

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, Judy Joling, Teresa Young, John Weir, Sharon Spears  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Program Coordinator  
2 Citizens in attendance

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from December 19, 2016:**

Motion by Weir/ support from Joling to accept the Minutes as presented.

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Spears/ support from Weir to approve the Bills Payable as presented.

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** None

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**6. Reports:**

a. Parks Director: Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

- Parks Director Street noted pavilion rental information is now included in the Comstock Communicator, which may lead to an increase in pavilion reservations.

b. Treasurer: Report provided in packets

c. Commission Chair:

- Chairperson Law noted that the Township meetings were changed to the first and third Mondays at 7:00 P.M., with work-study meetings held from 5:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. We are encouraged to attend.

**7. Business:**

a. Robert Morris Park Fishing Pier Grant:

- A public input meeting is planned for February 13, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. (notifications placed in the Kalamazoo Gazette and Township website). The DNR grant proposal is due in April 2017. Parks Director Street will prepare a project description.

Motion by Spears/ support from Young to approve holding a public input meeting.

Motion to approve holding a public input meeting: 5 Yes/ 0 No

b. Merrill Park Grant Update:

- Final steps to securing the DNR Grant are proceeding through the state government process. Park Director Street contacted the office of State Senator Margaret O'Brien and her office has agreed to monitor the process and keep her apprised. Finalization of the grant should occur in a few months.
- Commissioner Law noted that additional funds may be sought for any future phase riverfront park improvements beyond the current project plan.

**8. Announcements:** None

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M. Next meeting will take place on Monday, February 13 at 7:00 P.M.  
Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, Judy Joling, Teresa Young, John Weir, Sharon Spears  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director and Rachel Hopkins, Parks program Coordinator  
16-18 Citizens in attendance

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

Public Input Meeting (7:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.): A public input meeting was held regarding a "Fishing Deck Project" for Robert Morris Park. Parks Director Vanessa Street presented the project as might be described in a grant application, and citizens in attendance then provided feedback. Due to the questions and concerns of citizens and the later commission discussion, additional information and more public input will be sought at future meetings before proceeding with a grant application.

Concerns generally focused on three areas: (1) priority (need relative to resources and other priorities), (2) monitoring of park users (perceived problems with more use/visitors not following park rules, e.g. diving-off/misuse of deck), and (3) technical project questions (deck cement placement in lowland, long length/safety, and lake bioburden load from bait/birds/trash), especially when next to the swimming area. (see notes recorded by Teresa Young, Feb. 13, 2017).

Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting: 8:00 P.M. - 9:05 P.M.

**1. Review of the Minutes from January 9, 2017:**

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to accept Minutes as presented.

Motion to approve Minutes: 5Yes/0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Bills payable as presented.

Motion to approve Bill Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** None

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** Motion by Young to add RMP Fishing Deck Project to Agenda for discussion by the Commission/support from Spears.

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets

**c. Commission Chair:**

Chairperson Law clarified that the Township's work-study meetings are held from 5:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. on only the first Monday of the month, preceding the regular meeting.

**7. Business:**

**a. 2016 Annual Report**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept the 2016 Annual Report as presented

5 Yes/ 0 No

**b. RMP Fishing Deck discussion**

Discussion of the citizens' concerns continued. In principle, there was support for park access for the public in the park (especially handicapped access), but also concern about moving ahead rapidly with the project relative to cost-benefit questions (is there demand? liability?) and the

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necessity for good stewardship of resources – e.g. is there potential harm from this project (increasing bioburden and potentially invasive species (from birds attracted to the deck/poop and bait-guts dumping)) in view of the existing problem with bioburden near the swimming area? It was also felt that it was important to be responsive to the citizens who expressed their concerns by providing more information/data and another input meeting.

In order to meet the April 1, 2017 application deadline, Motion was made by Weir/support from Joling to proceed with the application with option to rescind.

2 Yes/2 No. The motion was not carried. The application effort will be postponed for 1 year.

**8. Announcements: None**

Motion adjourned at 9:05 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 13 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, Judy Joling, Teresa Young, John Weir, Sharon Spears  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Program Coordinator  
Citizens in attendance: 2

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from February 13, 2017:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to accept Minutes as presented.

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Bills payable as presented.

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:**

A 'Thank You' card from Kathy Dilsaver to Parks Director Vanessa Street was received for the expeditious falling-tree removal at Green meadow Park near her adjacent property/shed before damage could occur.

A letter was received from Dr. Kenneth Kornheiser of the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council concerning Comstock Creek flow concerns/dams at Cooper Park and Peer Park; in the two cases fish passage may be impaired from run-off and eroding shoreline, respectively.

**4. Citizen's Comments:** A citizen asked for clarification on where to locate recent meeting minutes on the Township's website.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets

**c. Commission Chair:** None

**7. Business:**

**a. Joint Township Survey Questions**

Sample Survey question ideas from Oshtemo, Texas, and Comstock Townships were provided for review and discussion by Parks Director Vanessa Street. Commissioners may email their survey question ideas & comments to Vanessa.

**b. 2017 Programming (see attached)**

2017 currently planned programming was provided by Parks Director Vanessa Street. Included this year is a proposed "Joint (4-districts: Portage City, Kalamazoo City, Kalamazoo County, and Comstock Township) Free Day", scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve the June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 day as fee-free day at Robert Morris Park.

5 Yes/0 No

Future programming possibilities for 2018 were also provided by Vanessa for consideration.

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**c. Facebook Page**

Parks Director Vanessa Street provided information proposing establishing a Comstock Parks and Recreation Facebook page to enable better communication with residents and non-residents. Parks Director Vanessa and Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins would be the facebook page Administrators, and anticipate posting information on the site ~once/month. The page would have a link to the Comstock Township website.

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve creation of a Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Facebook page

5 Yes/0 No

**d. Purchasing Approval – Woodchips**

Parks Director Vanessa Street provided a quotation for the purchase of woodchips for Robert Morris Park and Wenke Softball Complex playgrounds. Both playgrounds lost woodchips due to water "wash-outs".

Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve purchase of the woodchips for the playgrounds.

5 Yes/0 No

**e. 2017 Park Visits (see attached)**

The Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Board must visit parks (at least) once per year. A 2017 Park Visit Schedule for May through August was provided by Commissioner Linda Law. The respective monthly Parks and Recreation Commission meeting will be held after each visit. Commissioners are asked to take notes of their visits.

Motion by Weir/approval from Joling to approve schedule as presented.

5 Yes/0 No

**f. Fishing Deck (Continuing) Discussion**

As requested, Commissioner Teresa Young shared published research information regarding potential problems with bait fish transfers/resulting in invasive species, and noted there are some simple control approaches available (can request DNR input).

She also noted that current information on the Campbell Lake fishing resource is needed, but that the northern pike present is non-native. A citizen in attendance concurred, noting that there are fewer blue gill since the pike showed up, relating a story of inadvertent pike introduction from a bucket years ago.

Other discussion items will be covered at future meetings.

**g. Other**

Commissioners present discussed meeting-notification and improving overall communications.

**8. Announcements: None**

Meeting Adjourned at 9:15 P.M. Next meeting will take place on Monday, April 10 at 7 P.M

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

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## **2017 Park Visit Schedule**

May – Commissioners should visit the Jan Schau Wildflower Walk, River Villa Preserve, and visit the community garden on your own time before the May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. May meeting at Township Hall at 7:00pm.

June- Meet at Wenke Softball Complex at 6:30pm. Meeting to follow at Wenke Softball Complex Pavilion at 7:00pm. (Please visit Fleetwood Park at Green Meadow Park on your own before the meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup>)

July- Meet at Robert Morris Park at 6:30pm, with meeting to follow at 7:00pm at Robert Morris Park Pavilion. (Please visit McLinden Nature Trails on your own before the meeting).

August – Meet at Merrill Park at 6:30pm, with Meeting to follow at 7:00pm at Merrill Pavilion. (Please visit Celery Street Park, Cooper Park, Peer Park, Neal St Ball Diamonds, and North & South Wenke Parks before the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on your own).

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## **2017 Current Programming**

### **Galesburg Kids Walking Club**

- Partner with Galesburg Augusta Primary School & KRVT
- 6 week program in the spring and fall Thursdays after school (3:15-4:30pm)
- Track steps with pedometers, provide nature hunt activities, and supervise 1 mile walk.
- At the end give kids certificates with their total steps taken for the 6 week period

### **Senior Walking Club**

- Partner with Comstock Community Center
- One day a week – late morning.
- 6 week program
- Track steps with pedometers, provide walking bottles, or t-shirts through possible sponsor/donations.

### **Community Garden**

- 12 ft. X 4 ft. raised bed plots (12 total)
- \$10 a plot (money goes back to the community center to cover the cost of water)
- Plants provided by local greenhouse donations
- Partner with Master Gardeners to provide informational workshop for new gardeners.

