Order: Chair DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Roll Call of Commission Members:

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

Absent and Excused: Denise Schmuckal

Staff Present: Park Steward Derek Morton, Park Steward Sean Kehoe, and Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon

1. Public Comment (6:04)

None

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:05)

DeGood explained that his company, Beckett & Raeder, responded to the RFP for the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan (Item 5.b.i) and stated that if Beckett & Raeder were selected, he would not be involved.

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

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

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of the Meeting Minutes – October 4, 2021 (6:06)

Hoort moved and Bukowski seconded to approve the minutes of October 4, 2021.

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

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:07)

None

5. Reports (6:07)

a. Commissioner Reports (6:07)

None

b. Staff Report / Updates (6:07)

Morton gave an overview of his report and activities in several of the Township parks, including the following:

- *Silver Lake Recreation Area* – Staff activities have included winterizing, mulching, monitoring for encampments, and planting a tree in memory of Bill Mouser. The rugby club has indicated they will remove their posts currently on the field. Staff is in contact with Apple Fence for a gate for the well house.
- *River East Recreation Area* – Arborvitaes were planted along the parking lot. Other activities included winterizing and insulating the water pump, monitoring for encampments, and a formal hearing with Goodwill Inn. Commissioners discussed the situation with encampments and Goodwill Inn, expressing general support for Staff and acknowledging how the situation is challenging for everyone involved.
- *Boardman Valley Nature Preserve* – Pickleball nets and portable toilets are stored for the winter. Norm Fred is donating a trash can for the kayak launch area. Norm Fred and Staff are also looking to install a plaque for Noah, a person who formerly experienced homelessness and who has helped with cleanups in the area.

Spence moved and Remy seconded to support a plaque for Noah.

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

Nays: None

- *Miller Creek Nature Reserve* – Some basic cleanup has been performed but generally this park has been in good shape.
- *Kids Creek Park* – Posts for the United Way “Born Learning” stations are installed, signs were posted at the ends of the Buffalo Ridge Trail for keeping dogs on leashes, and Kohl’s has fixed an erosion issue near the trailhead on their site.

Hannon stated the proposed project for the Michigan State University Urban Planning Practicum course, an inventory and analysis of Township trails and sidewalks, was selected. Hannon said the first meeting at MSU is January 12 and he will update the Parks and Recreation Commission at the next meeting.

- Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Update (6:29)**

Hannon provided an update on this process. Four companies responded to the RFP: Beckett & Raeder, Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT), MCSA Group, Inc., and OHM Advisors. An ad hoc committee of Township Staff and Parks and Recreation Commissioners reviewed the proposals and conducted an interview with each firm. Staff is currently conducting reference checks. The committee will meet again this week and provide a recommendation to the Township Board for the meeting on December 14, 2021.

c. Grand Traverse Conservation District Report (6:31)

This report was included in Commissioner packets. Morton also provided an update on the current role of the Conservation District. Morton and Kehoe are handling day-to-day parks tasks, while the Conservation District offers support on major tasks and contributes their expertise as needed.

6. Old Business (6:33)

None

7. New Business (6:33)**a. 2022 Meeting Dates (6:33)**

Commissioners reviewed the proposed meeting dates for 2022.

Remy moved and Bukowski seconded to accept the proposed meeting dates.

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

Nays: None

b. Certificate of Appreciation – William Scott (6:35)

DeGood presented the Certificate of Appreciation to Scott and thanked him for his contributions to the Commission, which were also affirmed by the other Commissioners. Commissioners also asked Staff to continue to include Scott in the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan process.

8. Public Comment (6:38)

None

9. Items for Next Agenda (6:38)

Hannon gave an overview of items for the next agenda including the 2021 Annual Report, updates on the MSU Urban Planning Practicum course and the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan process, and any other items that may come up.

10. Adjournment (6:41)

Spence moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 pm.

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



Charter Township of Garfield Parks Report

Silver Lake Recreation Area

Snowmobilers caught by off-duty CPO. Warning given.

Status quo at the park. Minor off-road issues.

Dog Park still a hit through winter.

Building more picnic tables for River East in garage.

Commons

No camping to date.

Monitoring trails for graffiti and damages.

Consultant Group (ECT) chosen for Commons Development.

Planning Department working on final contract.

Working on Volunteer Days for Summer Months.

River East

Pavilion should be completed week of Jan. 24th.

Building picnic tables & working on rental prices for 2022.

Monitoring for camps. Nothing to date.

New trail users are fat tire biking and cross-country skiing. Cleared a few trees off trails after windstorm.

