

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD  
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
December 7, 2020**

**Roll Call of Commission Members:**

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

Absent: James Guilmet

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

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

- 1. Public Comment:**  
None.

- 2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest**  
*Scott moved and Schmuckal seconded to approve the agenda as presented.*

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

- 3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 5, 2020**  
*Bukowski moved and Scott seconded to approve the minutes of October 5, 2020.*

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

- 4. Correspondence**

- a. Silver Lake Recreation Area Dog Park**

A letter from Michelle Sands expressing interest in having the dog park open in the winter evenings. Currently, the Silver Lake Recreation Area, including the dog park, closes at sunset.

In response to the letter from Michelle Sands, the Board decided to add the subject of extending dog park hours to the agenda for discussion.

*Schmuckal moved and Bukowski seconded to amend the agenda to add Silver Lake Recreation Area Dog Park – Discussion under New Business*

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

**5. Reports****a. Commissioner Reports**

None.

**b. Staff Report/Updates**

Sych mentioned that the Township Board is considering recording Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. Commissioners discussed the idea of recording. Commissioners agreed recording would be good for transparency but because the Commission is a recommending body only, it is not necessary.

Morton reported that initial work has started on the well house at Silver Lake Recreation Area. Work on converting the old tennis courts to a parking lot at the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve has also started.

**c. Grand Traverse Conservation District Report**

Tom Vitale reported on maintenance activities including trail clearings and cleanup of graffiti. The boardwalk extension at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve has been moved to 2021.

**6. Old Business**

None

**7. New Business****a. PD 2020-157 – Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Proposed Planning Process**

Sych reviewed the planning process for the Commons Natural Area planned for 2021. A combination of Township staff and a park planning and design consultant will lead the process. Commissioners mentioned that strong public engagement is important and offered several recommendations including utilizing students from Michigan State University (MSU) or Central Michigan University (CMU), gaining media coverage to bolster public input, evaluating watershed and waterways along with forestry management as part of the process, and reaching out to the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (mParks) to identify possible consultants.

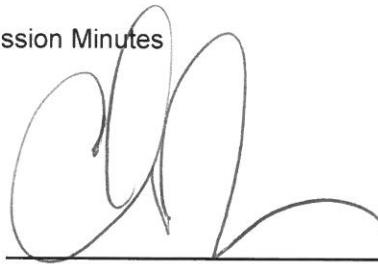
Sych also mentioned the creation of an advisory committee of community stakeholders to assist in the process, including the Parks and Recreation Commission. Several commissioners expressed interest in serving on the advisory group for this project.

*Bukowski moved and Spence seconded to appoint Chris Remy and Bill Scott to the advisory committee to the Commons Natural Area Planning Process*

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

*Nays: None*

- b. River East Recreation Area 2021 Project - Discussion**  
Hannon reviewed the initial plans for the development of River East. Commissioners would like to see a site plan for the project at its next meeting on February 1, 2021 so that the project can commence early in 2021. Tom Vitale noted that access to the Boardman River on the site is not sustainable and should include some improvement such as a fishing platform.
  - c. Park PDFs for Township Website and Handouts - Discussion**  
Hannon reviewed a sample of a new Park PDF containing maps, images, and description. Bukowski suggested looking at maps from Long Lake Township and the Grand Traverse Conservation District as examples.
  - d. 2021 Meeting Dates**  
*Bukowski moved and Schmuckal seconded to set the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting dates for 2021*  
  
*Yeas: Schmuckal, Scott, Spence, Remy, Bukowski, DeGood*  
*Nays: None*
  - e. Commissioner James Guilmet – Certificate of Appreciation**  
Commissioners recognized James Guilmet for his service on the Parks and Recreation Commission for the past three years. Guilmet is not seeking another term.
  - f. Silver Lake Recreation Area Dog Park - Discussion**  
Commissioners discussed the possibility of extending the dog park hours beyond sunset. Commissioners recognized how the dog park is a well-used and well-liked facility, however, they were concerned about the need to be equitable to other parks users (walkers, etc.) and that keeping the park open beyond sunset would create safety issues and other problems. Commissioners appreciated the input and directed Staff to respond with a written letter to Ms. Sands.
- 8. Public Comment**  
None.
- 9. Item for Next Agenda – February 1, 2021**  
2020 Annual Report and a site plan for River East will be on the upcoming agenda for February 1, 2021.
- 10. Adjournment**  
*Schmuckal moved and Bukowski seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:24pm.*  
  
*Yeas: Schmuckal, Scott, Spence, Remy, Bukowski, DeGood*  
*Nays: None*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Remy', is positioned above a horizontal line.

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