

Superior Charter Township Park Commission  
Regular Meeting  
October 2, 2023

Approved Minutes

1. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order by Chair Nahid Sanii-Yahyai at 6:34 pm.
2. Roll Call  
Park Commissioners present: Nahid Sanii-Yahyai, Martha Kern-Boprie, Greg Vessels, Guy Conti, Curtis Freeman, Riley Schofield  
  
Park Commissioners absent – none  
  
Others present: Trustee Bernice Lindke; Juan Bradford, Paark Director; Marion Morris, Peter Morris, Terry Lee Lansing, Angela Miller, Jan Piert, Jack Smiley, Sharon Bryant-Phillips
3. Flag Salute  
Chair Nahid Sanii-Yahyai led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
4. Agenda Approval  
I was moved by Riley Schofield and supported by Greg Vessels to approve the agenda with the addition under New Business C Parks & Recreation Commissioner Interviews of Sharon Bryant-Phillips as an applicant to be interviewed. The motion carried.
5. Prior Meeting Minutes Approval
  - A. September 11, 2023  
It was moved by Greg Vessels and supported by Nahid Sanii-Yahyai to approve the minutes of 10/02/2023 with correction to New Business A. Parks & Recreation Commissioner Interviews, fourth paragraph. After the end of the third sentence, insert a sentence that reads “Nahid Sanii-Yahyai suggested that the open park commissioner position be posted on the township’s website.” The motion carried.
6. Citizen Participation  
Jan Piert spoke, and asked if a millage to support parks had ever been sought in Superior Township. Martha Kern-Boprie responded that she had some information on this topic, and would provide it later in the meeting, as Citizen Participation is a time for the public to speak to the Park Commission.
10. New Business
  - A. Resolution 2023-02: Marion Morris  
Resolution 2023-02 was moved by Martha Kern-Boprie and supported by Nahid Sanii-Yahyai. WHEREAS Parks & Recreation Vice-Chair Marion Morris has served the residents of Superior Charter Township as an elected member of the Superior Township Parks & Recreation Commission since November 20, 1992; and  
  
WHEREAS Marion Morris has contributed her time, talent and leadership to the mission of the Parks & Recreation Commission; and  
  
WHEREAS Marion Morris has served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Parks & Recreation Commission several times. During her service she lead extraordinary advances in natural open space preservation, improvements to neighborhood parks and expansion in recreation programming; and

WHEREAS Marion Morris has chosen to resign from the Parks & Recreation Commission on September 11, 2023.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Parks & Recreation Commission of the Charter Township of Superior thanks and honors the contributions of Parks & Recreation Commissioner Marion Morris and wishes her well in her future endeavors.

Roll Call Vote

	Yes	No	Absent
Nahid Sanii-Yahyai	X		
Greg Vessels	X		
Martha Kern-Boprie	X		
Riley Schofield	X		
Curtis Freeman	X		
Guy Conti	X		

The resolution was adopted.

B. Resolution 2023-3: Terry Lee Lansing

Resolution 2023-3 was moved by Martha Kern-Boprie and supported by Nahid Sanii-Yahyai.

WHEREAS Terry Lee Lansing has served the residents of Superior Charter Township as an elected member of the Superior Township Parks & Recreation Commission since November 20, 2008; and

WHEREAS Terry Lee Lansing has contributed her time, talent and leadership to the mission of the Parks & Recreation Commission, and was a particular advocate for preservation of open, natural spaces and brought her expertise in bee-keeping to commission work; and

WHEREAS Terry Lee Lansing has chosen to resign from the Parks & Recreation Commission on July 23, 2023.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Parks & Recreation Commission of the Charter Township of Superior thanks and honors the contributions of Parks & Recreation Commissioner Terry Lee Lansing and wishes her well in her future endeavors.

Roll Call Vote

	Yes	No	Absent
Nahid Sanii-Yahyai	X		
Greg Vessels	X		
Martha Kern-Boprie	X		
Riley Schofield	X		
Curtis Freeman	X		
Guy Conti	X		

The resolution was adopted.

7. Reports

A. Chairperson

Chair Nahid Sanii-Yahyai stated she still wishes to host a luncheon to thank Marion Morris and Terry Lee Lansing for their service to the Park Commission. She suggested a potluck at the township hall. Marion and Terry Lee were present in the audience. Nahid asked park commissioners if a day-time or evening-time event would be workable. All said they were flexible. Marion and Terry Lee were asked

to send a few different dates over the next few weeks, when they could attend a luncheon, and Nahid will select a date.

Nahid also informed the park commission that she attended the Harvest Moon bonfire in LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve on Saturday evening. It was a delightful event, and Nahid encouraged the Park Commission to plan more activities there.

B. Director

Juan Bradford submitted written report. He added to it the news that another bid was submitted for construction of a bathroom at Fire Station #2 for Park Department staff. This bid was for a total of \$66,000.

