

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2018  
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: none

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from December 11, 2017 (note: January 2018 meeting cancelled):**

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

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Law/support from Weir to approve Bills Payable with clarification on property insurance billing dates.

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** A Thank You letter from Kathy Dilsaver (3364 Senne Street) was received by the Comstock Township Board and then forwarded to the Parks & Recreation Commission regarding a decision by the township not to rezone her neighborhood area. She hopes for more neighborhood expansion (vs. industrial) and particularly appreciates the park/green space zoned area known as Green Meadow Park. She suggested expansion of this space for more use by children and for walking trails, including for walking dogs. It was noted by Commissioner Law that many folks spend their lunch break at Green Meadow Park.

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

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

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets. Commissioner Joling thanked Parks Director Street for the recent article in the Comstock Communicator about Merrill Park.

It was noted that not all of the cost of the new bathroom planned for the park is included in the awarded grant improvement funds (specifically for location change+sewer hookup), and so any difference in cost from original plan will be covered by the township.

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

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

- The township has approved a consultant for a project to improve the center of Comstock, which includes Merrill Park.
- The Comstock Superintendent has written a 2017 Administrative Annual Report.
- Commissioner Law has been attending most township meetings and workshops.

**7. Business:**

**a. 2017 Annual Report**

Commissioner Law distributed a draft of the 2017 Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report for review.

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve the 2017 Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report with noted minor corrections.

Motion to approve the 2017 Annual Report: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**b. Merrill Park Update**

- 1) Parks Director Street is working on the bid process for park improvements. It is not finalized.
- 2) Parks Director Street shared the initial conceptual rough draft drawing of planned improvements.
- 3) Commissioner Spears suggested that the playground design process include a kids' perspective.

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- 4) Commissioner Weir recommended that the full amount required for the new bathroom be included in the budget.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve that \$110K be put in the Merrill Park budget for its planned bathroom facility/hook-up.

Motion to approve addition of \$110,000 to the budget: 5 Yes/0 No

**c. Robert Morris Park – DEQ Permit Application**

Commissioner Law met with the DEQ in January 2018 for its site visit to the park, as required for the permit application. Parks Director Street shared a firm concept drawing (referred to as “mock-up”), showing a walkway with a fishing platform at two different location options west of the swimming area, also required for the permit application. The drawing shows the walkway/platform extending from the shore out to the solid muck edge of the lake. Commissioner Law noted that the plan is not actual, and that the platform can be adjusted back (i.e. moved closer to the shore), after Commissioners Spears and Young were concerned about how far the platform was shown to extend into the lake.

**d. MParks Conference Summary**

The Michigan Parks (MParks) Conference was held in Detroit, Michigan, attended by Parks Director Street and Parks Coordinator Hopkins. Both appreciated sharing ideas with other Parks Directors and staff across areas.

Director Street reported the sessions she attended encompassed ‘long-view’ planning, including trends in playground safety risk, ballot initiatives concerning parks, and using economic impact data to demonstrate relevance. Director Street also requested that she receive permission to train and become a Certified Playgroup Safety Inspector so that she can lead community ‘builds’.

Coordinator Hopkins shared an example of a “rebirth of a playground” in Traverse City, about change and progress to make better playgrounds, and shared awarded program information about park visit/photo scavenger hunt activities. Many ideas were shared across areas and among many participants (e.g. “99 programmers”).

Commissioner Spears noted that Firekeepers might be a resource for parks/environmental project funds.

**e. Other Misc.**

- 1) Commissioner Weir requested that the Commission formally reaffirm/approve Parks Coordinator Hopkins’ position from part time to full time.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve full time Parks Coordinator position by Commission vote.

Motion to approve full time position: 5 Yes/ 0 No

- 2) Reflecting on the success of last year’s park “free day”, Commissioner Weir made a motion that we participate in this year’s free day in June.

Motion by Weir/from Young to approve a park “free day” in June 2018: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Monday, March 12 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

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

Call to Order by Vice Chairperson, Judy Joling

**1. Review of the Minutes from February 12, 2018:**

Motion by Spears/support from Weir to accept Minutes with minor wording change to Parks Director Report summary.

Motion to approve Minutes: 4 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

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

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 4 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

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

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** A request was made by Parks Director Street to add a request for a playground border purchase at Wenke Park.

**6. Reports:**

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

b. **Treasurer:** Report provided in packets. Commissioner Weir noted that revenue and expenditure reports have not yet been updated by the township.

c. **Commission Chair:** No Report.

**7. Business:**

**a. Request for Rachel Hopkins to become a Ticket officer at RMP**

Parks Director Street noted that there is no staff at RMP until Memorial Day. She requests that Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins become a ticket officer at Robert Morris Park and to remove Gary Swanson from that role.

Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve request for Rachel Hopkins to become a Ticket Officer at RMP.

Motion to approve request: 4 Yes/ 0 No

**b. Payroll classification – Rachel Hopkins**

Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins is currently a full-time hourly employee limited to 40 hr/week. A request has been made to change this designation to full time salaried employee, as duties have consistently involved after hours/weekend work, yet without the ability to accrue flex time hours.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to change payroll classification of Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins from hourly to salaried, subject to the Comstock Parks and Recreation Policy and Procedure Manual.

Motion to approve designation change: 4 Yes/0 No

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**c. Policy & Procedure Manual Updates**

Parks Director Street provided a draft of the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Policy and Procedure Manual with some highlighted proposed changes to Commissioners for review and discussion. Based on many questions, it was decided to table any approval/decisions to allow more time to consider changes. Parks Director Street will email the draft to Commissioners for review (and the Township's manual for comparison).

**d. Additional Agenda Item: Request for playground border purchase for Wenke Park**

Parks Director Street reported that the playground border at Wenke Park is in disrepair and needs to be replaced. She obtained three quotations from vendors for the replacement. After discussion, a quote from Direct Rubber Mulch @ \$1383 was selected.

Motion by Weir/support from Young to approve \$1383 for the Wenke Park playground border repair/replacement.

Motion to approve purchase: 4 Yes/0 No

**Other:** Commissioner Spears noted that Fleetwood Platt has a facebook page and suggested that the P&Rec Park Day for the park also be advertised in such pages. Parks Director Street will follow up.

**8. Announcements: None**

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

The Next meeting will take place on Monday, April 9 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2018  
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: Comstock Township Board Trustee David Camburn

**1. Review of the Minutes from March 12, 2018**

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

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

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

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:** Trustee Camburn, attending his first Parks Commission meeting, thanked the commissioners for their good service. Regarding Merrill Park planned improvements, he suggested that walkways be well lit to provide a safe area for folks to enjoy the park at sunset hours.

Parks Director Street and Commissioner Spears noted that security camera placement in certain areas is planned.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** Commissioner Young requested addition of the 'Playground Inspector Certification' topic to the agenda.

**6. Reports:**

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

- Regarding Robert Morris Park: The DEQ application review fee for a fishing deck is now \$500 vs. \$250 because of a review request 'category change'. The DEQ will post a notice for public input for a 20 day period. Nearby lake property owners will be contacted in writing or by phone. After public and other input, the DEQ decision will indicate whether the grant application process can be started.

Commissioner Weir asked 1) if we will see a presentation of the plan, 2) if the Commission needs to approve the fee increase, and 3) how the budget approval process should account for the change. In addition, pre-purchase or post-purchase approvals for items over \$1000 or changes need to be clarified procedurally. Commissioner Law will check with the attorney as to the proper budgetary approval procedures.

- Parks Coordinator Hopkins reported that there are now 24 softball teams signed up (so far) and 14 baseball teams signed up (the maximum number) for play at the Wenke Softball Complex.

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets. Commissioner Weir noted that revenue and expenditure reports still have not been updated by the township.

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7:00 P.M.**

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

- Mike Dyer has been promoted to Deputy Fire Chief
- Commissioner Law suggested that for 2018 an oral Annual Report for the Parks and Recreation Commission be presented to the township board in addition to providing a written report
- The Planning Board has funded a Comstock central business area assessment to provide to businesses looking to invest in/come to the area. This may provide an opportunity to include information to promote our parks. There is planned a public input meeting in June 2018.

**7. Business:**

**a. Park Visit Schedule**

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to approve the 2018 Park Visit Schedule as proposed by Parks Director Street.

Motion to approve 2018 Parks Visit Schedule plan: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**b. Employee Handbook**

Parks Director Street and Commissioners have suggested section and sentence revisions to the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Policy and Procedure Manual. After discussion of the proposed changes, it was apparent that format changes and more extensive revisions are needed to improve the document overall. Parks Director Street will work on a new draft for Commission consideration.

Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve proceeding with a new revision of the Comstock Township Parks & Recreation Policy and Procedure Manual for review/discussion/approval at a later Commission meeting.

Motion to approve continued revision of the Manual revision for later review: 4 Yes/ 0 No.  
(Note Commissioner Weir no longer present).

**c. Other – Playground Inspector Certification**

Parks Director Street requested approval for training/certification as a Playground Inspector at a previous meeting. This topic was brought forward to today's meeting.

Motion by Law/support from Joling to pursue training/certification (up to \$600) for Parks Director Street as proposed.

Motion to approve training/certification (up to \$600) for Parks Director Street: 4 Yes/ 0 No

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, May 14, 2018 at 7:00 P.M.

Commissioners should visit and assess the condition of the Jan Schau Wildflower Walk and River Villa Preserve, and also visit the community garden on their own time prior to the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of May 14, 2018  
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: 4

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from April 9, 2018**

Motion by Spears/support from Weir to approve Minutes with minor corrections to comments in section 6.a. bullet points, and spelling correction on 6.c.

Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

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

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

- 3. Correspondence:** An email from Dave Camburn to Parks Comstock (Vanessa Street) was received regarding a "dangerous situation at Wenke Softball Complex"; specifically, foul balls nearly striking children in the play area between the ball fields. Mr. Camburn spoke to the Commissioners about the hazard, having witnessed a close-call at the Wenke Complex, and recently learning of a serious injury to a child hit at another ball park. He suggested the Commission consider a play area net-cover remedy that he had researched.

Commissioner Weir also shared a close-call experience. Mr. Camburn requested that the Parks Department do something to remedy this risk situation.

Parks Director Street shared a Risk Improvement assessment email regarding a previous risk assessment of the area which concluded that if people are in the park, then they have accepted the risk of being struck by a ball.

Commissioner Young noted that citizens expect that safety is given due consideration at children's play areas, and given the two (and maybe other) incidents, the Commission needs to respond with a remedy. Commissioner Weir noted that any response should be timely, as the softball season is in full-swing now. He suggested a dollar limit should be set and approved so that action can be taken soon.

Motion by Spears/support from Young for Parks Director Vanessa Street to pursue and install a cover (at a cost up to \$2000) to improve safety at the play area at Wenke Softball Complex.

Motion to approve remedy as determined by the Parks Director (up to \$2000); 5 Yes/0 No.

**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. Commissioner Weir noted he is still awaiting budget numbers to be provided by the Township/Treasurer.

**c. Commission Chair:** Commissioner Law shared that Midlink has inquired about Green Meadow Park options.

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Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of May 14, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

**7. Business:**

**a. Merrill Park Improvement Plans**

Parks Director Street shared a schematic of park improvement plans with Commissioners (see Director's report). Note that the new bathroom building will be located across from the current structure on the park green grounds.

**b. Merrill Park Bathroom Demo**

Parks Director Street indicated that the demolition cost of the existing bathroom could be up to \$5500 plus \$500 for asbestos testing. Commissioner Weir would like to request that the Township Board match the demolition cost with the Parks Commission.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to request that the Comstock Township Board match the Merrill Park bathroom demolition cost (up to \$3000).

Motion to approve request: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**c. Fleetwood Park Drinking Fountain**

Consideration of the purchase of a new drinking fountain for Fleetwood Park was discussed by Commissioners, but questions arose as to its need. The question will be raised with neighborhood citizens during their next Park Day.

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to table consideration of a drinking fountain purchase for Fleetwood Park pending input from neighborhood citizens at Fleetwood Park Day.

Motion to approve tabling purchase consideration: 5 Yes/ 0 No

**d. Park Visits (Jan Schau Wildflower Walk, River Villa Preserve, and the community garden)**

Commissioners reported that path mowing was needed and some trees were down along the walk and preserve, and that only two garden plots were started as of today's meeting (though planting season is just starting).

**e. Lillies at Cooper Pond**

Options for reducing the amount of lilies growing in Cooper Pond were described in an email from Sara Thoma of the Michigan DEQ to Parks Director Street, including chemical treatment. Commissioner Weir would like to obtain information from a licensed chemical application company about what they recommend and the cost of treatment.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to obtain a recommendation and cost estimate for chemical treatment at Cooper Pond from a licensed applicator, for consideration by the Commission.

Motion to pursue recommendation/bid: 5 Yes/0 No

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 P.M. Commissioners should gather on Monday June 11 at 6:30 P.M. at the Wenke Softball Complex, with the meeting to follow at 7:00 P.M. at the Wenke Softball Complex Pavilion. Commissioners should visit Fleetwood Park and Green Meadow Park on their own time before the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
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Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2018  
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

**1. Review of the Minutes from May 14, 2018:**

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 Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** Correspondence was received by Commissioner Spears from Helen Hayes of the Fleetwood Park neighborhood indicating support for a Fleetwood Park drinking fountain as well as the notion of installing other amenities. It is noted that a Fleetwood neighborhood picnic is planned for August.

**4. Citizen's Comments:** Pat Haring (555 Moline St., Kalamazoo) shared information that pond weeds, such as those present in Cooper Pond, can be trimmed using a "Weedgator". She will provide a website link to Parks Director Street showing its operation for consideration.

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

**6. Reports:**

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

A special Thank You! was extended to parks Coordinator Hopkins for the nice job hosting/organizing the recent "Build and Bird House Workshop" at Robert Morris Park.

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

Commissioner Weir noted he is still waiting for budget numbers on spreadsheets, delayed due to an apparent software programmer backlog, and requested that we use last year's numbers as approximations. Parks Director Street will work on preparing these approximations.

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

- A Day of Remembrance for Fire Chief Edward Switalski is being held June 14 at 4:30 P.M.
- Questions regarding how to ratify/approve budget items after the fact were addressed by the township attorney but still need clarification. Commissioner Law will check the proper wording needed in such cases. Commissioners may establish that expenditures under a certain amount can be approved by the Parks Director, and require that specific expenditures be listed in the Director's Report each month.
- Midlink/Rob Britigan is still interested in Green Meadow Park. Commissioner Law and Parks Director Street along with others met with Mr. Britigan to discuss proposals, including use of a small elementary school property. Proposals thus far are not considered suitable.

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Motion by Joling/support from Weir stating that the Comstock Parks & Recreation Commission is not interested in proceeding further unless a concrete offer to relocate Green Meadow Park (retaining its area location, size and all of its several amenities and without incurring cost to taxpayers) is received for consideration.

Motion to approve statement: 5 Yes/ 0 No.

**7. Business:**

**a. RMP Fishing Pier – DEQ Application Comments & Discussion**

Commissioner Law reported that letters from lake owners were received by the DEQ regarding the RMP Fishing Pier/Deck permit application. Objections regarding the Deck consistently concerned its long length, and that a shorter pier (by 15-20') would be more acceptable. The DEQ has indicated to Parks Director Street that the DEQ would pass the permit as submitted, including a shorter length of ~55 feet if desired (revising the current permit application without any additional application cost).

Commissioner Young suggested that since the next meeting will be held at Robert Morris Park, a notice for citizens be posted so as to provide an opportunity to see the final proposal/revision, as requested at last year's meeting. Commissioner Weir suggested that buoys be placed in the water at distances proposed for the pier/deck to provide visual perspective of the plans. Commissioner Law will facilitate putting the notice on the website and arranging for buoys/markers for the next meeting.

**b. Wenke Playground Cover Discussion**

Parks Commissioners Law and Joling, Parks Director Street, Trustee Dave Camburn, Supervisor Randy Thompson, Superintendent Scott Hess, Kalamazoo County Parks Director David Rachowicz and Insurance Representative Patricia Kelly met at the Wenke Softball Complex recently to discuss the request for a protective cover for the play area and to discuss liability issues. The constraint for any cover remedy is that it must be approved/meet regulatory requirements in terms of its design and installation by a certified playground installer.

Parks Director Street shared information with Commissioners about cover system options from a certified installer. Commissioner Law also advised that another approach is to remove and/or relocate the play area, although a better location in the park was not determined.

Commissioners Law and Young will assist Parks Director Street in widening the search for certified playground vendors and obtain play area cover proposals/quotes.

