

**Whitewater Township
Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
Minutes for Regular Meeting
June 13, 2022**

Call to order 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Butler, Cosgrove, Hubbell, Melton, Slopsema

Absent:

Set / Approve Agenda: Set

Declaration of Conflict of Interest: None

Public Comment:

Approval of minutes:

Motion by Cosgrove, second by Butler to approve May 9, 2022, meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Reports/Presentations/Announcements/Comments/Correspondence: None

Unfinished Business:

1. Hi Pray Park dug-outs: Fleis & VandenBrink (F&V) is to provide the engineered drawings for presentation to the county for construct code approval. Materials have been paid for.

2. Park Playground: Work has been completed with the equipment set, soil and grass seed has been put in. There is money in the budget for landing zone material. There is room for a future slide, benches and possible tables. We can put in trees around the edge.

Landing zone materials. ADA does not allow sand as a landing zone material. ADA surface and equipment has been and continues to be financially impossible for our budget at this time. Since the goal was not to be ADA we can use the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) guidelines approved sand or wood chips. Extensive discussion of the PRAC's understanding of depth and maintenance of sand and wood chips. Extensive discussion of ADA compliance and regulations.

Before any decisions can be made we need to get answers to possible questions for the attorney or landscape engineer: Does the existing structures have to be ADA compliant? Does a new structure have to be ADA compliant in an existing playground? Can an infant swing be put up next to a regular swing?

3. BCNA & Lossie Trail tree removal: The township received seven bids that are in the board packet. The bids range from approximately \$35,000 to \$194,000.

A lot of ARPA funds are being designated for local parks and upgrades.

If there are any funds left from the tree removal project would that go back to the recreation fund for use for projects?

If the board goes with the lowest bid there could be up to \$16,000.

4. Lossie Trail wetland, bridge improvements: No movement. If the GT Conservation gets the bid for the tree removal they may be able to do more evaluation and give more detailed information on the wetland and bridge improvements.

5. Hi Pray Park playground cleanup, sand, results, slideshow presentation. Hi Pray is a highly used facility in the community.

Discussion of batting cage use. Is there any way we can do on-line reservations for the batting cage?

New Business:

1. Popp's agenda item for the meeting Tuesday is for a motion to close Hi Pray playground. The playground has not been closed in the past as indicated in the board packet. Discussion ensued regarding guidelines vs requirements vs suggestions. The park was not intended to be ADA compliant.

The Supervisor can communicate with the PRAC to get questions and concerns addressed.

Does the PRAC want to present an official statement to the Board for the meeting? Yes. Include specific reasons of guidelines, standards and compliance.

We, as the Parks and Rec Advisory Committee, make the point:

a.) CPSC guidelines, section 1, 1.1 the fifth paragraph, because many factors may affect playground safety the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC) believes that guidelines, rather than a mandatory rule are appropriate. The guidelines are not a mandatory standard.

We would encourage the board to read the handbook for public playground safety.

<https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf>

b.) Sand is an approved landing zone material according to the CPSC guidelines in the handbook for public playground safety.

c.) ADA section 35.150, existing facilities, read A-general, does NOT necessarily require a public entity to make each of its facilities accessible. . . Also note the undo expense.

https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/titleII_2010/titleII_2010_integrated.htm

d.) The US Dept. of Justice has made it clear that not necessarily every existing site needs to be made accessible and they quote the above referenced ADA section 35.150.

e.) The township has not received any complaints of safety incidents or injuries.

f.) Also did an annual safety and maintenance inspection checklist. No concerns were found.

2. Resolution to change the appointment request submittal/approval process. It is concerning that people have applied for PRAC appointment and they have not been presented to the full board for approval. Will have to look at Ordinance #48 that established the committee.

Table and discuss next month. Provide members with a copy of or link to Ordinance #48.

3. Popp's agenda item for motion to hire new position for parks, a deputy park administrator. Why has this come up? The park administrator position is pretty much a full year position with a lull in November and December. The park administrator position decision needs to be addressed in the fall. The concern is that the two longest standing park rangers will eventually retire and we need a plan of succession.

Melton notes the stated preference of being fire and EMT trained.

Melton also notes the amount of money for the position (\$35K-\$45K) but there are not funds available for any recreation projects. The township has also never gotten the needed handyman position filled.

It is not a standard deputy position in that this deputy would be under the purview of the board not the head Park Administrator. The Park Administrator makes the day to day, general work decisions.

4. Grants – postpone

July newsletter article about the cleanup and park update.

Next regular meeting: July 11, 2022

Public Comment: Dan Belanger, 26 year member of the community, worked at the park for 16 years. It's great we work on playgrounds. The biggest playground is the waterfront. Real concerned about the major issues that are problems at the campground park and boat launch at the pavilion, port-a-johns, boat launch falling apart and the roads falling apart. The park is completely funded by the campground. Elk Lake is the big community "play ground". The

Board needs to look for leadership for the park administrator. The board needs to listen to what is happening. Challenge the township to look at the monies that have been earned at the park over the past 10 years. Very unhappy with the board who thinks they are going to circumvent the park administrator or the park rangers in the middle of the season. Very disappointed in the direction the board is taking on the campground.

Lorie North, supportive of what Dan said. Daughter, Kinzie Gallo, was a park ranger for two years. Kinzie loved the park and wanted to see the park flourish. Would like to see the trails cleaned up and is willing to help.

Adjournment: 10:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois MacLean, Recording Secretary