C. Board Liaison

Trustee Bernice Lindke reported on the September 13, 2023 Special Meeting and the September 18, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Township Board.

September 13 Special Meeting – The Township Board approved hiring of Brian Koncius to conduct an investigation under the township’s Sexual Harassment Policy. The resolution to approve the zoning and land use agreement with conservation easement (Garrett’s Space) was tabled.

September 18, 2023 –

Supervisor’s Report: Invited board members to tour Blackbird Lodge at Staebler County Farm Park. Tom Freeman will be accepting bids for the septic system to be installed on the Dixboro Village Green. Supervisor Schwartz reported he asked Coy Vaughn, Director of Washtenaw County Parks & Rec Commission, if the County would hold the easement on the Rock property. The County Parks & Rec Commission offered to draft the easement, pay \$1.00 for it, and do a Phase One study. The resolution to accept the bid for the improvements at Fireman’s Park was tabled pending requested information about funding the proposal. Reinstated the educational bonus for current employees. Approved Curtis Freeman to be a Parks & Recreation Commissioner to fill the vacancy left by Terry Lee Lansing. Approved a motion to receive preliminary 2024 budgets.

Discussion took place about the conservation easement on the Rock property that is proposed to be held by the County Parks & Rec Commission. Guy Conti explained the role and use of easements. A conservation easement held by the county, would prevent a future county parks & recreation commission from selling the property without approval of the township board. The text of the easement prohibits the county from conveying the easement without the approval of the township board. If someone approached the county about releasing the easement and/or purchasing the property, the county could not do so without consent of the township board because it would still own the property.

D. Board Meeting Attendee

Martha Kern-Boprie attended the September 18 Township Board meeting, and submitted a written report.

E. Park Steward

Juan Bradford spoke with Ellen Kurath recently. She has removed some invasive plants in Schroeter Park.

F. Safety

Juan Bradford reported there were no accidents or injuries in the past month.

It was moved by Riley Schofield and supported by Greg Vessels to receive the reports. The motion carried.

8. Communications

- A. Educational: National Recreation & Park Association Research
- B. P & R Commissioners Letter of Recommendation
- C. Park Maintenance Job Posting

It was moved by Martha Kern-Boprie and supported by Curtis Freeman to receive the communications. The motion carried.

9. Old Business

- A. Community Center Advisory Committee Update

Juan Bradford reported there is no update, as the committee has not met since the last Park Commission meeting.

- B. Fireman's Park Improvements Bid Review Summary

The township received two bids for the improvements to Fireman's Park.

<u>Bidder</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
KAB Enterprises, Inc	\$529,864.78
Sole` Building Company	\$622,284.00

Orchard Hiltz & McCliment (OHM) the township's engineering consultant analyzed the bids. The low bidder is competent and has good references.

The amount of ARPA funds set aside by the township board for Fireman's Park improvements is \$319,800.00. Township board members discussed where the remaining \$211,000 would come from to complete this project. Supervisor Ken Schwartz suggested splitting it between the Park Fund and the General Fund. Juan Bradford and Keith Lockie noted that the unrestricted Park Fund balance is only \$192,000. Charging over \$100,000 to it will severely impact the Park Fund's ability to handle emergency equipment repairs and acquisitions. Some township board members suggested the General Fund should cover the entire \$211,000, others suggested the General Fund cover 75% and the Park Fund cover 25%. The township board tabled this decision to a future meeting.

At the Park Commission meeting Juan Bradford noted that this park improvement will enhance the neighborhoods near it, and possibly raise property values. He believe the Township Board should fund the entire \$211,000 out of General Fund assets.

Guy Conti left the Park Commission meeting at this point.

10. New Business

- C. Parks & Recreation Commissioner interviews

There is one posted opening on the Park Commission. Two people applied for the position. The Park Commission will interview the applicants, and make a recommendation to the Township Board, which has the authority to appoint individuals to fill vacancies in elected positions. The applicants are Sharon Bryant-Phillips and Jack Smiley. Sharon was interviewed first.

Sharon Bryant-Phillips addressed the Park Commission. She holds a degree in Communications from the University of Michigan, as well as masters degrees in Educational Administration and Biblical Studies. She previously served twelve years on the Superior Township Park Commission and taught Spanish in Detroit Public Schools for 30 years. She is retired now, and has time available to help the park commission. Commissioners asked Sharon questions.

Martha Kern-Boprie noted that Sharon was not a candidate for Park Commission in either the 2016 or the 2020 elections, and asked why Sharon is seeking appointment now. Sharon responded she helped start a school in Belize, authored a book and traveled. She is now ready to focus her efforts toward the Park Commission.

Greg Vessels asked what Sharon would like to see in our parks, that is not there now. Sharon responded she would like to see a dog park and a dog cemetery.