**c. Park Visits – Green Meadow, Fleetwood, Wenke Softball Complex**

Commissioners reported good conditions at Green Meadow Park (although one downed soccer net was noted), and Wenke Softball Complex. Play structure platforms need repainting at Fleetwood Park. A low level of playground sand was also noticed. Walkway cracks were noted. Questions about the confusing parking signs arose. Commissioner Spears suggested a handicap-swing would be a good addition.

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M. The next meeting will take place on July 9 at 6:30 P.M. at Robert Morris Park, with meeting to follow at 7:00 P.M. at the Robert Morris Park Pavilion. Commissioners are requested to visit McLinden Nature Trails on their own before the July 9 meeting. Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of July 9, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, Teresa Young  
Commissioner Absent: John Weir  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director and Rachel Hopkins, Parks Coordinator  
# Citizens in attendance: 7

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from June 11, 2018**

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

**2. Bills Payable**

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

**3. Correspondence: None**

**4. Citizen's Comments:**

- Julie Vanderweele (8199 East H Ave.) voiced support for a RMP fishing pier as a positive addition to the park
- Bert Kreg (3853 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> St.) voiced support for a RMP fishing pier especially for handicapped groups
- Michelle Mohny (2895 Casper), Township Clerk, voiced support for a RMP fishing pier and shared an email from her disabled spouse expressing support and noted its benefit for grandchildren. She also noted it was supported on a survey and noted such a pier at Fort Custer was fine with boat traffic.
- Travis Law (8225 East H. Ave.) noted that the fishing pier would be a nice feature, especially off to the side of the swimming area.
- Brian Young (8116 Waterwood Dr.) voiced concern about the inaccuracy of the DEQ/and Prein & Newhoff's site map distance numbers related to the stated location placement of the pier and its length. He voiced concern with folks diving off the pier if in deeper water, and suggested that having a 3-4' water depth at platform edges would be best.

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

**6. Reports:**

- a. **Parks Director:** Provided to Commissioners in Board packets. Parks Director Street noted the June 19, 2018 sample spike in e.coli levels at RMP, followed by passing daily test results thereafter.
- b. **Treasurer:** Report provided in packets. Commissioner Law noted that the Commission Treasurer Weir was not present however reported that the 2018 budget numbers are coming soon from the Township Treasurer.
- c. **Commission Chair:** Commissioner Law noted that the Commission must resubmit some Capital Improvement Project applications, including those for repaving the park road and parking lot.

**7. Business:**

**a. RMP Fishing Pier**

Commissioner Law reported that the DEQ received citizen's input. Regarding negative concerns, the DEQ gave Parks Director Street the option to discuss further or issue the permit. A 30 day extension was requested. A major concern was the distance of the pier/its protrusion into deep water.

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7:00 P.M.**

Parks Director Street placed stake markers into the water at RMP marking the pier location/start, length and platform extended length. Distances were also marked along the grass to aid perspective. During discussion it was noted by a citizen that the provided map/drawing (Prein & Newhof (March 2018)) showed a different start location/start point than that marked/staked. The map shows it is located/starts farther away to the east of the marked/staked location approximately 17 paces (which corresponds to approximately 51 feet), which would result in the pier extending into deeper water due to the shoreline contour difference. Another citizen wondered about water/lake height changes. It was noted that the west-most swimming buoy is 110 feet from the shore.

The intended location of the pier is as physically marked/staked for today's meeting at RMP.

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to proceed with securing the DEQ permit pending revision of the Prein & Newhoff map/drawing so that the pier is placed as intended at today's meeting (July 9, 2018), approximately 17 paces west of the Prein & Newhof (March 2018) drawing location.

Motion to approve proceeding securing permit pending revision of location specification (map/drawing): 4 Yes/ 0 No

**b. Cooper Pond Lily Pads**

Commissioners discussed the 'weedgator' and chemical treatment options to control lily pad growth and the associated costs. It was not clear to what extent shoreline residents or the parks are responsible for the aesthetic lily /clearance upkeep of the pond, nor effects of chemical treatments downstream. It was decided to table any action at this time.

Motion by Joling/support from Young to table any action at this time.  
Motion to approve no action at this time: 4 Yes/0 No

**c. Wenke Softball Complex Playground Covering**

Commissioners discussed leaving the structure as is, the cost of making changes that may stop foul balls from entering the play area, and eliminating the risk altogether by removing the play structure. Commissioners were divided on which approach to take. Several citizens in attendance noted ball field goers seem to enjoy having the play structure at the ball fields. Discussion will continue with no action taken at this time.

**d. Park Visits – McLinden Nature Trails & Robert Morris Park**

McLinden Nature Trails looked good, but some graffiti was noted east of the parking area. Parks Coordinator Hopkins noted that there are daily hikers who are quick to notify the Parks & Rec Commission group of any problems.

Commissioners noticed how nice and clean Robert Morris Park looked, and offered a Good Job-Thank You! to the park staff.

**8. Announcements:** Commissioner Spears announced that Fleetwood park Day is scheduled for Saturday, July 14, at 1-3 P.M. There will be games, snacks, and crafts.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M. The next meeting is scheduled for August 13, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. (Commissioners please visit Celery Street Park, Cooper Park, Peer Park, Neal Street Ball Diamonds, and North & South Wenke Parks before the meeting on your own). No visit to Merrill due to construction.  
Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2018  
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: 5

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from July 9, 2018:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept Minutes as presented with name spelling correction and addition of word "approximate" and use of word "paces" in section 7a (to better indicate the marked location change approximately measured via paces at the July P&Rec meeting).

Motion to approve Minutes: 4 Yes/1 Abstain

**2. Bills Payable:**

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

Motion to approve Bills Payable: 4 Yes/1 Abstain

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Citizen's Comments:**

- Pat Haring (555 Moline St.) asked if a decision was made about the Cooper Park lily pad proliferation. Commissioner Young noted that at the last meeting no action was taken.
- Beatrice St. Clair (5672 Comstock Ave.) also voiced concern about the Cooper Park lily pads and shared an idea about treatment done in winter (on ice) that stops growth later. She offered to provide reference information to Parks Director Street.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** Commissioner Weir requested to add the topic of the Wenke Softball Complex Playground Covering. There was consensus to add the topic for discussion.

**6. Reports:**

- a. **Parks Director:** Report provided to Commissioners in Board packets.  
Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins reported that 25-30 people attended the Celery Street Park Day. A Good Job/Thank You! was extended to Justin, Rachel and Vanessa for a nice Park Day. Survey feedback on the park was received.
- b. **Treasurer:** Report provided in packets.  
Commissioner Weir, P&Rec Commission Treasurer, objected to the prolonged delay (~8-mos. so far) in receiving correct monthly budget spreadsheets/figures from the Township. The commission cannot properly monitor expenditures and revenues without current, correct budget numbers. A complaint about the delay will be raised at the August 20, 2018 Comstock Township meeting by Commissioner Law.
- c. **Commission Chair:** Refer to Business section 7.

**7. Business:**

**a. RMP Fishing Pier – DEQ Permit Application**

Parks Director Street reported that if the location of the pier is changed from that specified in the drawing submitted with the DEQ permit application, a new permit application (with the updated drawing/blueprint) must be submitted. A new fee would also be required.

After discussion, the commission agreed that the intended location of the pier is as physically marked at the RMP site at the July 9, 2018 P&Rec Commission meeting, which therefore would require a revised drawing and new DEQ permit application.

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

Commissioner Young suggested that the commission proceed with a two-step approach: 1) request, review and approve a Prein and Newhoff drawing revision/update showing the pier location at the intended location (to include in a new DEQ permit application) and then 2) consider proceeding with approval of a new DEQ permit application.

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to procure a Prein and Newhoff revision of the RMP Fishing Pier drawing (location) according to the pier placement marked at RMP on July 9, 2018 at the P&Rec Commission meeting (which is approximately 51 feet (17 paces) west of the placement shown in the Prein and Newhoff drawing dated March 2018), with consideration of an appropriate length.

Motion to approve revising the RMP Fishing Pier drawing/location: 5 Yes/0 No

**b. Capital Improvement Projects**

Parks Director Street listed the following Capital Improvement Project (CIP) proposals:

- 1) Two pavilion roof repairs (shingle work @\$ 10-15K each)
- 2) Celery Street Park basketball court replacement + hoops @ \$25K
- 3) Resurface Robert Morris Park parking lot
- 4) Playground replacement @ \$40K
- 5) South Wenke Park gazebo replacement

Motion by Weir/support from Joling for Parks Director Street to put in/submit CIP applications for the items listed.

