Superior Charter Township Parks & Recreation Commission

Regular Meeting

November 25, 2024

Approved Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair Nahid Sanii-Yahyai.

1. Roll Call

Park Commissioners present: Curtis Freeman, Matthew Yahyai, Greg Vessels, Nahid Sanii-Yahyai, Martha Kern-Boprie, Jack Smiley, Sharon Bryant-Phillips

Park Commissioners absent: none

Others present: Juan Bradford, Parks & Rec Dept Director, Trustee Dana Green, Brenda Baker, Susan LaCroix, Steven Peach

1. Flag Salute

Chair Nahid Sanii-Yahyai led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

1. Agenda Approval

It was moved by Greg Vessels and supported by Curtis Freeman to approve the agenda as drafted. The motion carried.

1. Prior Meeting Minutes Approval
2. October 28, 2024, regular meeting

It was moved by Curtis Freeman and supported by Greg Vessels to approve the minutes of 10/28/24 as drafted. The motion carried.

1. Citizen Participation

Brenda Baker addressed the Park Commission about the comments attributed to her in the minutes of October 28, 2024, under Pleas and Petitions. She clarified that when she spoke about the number of candidates for Park Commission, she did note there were six candidates on the Democratic party, not four as recorded in the minutes. Commission Secretary Martha Kern-Boprie responded that she thought she heard Brenda say four candidates. Commissioner Jack Smiley recalled hearing Brenda say six candidates. Martha said she would correct the number of candidates in the minutes of October 28, 2024.

Susan LaCroix introduced herself as a member of the Legacy Land Conservancy which is a part of the Washtenaw County Land Conservation Collective. These organizations can send a “tool kit” to help landowners move forward in land preservation initiatives. Commissioner Sharon Bryan-Phillips spoke about “Woofers” an international organization that helps people interested in land preservation. Commissioner Jack Smiley asked if the organizations Susan works with are involved with a federal US Dept of Agriculture (USDA) grant. Susan responded they are somewhat involved. Jack also stated he is interested in learning more about the tool kit, and recommended a special meeting be scheduled for a presentation on it. Susan said her organization could give a presentation in March or April. A public meeting on March 10, 2025, was suggested by Juan Bradford, and commissioners asked Juan to pursue this.

1. Reports
2. Chairperson

Chair Nahid Sanii-Yahyai welcomed new park commissioners Sharon Bryant-Phillips and Matthew Yahyai. A new liaison from the Township Board has not been appointed yet, as the new board has not met yet. Nahid recommended a farm education program modeled after the MSU program the “Rock Committee” visited. Nahid also recommended planting ash trees.

1. Director

Juan Bradford submitted a written report. He reminded park commissioners the Township Board will hold a special meeting on Friday, December 13 at 5:30 pm to set millage rates and approve the 2025 Budgets. The regular meeting of the Township Board will take place on Monday, December 16 at 7:00 pm.

1. Township Board Liaison

A Township Board Liaison has not been appointed yet, as the new Township Board has not met yet.

1. Board Meeting Attendee

Greg Vessels and Martha Kern-Boprie were present for the Township Board meeting on November 18. There was not a quorum present, so the meeting did not take place. Supervisor Ken Schwartz, Clerk Lynette Findley and Trustee Bernice Lindke were present. Township Board members present agreed to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, November 20 at 10:30 am.

1. Park Steward

Juan Bradford spoke with Ellen Kurath. Ellen has been tending plants she planted last year. She sprayed them with deer repellent which has allowed the plants to grow well.

1. Safety

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

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

1. Communications
2. Thank you letter to Brookside Farms

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

1. Old Business
2. Controller’s Report

Juan Bradford reviewed items in the Controller’s report on proposed 2025 budgets, and inconsistencies in the data presented.

1. 2025 Proposed Board Budget Resolutions

Juan Bradford reviewed the proposed 2025 budgets for the Park Fund with the Park Commission. There were two different budgets, one proposed by former Township Supervisor Schwartz and one proposed by the Park Commission. The version requested by the Park Commission is higher by $105,332 which is the amount needed to expand the three permanent part-time maintenance staff to permanent full-time staff with benefits. Martha Kern-Boprie noted the budget documents appear some confusing, as they refer to a version with three full-time Parks & Rec employees and the other version with three part-time Parks & Rec employees, when the Options really are four full-time Parks & Rec employees (Director plus three full-time maintenance employees) and (full-time Director and three part-time maintenance employees). Jack Smiley commented that it may be time to decrease our budget request and negotiate. Juan Bradford reported he is seeking a meeting with Supervisor Emily Yahkind about the budget. Sharon Bryant-Phillips asked that future budget documents be presented in a simpler format in lay person’s language.

