

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 7, 2025**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: Jessica Brutzman, Art Bukowski, Andy Hoort, Chris Remy, Denise Schmuckal, and Chris DeGood

Absent and Excused: William Scott

Staff Present: Parks Steward Derek Morton, Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon

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

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited by all in attendance.

1. Public Comment (6:03)

None

2. Review and Approval of the Amended Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:03)

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

Yeas: Schmuckal, Hoort, Brutzman, Bukowski, Remy, DeGood

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 3, 2025 (6:04)

Hannon pointed out the header should indicate the date as February 3, 2025 and not December 2, 2024. DeGood asked to add a sentence at the end of Item 5.a. Commissioner Reports to read as follows: "DeGood stated that he was elected the new Chair of the Planning Commission."

Bukowski moved and Brutzman seconded to approve the minutes of February 3, 2025 as amended.

Yeas: Bukowski, Brutzman, Hoort, Remy, Schmuckal, DeGood

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:05)

None

5. Reports (6:05)

a. Commissioner Reports

Brutzman introduced herself to the Commission. Schmuckal reported on several items being discussed at the Township Board level including water usage discussions, website upgrades, and hiring a new assessor.

b. Staff Report/Updates**i. Parks Steward Report (6:06)**

Morton provided his report in writing and provided an overview of parks activities. Silver Lake Recreation Area security cameras are being updated. The wood duck boxes are being utilized and more may be installed. The River East Recreation Area playground equipment was delivered, and more parking will likely be needed. MDNR biologists have been contacted for bank restoration and fish habitat at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve; Staff are also talking to MDNR about dredging the pond at Kids Creek Park and stocking it with fish. Trees have been replanted on the Buffalo Ridge Trail and the River East Recreation Area bathrooms will now be a block building instead of prefabricated.

ii. Mountain Biking Subcommittee – Update

Hannon indicated he met with one of the subcommittee members and a consultant for Munson Medical Center for discussion about the potential for a new location near Munson Lot Q for the North Long Lake Road trailhead. This includes researching the potential for using Munson Lot Q as a temporary trailhead. The mountain biking community is also reviewing long-term connections from the Commons Natural Area to Hickory Hills.

iii. PD 2025-26 – Commons Natural Area Accessible Trail Grant Project – Update

The Township applied for a \$300,000 grant for an accessible trail at Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area and was recommended for funding by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees. The funds were appropriated in October 2024. The Township and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) fully executed the Project Agreement in November 2024. Township Engineer Jennifer Graham presented an overview of the plans for the project. She shared the potential trail design options for portions of the trail in which achieving a fully accessible design of 5% slope or less would be difficult. She indicated that proposed switchbacks and boardwalks along wetlands make the universally accessible trail almost double in cost. Staff are currently working to schedule a meeting with MDNR to ask for feedback on whether the trail could be designed to ADA accessibility standards, rather than full universal accessibility.

Commissioners asked questions on the project and discussed the options. All agreed that limited disturbance of the wetlands was a priority. They asked Staff to see if MDNR would consider the ADA accessibility standards at this time, with the full universal access in a future phase. Graham also provided an update on the progress of the proposed bike path connecting to the Boardman Lake Loop.

6. New Business**a. PD 2025-27 – Garfield Township CIP Committee – Overview (7:07)**

At their March 25, 2025 meeting, the Township Board voted to establish a Capital Improvements Planning (CIP) Committee. This committee will be tasked with reviewing and finalizing the Township CIP, which will be used as information to budget for Township projects. Hannon added that it will offer a long-term visualizing and budgeting tool for the township. The CIP Committee will have their first meeting in the next few weeks. The Parks and Recreation Commission will review the priority parks projects at their next meeting to recommend for inclusion in the CIP.

b. PD 2025-28 – EGLE Community Energy Management Program Grant – Discussion (7:16)

The Township recently received a grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The intent of the program is to offer “grants for communities to improve energy management and accelerate the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy for local governments and tribes.” The Township has about \$8,000 of the remaining funding available to spend from the grant. Potentially eligible projects could include energy efficiency upgrades such as lighting fixture replacements, HVAC upgrades, building insulation improvements, door and window retrofits, etc. The Township Manager is looking for ideas by the end of April for the potential use of these funds. Such ideas could be for anywhere in the Township including facilities, parks, other assets, etc.

Commissioners wanted to see upgrades to the bathroom heating at Silver Lake Recreation Area. Morton will investigate how far the \$8,000 will go and how much would be needed to finish such a project. He will provide additional details for the Township Board.

Schmuckal moved and Bukowski seconded to recommend the Township Board use the \$8,000 in grant funds to upgrade the heating system at the Silver Lake Recreation Area.

*Yeas: Schmuckal, Bukowski, Brutzman, Hoort, Remy, DeGood
Nays: None*

c. Lighting at Silver Lake Recreation Area – Discussion (7:22)

Morton brought up the possibility of lighting a walking path at Silver Lake Recreation Area. Schmuckal commented that there is a Township Board resolution in place which established the park hours of operation of dawn to dusk. This resolution would likely need to be amended if the Township were to consider allowing lighting within some of the parks. Schmuckal suggested that Staff review the resolution and determine what changes would be needed and how the extra cost of lighting would be paid. The consideration of lighting in the parks would also encompass changes to the Parks and Recreation Ordinance.

8. **Public Comment (7:34)**

None

9. **Items for Next Agenda – June 2, 2025 (7:34)**

Items for the next agenda include follow-up regarding the Commons Natural Area accessible trail project and the meeting with MDNR, a review of potential policies for park lighting and park hours, and follow-up discussion after the initial meeting of the Township CIP Committee.

10. **Adjournment**

DeGood moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Remy', written over a horizontal line.

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