

**Charter Township of Van Buren
Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting came to order at 5:31 PM with the following individuals in attendance:

MEMBERS: Chair Todd O'Neill, Vice Chair Charles Coleman and Kimberly Nofz

EXCUSED: Tammy Wall, Clerk Leon Wright

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

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

Committee members observed a minute of silence to pay respect for the recent passing of Recreation Committee member Denise Willoughby.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION and second by Todd O'Neill and Charles Coleman to approve the June 13, 2023 Recreation Committee Meeting Agenda as presented.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 23, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION and second by Todd O'Neill and Kimberly Nofz to approve the February 23, 2023, Regular Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Memorial Bench Program (Director Zaenglein)

- Director Zaenglein explained research shows a memorial bench program appears to be most popular. There is already an existing memorial brick program at the Belleville Area Museum. It is further recommended that Riggs Park be considered to kick this program off since it offers various walking pathways. It should also be called a commemorative program versus a memorial program to create a positive association.
- With an estimated \$3,500 donation, it includes the cement slab/installation (\$1,950) and powder-coated bench (\$1,500) with an inscription plaque.
- If the program is a success, it can be expanded to other VBT parks.
- Genevieve Riggs has expressed an interest to honor her parents at Riggs Park.
- Seniors have also expressed an interest.

- Director Renaud has said she would try and commit to ten (10) cement slabs in Riggs Park which would help reduce the donation cost.

MOTION and second by Kimberly Nofz and Charles Coleman to approve and recommend to Board of Trustees for approval of a Commemorative Bench Program be considered in Riggs Park.

VOTE:

MOTION CARRIED

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

1. Community Center Update (Director Zaenglein):

- The new Community Center's construction is on schedule for completion by the end of 2023 with an anticipated grand opening in March 2024. The Recreation Committee will be offered a chance to tour the facility prior to the grand opening.
- Continuing to work on policies and procedures (hiring practices, rules and regulations, etc.) for the new center so everyone will be on-the-same-page.
- Prior to COVID, VBT discovered our instructors did not fall under the Township's insurance umbrella. When the new center opens, instructors will have to provide proof of insurance and any certifications.

2. Recreation Update (Director Zaenglein):

- Parks and Recreation's Summer Fun flyer from the Van Buren Today publication was shared, which promoted the following summer events:
 - June 24th VBT Fireworks (Beck Ballfields): Increased this year's budget to \$25k (from \$18k last year).
 - Summer Concert Series schedule (Quirk Park)
 - August 26th Movie in the Park "The Super Mario Brothers" (Lower Huron Metropark) – Director Zaenglein will be representing VBT Parks & Recreation offering free crafts and activities.
 - Drop-in & Play (sponsored thru a Growth Works donation) offering free, fun summer program for elementary-aged school kids. This program is scheduled Thursdays July 13, 20, 27 and August 10 (9 – 11 A.M.) and ends at the time the Splash Pad opens so parents have to option to let their kids cool off and continue their fun.
 - Growth Works supports youth and families in Southeast Michigan offering substance use treatment resources, early intervention programming, and community-based opportunities for youth.
 - Growth Works will also be supporting this year's Pumpkin Roll-out.
- Director Zaenglein just completed interviewing/hiring for The R.E.A.L. (Realizing Exceptionally Amazing Leaders) summer youth employment program. This year, VBT hired 16 youth. The R.E.A.L. program's main focus will continue to provide light yard maintenance to local senior citizens. The R.E.A.L. program will help run the Drop-in & Play sessions.
 - The R.E.A.L. program is funded through a Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network (DWIHN) grant. DWIHN supports Detroit and Wayne County residents

with serious mental illness. This year's group will attend a mental health awareness seminar at the Huntington Place (formerly known as Cobo Hall).

3. Parks Update (Director Locke):

- Director Locke announced we are in full summer mode. All the pavilions are being rented.
- Quirk Park:
 - Splash Pad's bucket water feature had to be repaired and is now up and running again.
 - The soccer program is merging with the Huron League. We are not sure how this will impact play at Quirk Park at this time.
 - If the soccer program moves out, a 2nd pavilion should be entertained. There is plenty of space behind the Splash Pad for a structure and additional parking.
- Van Buren Park:
 - Iron Belle Trail inside the park is completed and operational. Final site restoration is continuing.
 - New Pavilions #1 (Meadow) and #3 (Grove) along with new signage have been completed and are in full use now.
 - A new gate with a heavy-duty chain/locks has been installed at the top of the beach's access drive to deter cars from parking down by the beach area. Already had one occurrence where someone cut the chain off.
 - Problems continue with beach visitors using the U of M dock. The police department has increased monitoring of this area.
 - More than half of the Community Garden plots have been rented. The peak planting season is almost over.
- French Landing Park:
 - Award of bid has been awarded to construct a kayak boat launch and boardwalk.
 - Installed signage and striping in the circular area to designate it as a loading/unloading zone.
 - Since April, VBT has contracted GC (Geese Chasers) to help control geese activity in the park. Also hiring GC to control nuisance geese in Van Buren Park's beach area.
- Rigg's Park: Completed the tree/stump removal along Huron River Drive. Soliciting bids to finish project's top soil and seed.
- Pickle Park: Pickle ball courts are in full swing. Trying to solve an issue with bird droppings on the courts and fencing. It was suggested to look into a large hawk kite to scare off birds. Director Locke is looking into a portable power washer with tank to clean up the mess since there is no water at the site.

ADJOURNMENT:

This meeting of the Recreation Committee was motioned and adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna Murphy
Recording Secretary