

Laketon Township Planning Commission
March 13, 2019 Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Don Nellis called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

- Present: Cindy Zaagman, Paul Hoppa, Don Nellis, DJ Hilson, Dave Mieras, June Earhart and Eric Anderson
- Absent & Excused: None
- Also present: Zoning Administrator Theresa Maner, Recording Secretary Veronica West, Twp. Supervisor Kim Arter and about 8 members of the public in the audience.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Paul Hoppa moved to approve the agenda as presented. Dave Mieras supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Cindy Zaagman moved to approve the minutes as presented for February 13, 2019. June Earhart supported the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: **NONE**

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Planning & Zoning News – March 2019 issue has not arrived yet – will distribute next month
- MTA 2019 Conference April 1-4, 2019 in Grand Rapids – reminder that this training opportunity is available.
- APAMI onsite Workshop Program – ZA Theresa Maner is waiting to hear back on dates/times/topics they are available for.
- Solar Energy – training opportunity is available and is put on by MSU Extension
- MTA Intro to Planning & Zoning - training opportunity available

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Capital Improvement Plan: Review & Recommendation to Board of Trustees – Don Nellis covered several items that were a bit different that what had been discussed at the worksession. The group discussed the following changes & corrections from the draft presented: move Cemetery Vault Project up to 2019 from 2020, add Mullally Park cement pad, walkway and roof on pavilion to 2020 with a cost estimate of \$10,000, move Mullally Park basketball and tennis courts up from 2021 to 2020 and also include pickleball courts with this item, correct description in 2022 from Board Room Electrics to Board Room Electronics. DJ Hilson moved to recommend to the Laketon Township Board of Trustees the 5 yr Capital Improvement Plan with the changes discussed. Dave Mieras supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote. Staff was directed to make the changes and get the document to the Board for inclusion on their meeting agenda.
- Review Park and Rec Plan – Don Nellis noted this document is actually a chapter out of the Master Plan, and noted the Master Plan document is online with this chapter as it was approved in 2014 before the changes and edits that “are the work in progress” on the document in front of you. The group went page by page on the draft making necessary edits:
 - Pg. 3, add in disc golf
 - Pg. 4, get updated pictures of the Block House now that it has been refurbished
 - Pg. 7, removed “Recreation Advisory Focus Group” and change to “Community Survey”
 - Remove the highlight on the word “accessibility” throughout the document
 - Pg. 8, correct the text box location description for Green Creek Park
 - Pg. 11, remove reference to tennis court resurfacing as it was a “band aid” project that has not held up, delete the word “new” in front of parking lot for disc golf and delete the redundant reference to the picnic pavilion
 - Pg. 12 -15, get updated pictures of new playground installed at Mullally Park in 2016, correct the text boxes with correct picture captions for what part of the park the amenities are located in

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There was extensive discussion about Horton Park, due to the grant project that has been delayed and is anticipated to occur and be completed by the end of this summer. The current description of Horton Park in the plan is not what will be there at the end of the construction. Discussed including the list of planned updates and a description of the grant project with a site plan diagram until the project is completed and new photos can be obtained to include in this document. Don Nellis asked Kim Arter to give more information on this project and Kim noted the grant project must be completed by the end of this year, there is an opportunity to request an extension. She also talked about the delay from the DEQ Fenner's Ditch project from last summer and the long permitting process from the MDEQ and that we are still waiting on the permits from the Army Corps of Engineers. The project can move forward with the land work, but the work in the lake/water for the boat launch cannot start until the Army Corp of Engineer permits are approved.

- Pg. 16, reword the second to last paragraph to remove reference to a former survey question regarding acquiring parkland as that was not a question on the current survey
- Pg. 16, add a hyphen to Reeths – Puffer and changes the Safe Routes to School path destination to Auble Rd from Whitehall Rd as the MCRC will not allow it to go all the way out to Whitehall Rd due to safety concerns with the Whitehall Rd/W. Giles Rd intersection.
- Pg. 17, remove the sentence that says the Laketon Township trail system has linked with the regional trail system as that plan did not come to fruition.

Also discussed inserting the Capital Improvement Plan once approved by the Board of Trustees, updating the Master Plan table of contents, cleaning up page numbers, insertion of updated trail maps that are in development, inserting the survey results and input gathered from the planned public open house.