### **Softball**

- Co-ed league Monday nights, mens league Wednesday nights, 60+ senior league Thursday nights, and 75+ senior leagues Monday mornings.
- 14 week season
- Concessions are open during game times 5-10pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays

### **Baseball Leagues & BPA (Baseball Players Association) Tournaments**

- 11U, 12U, 13U, 14U teams
- 8 week long double header season Tuesday and Thursday evenings
- BPA tournaments run every weekend starting in April for 12 weeks
- Concessions are open during game times 6am-7pm Saturday and Sundays, and 5-10pm Tuesday and Thursdays

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**Future programming possibilities...for 2017**

**Joint Free day**

- Wednesday June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017
- Portage City, Kalamazoo City, Kalamazoo County and Comstock Township
- Portage will also only have one park available (Ramona Park)
- More staff available on Wednesday rather than weekend day – County will only do a weekday.
- Save on advertising
- If all four districts are visited that day patrons will be entered in a drawing
- Each park will be in charge of their own activities/programs that day
- Grow awareness of RMP and bring Portage and Kalamazoo residents to Comstock
- Activity possibilities
  - Scavenger hunt
  - Bowling
  - Pinecone bird feeder
  - Chalk
  - Volleyball
  - Disc Golf
  - Wiffle ball
  - Bubbles
  - Corn Hole

**Fall Kickball**

- Tuesday or Friday evenings at Wenke softball complex
- Coed recreational league
- Team t-shirts
- 6 week program
- Use softball umpires

**Harvest Day**

- Saturday or Sunday October 7th-8th 14th-15th 21st-22nd
- Partner with a local cider mill or farm (Gull Meadow Farms) to get hay, pumpkins, apples, donuts, and cider
- Partner with Comstock Library for kids crafts
- Comstock fire truck
- Activity possibilities



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pumpkin painting  
pumpkin putt-putt  
Witch hat ring toss, cauldron toss  
can knock over  
sack races  
pumpkin bag toss  
bowling  
find the apple/pumpkin/candy  
cut out photo booth  
tic tack toe  
Hay maze

- Have donuts, apples, and cider separately or part of entrance fee (free)
- Apply for temporary food license \$90
- Fun day to end the season
- Advertise for Comstock residents
- Entrance fee?

**Story Time/Nature Walks**

- Partner with Comstock Library's current Story Time activities.
- Read a nature book to children along the KRVF or at a Park, take kids on nature walk to collect natural items to use as craft project back at the Library or under park pavilion.

**Movies in the Park**

- Partner with Comstock Library (Library has movie license)
- Project family friendly films in Robert Morris Park
- Provide popcorn (temporary food license needed - \$90)

**Adult Outdoor Crafts**

- Partner with library to bring their adult crafts outside to Merrill or RMP pavilions

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, Judy Joling, Teresa Young, John Weir, Sharon Spears  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Program Coordinator  
2 Citizens in attendance:

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from March 13, 2017:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to accept Minutes with changes (7c. motion by Joling, adding "see attached" to 7b and 7e subtitles, and adding "at Robert Morris Park" to motion in 7b.)  
Motion to approve Minutes with changes as noted above: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Bills payable as presented.  
Motion to approve Bill Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** None

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**6. Reports:**

- a. **Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets
- b. **Treasurer:** Report provided in packets
- c. **Commission Chair:**

Chairperson Linda Law provided the following Comstock Township Board information:

- On May 11 at 7 P.M. there will be a joint Township and Planning Committee meeting regarding medical marijuana and proposed state legislation. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.
- Dave Camburn replaced Art Austin, who resigned from the Comstock Township Board.
- A \$300,000 grant to build an adult daycare center near the Comstock Community Center but on P& Rec land has been offered, according to Mary Gustas, Comstock Community Center Executive Director. Consultation with the P&Rec Commission needs to take place and any land deed restriction(s) need to be reviewed.
- New street lights along the H Ave.-to-East Main segment of Sprinkle Road will be installed.

Other:

- Thanks are extended to Parks Director Vanessa Street for P&Rec news provided in the recent Comstock Communicator.
- Chairperson Linda Law registered to attend an MSU-Outreach presentation on Protecting Michigan Lakes and Rivers from Invasive Species at MSU's W. K. Kellogg Biological Station, Gull lake on April 11, 2017

**7. Business:**

**a. AED Units**

Because emergency response times to our parks can range from 8-10 minutes, Parks Director Vanessa Street requested the purchase of two AED units, one to be located at Robert Morris Park and one to be located at the Wenke Softball Complex. Units will be housed inside the concession buildings, accessible to staff. Signage will note AED location. Park staff are already trained in CPR and AED use. These units are expected to last for 8 years, and are the same type purchased by other Comstock Township groups.

Motion by Spears /support from Joling to approve the purchase of two AED units for a total of \$2644.80. Motion to approve purchase of the two AED units: 5 Yes/ 0 No

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**b. Facebook Follow Up**

The planned follow up demonstration was tabled until the next meeting.

**c. Robert Morris Park Parking Lot & Entrance Drive**

Chairperson Linda Law discussed the need for repair of the parking lot and entrance drive with the Township Supervisor and Superintendent. Costly repairs cannot be covered in the current budget. Estimates for the repairs will be sought.

**d. Fishing Deck Discussion**

Commissioner Teresa Young provided printed information from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources covering invasive species (esp. baitfish), fishing laws, goose problems (relates to fecal coliform levels in water) and associated control measures for review/consideration.

Public concerns/comments and possible remedies (incomplete) from the February 13, 2017 public input meeting were shared in a table format by Teresa Young for Parks & Rec Commission consideration and input. Concerns involving the general use of the park and visitor monitoring – within and off-season - will be grouped as a combined topic set for follow up.

**e. Other**

- Chairperson Linda Law reminded the Commission of the Comstock Community Fundraiser “Ready-Set-Grow” on May 4, from 5:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M. at River Street Flowerland.
- Commissioner John Weir noted that Celery Street Park looks in need of wood chips.
- Commissioner John Weir extended a ‘Thank You’ to Parks Director Vanessa Street for the recycling effort at the softball fields and Robert Morris Park.

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting adjourned at 8: 20 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, May 8 at 7 P.M. (note: Commissioners should visit the Jan Schau Wildflower Walk, River Villa Preserve, and the Community Garden on their own time before the meeting).

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of May 8, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, John Weir, Sharon Spears, Teresa Young, Judy Joling  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director, and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Program Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: 1

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from April 10, 2017:**

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to accept Minutes as presented with changes (clarify wording on 6.c., 4<sup>th</sup> bullet, point to: "New street lights along the H Ave.-to-East Main segment of Sprinkle Road will be installed.")

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Bills payable as presented.

Motion to approve Bill Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** None

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets

**c. Commission Chair:**

- A meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 11, 2017 with Commissioner Linda Law, Parks Director Vanessa Street, the Comstock Township Supervisor, Treasurer, Clerk and Planner to discuss capital improvements regarding needed park security and parking lot improvements.
- A meeting is being planned with Commissioner Linda Law and Midlink's Rob Britigan to discuss a possible parcel use/trade request.
- Commissioner Linda Law attended the MSU-Outreach presentation on protecting Michigan Lakes and Rivers from Invasive Species presentation on April 11, 2017 and shared information from the event with the Commission (Commissioner Teresa Young noted she also attended).
- The Parks & Recreation Commission 2017 Park Visit Schedule will follow the original plan.

**7. Business:**

**a. Facebook Follow Up**

Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins presented the new Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Facebook page site, described its features and demonstrated its use. The site has been visited by many since its debut.

**b. Park Visit Discussion – Jan Schau Wildflower Walk, River Villa Preserve, Community Garden**

Commissioners visited the 1) Jan Schau Wildflower Walk, the 2) River Villa Preserve, and the 3) Community Garden prior to the meeting.

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Meeting Minutes of May 8, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Suggestions were offered to enhance the parks:

For the Jan Schau Wildflower Walk and River Villa Preserve:

- a.) have contiguous mowed pathways that are not dead-ends
- b.) create signage that shows one's location based on path mapping (Commissioner Teresa Young suggested that item b. might be a good scouting project. Commissioner Law will follow up with the local scouting group).
- c.) remove downed trees over paths here and there; remove tires, debris
- d.) have a pamphlet, for example, to identify wildflowers

For the Community Garden: no suggestions.

The community garden is being readied. Use starts after Mother's Day, May 14, 2017.

**c. Fishing Deck Discussion**

Commissioner Linda Law reviewed some of the citizen concerns from the February 13, 2017 meeting. Follow up is continuing.

Parks Director Vanessa Street noted that signage regarding bait disposal (per FO 245.16) was available from the DNR.

A citizen in attendance noted that serious fishermen fish off-hours.

Note the July 10, 2017 Comstock Township Parks & Recreation meeting will be held at Robert Morris Park.

**d. Other**

Commissioner Linda Law requested to be kept informed about progress on an adult day care center proposal near/on Comstock Township P&Rec land.

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, June 12. Commissioners are to meet at 6:30 P.M. at the Wenke Softball Complex. The meeting will follow at the Wenke Softball Complex Pavilion at 7:00 P.M.

