

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Tuesday March 6, 2023 at 6:00 pm
Garfield Township
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684
Ph: (231) 941-1620

AGENDA

ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Call Meeting to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call of Board Members**

1. Public Comment

Public Comment Guidelines:

Any person shall be permitted to address a meeting of The Parks and Recreation Commission, which is required to be open to the public under the provision of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, as amended. (MCLA 15.261, et.seq.) Public Comment shall be carried out in accordance with the following Board Rules and Procedures: a.) any person wishing to address the Board is requested to state his or her name and address. b.) No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter, excluding time needed to answer Commissioner's questions. Where constrained by available time the Chairperson may limit the amount of time each person will be allowed to speak to (3) minutes. 1.) The Chairperson may at his or her own discretion, extend the amount of time any person is allowed to speak. 2.) Whenever a Group wishes to address a Committee, the Chairperson may require that the Group designate a spokesperson; the Chairperson shall control the amount of time the spokesperson shall be allowed to speak when constrained by available time.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 6, 2023

4. Correspondence

5. Reports

- a. Commissioner Reports
- b. Staff Report / Updates
 - i. Parks Steward Report

6. Old Business

- a. PD 2023-26 – Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Grants Update

7. New Business

- a. PD 2023-27 – Mountain Bike Subcommittee Update

8. Public Comment

9. Items for Next Agenda – April 3, 2023

10. Adjournment

Garfield Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting to individuals with disabilities upon the provision of reasonable advance notice to Garfield Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Garfield Township by writing or calling Lanie McManus, Clerk, Ph: (231) 941-1620, or TDD #922-4412.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 6, 2023**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: Denise Schmuckal, Andy Hoort, Chris DeGood, Chris Remy, Art Bukowski, William Scott, and Fern Spence

Staff Present: Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon and Parks Steward Sean Kehoe

Call to Order: Chair DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

1. Public Comment (6:03)

A member of the Northern Michigan Mountain Biking Association thanked Schmuckal for presenting to the Township Board the information regarding the trails at the Commons Natural Area.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:03)

Hoort moved and Bukowski seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Hoort, Bukowski, Remy, Schmuckal, Scott, Spence, DeGood

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 3, 2023 (6:04)

Remy moved and Spence seconded to approve the minutes of January 3, 2023.

Yeas: Remy, Spence, Bukowski, Hoort, Schmuckal, Scott, DeGood

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:04)

None

5. Reports (6:04)

a. Commissioner Reports

Schmuckal stated that the Township was unable to purchase a property that was up for sale.

b. Staff Report/Updates

i. Parks Steward Report

Kehoe submitted the Parks Steward report in writing and indicated the men's bathroom at Silver Lake Recreation Area needs some work. A drone flyover was done over the Commons Natural Area and staff met with Township Engineer Jennifer Graham regarding details for upcoming parks priority projects, including River East Recreation Area.

Hannon stated that the Township Board adopted the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Staff has submitted it to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

6. Old Business

a. PD 2023-23 – Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan Implementation / Grants (6:10)

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant applications for 2023 have now opened on the DNR grants website, and Staff have begun filling out the required information. As part of the grant application process, there will need to be a public meeting to allow for discussion on the submission of the grant application. Commissioners decided that as part of their March 6 regular meeting, discussion would be heard on the MNRTF grant application.

Hannon stated that Staff and the Joint Planning Commission discussed the Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) as a potential resource for infrastructure improvements. Garfield Township and the City of Traverse City have been conducting an Infrastructure Assessment for the Commons area. The SOGL program may apply to this area and have potential benefits including improving stormwater management. There are many significant wetlands in the area, including on the Commons Natural Area site, which could be restored and may qualify for funding through this program.

Hannon added that another potential grant application may be the Trail Accelerator Grants offered through the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), which is anticipated to have a grant cycle opening in summer 2023. The mountain bike subcommittee may collect information pertaining to this grant.

Staff will prepare the information on the grant for the upcoming March 6 meeting. Grant assistance was discussed, and staff will investigate what work may be needed and come up with a cost for a potential grant writer. Other possible grant sources and programs include the MDNR Michigan Spark Grant and Rotary Charities.

