

PENINSULA TOWNSHIP

13235 Center Road, Traverse City MI 49686

Phone: 231.223.7322 Fax: 231.223.7117

www.peninsulatownship.com

Peninsula Township Parks Committee

Regular Meeting

November 20, 2024

MINUTES

7:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order** Zebell called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
2. **Pledge**
3. **Roll Call** Caviston, Dahl, Zebell, Murphy, Milliken, Chown-township clerk.
4. **Approve Agenda** Dahl moved to approve the agenda with a second by Milliken. Approved by Consensus
5. **Brief Citizens Comments (for agenda items only)** None
6. **Conflict of Interest** None
7. **Consent Agenda:** any member of the committee, staff, or the public may ask that any item on the consent agenda be removed and placed elsewhere on the agenda for full discussion.
 - A. Minutes from October 23, 2024, Regular Meeting
 - B. Extension of 2% Allocation Grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa IndiansTwo items were corrected in the minutes. **Chown moved to approve the consent agenda as amended with a second by Milliken.** Approved by Consensus
8. **Business**
 - A. Introduction and Welcome to New Parks Committee Member Torey Caviston (Zebell)
Caviston has joined the parks committee and looks forward to being an active participant.
 - B. Kelley Park Boat Launch Update (Cram and Chown)
Consumers Power installed electric cabling throughout Kelley Park in anticipation of a housing development. The project never occurred. The DNR purchased the property after the electrical equipment was already installed. A portion of the installed electric infrastructure is used to power occupied residential homes to the north of the Kelley Park property. Our engineers are working to make minor changes to help mitigate the costs to move some of the electrical lines. A discussion with the engineers will occur after the Thanksgiving holiday.
 - C. Discussion of Need for Formal Request to Township Board to Change the Name Bowers Harbor Park Expansion Area to Bowers Harbor Natural Area (Chown)
Members of the parks committee agreed with the name change from Bowers Harbor Expansion Park to Bowers Harbor Natural Area. The committee wanted to differentiate between the active recreational area of Bowers Harbor Park and the passive use of the expansion area. However, this name change needs to be approved by the town board. There has been a change to the meeting agenda structure of the town board. There is now a category for governmental updates, and this is where a parks committee update can occur. Murphy volunteered to represent the parks committee at the next town board meeting on December 10, 2024. Murphy will recommend the name change and a definition of what

constitutes a natural area. Steve Lagerquist of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy will be contacted for a definition of a natural area. Pelizzari Natural Area has no lighting, no paved parking, no ball fields, and no organized activity. Only the walking trails are mowed. For the Bowers Harbor Expansion land, the issues of a dog park could arise as well as the current annual staging of the Bayshore Marathon in the parking area. Large areas are mowed for the marathon. In 2008, Christy Summers of Beckett & Raeder created a plan for the expansion property. This included a bathroom along the Devil's Dive Road perimeter, buffering vegetation, and a picnic shelter with a grill. The committee decided to wait before making the recommendation of the expansion to a natural area until the 2008 plan was reviewed. Dahl brought up the trash compactor facility further down Devil's Dive Road, where the road going through the compactor property needs repair. This property is owned by the township. Wilkinson will be contacted to access the situation.

D. Discussion of Draft "Nearby Recreation" Sign/Map and Icons to Potentially Be Used in New Township Park Signage (Murphy, Zebell, and Chown)

The committee went over the Nearby Recreation Sign/Map, which showed owned and managed township parks, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy properties, and the state parks (the icons and map are on pages 12-14 in the packet). The first park to have signage will be Pelizzari Natural Area. The sign will be a large square with about 15 placards. These pieces will contain the history of the park, the hemlock wing and its importance, keeping dogs leashed, maps, and both activities available and those discouraged. These are modeled after the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy signage. The Murray and Ridgewood trailheads should be included on the map. Archie Roadside Park, Mission Point Lighthouse Park, and Old Mission State Park are the correct names for each of these parks.

E. Discussion of Parks Committee Structure, Role, and Next Steps (Zebell and Murphy)

Maner Costerisan completed its Organizational Analysis and Recommendations for Township Structure on September 9, 2024. The Land Information Access Solution (LIAA) conducted a Parks Funding Feasibility Study in 2022. Both studies found the work being done by volunteers has become unsustainable to manage the 823 acres of parks and recommended hiring a parks director.

The parks committee discussed what it should be focused on, such as preserving and enhancing natural resources and promoting recreational activities. If a parks director was hired, the committee considered meeting quarterly and still having committee members responsible for their individual parks. Issues found at the parks would be communicated to the parks director. The parks director would make written or verbal reports to the town board monthly. Murphy explained the history of the elected parks commission, which operated independently of the town board and had its own budget. In 2018, the commission was eliminated through a citizen's referendum and seven members were appointed to the committee by the town board. The lighthouse was separated from the parks commission and has its own manager. The discussion turned to what the parks director would manage. There is the lighthouse, historical structures, the non-motorized committee, and overseeing maintenance of the parks. The township has three cemeteries, which are considered memorial parks and handled by the clerk's office. This would not change and may be something to consider in the future. A clearly stated job description of a parks director needs to be created.

The Maner Costerisan study has been put on the website and should be discussed at the town board meeting on December 10, 2024. Shanafelt suggested there be a committee of five to seven individuals to study the report and make recommendations to the township board. Individuals from the community can come forward to request their appointment. There will be several trustees and there should be one

member from the parks committee. The recommendations may be whether to become a charter township, do a Headlee rollback, do a parks millage, or some combination of these.

The township has had significant issues to deal with. Covid, the winery lawsuit, turnover on the township board, and three supervisors in the past couple of years. The committee discussed how a parks millage was put on hold so the PDR millage could be passed in 2022. There will be an election in 2026, and a parks millage should be on the ballot. The township cannot lead any millage elections, and they must be citizen driven. It would cost around \$20,000 to have a survey and ballot campaign.

The work on a new township survey needs to begin the first of the year. The last survey took about six months to design. With the new year comes a new annual budget. The parks will have limited funds and probably most of the money will go for parks maintenance. It is a statutory duty of the supervisor to create the budget. Maura Sanders, the newly elected supervisor, will take over this task from the treasurer's office. The committee discussed reviewing the parks budgets from 2024 and 2023. A list of completed projects and those items still needing attention will be created. A small project should be included for the budgetary ask for this upcoming year. The list needs to be as detailed as possible.

9. Citizen Comments:

Nancy R. Heller, 3091 Bluewater Road: I urge the committee to be extremely prepared and organized and stop spinning your wheels. Your committee responsibility for the budget needs to be your top priority as the clock is ticking.

10. Committee Comments

Zebell: perhaps the fire department would be able to assist in a controlled burn of the autumn olive.

Caviston: I have a background in environmental work. Currently, I work at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation as their Youth and Community Impact Coordinator. I spend half my time administering grants and scholarships. The other half I work with the youth and advisory councils, which is comprised of high school students. We teach them about philanthropy, and they manage an endowment where they get to decide where to award funding. For most of my career, I worked in environmental education, and my formal education is in environment stewardship.

11. Adjournment:

Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting with a second by Milliken.

Approved by Consensus

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.