Commissioners should also visit Fleetwood Park and Green Meadow Park on their own time before the June 12 meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2017  
7:00 P.M. at Wenke Softball Complex**

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, Judy Joling, John Weir, Sharon Spears, Teresa Young  
Staff Present: Rachel Hopkins, Parks Program Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: 2

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

Introductions: Chad McBarnes, Umpire in Chief.

- Mr. McBarnes shared the umpires' goal of maintaining good community relations with softball participants at our parks, focusing on its customers. They have received very good feedback.
- Umpires now use a training program for umpiring based on the NSA guidebook, but are looking at an accreditation program. In addition, they are considering AED training for the umpires-in-charge each day to help facilitate player safety.

**1. Review of the Minutes from May 8, 2017:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to accept Minutes as presented.  
Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to approve Bills payable as presented.  
Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that a 'Thank You' card was received from a citizen who held a memorial service for Richard Connelly at Robert Morris Park.

**4. Citizen's Comments:** None.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None.

**6. Reports:**

- a. **Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets
- b. **Treasurer:** Report provided in packets
- c. **Commission Chair:**

Linda Law shared the following:

- The old Comstock High School (near 26<sup>th</sup> Street & Oran St.) was sold, and is planned to become a business incubator. The owner may also be interested in its football field (now Parks land). The Neal Street ball fields (behind the school) are overgrown and no longer used. Because the adjacent cemetery needs more room, expansion into this area may be considered. Note also that after the school sale, the water at the cemetery is no longer provided for use.
- Commissioner John Weir was asked to attend the Comstock Township audit workshop Monday, June 19, 2017.
- Comstock Treasurer Bret Padgett asked Commissioner Linda Law to consider the idea of a neighborhood park like Fleetwood for the Shields neighborhood plat. Locations were discussed.
- Commissioner Law met with Rob Britigan to discuss possible parcel use. Deed restrictions currently apply.
- Commissioner Law reported that Comstock Township has had meetings covering medical marijuana issues. No decisions have been made yet however licensing will start anyway.

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7:00 P.M. at Wenke Softball Complex**

- A “conditional agreement” to transfer property for the Adult Daycare Center (Mary Gustas) has been put forward. Commissioner Weir suggested ALL park (and associated) property deeds be reviewed. Commissioner Law will consult with the Comstock Township attorney to get started.
- A new Capital Improvement Project Committee consisting of township leaders, including Commissioner Law, now have a process that requires use of an application form for each improvement project. The goal is to ensure consistency across areas. Previously approved projects in progress/to be initiated also need forms filled out.
- Recycling of weeds & grass has been reinstituted in the Township.
- The Comstock Library now has WI-FI hot spots that can be used.
- Comstock Township meeting agendas now have time allotments for before and after comments.
- The Maintenance Office at Merrill Park is being given to the Parks Commission.
- There will be no renting of the Merrill Park pavilion after July – it will be available on a first come/first serve basis. This means that the pavilion will not be *guaranteed* clean for each use after July (clean-ups are scheduled on Mondays). Bathrooms will continue to be maintained.

Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator, described some of the children’s activities planned for the June 21<sup>st</sup> park ‘free day’ at Robert Morris Park.

**7. Business:**

**a. Park Visit Discussions – Wenke Softball Complex; Fleetwood and Green Meadow Parks**

- **Wenke Softball Complex:**

At 6:30 P.M. Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins showed the Parks Commissioners the complex and its facilities. The complex is in good condition. Fields and grounds look good/well maintained.

Concern was raised over the location of the tot playground fixture near backstops (subject to potential foul balls). Possible relocation and/or addition of a canopy/screen were discussed.

Concession operations were described, which flow well with high demand for items. The older concession building needs more electrical outlets/electrical upgrade, however, to handle stock cooling needs. One issue currently exists with one toilet in the facility. Customers appreciate the addition of the new sunscreen dispenser.

- **Fleetwood Park:**

Ground fill (woodchips) is needed around the playground equipment. Some equipment painting is needed and walkway crack-fill is needed. The gate sign along the east fence needs to be updated. The ‘No Parking’ signs placed at the street are confusing...it was suggested that ‘Do Not Block’ signs might better convey the intent of not blocking each walkway entrance. The grass/grounds were nicely mowed. The seating areas are nice.

- **Green Meadow Park:**

The parking area and ball field are in good condition and the grounds are well-maintained. The bench area is nice. It was suggested that the park sign may need to be moved to be more visible from the road. There are some crumpled soccer net screens near the parking area that need to be removed.

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Meeting Minutes of June 12, 2017  
7:00 P.M. at Wenke Softball Complex**

**b. AED Unit follow up**

Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that CPR training is scheduled for June 15, 2017. Once training is completed, the AEDs and associated signage will be placed at Wenke Softball Complex and Robert Morris Park.

**c. Fishing Deck Discussion for July meeting**

Commissioner Law indicated that the July meeting will be held at the pavilion at Robert Morris Park. Anticipating that there will be many citizens providing public input, it is planned to limit specific topic comments to 4 minutes per person, in a rotating fashion.

Commissioner Law is hoping to have a DEQ or DNR representative present at the meeting.

Suggested actions prior to the meeting:

- 1) Survey other parks – specifically Ramona and Prairie View and Vicksburg as to their experience with fishing decks and their use by visitors
- 2) Consider a variety of deck ideas/possible options
- 3) Prepare a clear meeting introduction conveying the information-sharing purpose
- 4) Send Commissioner Linda Law any other suggestions to incorporate before the meeting

**d. Other: None**

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, July 10. Commissioners are to meet at 6:30 P.M. at Robert Morris Park. The meeting will follow at the RMP Pavilion at 7:00 P.M.

Commissioners should also visit McLinden Nature Trails on their own time before the July 10 meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary



**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2017  
7:00 P.M. at Robert Morris Park**

Commissioners Present: Linda Law, Judy Joling, Sharon Spears, Teresa Young  
Commissioner Absent: John Weir  
Staff Present: Rachel Hopkins, Parks Program Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: approx. 15-20

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

Introductions: The Parks Board and Staff were introduced to the audience.

**1. Accessible Fishing Platform Public Comment**

Commissioner Linda Law provided an introduction and review of the accessible fishing platform topic. Handouts showing photographs of decks/platforms at Ramona Park and Woods Lake (Kalamazoo area) and other platform designs were available for review.

A summary of Commissioner Law's remarks is given below:

The objective of the public comment part of the meeting was to listen to citizen comments/concerns and try to answer any questions. The Parks Board is continuing to research the topic and will assess how to proceed before applying for a DNR grant for 75% project funding (which is contingent upon DEQ approval of a required (\$250) DEQ-application for the project/site, which is preceded by a required (\$100) physical site DEQ review). Note that the DEQ regulates bodies of water for fishing structures for inland lakes. In reviewing the application, the DEQ will do extensive research and ask for input from adjacent landowners on the lake, and will involve the public.

The project idea is supported by the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan, developed every 5-years. One goal is to "improve the quality of life for Comstock residents by providing safe, pleasant and accessible recreational parks and facilities for Comstock residents". Robert Morris Park users/fishermen have expressed positive support for an accessible platform place to fish off of the shore at the park.

The goals of this project for Robert Morris Park are to:

- 1) Encourage folks to fish away from the swimming area

Currently, fishing along the park's shoreline has resulted in trampling of the unstable shoreline berm with barrier plantings intended to grow to deter geese and thereby reduce beach/water contamination potential.

- 2) Provide a place for families with children to fish
- 3) Provide an accessible area plus walkways

Concerns from the public comments of the February 13, 2017 meeting included the "pier" design presented (location, size, maintenance), baitfish control, and other controls. Commissioner Law addressed these issues as follows:

The fishing "pier" presented at the February 13, 2017 meeting was just one initial idea. A current idea is to have more of a near-lakefront fishing platform (vs. "pier"), specifically along the West side's more "passive" area shoreline of the park (more conducive to fishing). Extension of the platform would stop well before the "muck line".

Any maintenance costs will be budgeted in the Parks budget as part of the Comstock Township budget. The platform would also be included in the routine cleaning regimen of the beach area

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to remove any goose droppings. Fence barriers, trip-lines and solar "geese away lights" (nesting deterrent) are currently used to deter geese. Note the DNR has many deterrent suggestions on their website.

Baitfish disposal/invasive species control (ref.: F.O.245.16) for the project can be managed by having specific bait receptacles and signs (available from the DNR).

Lake management/control: The DNR sets the fishing rules and regulations for inland lakes, and enforces all Fisheries Orders (F.O.'s). They also respond to immediate concerns on the lake, and can drop-in their boats (from the park) at-will to monitor the lake.