Motion to approve submission of CIP applications: 5 Yes/0 No

**c. Benches & Trash Cans at Merrill, N. & S. Wenke, Peer, and Cooper Parks**

Parks Director Street reported that looking forward, trash cans with special lids and benches bolted to a foundation are items needed. This current capital Improvement project (@ \$45K) for future consideration needs to be approved.

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve the current CIP for future consideration as presented.

Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No

**d. Park Visits – Celery, Cooper, Peer, North & South Wenke**

New considerations include adding a chain/rope barrier between lot posts at South Wenke Park and paving entrances and parking lots of both North and South Wenke Parks, as the cost of annual re-grading of the graveled areas is high and may be more than the cost and maintenance of paving. It was suggested that this be included in next year's CIP proposal list.

**e. Playground Cover at Wenke Softball Complex**

Commissioner Weir shared that on a visit to Bailey Park, Battle Creek, he noticed considerable height was added to the backstops using a netting material (~20 feet). This might be work to address the Wenke Softball Complex foul ball concern. Commissioner Law will follow-up with the Battle Creek Parks Department.

**f. Other**

Parks Director Street reported that bids received for the Merrill Park improvement project exceeded what was expected as reasonable. She suggested nulling the bids received, and restarting the project bid process in December 2018.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to authorize Parks Director Street to rebid the Merrill Park project if not able to reduce the current bid costs.

Motion to approve rebid process as presented: 5 Yes/0 No

**8. Announcements: Green Meadow Park Day is Sept. 15 & Cooper Park Day is Oct. 6**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M. The next meeting will take place on Sept. 10, 2018.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission**  
Meeting Minutes of September 10, 2018  
7:00 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 13, 2018**

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to accept Minutes as presented, with address correction.  
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:** Commissioner Spears shared a request from a Fleetwood Park area resident that lighting in the park would be helpful as teenagers gather at night.

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

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** Commissioner Weir requested the addition of two topics:  
1) S. Wenke Park gazebo pricing information and 2) Discussion on whether an "Old Business" topic category should be included as part of the agenda going forward.

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Report provided to Commissioners in Board packets. Parks Director Street shared that bids for the Merrill Park improvement project would 'go back out' in November 2018.

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

- Commissioner Weir extended a Thank You! to Commissioner Law for attending the Comstock Township meeting to seek to obtain the proper P&Rec budget information.

**c. Commission Chair:**

- Commissioner Law conveyed P&Rec budget concerns at the last Comstock Township meeting.
- The P&Rec Capital Improvement Project (CIP) projects application was completed and 6-7 tentatively evaluated: the first three (Pavilion roofing, Celery Park playground equipment and Robert Morris Park paving) and the sixth listed (Celery Street paving) are moving forward. Next year's projects will include North and South Wenke Park paving.
- The Battle Creek Parks Director was contacted about their use of ball field area nets. Commissioner Law will follow-up regarding Field #4's net, near the concession stand, vs. Field #9's net, which appears to serve a different purpose.
- Commissioner Law contacted the Consumer Energy Foundation to see if they would be amenable to helping improve the lights at Wenke Softball Complex. They responded that the IRS does not allow them to fund lighting projects.

**7. Business:**

**a. 2019 Parks Budget**

- Parks Director Street described the changes from the old budget format to the new budget format, noting that some categories will be combined going forward (consistent with the new guidance provided to township by the State of Michigan). Some errors in budget item placement under specific categories in the 'old' budget format were identified which need follow-up.

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of September 10, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

- Budget numbers from 2018 and also those projected for 2019 were discussed. Parks Director Street will check with Comstock Township Treasurer Bret Padgett to clarify the new "Grant" budget category/placement, as well as "CIP projects greater than \$10,000" category placement. Note that as CIPs get approved, they will be added to the budget.
- Commissioner Weir noted that regarding the Merrill Park budget, the Merrill Park bathroom "moving" project was approved by the Comstock Township Board @ \$100K.

Commissioners thanked Parks Director Street for a good job on the budget draft for 2019.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve the draft 2019 budget as presented, with the understanding that the 'Grant' category may be added.

Motion to approve the draft budget as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No

- Parks Director Street proposed creation of a full-time Parks Maintenance Leader staff position (to replace the current part-time position) due to the need for year-round maintenance consistency of the parks. She presented a proposed position description listing the year-round tasks required. A maintenance shop will be utilized in the existing building at Merrill Park. It is planned to transition the current part time maintenance leader staff member to full time.

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to create a full time Parks Maintenance Leader position, as presented, starting fiscal year 2019.

Motion to approve creation of position as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No.

**b. Gazebo (S. Wenke Park)**

Commissioner Weir reported the local-supplier cost of a 8' diameter gazebo was about \$3000, and the cost of a 16' diameter gazebo was about \$7000 (hexagonal shape, composite decking, vinyl siding, metal roof). After discussion, the Commission questioned the need and cost with respect to other projects ongoing. The Commission will keep the project in mind but no action was taken.

**c. Discussion of Addition of an 'Old Business' topic to Agendas**

Commissioner Weir suggested that we add an "Old Business" topic to the agenda going forward to better track ongoing business. Suggestions included "pending business" or "follow-up" business" and "new business" categories. Commissioner Young noted that certain format items were specified in the P&Rec Handbook. Commissioner Law will check on format requirements.

**8. Announcements: Green Meadow Park Day is Sept. 15 & Cooper Park Day is Oct. 6**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 P.M. The next meeting will take place on October 8, 2018.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of October 8, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

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

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from September 10, 2018:**

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 (it was noted that credit card billing information is not yet provided in the budget spreadsheet).  
Motion to approve Bills Payable: 5 Yes/0 No

**3. Correspondence:** An email was received from BobbiJo Gomache stating appreciation for the P&Rec Walking Club Program.

**4. Citizen's Comments:** A citizen in attendance reported that specific information about the winter lilly pad treatment option for Cooper Park suggested at a previous meeting is still being sought and has not yet been provided to Parks Director Street.

**5. Request for Agenda Adjustments:** Commissioner Law noted she will include "Old Business" and "New Business" categories in the next agenda.

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Report provided to Commissioners in Board packets\*.

Parks Coordinator Hopkins reported that vandalism occurred at Green Meadow Park (grass torn-up from vehicles), N. Wenke Park (spray painting and destruction of picnic table/benches), and McLinden Walking Trails (spray-painting). Commissioners agreed that vandalism should be reported to police in every case. Commissioner Young suggested that nearby residents/businesses be encouraged to report incidences (e.g. provide fliers w/ contact numbers to them for reporting incidences)

\*(Commissioner Weir requested that more than one quote per expenditure item be included in future packets)

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets. Commissioners Law and Weir noted that 2017 figures still need to be corrected and 2018 figures provided.

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

- Commissioner Law will continue efforts to contact Baily Park, BC parks officials regarding information about specific fencing uses at the park, per inquiry by Commissioner Weir.
- Commissioner Law reported that at the recent Comstock Township meeting it was noted that more elections help will be needed (please contact Michelle Mohney, Comstock Township Clerk, if available).

**7. Business:**

**a. Robert Morris Park Fishing Pier**

A computer screenshot was provided in Board packets showing drawn-in piers at location "A" and location "B". Location "B" corresponds to the more-west location as discussed at the P&Rec

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of October 8, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

meeting on July 9, 2018. At the P&Rec meeting on August 13, 2018, it was decided to proceed with the drawing revision work by Prein & Newhoff showing location "B" which then the P&Rec Board would review and approve before proceeding with a new DEQ permit application. Due to some additional cost, Parks Coordinator Hopkins relayed that Parks Director Street paused the re-drawing work pending discussion of the pier final length and location approval by the Commission.

It was noted that the current DEQ permit (for location "A") is in effect until May 2019. It was also nevertheless noted that citizen support was received for location "B".

After lengthy discussion by Commissioners, Commissioner Joling moved/with support from Spears, to 1) pursue location "B" with the pier length to be a distance back from the muck line for optimum casting (at most 15' back), and 2) proceed with finishing the Prein & Newhoff drawing to then come back to the P&Rec Board for final approval.  
(note numerals 1) and 2) added for clarity).  
Motion approved: 5 Yes/ 0 No.

It was noted by Commissioner Law that the project may be able to proceed as a CIP (using a bid process) vs. as a grant process, if approved.

**b. 2018 End of Year Purchases**

- **1. Pavillion Roofs (at RMP)**  
(see motion under item 5 below)
  
- A motion was made by Weir/support from Spears to approve the following expenditures:
  - 2. Robert Morris Park Entrance Gate** –repair not to exceed \$2200
  - 3. Bleachers – Wenke Softball Complex** –replacement not to exceed \$8000
  - 4. Robert Morris Park Beach Sand** – added sand not to exceed \$1400

Motion to approve above expenditures as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No.