Boardman Valley

Monitoring for encampments. Nothing to date found.

Cleared down trees off trails.

Contact with snow removal contractor about damage to parking bumpers near Pickleball Courts. Still no call back.

Miller Creek

Removed more down trees on trails.

No encampments to date.

Cleaned up some small graffiti.

Kid's Creek

Monitored trails for down trees. All clear.

Installed posts for “Dogs on Leash” for Buffalo Ridge Trail.

Contact

Started a new email (Parks@garfield-twp.com) that is linked to our staff’s emails & website. Hope to be more connected with public over concerns, questions, and trail reporting.

Spring Newsletter looking for volunteer groups to get signed up for 2022 work bees.

Submitted January, 24th, 2022

Derek Morton

Sean Kehoe

BACKGROUND:

Our newly constructed pavilion at River East Recreation Area will be completed by the rental season of 2022. The River East Pavilion is similar in size to the Dog Park Pavilion at Silver Lake (16 x 32). There will be at least four 8-foot picnic tables under the pavilion and possibly another couple outside that area. With portable toilets also available, it is believed this pavilion will be rented often, much like the pavilions at SLRA. Therefore: a rental fee must be established.

ACTION REQUIRED:

After discussion, and comparing the size and rental fee to SLRA's Pavilions, then the following motion is suggested:

MOTION TO RECOMMEND to the Township Board to accept the Rental Fee for the River East Recreation Area's Pavilion of:

\$20 Resident \$35 Non-resident 4-Hour Period

\$40 Resident \$50 Non-resident All Day Rental

Attachment:

SLRA Rental Fees




Charter Township of Garfield

Grand Traverse County

Parks & Recreation User Fees

Silver Lake Recreation Area

| | 4-Hour | | All Day | |
|----------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Res | Non Res | Res | Non Res |
| Playground Pavilion | \$15 | \$20 | \$25 | \$35 |
| Dog Park Pavilion | \$20 | \$35 | \$40 | \$50 |
| Bill's Pavilion | \$25 | \$40 | \$45 | \$60 |
| Multi-Purpose Fields | \$50 | \$65 | \$85 | \$100 |

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
|  Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2022-10 | | |
| Prepared: | February 1, 2022 | Pages: 6 |
| Meeting: | February 7, 2022 Parks and Recreation Commission | Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Subject: | Parks and Recreation Commission 2021 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.

PARKLANDS OVERVIEW:**SILVER LAKE RECREATION AREA (SLRA):**

Dog Park: The dog park continues to be an extremely popular amenity, drawing dog owners from around the region. The Facebook group “East Silver Lake Dog Park” includes almost 1,000 members as of this writing, up from around 800 members at last year’s report. The group allows people to coordinate visits, helps with organizing meetups, and enables sharing news about the dog park.

Pavilion and Multi-Purpose Athletic Field Reservations:

The pavilions at SLRA are a popular Township amenity. The total number of reservations in the past four years are shown in the table to the right. There were 151 total reservations in 2021, totaling \$6,430 in reservation fees. The baseball field continues to be used for tee-ball in the summer months.

| Year | No. of Reservations |
|------|---------------------|
| 2021 | 151 |
| 2020 | 113 |
| 2019 | 75 |
| 2018 | 101 |

Well House: Commissioners had previously identified a project to construct a well house surrounding the existing well. The well house was built in late 2020, but there were some issues in acquiring the gate for the well house. Staff anticipates acquiring the gate in 2022 to complete this project.

Long-Term Rental Agreement: The Parks and Recreation Commission also reviewed the proposed Long-Term Rental Agreement for the multi-purpose field and baseball diamond, which have seen an increase in demand for extended rentals from local clubs and associations. The policy covers the terms of renting the multi-purpose field and baseball diamond for events, including obligations for renters regarding parking, trash, liability, insurance, and more. Commissioners recommended the Agreement form to the Township Board, which approved it at their April 13, 2021 meeting.

KIDS CREEK PARK:

The Parks and Recreation Commission initially identified a priority project for installing a solar aeration system at Oleson Pond. In early 2021, Commissioners had a broader discussion about the pond including questions about how often the pond is used, whether the pond should be left in its current state or returned to nature, and whether aeration would help the overall health of the pond or if dredging would be needed.

After discussion and Staff research, it was found that aeration would not have much benefit for the pond, and that dredging should be explored. Research into dredging costs found varied estimates based on if the spoils were transported offsite or repurposed onsite and if grant funds were available. The solar aeration system project was put on hold, and the Commissioners identified a 2022 priority project for dredging and fish restocking of Oleson Pond. Staff will seek out grant funds to help cover the cost of this project.