7. New Business (6:45)

8. Public Comment (6:45)

9. Items for Next Agenda – March 6, 2023 (6:45)

There will be a public discussion on the MNRTF grant application, and Staff will check requirements for noticing this meeting. There will also be updates on the grant applications process and the mountain biking subcommittee. Spence added that reaching out to the disabled community should be a high priority for any grants applied for.

10. Adjournment

DeGood adjourned the meeting at 6:48.

Chris Remy, Secretary
Garfield Township Parks & Recreation
Commission
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684



Charter Township of Garfield

Parks Report

Silver Lake Recreation Area

Trees have been marked in dog park, as well as tree by the roadway, for removal estimate.

Researching material to use in dog park that will expedite ice melt without being harmful to dogs or grass.

Working on new countertop in men's room – waiting for potential sales on counter tops

Commons

Researching material to be used on trails that will expedite ice melting. Trails very icy with no snow.

Mountain Bike sub-committee met – will let Chris speak to that.

River East

Clearing and grubbing has been completed for dog park.

Contractor to return for topsoil when weather permits.

Barn has been filled with materials for Kids Creek tree planting.

Removed an abandoned homeless tent behind Good Will Inn that showed up in the last month or so.

Boardman Valley

Removed down tree that was from previous beaver cutting-wind finally knocked it over.

Met with Tart, Conservation District, County, City and Federal Parks Rep. for grant funding and universal wayfinding.

Miller Creek

Continues to be a winter hot spot for hikers. The trails seem to be getting a lot of use.

Kid's Creek

Cage material and tubes have been delivered. We have started to cut the cage material to save time once planting starts.

Buffalo Ridge Trail

Additional grant funding may be available for invasive species control (autumn olive, etc.), piggy backing the Spring Planting through Conservation Resource Allaince.

Additional Information

Don't forget to pass the word that we are always looking for volunteer groups to help out throughout the year for different projects.

Submitted February 28, 2023

Derek Morton

Sean Kehoe

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2023-26		
Prepared:	March 1, 2023	Pages: 1
Meeting:	March 6, 2023 – Parks and Recreation Commission	Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan – Grants Update	

BACKGROUND:

The Township Board adopted the Garfield Township 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, at their meeting on January 10, 2023. The Plan was approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in February 2023 and allows the Township to maintain eligibility for MDNR grant programs including the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF).

The Township Board supports applying for an MNRTF grant and will hold a public meeting at their regular meeting on March 14, 2023 to receive input about the application. The application is due to MDNR by April 1, 2023.

STAFF COMMENT:

Staff offers the following comments on grant programs:

- The MNRTF grant application is for a portion of the “Conservation Recreation” Trail in the northern portion of the Commons Natural Area property. This trail will be designed as a universally accessible (UA) trail and form an approximately 1.4-mile loop.
- Part of the grant application process is an Accessibility Review including input from people with disabilities, disability advocacy groups, and other organizations which serve people with disabilities. Staff met with two representatives from Cordia at Grand Traverse Commons, a senior living organization, and had a discussion with a representative from Disability Network Northern Michigan. Some key points raised include:
 - Different trail materials present different advantages and disadvantages for people with disabilities. For example, specific challenges include cracking in pavement and slick conditions on boardwalks. The Township will likely need to include some boardwalk near wetlands; otherwise, the trail will be primarily crushed gravel.
 - As a regional example, Timbers Recreation Area in Long Lake Township received an MNTRF grant for a UA trail which included boardwalk and crushed gravel sections. This trail opened in 2019.
 - Disability Network Northern Michigan will do an accessibility review of the complete application, and indicated the minimum width of the trail should be at least 6 feet, ideally 8 feet, and 10 feet for sections intended for both hiking and biking.
- Staff have drafted a letter for outreach to area stakeholders, including those who provided input during the planning process, and a draft letter of support (see attached documents). Several stakeholders have already indicated a willingness to provide a letter of support for this grant application.
- Staff and the Township Engineer have discussed drawings and details required for inclusion with the MNRTF application and are working on finalizing these details.
- Staff and the Township Engineer are working on details for an application for the Oleson Foundation grant program, with the focus on artesian well improvements and wetlands management.

