

**Charter Township of Van Buren  
Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes  
February 14, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting came to order at 5:32 P.M. with the following individuals in attendance:

**MEMBERS:** Denise Willoughby, Tammy Wall, Charles Coleman, Todd O'Neill and Kimberly Nofz

**EXCUSED:** Daniel Belanger (resigned), Clerk Leon Wright, Director of Community Services

**STAFF:** Director of Recreation Zaenglein, Director of Parks Jason Locke and Acting Secretary Deanna Murphy

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:** A quorum of the Recreation Committee was present for this meeting.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**MOTION** and second by Todd O'Neill and Tammy Wall to approve the February 14, 2023 Recreation Committee Meeting Agenda as presented.

**VOTE:**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**APPROVAL OF AUGUST 9, 2022 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES:**

**MOTION** and second by Kimberly Nofz and Todd O'Neill to approve the August 9, 2022, Regular Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes.

**VOTE:**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Election of New Officers:**

According to the Recreation Committee By-Laws, the Annual Elections take place during the regular meeting in February of each year and the new terms shall commence March 1st. As it has been established, the Recreation Committee Secretary functions will continue to be performed by representatives of the Township's clerk respectively. The Chair and Vice Chair are to be appointed by the Committee.

Committee Member Charles Coleman nominated Todd O'Neill as Chair.

**MOTION** and second by Charles Coleman and Tammy Wall to accept the nomination of Todd O'Neill as Chair.

**VOTE:**

**MOTION CARRIED**

Committee Member Todd O'Neill nominated Charles Coleman as Vice Chair.

**MOTION** and second by Todd O'Neill and Tammy Wall to accept the nomination of Charles Coleman as Vice Chair.

**VOTE:**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

1. Community Center Update (Director Zaenglein):

- New Community Center's ground breaking ceremony was held on January 31<sup>st</sup>, with Deputy Wayne County Executive Assad Turfe, Township Clerk Leon Wright and Township Supervisor McNamara as presenters.
- Shared an article from the February 9<sup>th</sup> *Belleville Independent* news publication regarding ground breaking ceremony, which quoted Clerk Wright in recognizing the Recreation Committee who initially introduced a proposal for a new center to the Board of Trustees for consideration.
- Director Zaenglein passed out a commemorative plaque recognizing and thanking the Committee members for their help and participation in making this endeavor come to fruition.
- There is also a lot of work to do in preparation of our new center involving developing policies and procedures, operational, staffing and maintenance needs. The goal is to have the new center constructed by the end of 2023 and open for business during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024.

2. Recreation Update (Director Zaenglein):

- The last time this committee met, a proposed logo and style guide for the VBC, the Van Buren Community Center, was presented. With the recommendation from the Recreation Committee, Director Zaenglein changed the color scheme of the logo to include more vibrant colors. The edited logo and style guide was presented to the Van Buren Board of Trustees who accepted the look as the new style guide for the VBC.
- At the upcoming annual mParks Conference in March, Director Zaenglein is pleased to announce that Van Buren Twp. has been selected to receive the "Innovative Programming Award" for the The R.E.A.L. – Realizing Exceptionally Amazing Leaders (summer youth employment program). The R.E.A.L. program's main focus is to provide light yard maintenance to local senior citizens. In the past, the R.E.A.L. program also included career training aspects for its staff as the program was administered by our Human Resources Director. Since 2022, the program has been run by Director Zaenglein and has included recreational

programming aspects. Recreational programming will continue to be a part of The R.E.A.L. as long as the Parks and Recreation Department is involved.

- 2023 Firework Request for Bid is currently advertised on BidNet. The Board of Trustees has increased this year's budget to \$25,000.
- Had a great time at the Candy Loop last fall which was well attended.
- A new program was introduced last year called the Pumpkin Roll which featured Detroit Mini Donuts. There were 50 – 75 participants and everyone had a good time. Channel 4 News covered the event. Following Halloween, residents (young and old) could bring their pumpkins to Van Buren Park and compete with one another on how far their pumpkins would roll down the sled hill. After the event, anyone was welcome to pick-up the discarded pumpkins to spread out in their gardens/farm fields to feed wildlife.
- 2023 Summer Concert series is scheduled to begin in July. Some of the featured bands will include: Motor City Soul, The Rhythm Kings and Toppermost.
- This year, Director Zaenglein said the Parks & Recreation Department's main focus will be on the community's main events, The R.E.A.L. program, pavilion rental and residential trash collection program/landfill passes.

### 3. Parks Update (Director Locke):

- Director Zaenglein introduced the new Director of Parks Jason Locke to the Committee. Director Locke worked +23 years at Allen Park serving as an Assistant Supervisor for the last 8 years.
- Director Locke explained he is currently focusing on park clean-up and training procedures, operations, programming and improvements. Will start the hiring process for summer help soon. Crew is repairing picnic tables. In the spring, crew will have pesticide training.
- New park monument signs have been installed at Quirk Park, Van Buren Park, French Landing Park, Riggs Heritage Park and Haggerty Park.
- Haggerty Park: Having trouble with vandalism (graffiti and damage). The playground equipment is in need of replacement/repairs. Director Locke believes there is a lot of wasted space in this park and feels it is often overlooked. He is working on a plan to beautify this park adding a walking path, landscaping and benches in hopes to make it more serene.
- Van Buren Park updates:
  - 1) New pavilions #1 and #3 are built – just waiting on warmer weather to pour the concrete pads. The pavilions have been renamed:
    - Pavilion #1: Meadow Pavilion (75 people capacity)
    - Pavilion #2: Lakeside Pavilion (150 people capacity)
    - Pavilion #3: Grove Pavilion (75 people capacity)
  - 2) Three new gates have been installed; two of which are accessed off of Old Denton Road and one at the entrance just past the sled hill. This allows longer sledding access to our visitors while blocking off the back part.
  - 3) Had a major clean-out of the pole barn creating a more useful space.

4) Since Wayne County is no longer offering leaching tests of Belleville Lake, Director Locke is looking at other options to continue testing to assess the potential risk of contaminants in the lake.

- Riggs Park updates: Sidewalk has been installed. Had to remove a hazardous tree to do so. Will eventually have to remove all of the old, invasive and mix-matched trees between sidewalk and Huron River Drive.
- Iron Bell Trail is progressing.

4. The next Recreation Committee Meeting is scheduled on April 11, 2023 at 5:30 P.M.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

This meeting of the Recreation Committee was motioned and adjourned at 6:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna Murphy  
Acting Recording Secretary