



Thomas Township Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 22nd, 2019 (6:30 p.m.)
Public Safety Building
8215 Shields Drive
Saginaw, MI 48609

1. The regular commission meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m. by Chairman, Scott Branch.
2. Present: Craig Blower, Carly Rusch, Dean Rusch, Scott Branch.
Also Present: John Corriveau, Parks Director, Meaghan Zielinski, Receptionist
Absent: DJ Sova, Eric Whelton, Angela Alworden
3. Pledge of allegiance.
4. Approval of the June 24th, 2019 meeting minutes: No questions or comments. Motion was made by C. Blower, supported by D. Rusch, approving the June 24th, 2019 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of Expenditures: No questions or comments. Motion was made by D. Rusch, supported by C. Rusch, approving the June 24th, 2019 expenditures. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Public Comment:
 - a. None
7. New Business:
 - a. Nature Center Grant Requirement: In 2018, Thomas Township applied for a \$300,000 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant (MNRTF) for improvements at the new Nature Center. The township pledged \$300,000 in match. The improvements included a new entrance drive, building renovation (creating a walkway through the building). The project did not score well enough to be funded with a score of 350, but needing 380. In 2019, the Township applied for two grants for the same project. The first was to re-apply for the MNRTF grant with the hope that the 350-point score would fare better in the 2019 pool of applicants. The second grant is a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant. It is administered through the Department of Natural Resources, but it is a federal pass-thru grant from the National Park Service. Both grants request \$300,000 with a \$300,000 match. It's important to note that the DNR will only fund one of the grants. The thought process was that it was not a lot of effort to apply for the second (LWCF) grant and it had the potential to score well and be funded. Funding awards for these grants will be announced in December of 2019.

An issue arose from the DNR regarding the LWCF grant. The DNR requires applicants to show a project boundary on the concept plan. The DNR and the LWCF require that the land within the project boundary be permanently encumbered for recreation purposes. The project boundary that Thomas Township is proposing includes only the front half of the parcel that the Township recently acquired that has the welcome sign on it. This part of the parcel will be used for the new entrance drive into the Nature Center. The rear of the parcel is shown to be not part of the park. In order for the DNR and the LWCF fund to consider this project for funding, they want to know what the Township plans to do with the rear portion of the welcome sign parcel and how that portion of the parcel would be accessed. If the Township responds that they don't know what will happen with that portion of the parcel, the project won't be considered for funding.

Corriveau and Township Manager Russ Taylor, explained the outline of the parcels and discussed options on how to handle the current issue. It was discussed that the value of the land is less than the value of the grant. There were four options given to the Parks Commissioners. They chose the third option which is to redraw the park boundary line to include the entire welcome sign parcel.

A motion was made by C. Blower, supported by C. Rusch to recommend to the Board of Trustees to redraw the park boundary line to include the entire welcome sign parcel.

- b. Evening in the Park event September 16th: Corriveau discussed how we have evolved over the years by adding the band shell, trails, soccer fields, and the soccer complex pavilion. We have also purchased the Shields Men's Club and the Heritage Insurance Building for our Nature Preserve. The new soccer pavilion at Roberts Park is a center piece and has closer bathrooms that are much nicer than the ones at Roethke. Corriveau gave a PowerPoint presentation with some suggestions on how we could change the "Evening in the Park" event. Dean Rusch gave the suggestion to move the location for the event to Roberts Park for this year, and make more changes in the years following. Craig Blower gave the suggestion to open up invitations to all of our volunteer coaches for our recreation programs. It was agreed upon to make a few small changes for this year's event, and to make larger changes next year.

A motion was made by C. Blower, supported by D. Rusch to move the location of the Evening in the Park to Roberts Park for 2019.

A motion was made by C. Blower, supported by D. Rusch to invite volunteer coaches to the 2019 Evening in the Park.

- c. Parks and Recreation 5 year plan: Every five years we are required to submit a five year recreation plan to the state in order to apply for grant funding from the Department of Natural Resources. I have attached the 2010-2015 plan so you can see what the plan looks like and the information it contains. We will be required to do a community survey and hold a public meeting where residents can come and look over the plan and ask questions. The plan has to be submitted to the State before February 1st, 2020. That puts the resolution for the five year plan on the Parks Commission agenda in October and the Board in November. Corriveau gave a PowerPoint presentation going over the accomplishments of the 2010-2015 Recreation plan.

8. Old Business:

- a. None

9. Reports:

a. Parks:

- Roberts Park: Painting began on the fences, picnic tables, soccer goals, dugouts and staff also started brushing the trails. There was a delay before due to all the rain that we had. Weed and feed was put on the soccer fields and the goal boxes were repaired so that we can start the fall soccer season. Batter boxes at the softball fields have to have the clay replaced and we are working on having those ready for the August 17th Wood Bat Tournament.
 - Roethke Park: We are currently working on brushing trails and getting some train railroad ties replaced. Corriveau explained to the board how one of the pool's lifeguards ran into a situation at the pool and her phone was stolen. Thomas Township did find the kids who stole it, but no charges are being filed. The lifeguard stepped down from her position after that. Mr. Russ Tayler discussed with the Park Commissioners thoughts on closing the pool early due to the fact that we don't have many residents coming to the 7:00PM-9:00PM session. This would allow us to offer pool rentals in the evening during the week.
 - Community Park: Nothing to report.
 - Nature Preserve: Some trees have been cleared and we are working on getting an access to the river for kayaks and fisherman. We were informed that the renters of Heritage Insurance will be out the end of August. It was suggested that we change the September Parks Commission meeting to be held at the Nature Preserve and everyone agreed. That change will be made.
 - Day Park: Nothing to report.
- b. Recreation Programs: Registration for Fall Soccer is going on with the season scheduled to begin September 14th.
- c. Sports Committee report: None.
- d. Concert Committee Report: None.
- e. Finance Committee Report: None.

10. Adjournment: It was moved by C. Blower, supported by D. Rusch, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

The next regular Park Commission Meeting will be Monday August 26th, 2019, at 6:30 pm at the Public Safety Administration Building, 8315 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Rusch, Secretary