GRAND TRAVERSE COMMONS NATURAL AREA:

Removal of Deed Restriction: Part of the Commons Natural Area, the “Commons 100” had been subject to a deed restriction limiting activities to hiking and cross-country skiing only and prohibiting bicycling. Public Act 159 of 2020 was signed into law by Governor Whitmer on September 17, 2020 to authorize the transfer of the deed to the “Commons 100” property and to facilitate removal of this deed restriction. Execution of the deed transfer and removal of the deed restriction was still required to be completed as a State administrative function; this process was finalized in September 2021.

Design Plan: Once the deed restriction was removed, the Township was able to focus on preparations for the Design Plan process. Staff and Commissioners worked on an Existing Conditions Report describing the current state of the Commons Natural Area. The Existing Conditions Report outlines the topography, natural features, trails, and access points, and describes some current challenges including the rogue trail construction, graffiti, and encampments (see pictures below).



Left: rogue trail; Right: sign stating, “Stay on Designated Trails”



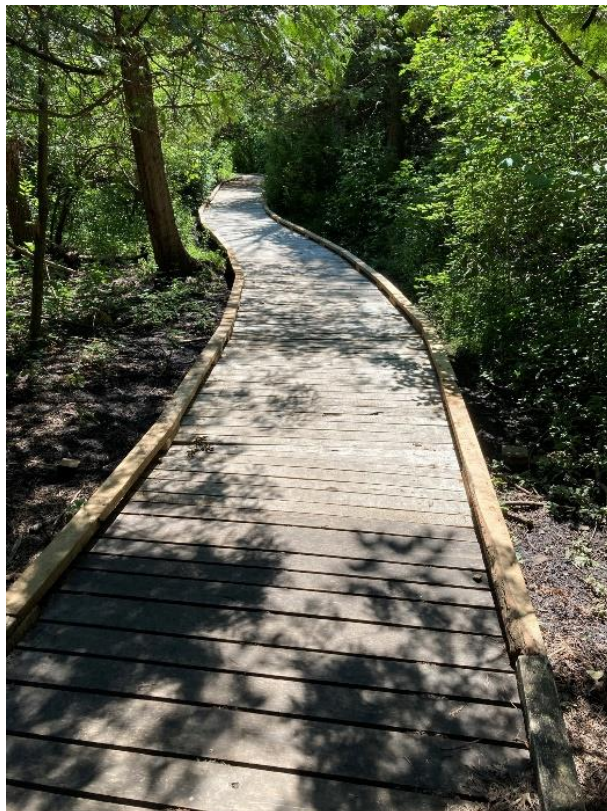
Cameras and signs were installed (left) to help cut down on graffiti spreading from beyond the Hippie Tree to other parts of the Commons Natural Area (right)

On October 4, 2021, the Township issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) for park planning and design services to find a consultant to help with technical expertise for this design plan. Four bids were received, and a subcommittee of Staff and Commissioners interviewed all four firms and made a recommendation to the Township Board. In December 2021, the Township Board selected the recommended consultant of Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT). The design plan is identified as a priority project for 2022 and is slated to begin in early 2022.

BOARDMAN VALLEY NATURE PRESERVE (BVNP):

In 2020, Parks and Recreation Commissioners recommended the former tennis courts be replaced with an additional parking lot that would use the old tennis court foundation as a base. The tennis court area was cleared in 2020 with parking lot construction completed in 2021.

A new boardwalk along the Peace Trail was constructed in 2021 at the end of the crushed gravel trail and heading south. This boardwalk carries the trail over a low-lying area, frequently muddy area and helps to protect the surrounding land and soil by keeping people on the trail.



New boardwalk along the Peace Trail in Boardman Valley Nature Preserve

RIVER EAST RECREATION AREA:

Development of River East Recreation Area began in 2021 including a new gravel parking area and sign, and construction was started on a new pavilion. Commissioners identified further improvements to this park, including dog parks, fencing, and other general site improvements, as a 2022 high priority project. Development of this park has been identified as a key near-term priority. Construction on the pavilion is anticipated to be completed in early 2022, after which the pavilion will be made available for rental. Fees for the pavilion rental are anticipated to be established in early 2022.



Park development at River East Recreation Area included a pavilion (left) and trash enclosure (right)

The Township Engineer has refined previous conceptual designs for the site and developed a preliminary Opinion of Probable Construction Cost (OPCC), which divides the park development projects into three phases. Further discussion and public engagement in 2022 will determine the direction and scope of any future improvements at this park.

