

**MINUTES FOR  
PENINSULA TOWNSHIP PARK COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

Location: Township Hall

Date: December 6, 2017

**Call to Order** at 7:00 PM by Mike Skurski, Vice Chair

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll call:** Don Atkinson; Mike Skurski; John Snow; Gary Cornell; Anne Griffiths (excused) Brian VanDenBrand (planner).

**Approve Agenda:** Atkinson moved to approve the agenda, Cornell second. Passed 4/0.

**Approval Minutes:** Minutes October 25, 2017 Bill Serocki (6924 Center Road) Remove comment on Pelizzari regarding universal access. What I did speak about was the proposed construction of a bathroom and thought that was unnecessary overkill and was not needed. Minutes November 1, 2017 change wording from soft launch to improved launch at Haserot Beach. Snow moved that minutes be accepted for 10/25/2017 and 11/1/2017. Skurski second-passed 4/0

**Brief Citizen Comments** for items not on the agenda: NONE

**Conflict of interest:** NONE

**Consent Agenda**

**Business**

**A. Public review and comment on draft Parks and Recreation Plan**

The purpose of this public meeting is to have citizen comments on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Nine written comments were received by VanDenBrand. Tonight we are still accepting opinions about what you strongly agree or disagree with or where you find omissions; that is exactly what we are looking for. This is still a draft. We will get the commission together again this month to sit down with the staff and look at all of the input, written and verbal. Taking all of this into account we maybe de-emphasizing some parts in the draft or emphasizing something we had lowered on the priority list and also looking for additions. One

of the items was to improve the trail system, even though the Park Commission does not have jurisdiction over anything but the parks, we can work in cooperation with the township, TART, and other organizations.

VanDenBrand: Tonight is the verbal public comment portion of our Parks and Recreation plan supported by the state and is certified by the DNR. The commission will have a working session this month and have a plan to finalize at the next meeting January 3, 2018. Then this plan is submitted to the township board for adoption and they have a meeting on January 9, 2018. This gives the commission time for work sessions to make any amendments recommended by the town board. Plan needs to be submitted to the DNR by March 1, 2018.

Skurski: The plan gets recommended in January and our budget begins in March. The plan will drive the priorities of next year's budget.

### **Citizen Comments**

Curt Peterson (1356 Buchan). Long range plan needs to include how to link up the park trails. The TART trail runs from Acme to Suttons Bay, the Empire trail runs another 18 miles over by Glen Arbor and eventually will run all the way up to Harbor Springs. We need to make plans to hook up with that trail within the next 5-7 years, if not sooner. We really need to think about a bike trail or hike trail the length of the peninsula. This is a high stress goal, but is something our residents would really appreciate. Bicycling needs to be part of this recreation plan. Bicycling Magazine, with a readership of 400,000, has picked the loop we have here as the best bike loop in all of Michigan. People come here and residents use this as well. Mike, you mentioned there are facilities we do not own, but yet parks and recreation should have some influence. We have seen the destruction of trees on two of our scenic roads Bluff Road and Peninsula Drive. Two years ago when they started cutting down the trees in front of my house, I thought they were going to extend the shoulder for biking from Traverse City and that did not happen. We lost an opportunity there. The same thing happened on Bluff and they took out the trees and did not put in a bike lane and now the road is wider and cars are traveling along there faster than before. We need to have something in this plan and give considerable thought to connecting these trails in the future.

Laura Serocki (6942 Center Road). I sent in comments and just want to reiterate the issue of Pelizzari. Please consider using some of the language from the Master Plan written in 2010 (see three sentences below from 2010 Plan) in the Recreation Inventory Section of the new Recreation Plan. I would like to have stronger language about Pelizzari being a passive area and not allowing any structures. In

the past, several Eagle Scouts have asked to build structures such as playgrounds, basketball courts, gazebos. This has always been turned down; that is not what the natural area is-- it's passive, walking, skiing.

1. "Ensure park usage is in keeping with the quite natural undisturbed character of the park" (Page 25).
2. "Natural area is a low-impact quiet/natural area...allowing for passive recreation activities while protecting, conserving, and restoring the natural scenic, outdoor recreation, and wildlife values of the site" (Page 22).
3. "Manage the Natural Area so as to preserve, protect, and restore the site's natural resources" (Page 28).

This will also help any park commissioners in the future. You are the third commission since this park went into effect.