- Park & Rec Plan Survey: Results – Don Nellis asked ZA Theresa Maner to present the survey results. Theresa noted the survey was taken by 100 people, and 82% of them were township residents. Also discussed the responses relating to the outdoor activities participated in, noting that walking/hiking was number 1, biking was number 2 and boating was number 3. Discussed keeping in mind there were only 100 people responding to this survey. Discussed in depth the final question that asked people to write in what they would like to see updated in the Township Parks. There were 23 comments about pickleball which was one of the most requested things, along with many comments about walking/biking trails, more playgrounds and updated tennis courts. Other comments touched on the football fields, boat launch, docks, park maintenance, better landscaping/grass, security, bathrooms, disc golf courses, and dog parks. These results and comments will be inserted into the Park & Rec Plan. Don Nellis opened the floor for audience members that wanted to talk about pickleball courts. A group of about 7 people was represented by Darrell VanFossan, a Laketon Township resident, that talked about the growing popularity and participation in the sport of pickleball and noted it is mostly known as a game for older people and senior citizens, it is gaining with the younger people and being taught in gym classes around West Michigan Schools. The differences between pickleball and tennis were discussed and Mr. VanFossan distributed a diagram of the dimensions of a pickleball court. He talked about the large number of people/groups that play at a variety of indoor places around the county and talked about the lack of outdoor venues in Muskegon County, noting that there are some in Whitehall Township and Roosevelt Park, and outside the county in Spring Lake and Grand Haven. Discussed the problems with multi-use tennis/pickleball courts and how it is difficult to play there with much time spent chasing balls over the large open area, whereas courts like the ones in Grand Haven are individually fenced off and keep balls contained to the small court area. Don Nellis noted it is the township goal to get DNR grant funding for the large cost park updates, including pickleball courts. He added it would be nice to find out the cost per court to construct dedicated for outdoor pickleball courts.
- Schedule Public Park & Rec Open House – Discussion covered a couple of potential dates, and brainstorming of ideas of how to get the word out about the open house; including the following possibilities: Reeths-Puffer school newsletters, church bulletins, letter invitations to organized sports groups (youth football, baseball/softball, soccer etc) social media blasts, email and the Township Website, the Reeths-Puffer Rocket Review newspaper, a handout/event flyer, and enlisting help from the school and the Walker Library to share news of the open house event with their groups etc. Cindy Zaagman noted the Township is holding the annual Clean up Day and the Tire Recycling events which are both being held on Saturday May 4, 2019 (one at Mullally Park and one at the Township Hall) which would be a good opportunity to pass out flyers about the open house as all those coming are residents of the township. The question was asked if having a quorum of the PC present would be an issue with regard to the open meetings act. Eric Anderson noted it should not be a problem so long as it was remembered by everyone that it is an open house to collect comment from the public and no discussion or decisions could be made. After discussion potential dates & times and methods of “getting the word out”, Eric Anderson moved to hold the Park and Rec Plan Open House on Wednesday May 15, 2019 from 6 pm to 8pm. DJ Hilson supported the motion and the motion carried by voice vote. Discussion also touched on the format of the open house and how to set up the room, discussed having maps of the

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parks available, the Capital Improvement Plan available and easels/stations where residents could write down ideas of park amenities they'd like to see added or upgraded, also discussed inviting the Township Board of Trustees to the open house as well.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Review the Master Plan – Don Nellis began the conversation noting that he is not sure the group is ready to start discussions on the master plan and requested that everyone review the document thoroughly and be ready to discuss/review at the next meeting. He added that about 90% of the document should be fine with only about 10% needing to be updated. He added it is his goal to update the Park & Rec plan, and the rest of the Master Plan and hold one public hearing that the law requires for the document as a whole. Don Nellis moved to table discussion on the Master Plan review until the next meeting. DJ Hilson supported the motion. The motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Janne Millett of 827 N. Peterson Rd – stated she is having flooding issues and has been dealing with the road commission (MCRC) for about 2 years. She added that the home at 907 N Peterson Rd has 3 sump pumps pumping water from their basement into the roadside ditch which the MCRC has said they cannot do. She wanted to know why they did not have to comply and she is being flooded out, and has water in her basement. Ms. Millett stated she received a letter from the MCRC 2/28/2019 that says they are going to do some ditch work in the spring but she is flooding now, she stated she is about ready to call Channel 13 News. Several PC members urged Ms. Millett to attend a MCRC meeting and work with them to gain compliance to try to help alleviate the water issues.

BOARD REPORTS:

- Board of Trustees – Cindy Zaagman reported the board approved the Clean Up Day date of Saturday May 4th, 2019 at Laketon Township Hall and it is the same day as one of the County Tire Recycling Events that will take place at Mullally Park. She also noted it is budget month and they have budget meetings scheduled.
- ZBA – Eric Anderson noted that there has be no ZBA activity.

ADJOURN: Don Nellis moved to adjourn the meeting. DJ Hilson supported the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:58 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Veronica West
Recording Secretary