

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
VIRTUAL PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, December 7, 2020 at 6:00 pm
Garfield Township
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684
Ph: (231) 941-1620

The Monday, December 7, 2020, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting at 6:00 pm will be held virtually due to the revised Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Emergency Order dated November 18, 2020. The Open Meetings Act, as amended by Public Act 228 of 2020, allows virtual meetings to be held for any reason through December 31, 2020.

You are invited to join the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting on December 7, 2020 at 6:00 pm. Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86050172461>

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +19292056099,,86050172461# or +13017158592,,86050172461#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799

Webinar ID: 860 5017 2461

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86050172461>

AGENDA

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call Meeting to Order

Roll Call of Board Members

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 – October 5, 2020

4. Correspondence

5. Reports

- a. Commissioner Reports
- b. Staff Report / Updates
- c. Grand Traverse Conservation District Report

6. Old Business

7. New Business

- a. PD-2020-157 – Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Proposed Planning Process
- b. River East Recreation Area 2021 Project – Discussion
- c. Park PDFs for Township Website and Handouts – Discussion
- d. 2021 Meeting Dates
- e. Commissioner James Guilmet – Certificate of Appreciation

8. Public Comment

9. Items for Next Agenda – February 1, 2021

- a. 2020 Annual Report

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, or TDD #922-4412.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 5, 2020**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: William Scott, Denise Schmuckal, James Guilmet, Chris DeGood (6:08), Chris Remy, and Art Bukowski

Absent and Excused: Fern Spence

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

1. **Call to Order:** Secretary Remy called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.
2. **Public Comment:**
Rob Larrea, on behalf of the Traverse Area Pickleball Association, asked the board to delay making a decision about the tennis courts at the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve so that TAPA could gather money to make them into pickleball courts.
3. **Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest**
Schmuckal moved and Bukowski seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Schmuckal, Bukowski, Guilmet, Remy, Scott
Nays: None
4. **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 10, 2020**
Bukowski moved and Schmuckal seconded to approve the minutes of August 10, 2020.
Yeas: Bukowski, Schmuckal, Remy, Guilmet, Scott
Nays: None
5. **Correspondence**
 - a. **Public Act 159 of 2020 (Commons 100)**
Hannon said that the State Legislature has passed this Public Act to allow the existing deed restriction to be removed on the Commons 100 property and broaden the uses allowed there. Although this has gone through the State Legislature, Hannon said the actual deed transfer will still need to be executed administratively.
5. **Reports**
 - a. **Commissioner Reports**
Remy said he enjoyed walking at the Silver Lake Recreation area but thought that more trail signage was needed.

b. Staff Report/Updates

Parks Steward Derek Morton reported that there are signage upgrades planned for the Silver Lake Recreation Area. He reported on projects and maintenance at all parks. A fall planting will occur with trees donated through a DTE program at Silver Lake. Downed trees were removed from the Commons area and a phased development has been fleshed out for the River East property. Morton met with contractors at the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve about the tennis court demolition and he is gathering snow removal bids.

c. Grand Traverse Conservation District Report

Tom Vitale reported that they have been working on Silver Lake signage and looking at small projects for fall completion.

6. Old Business

None

7. New Business**a. PD 2020-135 – BVNP Tennis Court Transformation 2020 Project**

Parks Steward Derek Morton gathered estimates for the crack seal and asphalt layer to turn the tennis courts into much needed additional parking at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve. The additional parking would make about 30 new parking spaces. Board members discussed the proposed parking area considering the public comment. Board members expressed concerns with the water table and adding more parking demand to the park. Rob Larrea spoke once again on behalf of TAPA.

Bukowski moved and Schmuckal seconded to recommend to the township board to accept the bid from Molon for a project at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve to replace the existing old tennis courts with an additional parking lot area.

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

Nays: None

b. PD-2020-136 –Parks CIP – Revised Proposed 2021 Projects

Hannon said that this is a follow up to the August Park Project CIP discussion. Some new information was presented that could potentially amend the priority list. After discussion, board members revised the amount allocated to River East for 2021 to make the bottom line total \$166,000 to be recommended to the Township Board.

Remy moved and Scott seconded to recommend to the Township Board the revised list of priority Parks and Recreation projects for 2021 in the amount of \$166,000.

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

8. Public Comment

Rob Larrea said he appreciated the work that Morton put into the BVNP bid. He asked that the board start over with the collaboration between Garfield and TAPA. Township Supervisor Chuck Korn appreciated the board and their consideration of all things in front of them.