MILLER CREEK NATURE RESERVE:

Although no major improvement projects occurred in 2022, the park and hiking trail system continues to be well-used, especially by nearby residents. In fall 2021, the Planning Commission approved a Special Use Permit for an apartment complex behind the Baymont Inn on US 31 on a site along the western edge of the park. One condition of the approval is to provide for a pedestrian connection from the apartments to the park. Staff will keep aware of the best opportunity to make this connection happen and determine what the Township may need to do to extend trails on its property.

BOARDMAN RIVER CLEAN SWEEP:

Staff has dealt with the issue of cleaning up after encampments throughout 2021. The encampments have been seen in many Township parks although the highest concentration has been behind the Goodwill Inn along the Boardman River. The situation has been challenging for everyone involved, given the need to acknowledge the difficulties faced by people experiencing homelessness, the need for community service agencies to provide services to people facing that situation, and the need for the Township to maintain the cleanliness of the Township parks and safety for park users.

The Boardman River Clean Sweep organization brings together volunteers to clean up trash from the river and surrounding parks. This organization has been led by Norm Fred and his countless volunteer groups. As of May 2021, total trash removed was over 80,000 pounds. The organization partnered with Garfield Township several times in 2021 to clean up trash along the river and in River East Recreation Area. The Township recognized Norm Fred by voting to name a trail in River East Recreation Area after him and by nominating him for the Frank Purvis Stewardship Award which he received in November 2021 during the annual banquet for the Grand Traverse County Chapter of the Michigan Townships Association.



Before and after trash cleanup event with Boardman River Clean Sweep volunteers

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETINGS:

The Parks and Recreation Commission met six times in 2021 on the dates listed below. The Commission has adopted a bi-monthly meeting schedule since 2020 to ensure meeting at least six times per year. This schedule will continue in 2022.

- February 1, 2021
- April 5, 2021
- June 7, 2021
- August 2, 2021
- October 4, 2021
- December 6, 2021

2018-2023 FIVE-YEAR PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN:

The 2018-2023 Charter Township of Garfield Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved by the DNR in early 2018 making the Township eligible for various forms of grant funding through 2023. The most recent amendment to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was adopted by the Township Board on May 14, 2019. No amendments to this Plan were completed in 2021.

PARKLAND ORDINANCE (TOWNSHIP ORDINANCE NO. 50):

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 2021.

HUNTING ON TOWNSHIP PARKLAND:

The Township issued 27 hunting permits for 15 different people in 2021. 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.

| Year | No. of Hunting Permits | No. of Hunters |
|------|------------------------|----------------|
| 2021 | 27 | 15 |
| 2020 | 18 | 12 |

OTHER:

Park User Survey: Commissioners and Staff created a park user survey allow for feedback from residents on the park system and to gain insight into how people use the parks. The survey was publicized in the summer Township newsletter, mailed out with summer tax bills, and received coverage from local media. A total of 175 responses were received. Users indicated Silver Lake Recreation Area, the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area, and Boardman Valley Nature Preserve as the most visited parks. The most used amenities and activities were hiking trails, paved trails, playground, other sports, pavilions, and dog park. Other comments offered critiques and suggestions but in general respondents were pleased with the parks.

Buffalo Ridge Trail – “Born Learning” Stations: United Way of Northwest Michigan presented to Parks and Recreation Commissioners about placing signage along the Buffalo Ridge Trail near the West YMCA to promote activities for parents and children to do together which foster appreciation of the outdoors, and that United Way would propose to maintain these signs. Commissioners recommended approval to the Township Board, which then granted approval. These signs were installed by the end of 2021.

Boardman Lake Loop Trail: Garfield Township continues to work with the City of Traverse City, Grand Traverse County, and TART to complete the final leg of this trail. In 2021, the first remaining phase from 14th Street in Traverse City to Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) University Center in the Township was completed. Construction on the final phase from University Center to Logan's Landing and Medalie Park has already begun and is expected to be completed in 2022.

CONCLUSION:

Looking ahead, major projects in 2022 will be the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, further development of the River East Recreation Area, and more. The Township will continue working to meet the goals and objectives from the 2018-2023 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan and to implement the projects as recommended by Commissioners in the Parks Capital Improvements Program (Parks CIP) and as 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 Planning Department Report 2022-10 BE RECEIVED and FILED
and FORWARDED to the Township Board.