**Snow:** I am just speaking for myself and not for the commission. There really should be a toilet there and what I envision is something that is surrounded by shrubs, trees, bushes. In a park like that, where people spend an extended period of time, I really think there should be some sort of facility. Seniors have mentioned to me that they would like to see more benches. Would not have bench placement to be across the horizon line. As far as the area appears, the more natural the better.

**Skurski:** There have also been comments about having too many benches in Pelizzari.

Michelle Zebell (2616 Bowers Harbor Rd) I am here on behalf of Bill Cantinella and our own property. We live adjacent to the Bowers Harbor Park expansion. We are thrilled to have the park next door with the walking paths. I was a little concerned living so close to the property line, and we have met so many wonderful people in the process of having that path there. We are also appreciative of the fence that has gone up that separates our property from the park property.

We have also had an issue that has occurred for quite some time. Run off from the property south of us, the expansionary area runs across the southwest corner of our property in the spring when things are thawing and runs north of us across the adjacent property and then on to Cantinella's property, which is on Bowers Harbor Road and is at the base of our drive. In wet years we end up with a small pond on the west side of our property; the river then moves onto our neighbors property and then onto Bill's. In really wet years his yard becomes a lake. This has been going on for quite some time and Bill has talked with the Park Commission and was given some reassurance that this would be looked at in the park plan. I sent you an

email this evening as well regarding this issue. Also we have a bit of a poison ivy problem and we have been spraying and trying to mow and we are going to continue to do that work to keep it in check and ivy is in that wet area as well. In the spring you can actually feel and hear the water in the grassy sod that grows in clumps in that corner.

**Atkinson:** Do you know if anything has been done in the past to try to determine where that water has been coming from?

**Zebell:** A number of years ago when they were considering putting in a large development, we found that there were agricultural tiles that were put in when it was an active farm. A couple of summers when it was especially dry with 23 days without water down at the bay you could see water that was trickling from under the road into the bay and there were cattails growing in that whole area. That is when we were told the drain tiles were draining into the bay. We had heard that they had filled up at one point and a previous owner had actually removed those so it was running again. My suspicion is that they are blocked again. Another thing is when the pond was drained at the winery area, I think trenches were dug and that may in really wet years contribute to the problem as well. One year a portion of our yard on the southeast corner flooded and that had never happened before. Since that wet year, we have never had that problem again. We have chosen not to use that portion of the property, but if we were to sell the property use of that area would be a benefit.

**Snow:** There is a small creek that you can see on the southeast part of the property and it is above ground and then the small creek goes underground, so it is actually a sort of subterranean creek there.

There were no more public comments and **Skurski** thanked all of those who spoke. Public comments are still being solicited. After the Park Commission has met with the township planning staff, the public will have another opportunity to make comments.

**Action-Motion** Meet with Brian VanDenBrand on December 18, 2017 at 1:30 PM to discuss Master Park Plan and submission to DNR. **Snow** made motion/second by **Atkinson**. Passed 4/0

## **B. Pelizzari Natural Area**

Many of you have been through the area since it has been cleared. They lumbered out most of the large trees and the conservancy has some volunteers to clear the

pathways and there is a firm coming in to do some chipping and waste removal. They are going to chip it and remove the waste from the site; and the park should be completely accessible in another week. This information is being placed on the Peninsula Township website. We will probably end up profiting from the lumber of the 100 trees cut down due to the Oak Wilt. This will be added to the Pelizzari budget. We will be searching next spring after the leaves come out to make sure we have gotten all of the Oak Wilt.

### **C. Establish committee for preparing for preparing Lighthouse Manager's Contract**

This is an item that **Skurski** and **Snow** had discussed in reviewing the last job description of the lighthouse manager. We want to standardize the agreement and the measurements for performance. This needs to be done to create transparency between the Park Commission and the lighthouse manager. Propose there be a two person committee to prepare this document and then pass the results to the other commissioners in preparation for the meeting on December 18, 2017 at 10AM. If it is a three person committee, it needs to be a public meeting. **Snow** is overseeing the lighthouse for the Parks Commission and **Skurski** is the treasurer and that seems to make sense in terms of committee formation.

Nancy Heller (3091 Bluewater Rd.) commented agreement needs to be reviewed by an attorney.

