

**Springfield Township  
Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, July 13, 2010**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The July 13, 2010 Regular Meeting of the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Chairperson Vallad at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, Michigan 48350.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present**

Diane Baker  
Dot LaLone  
Anne Loncar  
Annette Zemon-Parker  
Jean Vallad  
Darryl Wendt

**Staff Present**

Sarah Richmond  
Jennifer Tucker

**Others Present**

Bernie LaCroix  
Brenda LaCroix  
Nancy Strole

**Commissioners Absent**

Commissioner Christensen with notification

**IV. AGENDA REVISIONS AND APPROVAL**

**Commissioner LaLone moved to accept the agenda as presented. Commissioner LaLone was supported by Commissioner Wendt. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, LaLone, Loncar, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None; Absent: Christensen. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairperson Vallad explained the Park Commission's policy regarding public comment.

Mr. Bernie LaCroix, 8256 Pine Lake Dr., Davisburg, read an e-mail that was sent to Director Tucker, Township Supervisor Trout, and Township Treasurer Dubre. The e-mail was sent to formally request reimbursement for veterinary expenses in the amount of approximately \$3,000.00 (as of the end of June) related the massasauga rattlesnake bite of their Samoyed dog on June 17<sup>th</sup> in the Shiawassee Basin Preserve. The e-mail then goes on to explain the LaCroix's version of the event and asked for reimbursement of the incurred veterinary expenses.

Chairperson Vallad asked the Park Commission what they would like to do regarding this matter. She stated first that the Department has contacted the Township Attorney, who has informed the Commission that they are under no legal obligation to cover the LaCroix's veterinary bills. Chairperson Vallad stated that it was a scary incident for all involved and she is sorry that it happened but Mrs. LaCroix was walking in a preserve. So knowing all of this, if

the Park Commission should so choose, they could add this item to the agenda by making a motion to discuss as to whether or not the Commission should cover these expenses. Again as she had stated earlier, the Commission is under no legal obligation to cover these veterinary bills, so she needs to know what the other Commission members would like to do.

A lengthy discussion ensued. After this lengthy discussion, the Park Commission was unanimous in agreeing that no action would be taken regarding this matter and thus declined to authorize reimbursement to the LaCroix's for their dog's veterinary expenses.

Mr. LaCroix stated, that because of this conclusion that he will not be paying his property taxes and he will be going to court. He stated "he has no other option, where does the Park Commission think his money comes from?" He is retired and is on a fixed income. This amount is his summer taxes that just got "pissed away".

Chairperson Vallad stated, once again, that the Park Commission declined to authorize payment.

Chairperson Vallad thanked the LaCroix's for their comments.

## **VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes –June 8, 2010 with Additional Disbursements of \$6,975.90 for the Parks & Recreation Fund and \$ 700.00 for Trust & Agency
- B. Receipt of Activities Report for June
- C. Receipt of Financial Summaries
- D. Receipt of June Budget Printouts
- E. Receipt of Approved Township Board Meeting Minutes for May 13, 2010
- F. Receipt of Young At Heart Active Adults July and August Newsletter
- G. Receipt of Letter dated June 14, 2010 from Rotary re: Autumn Olive Removal Project
  - Receipt of Communications
  - 1.

**Commissioner LaLone moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner LaLone was supported by Chairperson Vallad. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, LaLone, Loncar, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None; Absent: Christensen. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

None

## **X. TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **A. Bills List**

**Commissioner Wendt moved to approve payment of the bills as follows: Parks and Recreation at \$ 37,519.21 and Trust and Agency at \$ 900.00. Commissioner Wendt was**

supported by Commissioner Baker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, LaLone, Loncar, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None; Absent: Christensen. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

**X. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Policies and Procedure Committee**

None

**B. Non-Profit Community Group Committee**

None

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Nancy Strole wanted to express how great it was to see all of the support for the parks. Seeing all the millage signs up, she is taking it as evidence that people understand and appreciate the important role that our parks, both the lands and programs, play in this community and really are a major reason why people decide to live here.

Mrs. Strole stated that she is aware of the situation that was addressed earlier in the meeting this evening. She is certainly empathetic with anyone that has their dog hurt whether it is attacked by a coyote, bitten by a snake, or hit by a car, etc. However, having said that, personally as a taxpayer and a resident of Springfield, she would be very disappointed if the Park Commission or the Township Board began to start going down that slippery slope in the road of trying to protect residents from eventualities that might occur. There have been reports on both private and public land(s) that there are snakes, and it is no secret that there are venomous snakes in the State. It is her knowledge of the massasauga that the behavior that was described is very atypical; they are typically very docile and passive snakes by nature. In her opinion, people have to take responsibility when they go out by being aware of their surroundings, and that is not to say something still can't happen. Again it is her concern that if the Township uses tax dollars to reimburse those individuals for their veterinary expenses, then the Township begins to go down a road that she is not sure the Township wants to start to go down because there is no end to it.

Chairperson Vallad asked for clarification on poisonous.

Director Tucker stated that the snake is venomous. Venomous means that it could secrete venom when it bites, but it does not mean it will kill you.

Commissioner Loncar stated that as a society we need to be aware of our surroundings and take some responsibility for our actions.

Commissioner Zemon-Parker agreed.

Director Tucker stated that this patron is still utilizing the park with her dog.

**XII. COMMISSIONER COMMENT**

Commissioner Loncar wanted to ask her fellow Commissioners to get involved in the “Parks Now” campaign. The committee is in need of help with phone calls and working the polls the day of the election. The millage is to help maintain the parks and programming that has become expected in this community. It is something, that as elected Commissioners, they are expected to do for the community, to keep the park land and programming. If the millage is able to pass it hopefully will enable the Commission to do some of the things that they are always trying to do but are not able to afford to do. So it is her hope that as a group that everyone can get out there and volunteer some time toward the campaign. The millage will help to keep the parks system viable.

Commissioner LaLone stated that she had begun her annual summer tour of the parks and things are looking good. She said that she would like maintenance to look at Green Lake Park because there is a table that has been spray painted silver. Commissioner LaLone also stated that she feels that the Commission needs to address the parking issues at the Shiawassee Basin Preserve and especially Shultz Park. Also she stated that the garage wall at Mill Pond Park is awfully rotted and only getting worse.

Chairperson Vallad asked if the weed management that the maintenance staff has been performing in the Mill Pond has been helping the situation at the beach.

Director Tucker stated that yes the weed management seems to be helping. The chemical treatment will hopefully be performed soon.

Chairperson Vallad stated that Laura Moreau, on her own time, went through the primary voter list and then gave it to her. Chairperson Vallad then went through two years worth of park patron registration forms who were also on the primary voter list and then noted the ones that were not on that list so they have a master list compiled that are park patrons who have voted in the primaries. What the campaign committee is going to do is compose a telephone and/or e-mail script to contact those individuals. On Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm there will be a meeting to fold and address brochures if anyone would like to attend.

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Zemon-Parker moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation at 7:32 pm. Commissioner Zemon-Parker was supported by Commissioner Baker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, LaLone, Loncar, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None; Absent: Christensen. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

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Jennifer Tucker, Director of Parks & Recreation

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Jean Vallad, Chairperson of Park Commission