ACTION REQUESTED:

This item is for discussion only. No action is requested at this time. The public meeting for the grant application is scheduled for the Township Board regular meeting on March 14, 2023.

Attachments:

1. Draft Letter for Outreach
2. Draft Letter of Support Template

Dear Community Leader,

Garfield Township recently adopted the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Design Plan to help guide improvements to trail and recreation opportunities, and to address issues such as wetlands, erosion, and protection of the environment. The Township thanks the community for providing feedback and support throughout the planning process.

To begin implementation of the design plan, the Township is applying for a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund program for a universally accessible (UA) trail loop within the northern portion of the park. The loop is planned to begin and end at the Red Drive trailhead near Greenspire School and provide greater access to recreation, including for people with mobility challenges.

If you would like to support Garfield Township in this application, please consider writing a letter of support to submit to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources with this application. The Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area is a unique place in our community, and we are excited to begin the implementation of the design plan to help ensure this place can be enjoyed by everyone and will be preserved for future generations.

Sincerely,

Chuck Korn
Supervisor

John Sych, AICP
Planning Director


Dear Michigan Department of Natural Resources Representative,

Please accept this letter as an indication of our enthusiastic support for Garfield Township's application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant program for a universally accessible (UA) trail at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The recently completed design plan for this park brought together feedback from throughout the community, and we are excited to support the application for this project to implement this design plan.

The Commons Natural Area holds tremendous value to the community as part of the former Traverse City State Hospital. The State Hospital grounds were designed with the idea that "Beauty is Therapy." Today, the Commons Natural Area offers its beauty to the community as a major recreational area near an urban area. Creating a universally accessible trail will allow everyone throughout the community to experience the beauty of this place. An intentionally designed trail will help preserve the beauty of the natural environment for future generations by reducing social trails and preventing erosion.

Thank you for your consideration in supporting this funding request.

Sincerely,

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2023-27		
Prepared:	March 1, 2023	Pages: 1
Meeting:	March 6, 2023 – Parks and Recreation Commission	Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Mountain Bike Subcommittee Update	

OVERVIEW:

In January 2023, the Parks and Recreation Commission agreed to create a subcommittee focused on issues related to the mountain bike trail area at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The subcommittee's input will be useful in guiding future projects here to implement the Commons Natural Area Design Plan.

The subcommittee met for the first time on February 22, 2023 at Township Hall and included representatives from Copper Ridge Riders Association (CRRA), Northern Michigan Mountain Bike Association (NMMBA), and others. Members of the subcommittee discussed the following items:

- **Existing Trails** – CRRA members have been conducting an inventory and gathering photos to document the status of the existing mountain bike trails. Subcommittee members will be meeting with Township Staff on the property to assess specific areas of concern regarding erosion, trail crossings, signage needs, and safety, and to determine appropriate action which may potentially include closing off some trail sections.
- **Fundraising** – The subcommittee discussed strategies for fundraising and generated an initial list of people to ask for donations or potentially help with fundraising. They also discussed the need for a project website and branding to help promote the project to potential donors. Staff will also continue seeking grant programs to which the Township could apply including the Trail Accelerator Grants through the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), which is anticipated to have a grant cycle opening in summer 2023.

Other topics of discussion included design considerations for potential future trails, and how to handle maintenance of any future trails. The subcommittee scheduled their next meeting for March 15, 2023.

STAFF COMMENT:

During the discussion on fundraising, some wondered if forming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity would be appropriate for any fundraising activities, with Preserve Hickory cited as an example. Staff followed up with a representative of Preserve Hickory to discuss how collaboration works between Preserve Hickory as a 501.c.3 and the City of Traverse City as a municipal entity.

The 501(c)(3) model was cited as beneficial because it was seen as a more appropriate recipient of donor money and provided tax benefits to donors. Also, some grants allow 501(c)(3) organizations to apply but not municipal entities. Staff intends to bring this topic to the next subcommittee meeting and will continue to research if this approach is the best course of action for the Commons Natural Area.

ACTION REQUESTED:

This item is for discussion only. No action is requested.