**Action-Motion** Establish a two person committee comprised of **Skurski** and **Snow** to review lighthouse manger's contract. **Cornell** made motion, **Atkinson** second. Passed 4/0

### **D. Lighthouse Manger's Report - Schultz**

Ginger Schultz (3877 Smokey Cove Rd)

Annual gross sales from lighthouse to date are \$165,395.89, which is \$23,114 higher than last years. Schultz will provide final year end totals. Lighthouse now closed until the spring. Requested meeting with commissioners physically at the lighthouse to review items on the maintenance list.

John Fraifogl donated artifacts from the Metropolis shipwreck and sent \$5,000 to expand the Metropolis and other exhibits. Requests that a plaque be posted that these artifacts came from Fraifogl family of Mansfield, Ohio. The check has not been cashed. **Skurski** wanted to make sure that it was not implied that all the money was for just the Metropolis display.

**Action-Motion Snow** moves that the check is cashed and a letter sent thanking Fraifogl for the donation and clarifying money will be used for other exhibit expansions as well. **Cornell** second. Passed 4/0

**Action-Motion Atkinson** made a motion that commissioners meet on December 12, 2017 at noon at the lighthouse to inspect and review lighthouse plans with Schultz. Notice of Special meeting of the Park Commission will be posted so public may attend. **Snow** seconded. Passed 4/0

#### **D. Maintenance Report – Wilkinson**

Bob Wilkinson (18426 Condor, Interlochen, 49643)

Fence posts up at Bowers Park; started installation of fence posts at Bowers Harbor Expansion Park and there are issues there that we need to address.

VanDerBrand led discussion on fencing at Bowers Harbor Expansion Park.

1. Regarding two parcels where the homeowners are interested in having split rail instead of a two wire fence and are willing to pay for this. This would involve 8-10 homes. There is a \$4.50 foot difference between two wire and split rail. The Park Commission has budgeted for a two wire fence. This can be a danger for snowmobilers, even though this activity is not allowed within the park. Township has an ordinance that any home owner can put up a fence 3 feet back from the property lot line without having a property dispute from neighbors. Where there is a natural barrier of trees, the fence is being put 3 feet inside the park line. VanDenBrand suggested knocking on doors to see if people want to pay extra for split rail fencing. Send certified letters to homeowners bordering park letting them know of option for split rail fencing. Attorney for township would have to review as this would be a contract between homeowner and township.

On parcel 11-128-026-10 the survey marker has been removed and the property owner has been using a portion of the adjacent park property as a garden.

VanDenBrand requests a survey and to install two permanent markers

**Action- Motion** Gordie Fraser to install permanent survey markers along property parcel 11-128-026-10. **Cornell** moved and **Snow** second. Motion passed 4/0.

**Action-Motion Amendment** Approval to pay \$650 for Gordie Fraser survey. **Cornell** moved; **Snow** second. Passed 4/0

Installation of fence posts to continue until halted by winter conditions. Then will need to wait until the spring. Continued discussion on ways to make the public aware that two wire fencing is present such as with florescent tape. Two times (within two months) the gate posts have been knocked down where the winery has their easement. The wire has tape on it. Indicated that tape did not make a difference.

Start off with letter regarding fencing and going door-to-door. Inform homeowners of choice to install split rail fence. Concern if 75% are in favor of paying more for split rail fence and others are not, does the Planning Commission pay for the others?

Big sign at the lighthouse removed; Haserot bathroom door replaced; new sign installed as well. Discussion on removal of portable toilets at lighthouse.

**Action-Motion** Snow moved that the two portable toilets be removed from the lighthouse. Atkinson second. Motion passed 4/0

45 Parallel sign needs to be ordered and installed for spring.

### **Citizen Comments**

Helen Kelly (3901 Bluewater Rd) Bowers Harbor Expansion Grant requires a fence to go up in a timely manner. Be careful to avoid any verbiage used in the minutes if you are going to have solicitation of neighbors to pay for fencing just to explain the delay. The Park Commission by soliciting the neighbors are going to get into the business of solicitation. Suggests the two homeowners who want a split rail fence go and make the inquiries of the neighbors and have the process managed by the planner. Not the Park Commission's position to solicit a taxpayer for additional money. This is just not a good idea.