Public Comments:

Ten stated public comments/concerns/questions from today's meeting consisted of the following (from secretary's notes):

- Opposed to any dock – old swimming structure didn't last/why spend the money- kids will jump off-DNR unlikely to come to park (for problems), most complaints/problems occur after hours. (Rick Schipper, 8279 East H. Ave.)
- Kids love to come to the park & love to fish- folks pay taxes-no reason for public park not to have accessibility for folks to fish. (Kelly Stanley, 2977 N. 26<sup>th</sup> St.)
- A serious fisherman wouldn't fish here; we fish for fun – accessibility is key –platform can be used to promote/educate folks on how to fish & how to take care of resources. There are pros and cons – but good opportunity to educate folks. (Mary Huyck, 4757 Landing Way)
- This is an excellent fishing lake. A concern is that navigating the lake (by boat) is difficult so concern is the length of a pier as a hazard. (Laura Bowersox, 4822 Landing Way)
- Would prefer to have folks fish elsewhere – historically (w/rental boats) people threw trash in the lake – should spend money for maintenance of current items (park loses money (i.e. costs greater than what takes in)). (Rick Herbert, 8471 East H. Ave.)
- Where is the demand –what kind of analysis done/comparison with other parks? Have a park pass and have small kids and want the park maintained with enforced rules. (Valerie Schipper, 8279 East H. Ave.)
- Glad to see original pier design now disregarded – need to have the platform close to the shoreline/way back from the muck line edge (i.e. deck edge needs to be within ~25' of the shoreline –can easily reach beyond muck line by casting). (Brian Young, 8116 Waterwood Dr.)
- A fishing platform would be a nice addition to the park, and will keep folks from fishing off the shoreline, which is what we want. (Julie Vanderweele, 8199 East H. Ave.)
- Park staff has done a good job cleaning the beach and following recommendations – by making the berm buffer, things will improve. A fishing dock would be a great addition. Have watched employees picking up after geese and trash – they do a good job. (Chelsea Frederick, non-Comstock resident, monitors RMP beach-water quality for Kalamazoo County).
- Getting DNR to monitor is hard – issues fall on deaf ears. Not totally against it, there is some positivity behind it. Kids should be exposed to good things, but the rules must be enforced. (Dan Short, 8073 East H. Ave.)

Meeting Time: 7:55 P.M.

**2. Review of the Minutes from June 12, 2017:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept Minutes as presented.

Motion to approve Minutes: 4 Yes/ 0 No

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**3. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve Bills payable pending confirmation that Check # 151602 is for a Parks & Recreation's contracted service.

Motion to approve Bill Payable with correction: 4 Yes/0 No

**4. Correspondence:** Vanessa Street (Parks Director) received an e-mail from Ann Conklin, Executive Director (mParks.org) indicating Senate Bill 76 H-3 passed 37/0, and is proceeding to Governor Snyder's desk (this bill affects grant-funding for Merrill Park improvements).

**5. Citizen's Comments (non-fishing platform related):** None

**6. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**7. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets.

Addition: Celery Street Park report inadvertently omitted; Commissioner Joling noted that the 1 picnic table has one of its benches missing – may be a hazard.

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets

**c. Commission Chair:** no items

**8. Business:**

**a. Midlink Proposal**

Robert D. Britigan III, VP of Property Management, Midlink Business Park presented a proposal requesting support of the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Board for transfer of ownership of Green Meadow Park to Cork Street investors, LLC in exchange for 20 acres of farmland at the SW corner of East Cork and 26<sup>th</sup> Street, which may include a building, and funds for property improvements. Commissioner Law noted that the P&Rec Commission will need to do additional research regarding the cost to replace a ball park, playing field, parking area and fencing at the proposed site. Deed restrictions may also apply.

**b. Fire Chief Memorial**

Commissioner Law proposed that a memorial for Fire Chief Edward Switalski be included at a Comstock park (e.g. tree, plaque, or bench, dedication, etc.), but will coordinate with the Comstock Fire Department's memorial plans.

Motion by Spears/support by Young to approve Commissioner Law pursuing establishment of a memorial in coordination with the Comstock Fire Department.

4 Yes/0 No

**c. Tree Planting Request N. Wenke Park**

A request was received from Danielle Bobber and Janet Holroyd to plant a tree/plaque in honor of Adam William Reimer at N. Wenke Park (a person who passed away but loved the park). Commissioners discussed the need for guidelines for such requests, and will check with the Comstock Township staff for information before considering the private request.

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**d. Park Visit Discussion – McLinden Nature Trails**

Park Commissioners present reported that the McLinden Nature Trails looked in very good condition – wide paths nice with bark, parking area clean, sign ok. Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator, questioned if trash barrel gator access was adequate (as the Parks Board is responsible for maintaining access). She also noted that we stock the pet waste bags.

**e. DEQ Site Visit Request**

Commissioner Law requested approval to proceed with applying for a DEQ site visit for site assessment for a fishing deck at Robert Morris Park, at a cost of \$100.

Motion by Joling/support by Spears to approve spending \$100 for a DEQ physical site visit at RMP.

4 Yes/0 No

**f. Fishing Platform: None**

**g. Other: None**

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M. the next meeting will take place on Monday, August 14. Commissioners are to meet at 6:30 P.M. at Merrill Park. The meeting will follow at the Merrill Park Pavilion at 7:00 P.M.

Commissioners should also visit Celery Street Park, Cooper Park, Peer Park, Neal St. Ball Diamonds, and North & South Wenke Parks on their own time before the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir, Teresa Young  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director, and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: 3

Call to Order by Chairperson Linda Law

Introductions: Commissioner Law introduced Jonica Camburn, a longtime resident of Comstock Township. Mrs. Camburn would like to share her views about Merrill Park.

**1. Review of the Minutes from July 10, 2017:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept Minutes as presented with the addition of citizens' names/addresses giving public comments.

Motion to approve minutes with addition as noted above: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to accept Bills Payable pending confirmation of a \$300 entry and Check No. 151755.

Motion to accept Bills Payable after confirmation as noted above: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** Pat Haring (555 Moline St., Kalamazoo) raised concern about the proliferation of lily pads in the Cooper Park pond.

Commissioner Law will contact the Invasive Plant Species Task Force to look into eradication options, if the lilies are invasive.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** Commissioner Law requested adding "Merrill Park" under section 7 Business.

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

Addition 1: Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins described a Meijer & Johnsonville Corporate BBQ Competition/Comstock Fire Department fundraising event to honor Chief Switalski held at Robert Morris Park on August 9, 2017. The event was a success with over 150 persons attending.

Addition 2: Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that the fall softball league sign-ups are progressing nicely/filling up.

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets

**c. Commission Chair:** Commissioner Law shared the following:

- A warm Welcome Back! was extended to Parks Director Vanessa Street, who is returning from leave.
- A big Thank You! was extended to Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins for filling in for Vanessa during her absence.

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- Commissioner Law will arrange a meeting with Commissioner Weir and Comstock Township Treasurer Brett Padgett to review the status/results of the Parks & Recreation budget audit and determine the current level of CIP funds.
- Comstock Superintendent Scott Hess plans to meet with each Comstock Township department head to review a township survey.

**7. Business:**

**a. Parks Visit Discussion**

**Celery St. Park-** To the Commissioners, the use level of the park seemed low. Commissioner Spears suggested asking neighbors about their assessment of the park. The park is clean with nicely cut grass; it has a large field with a baseball backstop but no infield diamond. The space for parking is limited (there is no designated parking area). The basketball court poles may need to be straightened. The play structure has a tall slide without extended rails.

**Cooper Park-** Commissioner Young asked about the crumbling cement areas around the waterfall and its structural integrity. Commissioner Law noted that the Township deemed the falls ok when thoroughly examined a couple of years ago. Comstock Township has taken responsibility for monitoring the waterfall/structural integrity, which is routinely checked by the Maintenance Supervisor. Commissioners agreed that the benches around the pond need to be moved back and areas in front of them filled/leveled.

**Peer Park-** Commissioner Young saw 3 fishermen enjoying the pond during her last visit; the park was well-maintained; the sluice-creek area was interesting but very rough; the memorials are well-tended.

**Merrill Park-** Commissioner Law noted that we are still waiting for Governor Snyder to sign the bill that will fund improvements to the park. Guest Jonica Camburn spoke about her family's experiences and concerns at the park: 1) the safety concern of the close proximity of the playground and benches near the river (suggesting a fenced play area would be better), 2) the dark, unlit areas near the water, and 3) the mischievous gathering of older kids near the secluded basketball courts at night, suggesting it would be better to move them closer to the road. She also suggested that it would be advantageous to have park monitors present.

For park improvement consideration, Commissioner Spears shared handouts showing illustrations of park swings designed for handicapped persons.

**Neal Street Ball Diamonds-** Commissioner Law noted that the area is no longer used or maintained.

**North Wenke Park –** Commissioners reported some trash was strewn in the park, and noted there is erosion near the table and in front of the bench (which needs to be moved back and fill-leveled/stabilized).

Commissioner Weir suggested some fresh paint on the fencing.

**South Wenke Park-** Commissioner Young noted that during her last visit there were several cars parked in the lot and several people were fishing and wading in the waters. Commissioners noted the park was clean but there were many birds and bird excrement on the grounds.

**b. North Wenke Tree Memorial**

Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that the request for a memorial at the park from D. Bobber and J. Holroyd could simply consist of a tree of our choosing, without a plaque. Note that currently there are no specific township guidance documents for such memorials.

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Motion by Joling/support from Spears to pursue further discussions with the requestors about the tree type, professional planting, and maintenance particulars.

Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No

**c. DEQ Site Visit/Fishing Platform – RMP**

Commissioner Law noted that the fee for the DEQ site visit, which is required to "green light" the the DEQ's site application process, was actually \$250 (for a township entity) vs. \$100 (as required for a private resident). Parks Commission approval for the higher amount is therefore needed.

Motion by Joling/support from Weir to approve payment of the \$250 fee for a DEQ site visit at RMP.

Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No

**d. Midlink Green Meadow**

An independent estimate of the cost to relocate the Green Meadow Park baseball field, parking area, and fencing far exceeded the cost figure presented at the July 10, 2017 meeting. Other costs in terms of downtime and neighborhood needs also have to be addressed. Nevertheless, continuing the discussions were supported.

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to continue discussions with Rob Britigan regarding Midlink's Green Meadow parkland transfer proposal terms and conditions.

The motion to continue discussions was approved: 5 Yes/0 No

**e. Other**

Commissioner Law noted that the Parks & Recreation Commission now has ownership of the maintenance garage building at Merrill Park.

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, September 11 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2017  
7:03 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir, Teresa Young  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director  
# Citizens in attendance: 2

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from August 14, 2017:**

Motion by Spears/support from Weir to approve the Minutes with a spelling and term correction and addition under 7. Business, Cooper Park: Comstock Township has taken responsibility for monitoring the waterfall/structural integrity, which is routinely checked by the Maintenance Supervisor.

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Bills Payable as presented.

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

Commission Treasurer Weir reported that in the Bills Payable for July 2017 summary, Check # 151755 was used as a township account repayment. A week's worth of umpire payments were made using borrowed check stock because Parks & Rec's account check stock ran out.

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** None

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** Commissioner Law requested an additional agenda topic under 7. Business: Capital Outlay Carryover from Years Past

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in Board packets

**c. Commission Chair:** Commissioner Law shared the following:

- At the next Comstock Township meeting, a resolution will be put forth for agreement with the State of Michigan's approval for funding, paving the way for Merrill Park improvements.
- The DEQ site visit at Robert Morris Park for a fishing platform physical site assessment will commence pending certification of Parks Director Vanessa Street as the "site administrator" (a necessary designation for the DEQ application).
- Commissioner Law and Parks Director Street met with Comstock Superintendent Scott Hess for an overview of a 2017 county-wide parks survey. Generally the Comstock Township, Michigan, Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan is supported and results are positive for parks overall.
- Commissioner Law and Parks Director Street met with the Comstock Fire Department to discuss plans for a memorial at Merrill Park in honor of Fire Chief Ed Switalski. A mosaicked wall and bronze statue are being planned. Park bench design particulars are being considered.

**7. Business:**

**a. 2018 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Summary**

Commissioner Law shared the following seven submitted CIP application descriptions:

PR - 1 Park Security Systems for Robert Morris Park, Merrill Park and the Wenke Softball Complex

PR - 2 Robert Morris Park Parking Lot and Driveway Paving



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- PR - 3 McLinden Nature Trail DNR Grant Match - We will propose to partner with the city of Kalamazoo for this grant which gives us a much better chance for approval.
- PR - 4 Wenke Ball Field Complex DNR Grant Match - We will propose to the county to submit this grant and as a partner will provide the 25% match.
- PR - 5 Replace benches, picnic tables and trash cans in Cooper, Peer, North & South Wenke, Celery St. and Green Meadow Parks.
- PR - 6 Merrill Park DNR Grant Match for the grant approved in December, 2016. We are entering into a contract with DNR this month and will begin once this is processed.
- PR - 7 Connector Bike Path - Providing the community with an accessible walking/bike path to connect the Kalamazoo Valley River Trail with the Gull Road (M43) walking/bike path that runs from Sprinkle Road east into Richland.

**b. 2018 Budget**

Parks Director Street described the budget worksheet handout line items proposed for the 2018 Comstock Parks & Recreation budget (worksheet provided in Board packets). The proposed budget plan is considered "forward-looking" to meet near-future needs of Comstock Parks & Recreation. Commissioners reviewed, discussed, and approved the worksheet draft with corrections.

Motion by Spears/support from Weir to approve proceeding with the 2018 budget draft worksheet with corrections for presentation to the Comstock Township Board for consideration.

Motion to approve proceeding with the 2018 Parks & Rec budget proposal: 5 Yes/0 No.

**c. Capital Outlay Carryover from Years Past**

Parks Director Street met with Comstock Treasurer Brett Padgett to determine the availability of funds from carryover from past years' Parks & Rec budgeted projects. Availability is not clear. Parks Director Street and Commissioner Law will review budget histories and past meeting minutes for specific details and commitments made to Parks & Rec by the Township.

Parks Director Street will prepare a list of items/funds that might be available from existing projects for the commissioners to review at the October 2017 Parks & Rec Commission meeting.

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, October 9, 2017 at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of October 9, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Sharon Spears, John Weir, Teresa Young  
Commissioner Absent: Linda Law  
Staff Present: Parks Director Vanessa Street and Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins  
# Citizens in attendance: 2

Call to Order by Vice Chairperson, Judy Joling

**1. Review of the Minutes from September 11, 2017:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Minutes as presented.  
Motion to approve Minutes: 4 Yes/0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Bills payable as presented.  
Motion to approve Bill Payable: 4 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** Sandy Sprague (1136 N. 28<sup>th</sup> Street) notified the Commission that on November 4, 2017, a "chilli-cook-off" is planned by the Oshtemo Township fire station to, in part, raise funds for a memorial statue in memory of Comstock Township Fire Chief Ed Switalski at Merrill Park.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**6. Reports:**

- a. **Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets
- b. **Treasurer:** Report provided in packets
- c. **Commission Chair:** No Report

**7. Business:**

**a. Green Meadow Presentation**

Rob Britigan from Midlink informed the Commission that the parkland exchange proposal presented at the July 2017 may no longer be available. He will notify Parks Director Vanessa Street of the final status of the parcel's potential sale from a different offer in the next week or so. If the possibility of purchase by Midlink still exists, he suggested that any shortfall in ball park grounds exchange/replacement costs could be covered perhaps by fundraising efforts by Midlink.

Mr. Britigan also presented to the Commission an alternative proposal for consideration, where the southern half of the Green Meadow Park property (approximately 8 acres) would be purchased, with a future option (yet undefined) related to the remaining northern portion of the parcel. He also noted that there are no longer deed restrictions on the entire property.

Mr. Britigan requested that the Commission convene a special meeting this month to act on either proposal.

The Commission tabled any action pending receipt of the status update information and further discussion.

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7:00 P.M.**

**b. Budget Line Items Adjustment**

Parks Director Vanessa street presented three budget line item adjustment proposals.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve line item adjustments as presented.  
4 Yes/0 No

**c. 2018 Meeting Dates**

Parks Director Vanessa Street presented a list of proposed Parks Board of Commissioners Meeting Dates for 2018. After discussion, the Commission members present preferred that the Usual "second Monday of the month" meeting schedule continue to apply for 2018, even though the January and March the meetings will need to be held at a different room location.

Motion by Young/support from Spears to approve the 2018 Meeting dates as amended.  
4 Yes/0 No

**d. 2017 Purchases**

- 1. Fleetwood Playground Replacement Part**
- 2. Wenke Softball Complex Restroom Partitions**

Parks Director Vanessa Street described the need and cost to replace a play structure footing platform at Fleetwood Park and restroom partitions at the Wenke Softball Complex .

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve the purchase of the play structure footing part at Fleetwood Park.  
4 Yes/0 No

Motion by Weir/support from Young to approve purchase/installation of restroom partitions at Wenke Softball Complex.  
4 Yes/0 No

**e. Celery Street Park Day**

Parks Director Vanessa Street described activities planned for Celery Street Park Day on Saturday, October 21 from 12-4 P.M. (see Director's Report in packet). Commissioners are encouraged to volunteer to help with activites, and can email Vanessa for sign-up times.

**8. Announcements: None**

Motion by Spears/support by Young to adjourn the meeting.  
4 Yes/ 0 No.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, November 13 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
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Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir, Teresa Young  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director, and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: 2

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from October 9, 2017:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept Minutes as presented.

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve Bills payable as presented.

Motion to approve Bill Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence: None**

**4. Citizen's Comments:**

- Sandy Sprague, 1136 N. 28<sup>th</sup> Street, notified the Commission that the Comstock Community Center is collecting donations for "Holiday Baskets" (groceries) for local residents in need. Donations will be collected on Tuesdays in November from 8:30AM-1:30PM.
- Pat Haring, 555 Moline Street, requested an update on the proliferation of lily pads in Cooper/Peer Park lakes. Commissioner Law will revisit information regarding options.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments: None**

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets.

- Commission Treasurer Weir requested that the Parks Administration time required for softball and baseball administration be estimated, as this time is not explicitly tracked in the budget. Commissioner Law added that the time required for other parks activities (e.g. special events) should also be estimated.