- **5. Celery Street – Playground Equipment**  
Parks Coordinator Hopkins described the possibility of acquiring a 50% match grant (up to \$25000) from GameTime playground manufacturing company for a new playground structure at Celery Street Park. She will hear if granted by Oct. 31, 2018.

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to place expenditure priority on Celery Street playground equipment (item 5) over pavilion roofs at RMP (item 1) this year, not to exceed \$25000. If the match grant is not approved, then use funds for roofs now. If the match grant is approved, approve funds for RMP pavilion roof repair next year, not to exceed \$17000.

Motion to approve conditional expenditures as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No.

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

The next meeting will take place on Tues. November 13, 2018 (note offices are closed on Nov. 12, 2018).

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2018  
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  
No citizens in attendance.

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from October 8, 2018**

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:** None

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

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

**6. Reports:**

**a. Parks Director:** Report provided to Commissioners in Board packets.

Parks Director Street shared that new benches have just been securely installed at many parks.

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

**c. Commission Chair:** Commissioner Law reported that the budget process for 2019 is going forward. A public hearing on the budget is scheduled for November 19, 2018 and a vote is scheduled for December 3, 2018.

**7. Business:**

**a. 2019 Meeting Dates**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to accept the 2019 meeting dates as: Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 12 and Dec. 9.

Motion to approve 2019 meeting dates as presented above: 5 Yes/0 No

**b. Wenke Softball Complex Updates**

Commissioner Law and Parks Coordinator Hopkins shared photos of the netting material at Baily Park, Battle Creek, for consideration for Wenke Softball Complex improvement. Commissioner Weir requested that the cost and installation cost of the netting be pursued. It was noted that our insurance company agrees netting is nice but not necessary. Parks Director Street suggested looking at other 'whole park improvement' projects such as installing parking lot lighting.

**c. Robert Morris Park Fishing Pier Updates**

Parks Director Street requested clarification/verification on the pier length discussion decision from the last meeting on October 8, 2018. The re-drawing process will continue at location "B", with the outer edge approximately 15 ft. back from the muck line.

**d. Cooper Pond Updates**

Parks Director Street shared that Matt Diana from the DNR plans to attend a future meeting to discuss lilly pad control options.

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

**e. Project Updates**

Parks Director Street reported that the bench project came in significantly under budget and so the pavilion roofs at Robert Morris Park and the Celery Street playground equipment project (\$24,000, including shipping and woodchip cover) can come out of the 2018 budget. A \$15,000 grant was awarded which covers ½ of the structural cost of the playground equipment. The rest of the cost comes from the P&Rec budget with savings from volunteer labor. The pavilion roof material has been delivered and will soon be installed.

A special ThankYou! is extended to Rachel Hopkins and Vanessa Street for saving the township/P&Rec \$15K!

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

The Next meeting will take place on Monday, December 10 at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission**  
Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2018  
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir, Teresa Young  
Staff Present: Vanessa Street, Parks Director  
No citizens in attendance.

Call to Order by Chairperson, Linda Law

**1. Review of the Minutes from November 13, 2018:**

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept Minutes with correction to meeting dates.  
Motion to approve Minutes: 5 Yes/0 No

**2. Bills Payable:**

Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve 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:** Report provided to Commissioners in Board packets.  
Parks Director Street noted that the 2019 Programming List includes a variety of planned activities.

**b. Treasurer:** Report provided in packets. It was noted that some budget carryover funds exist.

**c. Commission Chair:** Commissioner Law reported that the 2019 township general budget and the CIP budgets were both passed. She also shared the Comstock Downtown Development Authority Proposed Boundaries plan dated December 2018.

**7. Business:**

**a. Wenke Softball Complex – Fencing Quote**

A fencing quote was obtained for replacing current softball backstop fencing with taller fencing, for consideration. Commissioner Weir will follow up regarding obtaining information to only extend existing fencing.

**b. RMP Fishing Pier Renderings for DEQ Permit**

A drawing/rendering of a RMP fishing pier location at "location B" was provided by Prein & Newhof for review by the P&Rec Board. It includes a sidewalk and boardwalk leading to the fishing dock. The muck line at location B is farther from the shoreline than at the original location A, and runs more diagonal to the shoreline. By measurement it is also farther out by ~20 feet than where marked with a buoy at the July 9, 2018 meeting. The apparent water depth along the dock "T" edge ranges from 3-6 feet, according to the drawing. Approximately half of the 10-ft. wide outer platform is ~10' back from the muck line; the fishing dock-walk portion is well back from the muck line. The total length from the shoreline is 90 feet (40' boardwalk, 50' fishing dock (including the 10' "T" top)). For reference, the west-most swimming buoy is placed at approximately 110 feet from its shoreline.

Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept the final drawing as presented (at location B) to finish the processing of the DEQ permit.

Motion to approve: 5 Yes/0 No

Note: Parks Director Street noted that since no changes were made to the pier design itself as presented in the original DEQ permit application, and that only a location change was involved (from "A" to "B"), then the original permit is still valid, according to the DEQ; consequently, no additional permit fee is necessary for the pier move change to location B.

**Charter Township of Comstock  
Parks & Recreation Commission  
Meeting Minutes of December 10, 2018  
7:00 P.M.**

**c. 2019 Commission Officer Elections**

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to continue with current Commission roles for 2019.  
Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No

**8. Announcements: None**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

The Next meeting will take place on January 14, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, Teresa Young, Secretary

**Comstock Charter Township  
Parks and Recreation Department  
Annual Report 2018**

**Introduction**

The Parks and Recreation Commission commissioners elected to a four-year term in December 2016 were Judy Joling, Linda Law, Sharon Spears, John Weir and Teresa Young. Officers for the year 2018 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 2018 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.

**January** – No meeting

**February**

Commissioner Law distributed a draft of the 2017 Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report for review. Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve the 2017 Comstock Township Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report with noted minor corrections.

**Motion to approve the 2017 Annual Report: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

Parks Director Street is working on the bid process for park improvements. It is not finalized. Parks Director Street shared the initial conceptual rough draft drawing of planned improvements. Commissioner Spears suggested that the playground design process include a kids' perspective. Commissioner Weir recommended that the full amount required for the new bathroom be included in the budget. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve that \$93,300 be put in the Merrill Park budget for its planned bathroom facility/hook-up. (The grant includes \$17,000 for restroom upgrades. The estimated cost of the new restroom building is \$110,300).

**Motion to approve addition of \$110,000 to the budget: 5 Yes/0 No**

Commissioner Weir requested that the Commission formally reaffirm/approve Parks Coordinator Hopkins' position from part time to full time. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve full time Parks Coordinator position by Commission vote.

**Motion to approve full time position: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

Reflecting on the success of last year's park "free day", Commissioner Weir made a motion that we participate in this year's free day in June. Support from Spears.

**Motion by Weir/from Young to approve a park "free day" in June 2018: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

## **March**

Parks Director Street noted that there is no staff at RMP until Memorial Day. She requests that Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins become a ticket officer at Robert Morris Park and to remove Gary Swanson from that role. Motion by Spears/support from Young to approve request for Rachel Hopkins to become a Ticket Officer at RMP.

**Motion to approve request: 4 Yes/ 0 No**

Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins is currently a full-time hourly employee limited to 40 hr/week. A request has been made to change this designation to full time salaried employee, as duties have consistently involved after hours/weekend work, yet without the ability to accrue flex time hours. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to change payroll classification of Parks Coordinator Rachel Hopkins from hourly to salaried, subject to the Comstock Parks and Recreation Policy and Procedure Manual.

**Motion to approve designation change: 4 Yes/0 No**

Parks Director Street reported that the playground border at Wenke Park is in disrepair and needs to be replaced. She obtained three quotations from vendors for the replacement. After discussion, a quote from Direct Rubber Mulch @ \$1,383 was selected. Motion by Weir/support from Young to approve \$1,383 for the Wenke Park playground border repair/replacement.

**Motion to approve purchase: 4 Yes/0 No**

## **April**

Motion by Weir/support from Joling to approve the 2018 Park Visit Schedule as proposed by Parks Director Street.

**Motion to approve 2018 Parks Visit Schedule plan: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

Parks Director Street requested approval for training/certification as a Playground Inspector at a previous meeting. This topic was brought forward to today's meeting. Motion by Law/support from Joling to pursue training/certification (up to \$600) for Parks Director Street as proposed.