Al Jankowski (2616 Bowers Harbor Rd) Here to make a couple of comments regarding the letter Bill Catinella sent. So we are the property at the back of that road right on Bower's Harbor Park. Just to establish the source of that problem, we can tell you that all the years we have owned the property, about 20 years, the problem comes from that swampy area right next to us. So it would be where our property meets the Swift property on the southwest corner of our plot. That swamp has always been there and if you have been here long enough there was a pond that was taken out. Once that pond was taken out the swamp level started coming up quite a bit in the spring. Now all summer you can't walk through that swampy area. When the pond was there, there was some

control; you could walk through there. Now what has been happening is what Bill Catinella is talking about. The water level comes up right next to our property. We are not complaining about it for us. I have brought some pictures of the worst case. This is when the water backed up so much on what we call the expansion property that it flooded the soccer field and our property. What is happening is that there is a small river that flows across our property in the spring every year when the snow melts; that swampy area comes up and flows about 6 feet wide and maybe 5 or 6 inches deep and flows right down from the Swift's right onto our property, crosses under the white fence, and meanders on the western side of our property, down onto our neighbors, and eventually down to Catinella's property. I think that a berm across the corner, if you want to investigate that would probably take care of the source right there. Catinella is out of town. Thanked commission for the split rail fence along their property; it's beautiful, thank you for that.

Marie Cornell (3999 Sweeney) Does the Pelizzari property go all the way to the water (Snow, yes) What is the possibility of taking the water portion and making a public beach there?

**Snow:** Part of the problem you have is balancing everyone's needs. What people are concerned about is that if that gets done, people will need some place to park and the other side of the area toward Pelizzari Park are wetland so that really cannot be turned into a parking lot and the people who live in the community are concerned that if it is opened as a beach there will be cars parked all along the road. Along East Shore drive there is concern there would be cars parked and scattered all along the area. There is a blind turn there and there is a real concern for people's safety crossing the road. The neighbors are absolutely opposed, even if we could. I have walked down to the beach at Pelizzari and it is not a welcoming beach. There are just rocks. It is not a beach like Haserot or Kelly.

Marie Cornell: (Lives near Haserot Beach) What I am hearing is that you are really concerned about the people there and care nothing about the parking in our area.

**Snow:** Haserot has a parking lot and it is more conducive to parking on the street. Granted it hasn't been adequate, but there is a parking lot. There is the parking and the boat launch parking and parking next to the American Legion Hall. The side streets there are more conducive to parking than it is on East

Shore Drive. But I share your frustration and it bothers me that we do have waterfront property there (Pelizzari) and I am at a loss on how to use it.

Marie Cornell: That is my question. If there is waterfront, why can't it be used?

**Skurski:** There is access at Archie. You cross M37 and there is a guard rail with an access line and people do launch kayaks and scuba divers enter there. It is not an actual beach and is not a very conducive setup. Five years there was sand, but not now.

**Atkinson:** You are absolutely right. The concerns you have about parking are the same as theirs. The concerns are the same everywhere as far as limited parking. I share your concerns.

**Skurski:** Hopefully, we are working with the DNR to open up Kelly to pull some of the traffic congestion away from Haserot. A representative from the DNR was at our last meeting and there are many possibilities that are under discussion.

Marie Cornell: The parking at Haserot does not have marking to designate car spaces. It is haphazard and you just pull in and park your car. I am really opposed to adding parking anywhere; if you expand the parking then more people can come. And the beach can't hold them; the beach is at over capacity. Making it easier for more people to come there is foolish.

VanDenBrand: This is why it is so vital to update the Park Plan to requalify with the DNR as they are extremely interested in helping us develop the beach along the peninsula. This is actually one of the longest stretches of shoreline where there is no public beach.

## **Board Comments**

Commissioner **Atkinson** gave an update on the sub-committee, which is comprised of tennis and pickleball enthusiasts. Two meetings were held and the goal was to come up with mutually agreed upon recommendations for the pickleball and tennis courts. The recommendations are:

1. Professional resurfacing of courts by filling cracks, cleaning them and resurfacing.
2. Paint both courts for tennis and one court for 4 pickleball. In order to change a tennis court to pickleball court, the lines need to be redrawn. This can result in multiple people playing two different games too close.

3. Obtain the cost to expand the west side of court by 5 feet to safely put in 2 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts. Want information by February 1, 2018 in time for budget hearings on the cost to resurface and a bid to widen the court.
4. The backboard needs to be repaired or replaced and painted.

There are a large group of pickleball enthusiasts who have talked about paying to have another pickleball court built. This may depend on costs. The courts are parallel and the east court remains a tennis court. The west court becomes 4 pickleball courts when the additional 5 feet of asphalt is in place.

Wilkinson: Suggested finding out the cost to add a new court.

**Adjournment** at 8:45 PM by **Skurski**

Respectively submitted,

Lola Jackson

Recording Secretary