Curtis Freeman asked what recreation ideas did Sharon have for ten years from now. Sharon responded she would like to see Spanish speaking programs, and program that focus on “Striving to Achieve (STA)” students.

Juan Bradford noted that the Park Department has a small staff, and Park Commissioners are needed to volunteer at recreation events. He asked Sharon if she would volunteer, and she responded that she would.

Jack Smiley addressed the Park Commission. He has worked successfully on open natural space acquisition and preservation for 33 years. He has been a resident of Superior Township for 13 years. Preserved properties include LeFurge Woods, Springhill Nature Preserve, Weatherbee Woods, Highland Preserve, Kosch Headwaters Preserve, Secrest Nature Preserve, Cherry Hill Nature Preserve and Jack R. Smiley Preserve. He has led multiple youth programs, including day camps. He holds business and political science degrees from Henry Ford Community College and the University of Michigan, and completed two years of graduate study in urban planning at Wayne State University. He has worked for MSU Extension, the City of Detroit, and served as Executive Director of the Detroit Audubon Society and the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy. He has been a licensed Michigan real estate broker for over 40 years. Commissioners asked Jack questions.

Martha Kern-Boprie asked Jack what ideas he has for programs to bring people into our natural areas. He responded activities like birdwatching and hiking.

Greg Vessels asked if Jack was available to help with weekend events in our parks. Jack said yes.

Curtis Freeman asked what ideas Jack has to build relationships with other open space owners, such as farmers, county parks and recreation and conservancies. Jack responded that he already does this, and has working relationships with many non-profits and conservancies.

Juan Bradford asked Jack how he can help our conservation efforts. Jack responded he is acquainted with non-profit groups and foundations that can help access grant funds and equipment use and acquisition.

Marion Morris, former park commissioner provided a memo supporting appointment of Jack Smiley to the Park Commission.

It was moved by Martha Kern-Boprie and supported by Riley Schofield to recommend to the Township Board that it appoint Jack Smiley to the open seat on the Park Commission. During discussion on the motion Greg Vessels stated he is very impressed with Sharon Bryant-Phillips, and supports her appointment to the Park Commission. Martha Kern-Boprie noted that a “Yes” vote would be to concur with the motion to recommend appointing Jack Smiley to the Park Commission, and a “No” vote would be to not concur with that appointment recommendation. A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

	Yes	No	Absent
Curtis Freeman	X		
Riley Schofield	X		
Greg Vessels		X	
Nahid Sanii-Yahyai	X		
Martha Kern-Boprie	X		
Guy Conti			X

The motion carried by a vote of four Yes to one No with one absent. Martha Kern-Boprie stated she will prepare a memo to the Township Board informing them of the recommendation, and send the memo to the Township Clerk via email.

D. Special Event Volunteer Sign-Up

Nature Hunt Bingo 10/07/23 1:00 – 3:00 pm Cherry Hill Nature Preserve  
Nahid Sanii-Yahyai and Greg Vessels volunteered.

Pumpkin Carving Day 10/21/23 11:00 am – 2:00 pm Norfolk Park  
Nahid Sanii-Yahyai, Riley Schofield, Curtis Freeman volunteered.

Owl Prowl 10/28/23 6:30 – 8:00 pm volunteer sign-up deferred to the October 23 Park Commission meeting

E. 2024 Preliminary Budget

Juan Bradford reviewed the proposed 2024 budget with park commissioners. Funding from the township General Fund represents a 4% increase over the revised 2023 amount. Commissioners asked many questions over details in the budget.

It was moved by Martha Kern-Boprie and supported by Nahid Sanii-Yahyai that the Superior Township Park Commission recommend to the Township Board that it approve the proposed 2024 Park Fund budget. The motion carried. Nahid and Martha encouraged Park Commissioners to attend the Township Board meeting on October 16 to support the Park Fund budget.

11. Bills for Payment

It was moved by Greg Vessels and supported by Riley Schofield to approve payment of the bills totaling \$43,380.28 through 10/02/23. The motion carried.

12. Financial Statements

A. August 2023 Revenue & Expenditure Report

It was moved by Curtis Freeman and supported by Greg Vessels to receive the August Revenue and expenditure report. The motion carried.

13. Pleas and Petitions

Martha Kern-Boprie spoke in response to Jan Piert's question about attempts to approve property tax millage for township parks. Martha noted that she was township treasurer from November 1984 to November 1996, and during that period she recalls three or four unsuccessful attempts to approve a millage for township parks and recreation. After these failed attempts, there were no more proposals. A better relationship developed with the Township Board, that resulted in better funding for Parks & Recreation in annual budgets. Jan suggested that it may be time to consider another millage proposal, as there are new residents in the township, and perhaps greater commitment to enhancing our protected open spaces with trail systems.

14. Adjournment

It was moved by Greg Vessels and supported by Riley Schofield to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. The motion carried.

Submitted by,  
Martha Kern-Boprie, Park Commissioner and Secretary