1. “Rock Property” Committee Update

Committee chair Jack Smiley reported there is no update at this time. He wishes to have a meeting with the committee members, after the Park Commission meeting ends.

1. Proposed 2025 Farming Lease for “Rock Property” Update

While working on the lease agreement with Steven Peach to farm around 186 acres of the “Rock Property” Juan and Steven were informed of a state law that requires in cases of government owned land that is leased for income to the government owner, the land be assessed and property taxes levied on the property that is leased. The lease amount plus the potential property tax could make the land too expensive for Mr. Peach to lease. Juan and Mr. Peach will continue to work on a draft lease agreement. There is a value to the township in continuing the farming operation on the land. It is possible that the lease revenue to the township will be very small, beyond the property tax amount paid by Mr. Peach.

1. New Business
2. Election of 2025 Park Commission Officers

Martha Kern-Boprie nominated Nahid Sanii-Yahyai as Commission Chairperson. Greg Vessels supported the nomination. Nahid Sanii-Yahyai was elected Chairperson by unanimous vote.

Nahid Sanii-Yahyai nominated Greg Vessels as Vice-Chairperson. Curtis Freeman supported the nomination. Greg Vessels was elected Vice-Chairperson by unanimous vote.

Nahid Sanii-Yahyai nominated Martha Kern-Boprie as Secretary. Matthew Yahyai supported the nomination. Martha Kern-Boprie was elected Secretary by unanimous vote.

1. Approve Purchase of Pick-up Truck

At the October 28 meeting of the Park Commission a concept was endorsed of using an additional $25,000.00 in ARPA revenue to purchase a used pick-up truck for use by the Park Director. Juan discussed this with Don Waligore, and learned that the pick-up truck used by maintenance staff is 23 years old, and it would be prudent to replace that truck with a new truck, and have Juan drive the older truck.

Juan presented information on vehicles available, and their prices. He explained the preferred vehicle is a Ford F-350. He could only find a new 2024 Ford F-350 at Gene Butman Ford in Ypsilanti for $48,480. He found a new Ford F-250 at two dealerships:

Gorno Ford in Woodhaven $46,472

Gene Butman Ford in Ypsilanti $48,497

The Gorno dealership would not have an F-350 available for another year.

He located used Ford Ranger trucks for less cost, but found their options were more than what the Parks Dept needs.

2021 Ford Ranger XLT $31,995

Gene Butman Ford, Ypsilanti

2020 Ford Ranger Lariat $30,500

Atchinson Ford, Belleville

Sharon Bryant-Phillips advocated for purchasing an electric truck. She owns one and is very happy with it.

After much discussion, Martha Kern-Boprie moved to purchase a Ford F-350 pick-up truck from Gene Butman Ford for an amount not to exceed $48,480.00. Curtis Freeman supported the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Curtis Freeman Yes

Matthew Yahyai Yes

Greg Vessels Yes

Nahid Sanii-Yahyai Yes

Martha Kern-Boprie Yes

Jack Smiley Yes

Sharon Bryant-Phillips No

The motion carried.

1. Christmas Tree Lighting December 7 – Volunteers Needed

The Christmas Tree Lighting event will take place on Saturday, December 7 at 6:00 the Old Township Hall. Volunteers should arrive by 5:30 pm.

Volunteers included:

Curtis Freeman Matthew Yahyai

Nahid Sanii-Yahyai Greg Vessels

Martha Kern-Boprie

Dress warmly. This is an outdoor event.

1. Bills for Payment

It was moved by Greg Vessels and supported by Curtis Freeman to approve payment of the bills totaling $28,819.64 through 11/25/24. The motion carried.

1. Financial Statements
2. October 2024 Revenue & Expenditure Statement

It was moved by Curtis Freeman and supported by Martha Kern-Boprie to receive the October 2024 Revenue & Expenditure Statement. The motion carried.

1. October 2024 Balance Sheet

It was moved by Greg Vessels and supported by Curtis Freeman to receive the October 2024 Balance Sheet. The motion carried.

1. Pleas and Petitions

Brenda Baker noted that she received an announcement sent from Superior Township to all email contacts that there would be a Parks & Recreation Commission meeting on November 25, 2024, at 6:30 pm. She could not readily find an agenda and packet on the township website. Eventually she did obtain these files, but it was complicated and not user friendly. Juan Bradford said he would discuss this with the Clerk’s staff.

Martha Kern-Boprie reminded Park Commissioners that the next meeting is on December 16 at 6:00 pm. This is the third Monday in December and 30 minutes earlier than usual. This schedule is necessary to avoid conflicts with Christmas holidays, and with the Township Board meeting at 7:00 pm on December 16.

1. Adjournment

It was moved by Martha Kern-Boprie and supported by Curtis Freeman to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. The motion carried.