**Motion to approve training/certification (up to \$600) for Parks Director Street: 4 Yes/ 0 No**

## **May**

Parks Director Street indicated that the demolition cost of the existing bathroom could be up to \$5,500 plus \$500 for asbestos testing. Commissioner Weir would like to request that the Township Board match the demolition cost with the Parks Commission. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to request that the Comstock Township Board match the Merrill Park bathroom demolition cost (up to \$3,000).

**Motion to approve request: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

Consideration of the purchase of a new drinking fountain for Fleetwood Park was discussed by Commissioners, but questions arose as to its need. The question will be raised with neighborhood citizens during their next Park Day. Motion by Weir/support from Joling to table consideration of a drinking fountain purchase for Fleetwood Park pending input from neighborhood citizens at Fleetwood Park Day.

**Motion to approve tabling purchase consideration: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

Options for reducing the number of lilies growing in Cooper Pond were described in an email from Sara Thoma of the Michigan DEQ to Parks Director Street, including chemical treatment.

Commissioner Weir would like to obtain information from a licensed chemical application company about what they recommend and the cost of treatment. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to obtain a recommendation and cost estimate for chemical treatment at Cooper Pond from a licensed applicator, for consideration by the Commission.

**Motion to pursue recommendation/bid: 5 Yes/0 No**

## **June**

No board actions.

## **July**

Commissioner Law reported that the DEQ received citizen's input. Regarding negative concerns, the DEQ gave Parks Director Street the option to discuss further or issue the permit. A 30 day extension was requested. A major concern was the distance of the pier/its protrusion into deep water. Parks Director Street placed stake markers into the water at RMP marking the pier location/start, length and platform extended length. Distances were also marked along the grass to aid perspective. During discussion it was noted by a citizen that the provided map/drawing (Prein & Newhof (March 2018)) showed a different start location/start point than that marked/staked. The map shows it is located/starts farther away to the east of the marked/staked location approximately 17 paces (which corresponds to approximately 51 feet), which would result in the pier extending into deeper water due to the shoreline contour difference. Another citizen wondered about water/lake height changes. It was noted that the west-most swimming buoy is 110 feet from the shore. The intended location of the pier is as physically marked/staked for today's meeting at RMP. Motion by Joling/support from Spears to proceed with securing the DEQ permit pending revision of the Prein & Newhoff map/drawing so that the pier is placed as intended at today's meeting (July 9, 2018), approximately 17 paces west of the Prein & Newhof (March 2018) drawing location.

**Motion to approve proceeding securing permit pending revision of location specification (map/drawing): 4 Yes/ 0 No**

Commissioners discussed the 'weed gator' and chemical treatment options to control lily pad growth and the associated costs. It was not clear to what extent shoreline residents or the parks are responsible for the aesthetic lily /clearance upkeep of the pond, nor effects of chemical treatments downstream. It was decided to table any action at this time. Motion by Joling/support from Young to table any action at this time.

**Motion to approve no action at this time: 4 Yes/0 No**

## **August**

Parks Director Street reported that if the location of the pier is changed from that specified in the drawing submitted with the DEQ permit application, a new permit application (with the updated drawing/blueprint) must be submitted. A new fee would also be required. After discussion, the commission agreed that the intended location of the pier is as physically marked at the RMP site at the July 9, 2018 Commission meeting, which therefore would require a revised drawing and new DEQ permit application. Commissioner Young suggested that the commission proceed with a two-step approach: 1) request, review and approve a Prein and Newhoff drawing revision/update showing the pier-location at the intended location (to include in a new DEQ

permit application) and then 2) consider proceeding with approval of a new DEQ permit application. Motion by Spears/support from Joling to procure a Prein and Newhoff revision of the RMP Fishing Pier drawing (location) according to the pier placement marked at RMP on July 9, 2018 at the Commission meeting (which is approximately 51 feet (17 paces) west of the placement shown in the Prein and Newhoff drawing dated March 2018), with consideration of an appropriate length.

**Motion to approve revising the RMP Fishing Pier drawing/location: 5 Yes/0 No**

Parks Director Street listed the following Capital Improvement Project (CIP) proposals:

- 1) Two pavilion roof repairs (shingle work @\$ \$10,000-15,000 each)
- 2) Celery Street Park basketball court replacement + hoops @ \$25,000
- 3) Resurface Robert Morris Park parking lot
- 4) Playground replacement @ \$40,000
- 5) South Wenke Park gazebo replacement

Motion by Weir/support from Joling for Parks Director Street to put in/submit CIP applications for the items listed.

**Motion to approve submission of CIP applications: 5 Yes/0 No**

Parks Director Street reported that looking forward, trash cans with special lids and benches bolted to a foundation are items needed. This current capital Improvement project (@\$45,000) for future consideration needs to be approved. Motion by Joling/support from Spears to approve the current CIP for future consideration as presented.

**Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No**

Parks Director Street reported that bids received for the Merrill Park improvement project exceeded what was expected as reasonable. She suggested nulling the bids received, and restarting the project bid process in December 2018. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to authorize Parks Director Street to rebid the Merrill Park project if not able to reduce the current bid costs.

**Motion to approve rebid process as presented: 5 Yes/0 No**

## **September**

Parks Director Street described the changes from the old budget format to the new budget format, noting that some categories will be combined going forward (consistent with the new guidance provided to township by the State of Michigan). Some errors in budget item placement under specific categories in the 'old' budget format were identified which need follow-up. Budget numbers from 2018 and those projected for 2019 were discussed. Parks Director Street will check with Comstock Township Treasurer Bret Padgett to clarify the new "Grant" budget category/placement, as well as "CIP projects greater than \$10,000" category placement. Note that as CIPs get approved, they will be added to the budget. Commissioner Weir noted that regarding the Merrill Park budget, the Merrill Park bathroom "moving" project was approved by the Comstock Township Board @ \$100,000. Commissioners thanked Parks Director Street for a good job on the budget draft for 2019. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to approve the draft 2019 budget as presented, with the understanding that the 'Grant' category may be added.

**Motion to approve the draft budget as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

Parks Director Street proposed creation of a full-time Parks Maintenance Leader staff position (to replace the current part-time position) due to the need for year-round maintenance consistency of the parks. She presented a proposed position description listing the year-round tasks required. A maintenance shop will be utilized in the existing building at Merrill Park. It is planned to transition the current part time maintenance leader staff member to full time. Motion by Weir/support from Spears to create a full time Parks Maintenance Leader position, as presented, starting fiscal year 2019.

**Motion to approve creation of position as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

## **October**

A computer screenshot was provided in Board packets showing drawn-in piers at location "A" and location "B". Location "B" corresponds to the more-west location as discussed at the July 9, 2018 meeting. At the August 13, 2018 meeting, it was decided to proceed with the drawing revision work by Prein & Newhoff showing location "B" which then the Board would review and approve before proceeding with a new DEQ permit application. Due to some additional cost, Parks Coordinator Hopkins relayed that Parks Director Street paused the re-drawing work pending discussion of the pier final length and location approval by the Commission. It was noted that the current DEQ permit (for location "A") is in effect until May 2019. It was also noted that citizen support was received for location "B". After lengthy discussion by Commissioners, Commissioner Joling moved/with support from Spears, to 1) pursue location "B" with the pier length to be a distance back from the muck line for optimum casting (at most 15' back), and 2) proceed with finishing the Prein & Newhoff drawing to then come back to the Board for final approval.

**Motion approved: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

A motion was made by Weir/support from Spears to approve the following expenditures:

Robert Morris Park Entrance Gate –repair not to exceed \$2200

Bleachers – Wenke Softball Complex –replacement not to exceed \$8000

Robert Morris Park Beach Sand – added sand not to exceed \$1400

**Motion to approve above expenditures as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No.**

Parks Coordinator Hopkins described the possibility of acquiring a 50% match grant (up to \$25,000) from GameTime playground manufacturing company for a new playground structure at Celery Street Park. She will hear if granted by Oct. 31, 2018. Motion by Weir/support from Joling to place expenditure priority on Celery Street playground equipment (item 5) over pavilion roofs at RMP (item 1) this year, not to exceed \$25,000. If the match grant is not approved, then use funds for roofs now. If the match grant is approved, approve funds for RMP pavilion roof repair next year, not to exceed \$17,000.

**Motion to approve conditional expenditures as presented: 5 Yes/ 0 No**

## **November**

Motion by Weir/support from Spears to accept the 2019 meeting dates as: Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 12 and Dec. 9.