**c. Commission Chair:**

Commissioner Law shared the following:

- The DEQ conducted a site visit at Robert Morris Park to determine suitability of a site (west of the swimming area) for a fishing platform. Commissioner Law and Parks Director Street were in attendance. The DEQ noted that a permanent platform/dock would require skirting (for sediment control). No problems were noted, and so the application process can proceed. The DEQ will send information to Campbell Lake landowners and allow input. Commissioner Law noted that lake depth measurement at the site was needed (it is planned to have the platform located back from the lake's muck line shelf edge enough to still allow casting into deeper water).
- Commissioner Law noted that there is no further information on Midlink's Green Meadow Park proposals.
- Commissioner Law and Parks Director Street and Parks Coordinator Hopkins met with Comstock Township engineers (Prien and Newhoff) who will start on the estimate phase of the Merrill Park improvements project.

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7:00 P.M.**

- The Comstock Township public hearing on its proposed 2018 budget will be held November 20<sup>th</sup>. The budget vote will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The Parks & Recreation Commission members are encouraged to attend.
- At the last Comstock Township meeting, police reported that the township (with 4 officers) is the 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest in the county with respect to police calls.
- Comstock Township has not yet made a decision regarding allowing medical marijuana.
- Comstock Township working meetings on the first Monday of each month will now be taped.

**7. Business:**

**a. Security Cameras**

Director Vanessa Street received two quotes (so far) for security camera/systems for Wenke Ball Parks, Robert Morris Park and Merrill Park. After lengthy discussion by the Commissioners, it was decided to consult with additional experts in the field (including police) for more information to better evaluate the security systems to assure that our specific site needs are met. Note that other townships' parks have different types of systems/security. Commissioners are requested to provide any pertinent information they may have as soon as possible to Parks Director Street.

**b. Other**

A big Thank You! is extended to Parks Director Vanessa Street and Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins, Commissioners Linda Law and Sharon Spears, and volunteers who hosted, planned and participated in the very successful Celery Street Park Day!

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, December 11 at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir, Teresa Young  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director, and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: 3

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

Introduction: BJ Gamesh (Twilight Street)

**1. Review of the Minutes from November 13, 2017:**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to accept Minutes with name-spelling corrections ("Sprague" and "Prien")

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to approve Bills payable as presented.

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:**

- 1) Commissioner Spears reported that a citizen commented on not being able to find a Merrill Park historical sign on a recent visit; it was suggested that a more prominent place be selected for its display.
- 2) Parks Director Street received a request from a resident for special permission to use a motorized 'snow dog' to get onto the ice on Campbell Lake from Robert Morris Park for ice fishing in winter, because of a leg injury. Commissioners discussed concerns about liability, verification of special needs, precedence, snow-tracks, and safety (shallow/melted lakeshore, etc.). It was suggested that the citizen may present his request before the board, however request was denied at this time.

**4. Citizen's Comments:** None

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** None

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets

- 1) Commissioner Weir extended a Thank You! to Parks Director Street for arranging a safety evaluation of the existing Merrill Park playground equipment.
- 2) A vacant lot near Celery Street Park has been offered for donation to Comstock Township, for Parks and Recreation Board consideration.
- 3) Drain Commissioner Pat Crowley will provide an assessment of the potential lily pad 'overgrowth' in Cooper/Peer Park ponds in Spring 2018.

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets

**c. Commission Chair:**

Commissioner Law shared the following information:

- The Comstock Township Board voted to opt out of the marijuana ordinance at this point in time.
- The Comstock Parks & Recreation budget for 2018 was passed. Rachel Hopkins will be a full-time Program Coordinator.
- Note the Comstock Township office hour changes now in effect as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018.

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

**7. Business:**

**a. 2018 Fees**

Parks Director Street provided a list of the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Department Activity Fee charges in 2017 for review and consideration for setting 2018 activity fees.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve keeping the same 2017 fees for the activities in 2018 as presented.

The motion to approve the 2018 fees: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**b. 2018 Commission Officer Elections**

Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve keeping the same 2017 officer roles for 2018.

The motion to approve the 2018 officer roles: 5 Yes/0 No

**c. End of Year Purchases**

Parks Director Street suggested considering the following end of year purchases:

- 1) a portable 10'x20' canopy (for 4 planned neighborhood park day events per year) and banners @ \$1100 (note: this is less than the cost of renting a canopy for the events for one year).
- 2) metal septic risers at Robert Morris Park to avoid recurring damage and costs that occur to the current plastic risers from lawn mowers @ \$4000 for 6 risers.
- 3) portable 6' pitching mounds (requested by players), the same as those used at the tournaments, at a cost of \$3300 for four mounds.
- 4) a 10'x10' shed for field grooming equipment storage and mound storage at Wenke Softball Complex, at not more than \$2000.

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to approve the end of year purchases as presented (Total: \$10,400).

Motion to approve End of Year purchases: 5 Yes/0 No

**d. Security Camera Discussion**

Parks Director Street consulted with law enforcement and security providers about security options and provided information about systems for purchase consideration. Commissioner Young emphasized that it is important to be clear that the Parks & Recreation Commission security objective is to deter vandalism at the Comstock Township Parks. After discussion, the Commissioners chose an appropriate system for purchase.

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to approve purchase of a system as presented by Parks Director Street.

Motion to approve system purchase: 5 Yes/0 No

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Post-note January 4, 2018: The next meeting will take place on Monday, February 12, 2018 at 7 P.M. (the previously scheduled January 8, 2018 meeting is cancelled).

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Comstock Charter Township  
Parks and Recreation Department  
Annual Report 2017**

**Introduction**

The Parks and Recreation Commission commissioners elected to a four-year term in November 2016 were Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir and Teresa Young. Officers for the 2017 year were Chair, Linda Law; Vice-Chair, Judy Joling; Secretary, Teresa Young; Treasurer, John Weir. The following is a summary of all formal actions taken and can be found in the 2017 monthly meeting minutes. Please note that many of the board decisions are made after extensive discussion among commissioners as well as with other parties when needed.

**Monthly Meeting Business**

**January**

Robert Morris Park Fishing Pier Grant: A public input meeting is planned for February 13, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. (notifications placed in the Kalamazoo Gazette and Township website). The DNR grant proposal is due in April 2017. Parks Director Street will prepare a project description.

**Motion by Spears/ support from Young to approve holding a public input meeting.**

**Motion to approve holding a public input meeting:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

**February**

Public Input Meeting (7:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.): A public input meeting was held regarding a "Fishing Deck Project" for Robert Morris Park. Parks Director Vanessa Street presented the project as might be described in a grant application and citizens in attendance then provided feedback. Due to the questions and concerns of citizens and the later commission discussion, additional information and more public input will be sought at future meetings before proceeding with a grant application.

**To meet the April 1, 2017 application deadline, Motion was made by Weir/support from Joling  
to proceed with the application with option to rescind. 2 Yes/2 No.**

**The motion was not carried.**

2016 Annual Report: Commission Chair Law had distributed the 2016 Annual Report at the previous board meeting and asked the board to review it and send to her any changes which were reviewed.

**Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept the 2016 Annual Report as presented.**

**5 Yes/0 No**

**March**

2017 Programming: 2017 currently planned programming was provided by Parks Director Vanessa Street. Included this year is a proposed "Joint (4-districts: Portage City, Kalamazoo City, Kalamazoo County, and Comstock Township) Free Day", scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

**Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve the June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 day as fee-free day  
at Robert Morris Park.**

**5 Yes/0 No**



Facebook Page: Parks Director Vanessa Street provided information proposing establishing a Comstock Parks and Recreation Facebook page to enable better communication with residents and non-residents. Parks Director Vanessa and Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins would be the Facebook page administrators and anticipate posting information on the site ~once/month. The page would have a link to the Comstock Township website.

**Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve creation of a Comstock Township  
Parks and Recreation Facebook page.**

**5 Yes/0 No**

Purchasing Approval – Woodchips: Parks Director Vanessa Street provided a quotation for the purchase of woodchips for Robert Morris Park and Wenke Softball Complex playgrounds. Both playgrounds lost woodchips due to water “wash-outs”.

**Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve purchase of the woodchips for the playgrounds.**

**5 Yes/0 No**

2017 Park Visits: The Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Board must visit parks (at least) once per year. A 2017 Park Visit Schedule for May through August was provided by Commissioner Linda Law. The respective monthly Parks and Recreation Commission meeting will be held after each visit. Commissioners are asked to take notes of their visits.

**Motion by Weir/approval from Joling to approve schedule as presented.**

**5 Yes/0 No**

#### **April**

AED Units: Because emergency response times to our parks can range from 8-10 minutes, Parks Director Vanessa Street requested the purchase of two AED units, one to be located at Robert Morris Park and one to be located at the Wenke Softball Complex. Units will be housed inside the concession buildings, accessible to staff. Signage will note AED location. Park staff are already trained in CPR and AED use. These units are expected to last for 8 years, and are the same type purchased by other Comstock Township groups.

**Motion by Spears /support from Joling to approve the purchase of two AED units for a total of \$2644.80.**

**Motion to approve purchase of the two AED units:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

#### **May**

Commissioners visited the Jan Schau Wildflower Walk, the River Villa Preserve and, the Community Garden prior to the meeting. Suggestions were offered to enhance the parks.