Hannon reminded the Commissioners that anyone with a term expiring at the end of the year will need to apply by the deadline for reappointment on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

9. Item for Next Agenda – December 7, 2020

Hannon said that in December, the Commission would revisit the River East project and the Commons 100 area and approve 2021 meeting dates.

10. Adjournment

Schmuckal moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:51pm.

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

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

To Whom It May Concern:

Please take this as a formal request from the attendees and regulars of the Silver Lake Recreation Area Dog Park to install lighting at the dog park for the winter months' usage. We suggest timed hours to reduce usage costs.

Many people, not only Garfield Township residents, but all of Grand Traverse County residents, use this large and wonderful dog park. On any given weekend at any time, you can see as many as 20 dogs, or more, with their owners, using the park and socializing (not only the dogs, but people too!). I have met and talked with people from as far away as Grand Rapids who discovered this large dog park.


These winter months, when it gets dark at 5:30, it is difficult for those that work during the day, to get home, get their dog, and try to make it to the park before dark. I myself usually go every day but during the week I can't now with the early dark times. I have met so many people at different times at this dog park. We hope to only continue its use.

It's a beautiful recreation area, and can only be enhanced by this improvement. We, dog lovers and park lovers, hope you consider our request!

On behalf of everyone I've spoken to at the dog park,

Sincerely,

Michelle Sands and the East Silver Lake Dog Park humans and dogs!

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2020-157		
Prepared:	December 1, 2020	Pages: 3
Meeting:	December 7, 2020 Parks and Rec Commission	Attachments: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Proposed Planning Process	

BACKGROUND AND UPDATE:

At the May 4, 2020 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, Staff provided information on the issues pertaining to the Commons 100 deed restriction. This restriction does not allow bicycling on the parcel and needs to be removed before any trail design planning can occur.

The first step in removing the deed restriction was legislative action to authorize the transfer of the deed of the Commons 100 from Garfield Township to the State of Michigan and asking the State to reissue it to the Township with the deed restriction language removed. Senator Wayne Schmidt introduced Senate Bill 595 on October 22, 2019. Thanks to his ongoing leadership, SB 595 passed out of the Senate unanimously on February 18, 2020.

The bill was then referred to the House, which passed their bill on September 9, 2020 with substitute (H-1) acknowledging a slight change in wording. The Senate passed the bill including the House substitute on September 10, 2020. Governor Whitmer signed the bill into law as Public Act 159 of 2020 on September 17, 2020. Staff would like to acknowledge local trail advocate and former legislative aide, Gabe Schneider, for his role this year in keeping momentum moving forward on this legislation.

Although Public Act 159 of 2020 has been signed into law, this only authorizes the transfer of the deed to occur. Execution of this deed transfer needs to be finalized administratively with the State Department of Technology, Management, and Budget. Staff is working with State officials on this matter.



PLANNING CONTEXT:

Removing this deed restriction is only a preliminary step to conduct a community-based planning process. Because the Commons Natural Area is a place treasured by residents from around the region, this planning process will need to engage the broader community.

While there has never been a formally adopted plan for design of the Commons Natural Area, there have been some discussions with community groups over the past few years and some planning documents have acknowledged the site as a multi-use recreational asset, including the following:

- 2010 Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan
- 2014 Forest Management Plan for Garfield Township Commons Property
- 2016 Trails Focus Group
- 2017 Grand Traverse Commons Development Regulations
- 2018 Garfield Township Master Plan
- 2018-2023 Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Commons Natural Area site also has several easements over it including conservation easements and historic preservation easements, which may limit what improvements can be done. Also, so far this year there have been several large rainstorms which have contributed to erosion issues on the site. The planning process for the Commons Natural Area will need to account for these existing conditions.

The planning process also needs to account for different user groups. Hiking, biking, skiing (cross-country and backcountry), snowshoeing, and dog walking are common uses on the Commons site. Mountain biking is a historically established use at the Commons, as bicyclists have been using trails there since at least the 1980s. There is a relatively extensive and well-established informal network of mountain bike trails within the Commons. However, some of these trails, including some newer “rogue” trails, have exacerbated the erosion issue on the site, and there is concern among users regarding potential pedestrian-bicycle conflicts.