**Motion to approve 2019 meeting dates as presented above: 5 Yes/0 No**

## **December**

A drawing/rendering of a RMP fishing pier location at "location B" was provided by Prein & Newhof for review by the Board. It includes a sidewalk and boardwalk leading to the fishing dock. The muck line at location B is farther from the shoreline than at the original location A and runs more diagonal to the shoreline. By measurement it is also farther out by ~20 feet than where marked with a buoy at the July 9, 2018 meeting. The apparent water depth along the dock "T" edge ranges from 3-6 feet, according to the drawing. Approximately half of the 10-ft. wide outer platform is ~10' back from the muck line; the fishing dock-walk portion is well back from the muck line. The total length from the shoreline is 90 feet (40' boardwalk, 50' fishing dock (including the 10' "T" top)). For reference, the west-most swimming buoy is placed at approximately 110 feet from its shoreline. Motion by Spears/support from Joling to accept the final drawing as presented (at location B) to finish the processing of the DEQ permit.

**Motion to approve: 5 Yes/0 No**

Note: Parks Director Street noted that since no changes were made to the pier design itself as presented in the original DEQ permit application, and that only a location change was involved (from "A" to "B"), then the original permit is still valid, according to the DEQ; consequently, no additional permit fee is necessary for the pier move change to location B.

Motion by Joling/support from Spears to continue with current Commission roles for 2019.

**Motion approved: 5 Yes/0 No**

The board actions throughout 2018 represent only a partial amount or outline of the Parks and Recreation Department's activities for 2018. 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.

## **Parks**

### **Robert Morris Park**

Ice Fishing continues to be a popular activity at Robert Morris Park. We had an increase in ice fishing this season. As the weather fluctuates so does the thickness of the ice. Several signs were placed around the park in an effort to encourage those ice fishing to check the safety of the ice.

The 18-hole disc golf course is used throughout the season, including the winter. The parking lot is plowed and a portable restroom is on site to encourage the park to be used year round. The Parks Director and Program Coordinator monitor the park to ticket individuals who do not use the self-pay system as well as keeping up on the trash removal.

We continue to make improvements to our disc golf course. By maintaining mowing practices, increasing brush cut back and tee pad replacement, we are ensuring that our course remains one of the best courses in the greater Kalamazoo area.

Plans for the accessible fishing pier have continued. In February the permit application was submitted the DEQ. This revised permit application required updated drawings to reflect changes to the original application.

In May the project entered into a public notice period for 20 days. After much discussion at several meetings, the process continued.

Vandalism continues to be an issue. The entrance gate lock was clipped and stolen on March 4<sup>th</sup>. No damage to the park was found. Lock was replaced and keys distributed.

Seasonal staff started at the park May 19<sup>th</sup>, with orientation and training the first week. We have a Park Manager this year which will help us maintain the park and oversee the seasonal staff.

As a community water supply, we are required to submit well water samples to the Kalamazoo County Health Department throughout the season to ensure our drinking water is free of bacteria and nitrates for the public. We had no incidents of positive samples this season, and continue to follow the KCHD protocol for testing procedures.

The swimming beach water sampling began Monday May 21<sup>st</sup>. The swimming beach area is tested for E. coli levels every Monday throughout the season. The swimming beach at RMP was placed under an advisory from the Kalamazoo County Health Department on Tuesday June 19<sup>th</sup>. The beach water sample taken on Monday June 18<sup>th</sup> was above the allowable E. coli level. A follow up sample was taken on Tuesday June 19<sup>th</sup> showing E. coli levels back down and the advisory was lifted Wednesday June 20<sup>th</sup>. This was the only incident of higher E. coli levels for the 2018 season.

Kalamazoo in Bloom has partnered with us again this season to provide 10 large flower planters that are displayed at our parks. Flowers were filled in the planters by River Street Flowerland.

Throughout the season we have worked hard to complete the painting project for the entrance fence along E. H Ave. Over 1,000 feet of fence was painted in an effort to spruce up the entrance of the park.

While removing the swimming beach buoys we discovered that one of the buoy cables that secures the buoy to the anchor at the bottom of the lake has broken. We will need to do some additional work with the Kalamazoo Dive Team in order to get the buoys in place next spring.

In December the two pavilion roofs were replaced. The new metal roofs are brown and match the other metal roof at the park. This adds a cohesive look to our park structures as well as provides safe coverings for our guests.

### **Wenke Softball Complex**

Security and vandalism continues to be a concern for our Parks. We have installed the EPS security system at the Wenke Softball Complex building. We had a few issues initially with keeping the unit warm enough to properly function during winter. EPS has added a warming strip to the keypad to prevent system failures from cold temperatures.

Joe Grabowski, our Field Supervisor, has returned for his eighth summer season managing our ball fields and various other tasks throughout Comstock.

A new tractor for grooming ball fields was in our budget to purchase this year. We purchased a Husqvarna GTH 52 XLS tractor from Hettinger's in Galesburg. The total cost was \$2,799.95, which was the lowest bid from the three tractors we had quoted.

We have also purchased a new cooler for the concession stand, a True brand cooler. This is a quality brand cooler that should last us for many seasons to come. The cooler cost was \$2,362.98.

Our playground received some updates this summer. We installed a playground border and installed playground-safe wood chips. We had discussion throughout the season pertaining to the placement of the playground in relation to the location of the ball fields.

We had our annual Health Department inspection at the Wenke Softball Complex concession stand. We passed the inspection with no violations.

Our 2018 ball season was in full swing at the complex. This year we had more teams than previous seasons participating in the weekend BPA tournaments. It is nice to see the complex being used to its full capacity, but it does create more work for our staff. Everyone is keeping up with the pace and the participants have noticed all of the improvement we have made this spring. We have installed a comment box with a survey at the fields. Feedback is important to our growth as a department.

Summer softball is still popular here in Comstock. We have 14 co-ed, and 24 Mens softball teams on Wednesday nights. That is the maximum number of teams we can take for a league. This was the first time in over 10 years that we have had to turn teams away. That is a good sign that the sport of softball is still popular and thriving. Fall Ball had 16 co-ed, 14 men's, and 5 double header teams.

60+ senior softball started Thursday May 10<sup>th</sup>, with a 12 week season.

75+ senior softball started Monday May 14<sup>th</sup>, with a 14 week season.

### **Green Meadow Park**

We had secured over 60 dates for field rental at Green Meadow Park for 2018. The majority of the dates are from the Maroons who have been renting the field for us for three seasons, with other local teams using the field periodically. We have received \$2,025 in field rental revenues for Green Meadow ball field from the Kalamazoo Maroons organization for this season.

A representative from MidLink contacted the parks department requesting approval to enter onto Green Meadow property to clear the fence line that runs along the back side of our property between the park and Midlink's property. The request was approved as it is important to maintain the fence line and keep it clear of brush.

Rob Britigan from Midlink scheduled a meeting on Friday May 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss alternative options and next steps for potential acquisition of Green Meadow Park. The current Township Supervisor, Township Superintendent, and previous Township Supervisor were invited to the meeting. Options were discussed but nothing was mutually decided upon.

We were contacted by a resident that lives in the Green Meadow neighborhood and his property backs up to Green Meadow Park. He requested that we remove some brush growing along the fence line. We resolved the matter with help from our maintenance department.

Vandalism is an issue at Green Meadow Park. Field rakes that are locked to the fence so that teams can use them during practice have been broken twice overnight. Someone has been driving their vehicle on the grass

areas of the park doing donuts and tearing up the grass. Field rentals were done for the season so we have temporarily locked the gate. There are openings in the fence for walk-in access to the park.

## **Merrill Park**

2018 has been an exciting year for Merrill Park. Although construction has yet to begin, many things have been happening behind the scenes to make this park renovation a reality. The township board approved an additional \$93,300 for a new restroom building on the "park side" of the park, instead of renovating the existing restrooms. This will be a great improvement to the safety of our park users as they will not have to cross the parking lot to use the restrooms.

Merrill Park experienced significant flooding in February due to rainfall, snow melt, and release of water from the dam. The flood waters reached the maintenance building and flooded 10-16 inches inside. After four days we were able to get inside and survey the damage. Luckily we did not see much damage. We lost 21 bags of field marker chalk and other paper product related items that were on the floor. Two interior wood doors warped and will no longer close properly. But our equipment and machinery seems to be ok. We are fortunate that Richard McCulloch, our Maintenance Supervisor, had the smarts to put most of the items higher up on shelves before the flooding started. Throughout the park there are a few picnic tables missing, as well as some trash barrels. We were not able to recoup any funding for lost and damaged items due to the flooding.