#### **June**

Meeting was held at the Wenke Softball Complex. Park Visit Discussions – Wenke Softball Complex; Fleetwood and Green Meadow Parks.

#### **July**

Meeting was held at Robert Morris Park. An open public comment session was held regarding the proposed Accessible Fishing Platform.

Fire Chief Memorial: Commissioner Law proposed that a memorial for Fire Chief Edward Switalski be included at a Comstock park (e.g. tree, plaque, or bench, dedication, etc.), but will coordinate with the Comstock Fire Department’s memorial plans.

**Motion by Spears/support by Young to approve Commissioner Law pursuing establishment of a  
Memorial in coordination with the Comstock Fire Department.**

**4 Yes/0 No**

Park Visit Discussion – Robert Morris Park and McLinden Nature Trails

DEQ Site Visit Request: Commissioner Law requested approval to proceed with applying for a DEQ site visit for site assessment for a fishing deck at Robert Morris Park, at a cost of \$100.

**Motion by Joling/support by Spears to approve spending \$100 for a DEQ physical site visit at Robert Morris Park.**

**4 Yes/0 No**

**August**

Meeting was held at Merrill Park. Parks Visit Discussion: Celery St. Park, Cooper Park, Peer Park, Neil Street Ball Diamonds, North and South Wenke Parks, and Merrill Park.

North Wenke Tree Memorial: Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that the request for a memorial at the park from D. Bobber and J. Holroyd could simply consist of a tree of our choosing, without a plaque. Note that currently there are no specific township guidance documents for such memorials.

**Motion by Joling/support from Spears to pursue further discussions with the requestors about the tree type, professional planting, and maintenance. Motion approved:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

DEQ Site Visit/Fishing Platform – RMP: Commissioner Law noted that the fee for the DEQ site visit, which is required to “green light” the DEQ’s site application process, was \$250 for a township entity not \$100. Parks Commission approval for the higher amount is therefore needed.

**Motion by Joling/support from Weir to approve payment of the \$250 fee for a DEQ site visit at Robert Morris Park. Motion approved:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

Midlink Green Meadow: An independent estimate of the cost to relocate the Green Meadow Park baseball field, parking area, and fencing far exceeded the cost figure presented at the July 10, 2017 meeting. Other costs in terms of downtime and neighborhood needs also must be addressed. Nevertheless, continuing the discussions were supported.

**Motion by Weir/support from Joling to continue discussions with Rob Britigan regarding Midlink's Green Meadow parkland transfer proposal terms and conditions. The motion was approved:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

**September**

2018 Budget: Parks Director Street described the budget worksheet handout line items proposed for the 2018 Comstock Parks & Recreation budget (worksheet provided in Board packets). The proposed budget plan is considered “forward-looking” to meet near-future needs of Comstock Parks & Recreation. Commissioners reviewed, discussed, and approved the worksheet draft with corrections.

**Motion by Spears/support from Weir to approve proceeding with the 2018 budget draft worksheet with corrections for presentation to the Comstock Township Board for consideration.**

**Motion to approve proceeding with the 2018 Parks & Recreation budget proposal:**

**5 Yes/0 No.**

**October**

Budget Line Items Adjustment: Parks Director Vanessa Street presented three budget line item adjustment proposals.

**Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve line item adjustments as presented.**

**4 Yes/0 No**

2018 Meeting Dates: Parks Director Vanessa Street presented a list of proposed Parks Board of Commissioners Meeting Dates for 2018. After discussion, the Commission members present preferred that the usual "second Monday of the month" meeting schedule continues to apply for 2018, even though the January and March the meetings will need to be held at a different room location.

**Motion by Young/support from Spears to approve the 2018 Meeting dates as amended.**

**4 Yes/0 No**

2017 Purchases: Fleetwood Playground Replacement Part and Wenke Softball Complex Restroom Partitions.

**Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve the purchase  
of the play structure footing part at Fleetwood Park.**

**4 Yes/0 No**

**Motion by Weir/support from Young to approve purchase/installation of  
restroom partitions at Wenke Softball Complex.**

**4 Yes/0 No**

### **November**

Security Cameras: Director Vanessa Street received two quotes (so far) for security camera/systems for Wenke Ball Parks, Robert Morris Park and Merrill Park. After lengthy discussion by the Commissioners, it was decided to consult with additional experts in the field (including police) for more information to better evaluate the security systems to assure that our specific site needs are met. Note that other townships' parks have different types of systems/security. Commissioners are requested to provide any pertinent information they may have as soon as possible to Parks Director Street.

Other: A big Thank You! is extended to Parks Director Vanessa Street and Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins, Commissioners Linda Law and Sharon Spears, and volunteers who hosted, planned and participated in the very successful Celery Street Park Day!

### **December**

2018 Fees: Parks Director Street provided a list of the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Department Activity Fee charges in 2017 for review and consideration for setting 2018 activity fees.

**Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve keeping the same 2017 fees for the activities in  
2018 as presented. The motion to approve the 2018 fees:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

2018 Commission Officer Elections:

**Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve keeping the same 2017 officer roles for 2018.**

**The motion to approve the 2018 officer roles:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

End of Year Purchases: Parks Director Street suggested considering the following end of year purchases: 1) a portable 10'x20' canopy (for 4 planned neighborhood park day events per year) and banners @ \$1100 (note: this is less than the cost of renting a canopy for the events for one year). 2) metal septic risers at Robert Morris Park to avoid recurring damage and costs that occur to the current plastic risers from lawn mowers @ \$4000 for 6 risers. 3) portable 6' pitching mounds (requested by players), the same as those used at the tournaments, at a cost of \$3300 for four mounds. 4) a 10'x10' shed for field grooming equipment storage and mound storage at Wenke Softball Complex, at not more than \$2000.

**Motion by Weir/support from Joling to approve the end of year purchases as presented (Total:  
\$10,400). Motion to approve End of Year purchases:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

Security Camera Discussion: Parks Director Street consulted with law enforcement and security providers about security options and provided information about systems for purchase consideration. Commissioner Young emphasized that it is important to be clear that the Parks & Recreation Commission security objective is to deter vandalism at the Comstock Township Parks. After discussion, the Commissioners chose an appropriate system for purchase.

**Motion by Weir/support from Joling to approve purchase of a system as presented by Parks**

**Director Street. Motion to approve system purchase:**

**5 Yes/0 No**

## **Parks**

The board actions throughout 2017 represent only a partial amount or outline of the Parks and Recreation Department's activities for 2017. Following is a summary of many of the year's activities; much of it is taken from the Director's monthly written report, therefore actions will be basically in consecutive order. Please note that this is not an all-inclusive narrative.

### **Robert Morris Park**

Robert Morris Park was one of the parks plowed in the winter because of the disc golfers, ice fishermen, and sledding activities at the park. A salt-spreader has been installed on the back of the plow truck, which has helped significantly in reducing the ice along the entrance drive

There was interest by park patrons for discs to be sold at the concession stand. The image has been designed by our sign maker (Marc at Sign Center), to correlate with the overall image of our Parks & Recreation publications and signs. A local disc golf professional aided in the selection of the best disc to sell for park patrons. They cost was established at \$12.00 each, and patrons can select from driver, mid-range and putter discs.

Certified playground woodchips were spread at the small playground unit at Robert Morris Park.

Staff started at the park May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Staff is scheduled to have CPR training June 14<sup>th</sup>. AED were taken to parks once AED signs were put up at both Wenke fields and Robert Morris.

Vandalism occurred on the disc golf course and entrance gate. Disc golf hole #6 was stolen from the park, report was made on 5/22/17 (case #175011 Deputy Steve Compo). Larry Labond and his club K'aces replaced the basket. A separate incident on 5/26/17 at approximately 8:00pm a vehicle ran into the West side of the gate (case# 175158 Deputy Bryan McLain). The gate has been welded back together and the post cemented back into the ground.

A few incidents of vandalism were discovered in May. The "Thank you for visiting" sign was stolen. The self-pay post and guard shack were broken into.

A Johnsonville/Meijer BBQ was hosted for fire department in honor of Chief Switalski Wednesday August 9<sup>th</sup>.

A disc golf tournament was held September 9<sup>th</sup>. The last day for staff is September 17<sup>th</sup>, and the park will be winterized shortly after. Whitney Plumbing and Electric were the contractors for the job again this season. Painting the fence along H Ave. was started in the fall.

The DEQ permit application for a fishing deck process continued. Prien & Newhoff did the required drawings for the application. DEQ made a site visit.

### **Wenke Softball Complex**

Recycling was implemented at the softball fields (and Robert Morris Park). Four containers were placed at each park, two for plastic and two for aluminum. The number of water & Gatorade bottles collected at the Softball Fields I greatly reduced the amount of trash. The recycling was taken to the transfer station. New concession menu items for the season were brats and breakfast sandwiches/burritos.

The certified playground woodchips were spread at the small playground unit at Wenke Softball Complex.

The new restroom partitions were installed late fall. The bathroom walls were painted with a protective paint that reduces the amount of mold on the walls from moisture build-up.

