



**THOMAS TOWNSHIP  
REGULAR PARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609  
November 27, 2023  
6:30pm**

1. The regular commission meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman, Scott Branch.
2. PRESENT: Rusch, Branch, Alworden, Sova  
ABSENT: Aimar, Blower, Hoffman

ALSO PRESENT: John Corriveau (Thomas Township Parks & Recreation Director),  
Sue Prevost (Secretary), Lynda Thayer (Nature Center & Preserve Coordinator).

3. Pledge of Allegiance recited.
4. Motion made by Rusch, seconded by Alworden, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**THOMAS TOWNSHIP REGULAR PARK COMMISSION MEETING  
8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609  
November 27, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.  
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Approval of October 23rd, 2023 minutes
6. Approval of November 2023 Expenditures
7. Public Comment  
It is requested that you state your name and address for the record.
8. New Business
  - a. 2024 Park Commission Meeting Dates
9. Old Business
  - a. None
10. Reports
  - a. Parks Report: Attached

- b. Nature Center and Preserve Report: Attached
- c. Sports Committee Report: None
- d. Concert Committee Report: None
- e. Finance Committee Report: None
- f. Commissioners: None

11. Other Business

12. Adjournment

5. Motion made by Sova, seconded by Rusch, to approve October 23, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Motion made by Sova, seconded by Alworden, to approve November 2023 Expenditures as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Public Comment: None

8. Public Hearing: None

9. New Business:

- a. Approval of 2024 Park Commission Meeting Dates

Motion made by Rusch, seconded by Sova, to approve 2024 Park Commission meeting dates as presented.

Roll call vote required.

Ayes: Rusch, Branch, Alworden, Sova

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Aimar, Blower, Hoffman

Motion carried unanimously.

10. Old Business: None

11. Reports:

- a. Parks Report: Presented by Park Director John Corriveau.

**ROETHKE PARK:**

Craig Sopak, Paul's son has taken over the train mechanic position from his father. Craig grew up working on the train with his dad and is a skilled metal fabricator, mechanic, welder and blacksmith. Craig has already rebuilt the two trucks for the new trains third car and we will have it together and running for spring. His next project is to re wire the old trains electrical system and inspect the two drive trucks under the engine per hours driven requirement. Craig is very passionate about the train, just like his dad, and I look forward to working with him and making our trains the best they can be.

### **ROBERTS PARK**

We are preparing for Winter Wonderland and sites will soon be decorated as the event is approaching fast! Santa will be there with Buddy the Elf, Laurie Middlebrook will be playing Christmas songs each night, food trucks, bon fires, smores and of course fireworks each night.

### **SPORTS AND PROGRAMS**

Registration has ended for Basketball Clinic and Boys Basketball; numbers are just a little less than last year. Archery has sold out and has a waiting list. Programs begin in January.

### **EVENTS**

Winter Wonderland will be held on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> at Roberts Park. Corriveau stated that more volunteers are needed.

- b. Nature Center & Preserve Report: Presented by Nature Center Coordinator Lynda Thayer. Thayer reported that visitor numbers are increasing. Corriveau added that the newly built stairs to the right side of building are finished and more trees will need to be removed in the future.

**NATURE PRESERVE UPDATE:** The Dow work in the northern six acres of the preserve continues. The bank management work is done, but the soil that will go on the north end of the preserve hasn't been moved because of the standing water along the perimeter of the field. The trail access is limited when the crew is working. We will be meeting with Cindy Todd from Spicer to go over our DNR 2021 Trust Fund Grant work to get things prepared to go out to bid. This work will be done in the spring if all goes as planned.

**NATURE CENTER UPDATE:** The nature center's new hours are Tuesdays from 3-7 pm, Wednesday-Friday 12-4 pm. I will attempt to be open the first or second Saturday of every month for more opportunities for visitors to come in. We are also offering programs: Tuesdays from 5-7 pm will be FUN (Families United in Nature), Wednesdays from 12-2 pm for senior citizen activities, and Thursdays from 1-2, we will host a pre-school activity group. We had three FUN nights in November. We had 36 people come for STEM night, 33 visitors participated in National Pickle Day, and only 5 came for Recycling. The recycling night was the Tuesday of Thanksgiving week, which could explain the lower attendance. The senior citizen days have not been well attended. My next step is to reach out to multiple agencies that work with senior citizens to get the word out. We had three Little Acorns pre-school activity days. We had seven participants for our intro day, thirteen participants that learned about acorns and seeds, and three for recycling. In December, we will continue with these activities and assess their success and we will have a family day on December 2 from 10 am-2 pm. We are hosting the Thomas Township Business Association event on December 13 from 5:30-7:30. I hope to encourage local businesses, non-profits, and other organizations to use the nature center for meetings and events. I met with an artist that might be a great fit to complete the proposed habitat area and add some fun nature features to the building. More to come on that, hopefully.

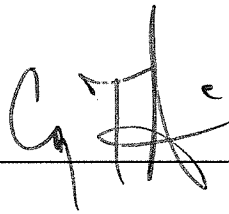
**NATURAL RESOURCES DAMAGE ASSESSMENT (NRDA) UPDATE:** We are working with US Fish and Wildlife and the DNR to have additional support in the preserve area next spring and summer. We will continue to use the original NRDA funds to develop the nature preserve. The pond concept is still under discussion, but has been Nature Center & Preserve placed on the

back burner for now. We need to focus on getting our planting areas established. We can look at the concept again when we are further along.

**SAGINAW COUNTY ARPA FUNDS UPDATE:** We are wrapping up our ARPA funds work. We have approximately \$58,000 left of the \$300,000. A projector, screen, and television monitor have been ordered. The stairs to the future kayak launch area finishing work on the sign will be ARPA expenses.

12. Other Business: None

13. Adjournment: Motion made by Alworden, seconded by Rusch to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Craig Aimar, Secretary  
12-18-23  
Dated

**The next regular Park Commission Meeting will be Monday, December 18, 2023 at the Public Safety Administration Building, 8215 Shields Drive, Saginaw MI 48609.**