The Merrill Park Improvement plans were submitted to the state for approval. Once that process is complete, the project will be bid out for 30 days and then construction will begin. We are working closely with our Grant Coordinator from DNR to have our project approved for the bidding process. They had a few follow up questions from our submissions that have been answered. The contractor bid process closed August 10<sup>th</sup>. The bid proposals for the Merrill Park Improvement Project were opened during the bid opening meeting. The next steps are for the bids to be reviewed and a contractor selected for the project. The project timeline given to the contractors was adjusted to reflect the delays we have experienced. The contractor has until December 21, 2018 to complete all items, with a restoration start up between April 15<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to complete things like grass seeding. Unfortunately, the two bids that came in for the project were significantly over budget for our project. We have rejected those bids as they are not feasible for the project. We will be rebidding the project again early 2019.

New benches were installed at Merrill, Cooper, Peer, and North & South Wenke Parks. They were installed by Balkema Site Work and the benches were purchased through Belson Outdoors. We received 3 quotes, and decided to go with the lowest quotes. Our project came in significantly under budget.

Joe, our Parks Maintenance Leader, has been completing several projects at the Merrill Park building. He has painted the interior, worked to replace the water heater that was no longer working, built a custom shelf for the portable pitching mounds we use for baseball in the spring. He is also on top of snow removal along the Merrill sidewalk from Comstock Ave to over the bridge to keep it open for pedestrians. There is a new bus route that has a stop at Merrill Park near the bridge, so we have been keeping it maintained for those using the bus system. Joe has also been doing all trash removal, liter pick up, down tree removal, and general up keep of park properties.

## **Cooper Park**

Consumers Energy cut down a sugar maple tree that was at the corner of 26<sup>th</sup> St and Oran. We attempted to contact them about the stump they left, as well as requesting better communication prior to tree removal at parks. We hired a tree service to have the stump removed.

New benches were installed at Cooper Park this summer.

The parks department and township maintenance department continues to monitor the structural safety and integrity of the dam at Cooper Park.

### **Peer Park**

New benches were installed at Peer Park this summer.

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

During the flooding in February, the gazebo at South Wenke Park had been washed away into the river. It ended up located upside down in the river to the west of the park caught in an area of brush. It was not attached to cement pad or the ground. McDonalds Towing assisted us in removing the gazebo from the river. Our maintenance crew worked hard to preserve the integrity of the structure, but it was a loss. The structure fell apart during the process, and the roof had damage from being under water. We will have to replace the gazebo if we see fit at the park.

There was no obvious damage to the lighthouse during the flooding. Although the river embankment directly in front of the light house has receded and is within 1 foot of the lighthouse.

This summer we worked to restore the lighthouse. We have worked with the Westrate family that originally donated the lighthouse to ensure that it is restored to original colors.

The picnic table, tree and trash can at North Wenke Park were vandalized. We removed what was damaged and covered the spray paint on the tree.

### **McLinden Nature Trails**

Several trees had fallen around the property during the heavy snow and ice storms this year. We cleared the tree that fell in the parking lot area, and cleared trees and brush down several times throughout the season.

We received a complaint that an individual was camping on the property. We sent the Sheriff's Department to investigate but they were unable to locate the individual, even though they saw evidence that someone was camping at the park.

It is our long term goal to have signage on native species and plants in the area, but for now we will install directional markers to keep people on the main trail. These markers will also identify the length of the trail.

### **Celery Street Park**

New playground equipment for Celery Street Park was purchased through a grant opportunity with GameTime. \$15,000 grant was received to help cover the cost of the unit. It will be installed in spring 2019. We will be able to keep the swings but we will need to remove the large slide as it is no longer compliant with safety codes.

### **Fleetwood Park**

Fleetwood Park received some attention this year with freshly painted playground equipment.

## **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.

## **Programming**

We are pleased to report programming and events have increased in 2018. We continue to grow our programs and offer more engaging events for the community. We have added several new programs for this year including adding two Neighborhood Park Days, fall walking club, birdhouse builds, disc golf league, and trees for trails. Weather might now have been on our side this year, but we will continue to grow our programs for 2019.

### **Youth Baseball League:**

Registration for youth baseball opened January 2<sup>nd</sup>. The league filled up with 14 teams, as that is the maximum number of teams we can take due to limited field availability.

### **Baseball Player Association Tournaments:**

With 14 weekend youth baseball tournaments this year, our staff was kept busy at the Wenke Softball Complex.

### **Pavilion Rentals:**

Pavilion rentals continue to be a popular gathering place for family reunions, graduation parties, baby showers, and much more at Robert Morris Park.

### **Galesburg Kids Walking Club**

The Parks department partnered with the Galesburg Augusta Primary School & KRVT and provided a six-week program in the on Thursdays after school (3:15-4:30pm). Participants tracked their steps with pedometers 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**

This year we expanded on our walking club to include a spring and fall offering of walking club events at various locations in Comstock Township. Participants in two 6-week programs met up at McLinden Nature Trails, Chipman Preserve, and locations along the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail & Gull Road Trail. We also began a McLinden Nature Trails Hike Day where participants were lead through a nature trail hiking experience.

### **Softball**

Summer softball we had 14 co-ed teams and filled up with 24 men's teams. This is consistent with previous years.

Fall softball we had 16 Co-ed, 14 Men's, and 5 Men's double header teams. This is consistent with previous years.

## **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**

We held Free Day at Robert Morris Park Wednesday June 20<sup>th</sup> in partnership with Portage, Kalamazoo City, and Kalamazoo County Parks. The weather was not great this year with a high of 70 degrees and rainy. We still had a decent turnout, more than we would on a normal Wednesday. We had yard games and gave out free ice cream. Our turn out was consistent with the other organizations given the weather conditions.

## **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 2018.

## **Build a Birdhouse**

We partnered with the Comstock High School shop class and they cut all the wood components to the houses. We then had 17 participants' adults and children come to Robert Morris Park and built the houses with staff supervision and guidance. The Kellogg Bird Sanctuary sent volunteers and brought engaging learning materials to hold a small presentation before the build. It was a great day with beautiful weather and everyone seemed to truly enjoy the workshop.

## **Neighborhood Park Days**

We held four neighborhood park days over the course of the season at Fleetwood, Celery, Cooper, and Green Meadow. They were all held on Saturdays 1-3pm. We advertised via post card mailings to all the neighborhoods. Weather was not in our favor this season. Cooper day was rained out completely and was rescheduled for October and new mailings were sent out. Fleetwood day was a rainy day also, but it cleared just enough to hold the event and have a few families come out. Each park no matter the turn out gave us an opportunity to speak to the residents and discuss what they would like to see at each park and what they already enjoy. It was determined that given the time, effort, and price of mailings it takes to hold the neighborhood park days Celery and Fleetwood would be continued for 2019 season.

## **Disc Golf League**

Andrew Marwede was one of our interns this past summer and a professional disc golfer. With his guidance we started a Wednesday night league, which ran June – August. We advertised on Facebook on our own page along with the Kalamazoo Area Disc Golf Page. Golfers could pay the \$5 entrance fee or get an annual pass for \$20. Many ended up getting the annual pass and we had a lot of golfers who had never played at Robert Morris before. The league was very popular with about 15-20 golfers every week.

## **Trees for Trails**

We advertised via flyers, Facebook, and tax inserts that the Transfer Station would be taking Christmas trees through end of January free of charge. We got 11 trees this year. We will rent a chipper this spring and chip up all the spring brush and trees to mulch trails, community garden, and Robert Morris Park gardens.

## Administration

The Parks and Recreation Board met monthly in 2018 on the second Monday of the month at 7:00pm. Most of the meetings were held at the Township Hall. However, the June, and July meetings were held at two 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, we held the July meeting was held at Robert Morris Park where we discussed the fishing pier.

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 is pleased with the addition of Program Coordinator Rachel Hopkins who was hired as a full-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, manages all of the sports leagues, and continues to implement new programs with enthusiasm and passion for bringing fun opportunities to the residents of Comstock.

Board members continue to be pleased with the way the township maintenance department has cared for the parks, and gratefully recognize 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 commissioners of Parks and Recreation Department with 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.

Submitted by,

Linda Law, Chair

With assistance from: Vanessa Street, Parks Director & Rachel Hopkins, Program Coordinator