### **Green Meadow Park**

Several teams this single field for practice. Currently there are 60 dates reserved for this season, and more are expected as the summer approaches. Most of the reservation dates were from the Kalamazoo Maroons, with a few dates reserved by teams that play in the township leagues. All were charged \$25 for practice time. The grass area was rented to the FC Elite Soccer Club in the evenings for soccer practice.

The gravel parking lot was graded once most of the rainy season passed.

Field rental revenue from teams using the Green Meadow ball field for this season was \$1,700.

The ball field was winterized with bases removed and final nail drag of the infield to prepare it for the winter.

### **Merrill Park**

Gull Lake Schools held their annual salmon release day at Merrill Park on April 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. This was the fifth year of the event, where the students raise salmon at the school and release them in the Kalamazoo River during a picnic day at Merrill Park.

High winds on 3/8/17 knocked down a tree at Merrill Park that was leaning into the river. Removal was delayed until the ground was firm.

The Parks Department has taken over the former maintenance building. The baseball field equipment and extra stock was moved into the storage area.

There was vandalism at the restrooms. The toilet paper dispensers were ripped off the walls. There were items flushed down the toilets that required plumbing service. All vandalism was reported to the police.

A playground safety representative from GameTime Company visited Merrill to evaluate the current playground equipment. He recommended not to reuse the equipment at another park for several reasons. The equipment no longer meets safety standards. With the structures being over 25 years old, he does not typically relocate play structures over ten years old. Examples are: the gap between the guard rail and support beam is a head-trap risk. Swings can no longer be attached to play structures, they must be free standing. The metal platforms and screws are rusted. The chance of the unit deteriorating further during relocating is high.

The township has officially entered into an agreement with the State for the Merrill Park grant project. Work on the details for engineer and architecture started immediately. Once completed and approved the project will go out to bid, and early spring was set as a start date.

### **Cooper Park**

The Maintenance Supervisor, Richard McCulloch, monitored the dam monthly for structural changes. There were no changes to the dam over the winter months.

DEQ was contacted regarding the concern from a resident about the lilies in the pond. Photos of the lilies were sent to the DEQ representative. The DEQ's representative did an initial assessment and stated that if the water lilies flower, either white or yellow, they are indigenous species. If they are not impeding boat traffic, etc. they probably don't meet any criteria for eradication. If they are on private property, the residents can get a permit if they are concerned.

New swing seats for the swing set were ordered, to replace the old, cracked ones. Sand was added to the playground in the fall.

### **Peer Park**

Volunteers from Eaton were interested in spreading woodchips and a landscaping boarder around the memorial stones. They worked with the Park director on their project selections.

### **N. Wenke/S. Wenke Parks**

The gravel parking lots were graded in March. The graffiti on the signs continue to be a problem as the initial product used did not work. The lighthouse was painted, and the gazebo washed this fall.

### **McLinden Nature Trails**

Gravel parking lot was graded in March.

The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) dropped off woodchips unexpectedly at McLinden Nature Trails. These woodchips were from trees cut down by the RCKC, which were only approved to be used along trails and walking paths, not playgrounds. The Parks Department has strived to work effectively with the RCKC and gain better communication about when to expect drop offs in the future. These woodchips were spread along the McLinden Trails

Security lights were repaired this month. Trees were cut back around the fixture to provide more lighting. Litter was removed from the parking lot edge and will be picked up along the trails this month as well.

### **Celery Street Park**

Basketball court was sprayed for weeds. One of the replacement metal basketball nets was stolen again. Additional nets were ordered.

The cracked slide on the Celery Street Park playground is to be removed. The playground equipment is too old and replacement parts are no longer available. Without the slide, the playground is obsolete. Discussion regarding this was taken to the board. Additional sand is needed for the playground.

### **Fleetwood Park**

A dead tree was removed near the pavilion. Swing seats were replaced this fall. Missing segments of the split rail fence were replaced.

The Facility Supervisor (Joe) painted the Fleetwood playground equipment. While working, he noticed that a floor board from one of the walkways was cracking in the middle and needed replacing. Replacement swing seats for the cracked swing set seats were ordered.

### **River Villa Preserve / Jan Schau Wildflower Walk**

These park lands were visited by the board members in the summer.

### **Neal St Ball Diamonds / Football field**

These continue to be unused.

## **Programs**

### **Youth Baseball League**

Registration opened January third for the 2017 youth baseball season. 12 teams signed up the first day of registration. This program is limited to 16 teams due to the number of fields.

### **Pavilion Rentals**

Pavilion rentals opened in the spring. An ad was placed in the Comstock Communicator Newsletter advertising that pavilion rentals offer a great option for family reunions, baby showers, graduation parties and meeting locations.

### **Galesburg Kids Walking Club**

The Parks department partnered with the Galesburg Augusta Primary School & KRVF and provided a six-week program in the spring and fall Thursdays after school (3:15-4:30pm). Participants tracked their steps with pedometers, were provided nature hunt activities, and participated in a supervised one-mile walk each day. At the end of the program the kids were given certificates with their total steps taken for the six-week period

### **Senior Walking Club**

The Parks department partnered with the Comstock Community Center and provided a six-week program, one day a week. Participants tracked their steps with pedometers, were provided water bottles, or t-shirts through sponsors or donations.

### **Community Garden**

The garden to the east of the Community Center offers 12 ft. X 4 ft. raised bed plots (12 total) at a cost of \$10 a plot (money goes back to the community center to cover the cost of water). Plants were provided by local greenhouse donations and the Parks department partnered with local Master Gardeners to provide information for new gardeners.

### **Free Day**

The Free Day was June 21<sup>st</sup> at Robert Morris Park. The Parks department partnered with Kalamazoo County, Portage City, and Kalamazoo City for a joint day. Discover Kalamazoo donated 100 small bags to each park. The bags contained park information, a punch card for a grand prize, and at Robert Morris Park, a kid's scavenger hunt was held and each participant was provided free ice cream or a Popsicle. Activities included scavenger hunt, bird feeder construction, and leaf printing. The activities continued all day. Scavenger hunt participants entered a drawing for a free annual park pass and the Robert Morris Park Disc Golf disc. The Free day went well. The Park director spoke to many park guests who had never been to Robert Morris Park before and enjoyed the park. Total tally was around 120 cars for the day, which was more than usual for a Wednesday.

### **Fall Kickball**

Flyers were put up at Wenke to advertise for Fall Kickball. Posts were made weekly on the Facebook page with a link to sign up. This new program did not get off the ground in 2017.

### **Fall Softball League**

Fall softball league began on Monday August 21<sup>st</sup>. The number of teams was consistent with previous years.

### **Celery Street Park Day**

This was held Saturday October 21<sup>st</sup> 12-4pm. 500 post cards were mailed out to the Celery St. and Merrill Park neighborhoods. A 15x15 tent was rented for crafts and any risk of rain along with a porta jon. There was kickball, small games, snacks, and crafts. Due to limited parking we asked that visitors walk or bike to the event.

### **Parks and Recreation Board/Administration**

The Parks and Recreation Board met monthly in 2017 on the second Monday of the month at 7pm. Most of the meetings were held at the Township Hall. However, the May, June, July and, August meetings were held at four different parks for two specific purposes. The first was for park visitations and observations of parks nearby as well as the park where the meeting was held. These visitations were for evaluation and monitoring purposes. Future developments were discussed, and concerns were noted. The second was to be located where much of the seasonal activity takes place and invite the staff, participants and any others to provide input on the facility and programs. For instance, at the Wenke Softball Complex, the Umpire in Chief for our softball summer recreational leagues shared his views of the facility, management, and programs.

The Board continues to be extremely satisfied with the performance of the Parks and Recreation Director, Vanessa Street, who has proven herself invaluable. She has an excellent working relationship with the board, the township administration, and the maintenance department. She has also built a wonderful cooperative relationship with the Comstock Community Center; the Library; the Baseball Players Association; the baseball and softball umpires; and, the many other park and recreation professionals around the region. Vanessa is very good at initiating ideas, solving problems, handling challenges as they develop, and communicating with the public she serves in all types of circumstances. The board welcomed Rachel Hopkins who was hired as a part-time program coordinator for 2017. Rachel moved smoothly from her past seasons as summer staff to year-round management. She presided over the seasonal staff and programs as well as skillfully filling in for the Park director while she was on family leave.

Board members continue to be pleased with the way the township maintenance department has cared for the parks, and gratefully recognize their efforts to carry out regularly scheduled and routine park maintenance functions as well as effectively handling emergency needs, special requests, and special functions.

The board chair, or designee, and/or the Parks Director routinely attend the Township Board meetings to keep abreast of all Township issues and periodically inform the trustees of Parks and Recreation Department updates. Commissioners agree that working closely with the township trustees and administration along with other factions of the township such as the fire department, library and community center improves communications and benefits our community.

The Parks and Recreation Board members continue to recognize the significance of its fiduciary responsibilities and commend the Parks Director and the Program Coordinator in their judicious efforts to this end.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Law and Vanessa Street  
Commission Chair and Department Director Respectively