PROPOSED PLANNING PROCESS:

With the background information in mind, Staff proposes to work on the following tasks over the next few months to help advance the planning process for the Commons Natural Area:

Convene Partnership of Key Property Owners

Staff recommends beginning the process by engaging key property owners and forming a partnership for this project. The Township owns most of the property on which the park is located, but other entities own additional parcels in and adjacent to the park. Other key property owners include the following:

- Traverse City / Garfield Township Recreational Authority
- Sub Area 3 LLC / The Minervini Group LLC
- Copper Ridge Professional Center / Retail Marketplace
- Munson Medical Center

Existing Conditions Report

Staff intends to gather information on current conditions at the Commons as part of an Existing Conditions Report which would be included in the final plan document. Staff would review prior planning efforts and documents described in the Planning Context above, as well as other information relevant to the Commons site. For example, there are conservation and historical easements on the site which may limit what can be done on certain portions of the site. There have also been ongoing erosion issues which were exacerbated by the heavy rains earlier this year, and this report may help identify key environmentally sensitive areas.

Establish Advisory Group

Staff recommends forming an advisory group to help guide the planning process and provide key feedback to Staff and consultant team members. The advisory group will include representatives of the different user groups and stakeholders to provide different viewpoints. This group will also include representatives from boards and commissions with a stake in the Commons. Potential advisory group membership includes the following areas:

- Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission
- Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission
- Traverse City / Garfield Township Recreational Authority
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Grand Traverse Conservation District
- User groups (hikers, mountain bikers, cross-country skiers, etc.)
- Neighbors / nearby residents

The advisory group will help guide the planning process including identifying goals, identifying resources to conduct the process, designating milestones and timelines, assisting with public engagement, and other key tasks. One immediate task will be to help guide the creation and publication of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for park design services.

Issue RFP for Park Design Services

Staff intends to use feedback from the advisory group to issue an RFP for park design services. This RFP would seek out a park design professional firm to guide the design of the Commons. The firm would use input from the advisory group and from public engagement efforts to create conceptual park designs. This would likely take the form of different scenarios for which the public could provide input. The firm would also then help to determine the preferred scenario with potential projects and an implementation schedule. Staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission would use any potential project information from the final plan to inform the Parks Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for 2021 and beyond.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff is seeking feedback from the Parks and Recreation Commission on the proposed planning process and the immediate next steps. If the Parks and Recreation Commission feels comfortable with the process as presented here, then Commissioners may also consider nominating a representative to serve on the advisory group for the project.

Attachments:

1. Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area – Proposed Planning Process



Charter Township of Garfield

Grand Traverse County

3848 VETERANS DRIVE
TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN 49684
PH: (231) 941-1620 • FAX: (231) 941-1588

Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Proposed Planning Process

- Lead Staff: John Sych, AICP, Planning Director
Stephen Hannon, AICP, Deputy Planning Director
Derek Morton, Parks Steward
- Assistance: A professional consultant will be secured by the Township through an RFP process. The consultant will participate in public engagement activities and develop park plans from the design scenario stage to the construction design stage.
- Project Timeline: Winter – Summer, 2021

1. Convene Partnership of Key Property Owners

- Identified Key Property Owners
 - Garfield Township
 - Traverse City/Garfield Township Recreation Authority
 - Sub Area 3 LLC/The Minervini Group LLC
 - Munson Medical Center
 - Copper Ridge
- Develop Partnership Agreement to accommodate Planning Process

2. Prepare Existing Conditions Report

- Community Scan
 - Population Trends
 - Socio-Economic Conditions
 - Nearby Parks/Trails
- Site Inventory
 - Boundaries/Ownership
 - Topography
 - Soils

- Natural Resources/Features (Land Cover, Vegetation, Wildlife, Water)
- Existing Park Features (Trailheads/Parking Areas, Trails, Signage, Scenic Views, Historic Features)
- Current Policy
 - Governance Structure
 - Township Board
 - Township Parks and Recreation Commission
 - Joint Planning Commission
 - Joint Recreation Authority
 - Plans and Studies
 - 1994 Grand Traverse Commons District Redevelopment Plan
 - 2010 Grand Traverse Commons Master Plan (JPC)
 - 2014 Forest Management Plan for Garfield Township Commons Property (TWP)
 - 2016 Trails Focus Group (TWP)
 - 2018-2023 Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan (TWP)
- Community Recreation Needs & Preferences
 - Prior Surveys

3. Present Existing Conditions Report

- Background
- Highlight Key Findings
- Present to the Community

4. Establish Advisory Group

- The advisory group will:
 - Draft goals for the Planning Process
 - Provide feedback and direction on the process
- Representation may include:
 1. Grand Traverse Commons Joint Planning Commission
 2. Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission Chair or Vice Chair
 3. Traverse City/Garfield Township Recreation Authority
 4. Grand Traverse Conservation District
 5. Regional Land Conservancy
 6. Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association (NMMBA)
 7. TART Trails, Inc.
 8. Grand Traverse Hiking Club (GTHC)
 9. Vasa Ski Club
 10. Gabe Schneider
 11. Copper Ridge Riders
 12. Neighbor

5. Conduct Public Engagement

- Present Key Findings/Goals for the Planning Process
- Conduct Open House/Survey
- Receive Preferences and Interests

6. Develop Design Scenarios

- Create three or more design scenarios for the plan the parkland that contain conceptual designs/elements
- Identify potential connectivity to other locations/uses
- Identify environmental improvements (health of the forest, restoration historic views/natural landscapes, stormwater management/soil erosion, remediation of contaminated areas)
- Provide preliminary construction costs for each design scenarios

7. Refine Preferred Scenario

- Conduct public engagement to identify a preferred scenario
- Refine construction costs
 - Coordinate with Township Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

8. Adoption

- Conduct Public Hearing
- Review and Recommendation by Parks and Recreation Commission
- Review and Recommendation by Joint Planning Commission
- Approval by Township Board

9. Implementation

- Outline implementation schedule and actions
 - Park management
 - Events
 - Fundraising
 - Friends of the Natural Area
- Develop construction design plans
 - Park specific capital improvement plan (CIP)
- Construction of park improvements



Amenities:

- Paved walking / biking trail
- Rustic hiking trails
- Dog park
- Restrooms
- Pavilions (3)
- Basketball courts (2)
- Tennis courts (2)
- Baseball field
- Multi-purpose field
- Playground area



Silver Lake Recreation Area



Park Description

The 84-acre Silver Lake Recreation Area ("Silver Lake Park") is located at 1785 N. East Silver Lake Road. Amenities at the park include restrooms, grills, a tee-ball field, tennis courts, basketball courts, dog park, a sledding hill, and a multi-use field for playing catch, football, or tossing a Frisbee. Paved and unpaved walking trails are also offered. The paved trail loop surrounds the developed portion of the site and measures 3,700 feet long (seven-tenths of a mile). The unpaved trails, which meander around Hidden Lake and near the shores of the north branch of Silver Lake, total about 4,400 feet in length.

There are three picnic pavilions at this park, which may be reserved and are popular for family reunions and company picnics. Pavilion reservations are available on a first-come, first-served basis for a nominal fee. Before submitting your Park Reservation Application, we recommend that you call us at 231-941-1620 to verify that the facility you would like to reserve is available.

The Dog Park at Silver Lake Recreation Area is a huge success. There is even a Facebook Page to find out when your furry friend will be there to play. When using the dog park, please be sure to familiarize yourself with the park rules and help others to understand them as well. Please [click here](#) for a map of the dog park and [click here](#) for dog park rules.



Charter Township of Garfield

3848 Veterans Drive
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Amenities at Garfield Township Parks

	Parking Area	Restrooms (Portable)	Restrooms (Permanent)	Soccer / Recreational Fields	Baseball Fields	Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Pickleball Courts	Hiking Trails	Kayak Launch	Fishing Access	Dog Park	Playground Equipment	Pavilions
Boardman Valley Nature Preserve	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area	✓								✓					
Kids Creek Park	✓								✓		✓			
Miller Creek Nature Reserve	✓								✓		✓			
River East Recreation Area	✓								✓					
Silver Lake Recreation Area	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓



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2021 PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING DATES

The Charter Township of Garfield Parks and Recreation Commission has scheduled the following meeting dates for 2021. All meetings begin at 6:00 PM and are held in the Meeting Room (2nd floor) at the Garfield Township Hall, 3848 Veterans Drive, Traverse City, Michigan.

The 2021 meeting schedule is as follows:

Regular Meeting

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

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

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CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Whereas, it is the desire of the Charter Township of Garfield Parks & Recreation to extend its sincere appreciation to James Guilmet for his three years of service to the Parks & Recreation Commission;

Whereas, James in his capacity as Parks & Recreation Commissioner, provided insight to assist his fellow commission members in making sound decisions in order to protect the future of the community parks through thoughtful planning;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Charter Township of Garfield Parks & Recreation Commission does hereby express its sincere appreciation on behalf of the community to James Guilmet for his dedicated service.

JOHN SYCH, PLANNING DIRECTOR

CHRIS DEGOOD, CHAIRMAN